

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1028-1032

Chapter 1028

Hannah rolled her eyes dramatically, then wailed, "You're not serious, are you? My wedding's happening in a couple of days! What if I can't fit into my dress? I can't possibly ask his mother to alter it on the spot, can I? The dress was custom-made and embroidered by hand! It cost an absolute fortune! I'm on the verge of moving out. I have to lose weight, or there'll definitely be a problem."

Hannah's noisy complaining could not hide the traces of a smile hovering over her lips. I grinned at that. If a little weight gain was all that Hannah had to worry about for the rest of her marriage, she'd have many blissful years ahead of her.

Hannah's endless rambling was finally put to a stop by an incoming call from Chandler. She answered the phone only to redirect her flood of words into the mouthpiece. On the other end, Chandler just absorbed everything patiently.

I suddenly found myself very much an outsider in this romantic display of affection. I surveyed around the cafe casually. Abruptly, a familiar face popped up within the field of my vision. I froze.

I was slightly myopic, so I couldn't be certain that the figure was indeed who I'd taken it to be. I squinted as hard as I could in that direction, but to no avail. I thus reached out and tugged on Hannah's sleeve, gesturing subtly in that direction.

Hannah paused and looked over. She was similarly taken aback. Hannah quickly mumbled into the phone, "Chandler, I just saw someone I know. I'm hanging up!"

After she'd ended the call, Hannah hauled me out of the cafe. When we'd gotten outside, she immediately shrieked, "That woman was Rebecca, wasn't she?"

I wavered, unable to say for sure.

We didn't approach her, however, but merely continued observing from a distance.

K City was a bustling, modern city. Life here was fast-paced, and it was common to see people dashing from place to place. Nobody paid any heed to the sight of a woman pulling on a man and shamelessly begging him for money.

Hannah glanced at her watch, then looked at me with a horrified expression. "It's only seven in the evening! It's not even midnight yet. Is she doing what I think she's doing?"

I bit my lip and continued gazing in Rebecca's direction. She had on a thick layer of makeup and wore a revealing dress that exposed various areas of her body with utter disregard for the winter cold. She looked as indecent as she was legally permitted to be.

Rebecca had a gorgeous face and a lovely figure. It was usually sufficient for attracting stares anywhere she went. If the scene unfolding before our eyes had played out anywhere else, I would never have given it a second thought.

Where we were presently standing was K City's most notorious red-light district. Vice oozed out of every pore of her. Rebecca's scantily-clad self, placed against this surrounding, made our suspicions perfectly reasonable.

Hannah dragged me closer to take a better look. We could hear the sound of Rebecca's cries now, clear as a bell. "Mr. Tuffin, you promised that as long as I agreed, you'd give me the money! Now that I've done it, how can you go back on your word? You can't do that!"

The man looked visibly irked by Rebecca's constant pleas. He fished out a couple of bills from his wallet and flung them roughly at Rebecca, vehemently cursing her all the while.

I was dumbfounded. Did we just witness Rebecca selling herself? How can this be?

Even if Ashton no longer cared for Rebecca, Joe clearly worshipped her. He would never have sanctioned this degradation of Rebecca's dignity.

Rebecca stooped to pick up the bills, utterly focused on counting them while shivering helplessly from the bitter cold. Clutching herself to preserve what little bit of warmth she had, Rebecca scampered off and disappeared into the nightclub behind her.

Hannah's stupefied expression mirrored mine exactly. We were stunned while we looked at each other as if to confirm what we'd just beheld. Haltingly, Hannah asked, "That was Ms. Larson, wasn't it?"

I craned my neck in the direction that Rebecca had slipped off to, then nodded reluctantly. "I think so."

"What happened to her? How did she end up that way? Wasn't she so glamorous previously? How did she suddenly end up like this? What in the world happened?" Hannah asked urgently. She was evidently still in shock. I could see the cogs in Hannah's mind turning as she struggled to process what she had just seen.

I didn't have the answers to Hannah's questions and said so frankly. "I don't know what just happened either. I think Ashton gave her an apartment and a car that we never asked her to return. Joe has also given her lots of money. There's really no logical reason as to why Rebecca would be so desperate for money that she'd need to sell her body!"

Hannah bit her lip. Soberly, she said, "Come on, let's go over and take a look!"

The incident at the Imperial Hotel had left me with a lingering uneasiness. I hesitated, then shook my head. "I don't really want to. It's too chaotic over there and isn't safe."

Hannah was insistent, however. She pouted, then wheedled, "It's not. I'm going in with you. Don't worry. As long as we don't cause any trouble, nothing will happen to us. Don't worry!"

Without waiting for my consent, Hannah dragged me across. Upon entry, the dance floor rose to meet us, packed with teenagers wearing the barest slips of clothing. The DJ's hollers were deafening over the speakers, and the drunk partygoers gyrated to the pulsing music without a care in the world.

Hannah burst out, "What's wrong with all of these people? Have they gone insane?"

She tightened her grip on my arm as we move through the crowd, searching for Rebecca. But, she seemed to have vanished off the face of the earth. Hannah puzzled, "Why isn't Rebecca on the dance floor?"

I pondered this, then realized, "She's in terrible need of money, isn't she? She should be hard at work right now."

Hannah smacked her forehead exaggeratedly. "That's right! Why didn't I think of it?"

Chapter 1029

We eventually located the front counter of the nightclub but were promptly ignored by the staff. While we were there, we heard a patron making enquiries if there were girls available to spend the night with. The staff member merely handed him a card. It was all rather cloak-and-dagger.

Rather naively, I whispered to Hannah, "What's that?"

Hannah explained, "It's a card with a number on it. It's the same in other bars or clubs. Due to the wide variety of characters that flow through sordid places like these, the nightclub caters to a similarly wide range of demands. That guy we just saw at the front counter should have been a new patron. He may have come from overseas, been here on business, or was simply here to try something new. There was a phone number on the card. I'm guessing that there's a woman waiting upstairs for the customer to call the number on her card. I suppose it's pretty much self-service from then on."

I didn't understand. "What do you mean? What will he do upstairs?"

Hannah said patiently, "The units above this nightclub are all apartments occupied by women. The staff at the nightclub connect these women with their clientele. Plainly put, it's a brothel."

I frowned. "Surely Rebecca can't be in such pressing need for money, can she?"

Hannah shrugged listlessly. "I wouldn't have thought so, but after what we just witnessed outside, it's hard to say for sure. One thing we can be certain about is that she's no longer in contact with Mr. Quinn. He's getting married to a K City socialite named Jordyn Bloom. I heard that she's a sophisticated woman who just returned from studying in Granatano. She's only in her early twenties and is a young and pretty lady. It's a pity that her parents pushed her to marry so quickly. Who knows how it'll turn out!"

"Joe?" I asked doubtfully. "Is he really engaged to a socialite?"

Perceiving my skepticism, Hannah replied, "It happened a few months ago. You were occupied with taking care of Summer, so I didn't want to bother you with this frivolous gossip. Apparently, after Jordyn found out about Joe's playboy ways, she made a fuss and wanted to terminate the engagement. Jordyn only went ahead with it begrudgingly because her parents pressured her into it."

All sorts of conflicting emotions stirred uneasily within me. I'd been jealous of Rebecca ever since I came to know Ashton. I could not deny that I'd been incredibly anxious about which one of us Ashton would choose, Rebecca or me. Even though I had defeated her, I could not find it in me to rejoice after seeing Rebecca's predicament. Perhaps I had also never really believed that Ashton would leave me for Rebecca. Besides, my identity as a member of the Moore family had already cemented my superiority to her.

It was peculiar how one's family background could make such a vital difference to one's bearing and attitude towards life. Anyone who possessed any sort of self-confidence or boldness usually had the backing of a strong heritage and family status.

Hannah looked determined to continue hunting down Rebecca. Unwilling, I tugged at her, saying, "Let's go back! There's nothing much for us to look at here. No matter what caused such desperate straits to befall her, it's none of our business either. Let's leave this place quickly!"

Hannah frowned, then egged me on, "Aren't you curious at all to see how Rebecca's faring?"

I shook my head firmly. "Nope. There's no point in doing that anyway."

What was the point in witnessing Rebecca's debasement? What would I gain from gloating over it? No matter what Rebecca was doing now, wasn't my business with her already entirely relegated to the past?

Seeing my obstinate expression, Hannah decided not to pursue the matter. "Fine. It doesn't matter anyway. Let's go, then!"

There was a small alley just behind the nightclub. Hannah seemed to be in a particularly daring mood today. She was usually rather meek and timid, but today she was exhibiting a wildly uncharacteristic side of her. She was spontaneous and seemed to be especially seeking out a challenge.

I wondered if it had anything to do with Chandler. Now that Hannah knew there would always be someone supporting her unconditionally, she felt absolutely liberated to act without fear of the consequence.

I, however, hung back slightly and trod rather fearfully behind her a little way, Noticing that the last dregs of daylight were fast fading, I shimmied closer to Hannah, urging, "Hannah, shouldn't we be turning back already?"

Hannah turned to me with a mischievous grin on her face. "Chandler's still out of town, and Xavier's staying with Uncle Louis. I'm so bored staying home all alone. Let's just take a stroll together! I'm going to get married in a few days' time and will be under Chandler's thumb for the rest of my life. He won't let me out to play, I'm sure! The thought of it is dull enough."

Hannah's pout belied the warmth in her tone. I smiled at her obvious happiness. Romance was a truly lovely thing. It could utterly rejuvenate and transform anyone.

Unable to resist Hannah's cheerful enthusiasm, I thus continued down the gloomy alley with her. Nervously, I joked, "Why are we taking a stroll here? Wouldn't a mall be more suitable?"

Hannah turned to me and pressed a finger to her lips. As if she were sharing a delightful secret, Hannah whispered, "I've been hearing about this place for the longest time. Apparently it's a gathering place for all sorts of characters at night. I wanted to take a look to satisfy my curiosity."

I gaped at Hannah, aghast. "What are you so curious about nothing for? All we'll meet are probably hardened criminals! Shouldn't we be fleeing instead of charging straight into their den?"

Hannah sniggered. Gleeefully, she declared, "I wrote a book recently and was considering adding some scenes set in the city's underworld. All the true crimes I've ever heard were paltry drug sellers earning a few quick bucks, though. I've never seen the real deal, you know? K City is rife with all sorts of shady characters. I really wanted to come here after all I'd heard about it and see for myself, hoping to gain some material for my writing."

Chapter 1030

I groaned inwardly. This woman is crazy!

I reluctantly trailed after Hannah. We hadn't proceeded much further, however, when we came to a halt.

K City's underworld was equally as squalid as how vibrant the city was. Beneath streetlamps so dim, there was barely a glow in the oppressive dark sat a few men. Some were leaning against the wall while others perched on top of it. Some looked haggard, skeletal, and barely sustained by the occasional meals from good Samaritans.

Others were dressed in flashy outfits, clutching thick wads of cash in their hands. Revolted by the grimy, seedy appearance of the place, I grabbed Hannah and yanked at her frantically, indicating that we should leave right away.

Hannah was evidently terrified as well. She took one glance and turned on her heels, ready to leave with me. Before we could escape, we ironically crashed headlong into the one person we'd come here to meet. It was Rebecca! In the flickering light cast by the streetlamps, Rebecca's face looked absolutely ghastly.

Rebecca's eyes widened first in shock, then in recognition. She instinctively recoiled, her eyes darting nervously from side to side. Realizing that there was nowhere for her to hide or run, she faced me squarely, her eyes blazing in fury and despair. "Scarlett? Why are you here?" she asked.

My gaze shifted to the object that Rebecca wielded in her hand, then jumped in fright. "You..."

Rebecca glanced down at the sealed plastic sachet in her hand. The corners of her mouth curved up into a sinister smile. "What? Do you want to try some? It's good stuff. Once you've had some, you'll find yourself craving for more the rest of your life."

I staggered slightly in horror and gawped at Rebecca. "Did you use the money from all your dirty deeds to purchase this?"

Rebecca narrowed her eyes, then abruptly burst into peals of high, piercing laughter that sounded almost like a shriek. "So it was indeed the two of you I saw just now! I'd thought I was hallucinating," Rebecca admitted dizzily. She stuck a fingertip into the powder in her hand, then waved it in front of us. "Come on, I got lots of extras today. I can spare you a little. Why don't you try a bit to see what it feels like? How about that? Just a little."

"Get away from us!" Hannah struck out, shoving Rebecca aside. She bellowed, "Rebecca, no one cares if you become an addict. But you'd better keep your distance from us! We don't want to end up like you."

Hannah's words seemed to trigger something in Rebecca. Scowling, Rebecca snarled, "Mrs. Fuller, you're already married to Ashton, aren't you? What are you doing all the way out here, then? Why are you suddenly so interested in addicts like us? Aren't you afraid that someone will kidnap you and demand a ransom of millions from Mr. Fuller?"

“Enough of your nonsense!” Hannah snapped back in return. “You’ve already been reduced to such a state, yet you’re criticizing others? Let me tell you honestly then, we came here to look at you!”

Hannah pulled my arm again, but Rebecca stood adamantly in our way. Raising her voice, she addressed the group of men standing behind us. “Everyone, listen up! She’s the wife of the president of Fuller Corporation! If you manage to get her, you should be able to easily get a cool hundred thousand from Mr. Fuller at the very least.”

Does Rebecca intend to incite my kidnapping and threaten Ashton? I pondered.

Hannah was speechless. “Rebecca, have you gone crazy? How can you bring yourself to stoop so low?”

Busy reveling in her loathing of me, Rebecca seemed unfazed by either Hannah’s derision or the cold wind. One could say that Rebecca was my nemesis, perhaps, but amongst all the possible endings to our rivalry, I’d never imagined this one. There was no light at all in Rebecca’s dull eyes. She looked as if she had utterly given up on herself and life.

I had no intention of squabbling with Rebecca. This wasn’t an ideal environment, and the sooner we got away from here, the better. Besides, I wasn’t invested enough in her to care. We were merely two individuals whose paths had crossed at one point in time but had diverged thereafter. I thus saw no purpose in further engaging with her antics.

I briskly pushed Rebecca aside, dragging Hannah close behind me. But, Rebecca stopped us with one hand. “Scarlett, do you really think I’m going to let you get away so easily?” Rebecca sneered.

Having said that, she howled towards the men behind us with a vengeance. “Inject her with the stuff! I’ll give my entire stash to anyone who succeeds. Quickly!”

I froze. Hannah lunged forward to restrain Rebecca but was pushed aside. Rebecca’s eyes were blazing. “Move aside if you don’t want me to kill you as well!”

I struggled, but Rebecca seemed possessed with an inhuman strength. I was totally incapacitated by her strong grip.

The audience behind us in the alley sprang into action. I highly doubted that they cared about the legality of their actions. Rebecca's proclamation seemed to unleash the demons within them. They scrambled and sprinted over in their eagerness to inject me.

At the sight of those needles pointing towards me, I stood rooted to the spot, petrified. My mind raced and I panicked. These needles are all probably infected with something or another! I'm dead if they touch me!

Rebecca laughed maniacally. "Scarlett, I never thought I'd live to see you like this!"

Just then, a miraculous burst of energy surged through me. I wrenched my arm out of Rebecca's strong grip and hurled her towards the incoming needles. Without a second thought, I grabbed Hannah. We sprinted for our lives towards the exit of the alley.

Fortunately for us, it wasn't a long way off. The addicts, probably lethargic, didn't have enough of an interest to hunt us down.

Chapter 1031

Unfortunately, Rebecca had given chase. Bemused, Hannah exclaimed with a short laugh, "This woman is really something!"

I found Hannah's utterance rather abrupt. Before I could respond, I caught sight of Rebecca standing just behind us, staring at us somewhat unsteadily.

Realization dawned upon me when I saw the car parked right outside the alley. Hannah's irrational calmness now made complete sense.

By the time Rebecca recovered her wits, it was far too late. The policemen were already converging on her and caught up within a few steps.

“What are you doing? What right do you have to arrest me?” Rebecca shrieked. Her cries fell on deaf ears as she was handcuffed and thrown into the car.

Hannah pointed back to the alley in the direction from whence we came. “Officers, there’s still a whole crowd waiting inside! Get them quickly!” she cried.

Seeing that her shouts of abuse had no effect on the implacable policemen, Rebecca turned the full brunt of her rage towards me. “Scarlett, I won’t forget this! Watch out! I won’t let you get away with this!”

Hannah and I merely turned onto another path and went on our way. Rebecca’s yells of abuse faded gradually into the distance. I shook my head in amazement, then turned to Hannah and asked, “Did you already have the police on standby since the beginning?”

Hannah nodded with a look of satisfaction. “Prevention is always better than cure when dealing with nasty matters like these. It was dangerous enough to drag you along with me. If I hadn’t headed in with my guard up and anything had happened to you, I wouldn’t be able to live with myself.”

I marveled at the intricacies of Hannah’s planning. I was about to continue, but Chandler’s car pulled up beside us. I didn’t think it would be right to retain Hannah with me when the lovebirds had clearly reunited, so I merely waved goodbye to her and headed back to the villa.

Summer was just shakily getting back on her feet after the illness. Cameron fussed over Summer like a mother hen, so she was insistent on having her. She had intended to become Summer’s sole caretaker. Ashton, meanwhile, was still in Moranta. I wanted to pop by the villa to grab a couple of things before making my way over to the Moore Residence. When I’d gotten out of the car, I stopped short at the sight of Ashton driving out of the garage.

After more than ten days of being apart, I took a double-take when I saw Ashton. He got out of the car and flashed a disarming smile at me. “Did you go shopping?” he asked casually, glancing at the snacks I held in my hand.

I froze for a second, then ran into his waiting arms. I pressed my cheeks, raw from the cold, onto his warm chest, saying hoarsely, "Why did you come back all of a sudden? When did you arrive in K City? Why didn't you tell me? I would have come to fetch you!"

Ashton patted me tenderly. In a low voice, he murmured, "It's too cold outside. I didn't want you to freeze to death." He disentangled himself, then pulled me towards the car. "Let's make a trip to the police department!"

Ashton lightly planted a kiss on my forehead, then bundled me into the car. In the warmth that filled the car, I opened my bag of snacks and offered one to Ashton, asking, "Have you eaten anything?"

Before I'd finished, I'd borne the snack towards his mouth. Ashton glanced at the snack hovering threateningly near his lips, then at my eager expression. Chuckling, he opened his mouth and ate the snack dutifully. As he ate, he replied, "Hannah's wedding is in a few days. I was afraid that you'll be lonely going by yourself."

"Did you come back to be my plus one, then?" I asked, feeding myself. I didn't usually have much of an appetite when I was around, but was strangely invigorated by Ashton's presence.

Ashton smiled. "Yep!" he said. Then he continued concernedly, "Didn't you eat dinner?"

I laughed genially. "I did! I just wasn't hungry at the time, so I bought some snacks to eat on the way home. I only bought these snacks because they're so delicious."

Ashton looked helplessly at me. "Snacks aren't good for your health. You should... Oh!" As he was speaking, I stuffed another snack into his mouth to forbid him from continuing. "I know snacks aren't healthy! I don't eat them usually. It's my first time in a long while, so don't worry, Mr. Fuller!"

Ashton sighed dramatically. "I've only been gone a few days, and you've stopped taking care of yourself! You've lost weight."

I tilted my head and stared him down. “Right, when are you planning on going to Moranta? How’s it going over there? Are we going to leave that matter with Armond just like that?”

Ashton gaze was focused intently on the road ahead. His brow wrinkled ever so slightly as he replied, “I’ll head back after Hannah’s wedding is over. You stay in K City and take care of yourself.”

I chewed on my lip. Ashton seemed to have cultivated a borderline obsession with my health. Every interaction we had was sure to consist of an order to take care of my health like how Ashton had just emphasized.

The car sped towards the police department. Looking out of the window, I felt tremendously unsettled. The baby lay like a solid, invisible presence between Ashton and me. He’d wanted a child with all his heart, desperately. But all the desire in the world could not and would not bring our baby back.

We screeched to a halt at the entrance of the police department. Ashton looked at me, then ordered, “Stay in the car where it’s warm. I’m going in to deal with a couple of things and will be out in a while. Stay right here, OK?”

Chapter 1032

Before I could ask Ashton what pressing affairs he was attending to, he’d already gotten out of the car and shut the door behind him. I reclined in my seat, feeling the warmth of the radiator suffuse the car.

Memories of the baby and what had happened then crowded my mind, and Ashton’s business at the police department was set aside. After a while, I picked up my phone and dialed Cameron’s number.

She picked up almost immediately. “Scarlett, didn’t you say you were coming back soon? Why aren’t you back yet? Where are you? I’ll get your Dad to go over and pick you up,” she answered anxiously.

“There’s no need! I’m with Ashton. I don’t think I’ll be heading back tonight,” I replied.

Cameron grunted in acknowledgment, then asked, "Why did he suddenly come back? How are things going in Moranta? Zachary said that Boris was getting news about the Murphys and how difficult they were to handle. Why did Ashton come back at this crucial point in time?"

I sucked in a breath of warm air and felt it settle in my lungs before exhaling gently. I then said uneasily, "Hannah's getting married. Ashton was worried that I wouldn't be comfortable going alone and came along to accompany me. He was needlessly worried."

"That's good! I was thinking anyway that if you could come over a little later, I'd whip up a light supper for you. I can't rest easy not knowing if you've been taking good care of yourself nowadays," Cameron fretted.

There was no malice in Cameron's tone, merely an infinite supply of concern and tenderness.

I knew what she was thinking and replied slowly, "Mom, did the doctor say whether I would still be able to conceive?"

Cameron was flabbergasted. She hesitated for a long while before saying, "My dear, Summer is doing fine now. She'll recover with enough care. Mr. Fuller treats you well. When he's back from Moranta, the three of you can be reunited as a family again and take care of each other..."

"Mom, did the doctor say I won't be able to conceive ever again?" I repeated doggedly. I already knew what the answer was but had to hear it spoken out loud. My hope for a miracle had gradually faded along with each day that passed.

The other end of the line was dead silent for a long time. At last, Cameron said kindly, "Don't worry too much about being able to have babies. Your womb was the only thing that was affected. With technology being so advanced these days, you can still opt for in vitro fertilization. Don't let not being able to conceive get you down! Everything will be all right."

In vitro fertilization?

A thought sprang to mind. I quickly said into the phone, "Mom, there's something I have to do. I'll be hanging up first!"

I ended the call, breathing rapidly. My mind raced feverishly. Gazing at the police department entrance where Ashton had vanished into and I wondered. Would Ashton be willing to try?

I cracked open the car door slightly. The frosty wind immediately gnawed at my exposed face. Shivering slightly, I kept my arms tucked tightly against my chest as I hurried into the police department.

Police officers were milling about the main lobby inside. I looked around cautiously but saw no sign of Ashton. I'd approached the front desk and was about to ask for him when I heard a loud roar from behind the metal screen. "I don't want to stay here, Ash! I didn't do it! Please don't leave me here! I didn't do it!"

The high voice sounded oddly familiar. Rebecca?

I walked closer to where the shouts were emitting from. The guard sitting in front of the door jumped up hastily, barricading my way. "Miss, you are not authorized to enter."

I smiled at him politely, then informed him, "My husband's in there. He came in without me just now."

Ashton must somehow have heard my voice from amidst the surrounding ruckus, and opened the door. He looked thunderous. When he caught sight of me, his tense features instantly softened. "What's wrong? Isn't it cold outside?" he asked worriedly.

Rebecca was sitting on a chair in the room just behind Ashton, looking utterly disgraced. I didn't think it was possible for her to be more humiliated than she had been, but I was clearly wrong. "What's she doing here?" I inquired, gesturing towards Rebecca.

It felt a little cruel of me to ask when I knew perfectly well what had happened to Rebecca.

Rebecca indeed gave me a look of tremendous indignation. She practically spat, "Scarlett, stop being so hypocritical! You know more clearly than anyone else what I'm doing here. You landed me here! I didn't do anything at all. You're evil!"

"You'd better shut your mouth," Ashton growled. Frightened by the harshness with which he'd issued the threat, Rebecca's face turned ashen, and she fell silent.

I, too, was not exempt from the solemn effect that warning had, even though it had not been directed to me. My heart pounded in my chest.

A sudden hush descended upon the room. Ashton glowered at Rebecca, saying distinctly, "Nobody forced you to make those choices you made. I've given you what you were due, so don't come to me using your brother's name anymore. I am not obliged to you. Since you've committed a crime, then do your time. When you're released, don't come and bother me any further. I don't have the time to spend on people like you who I have absolutely no business with."

Ashton spoke these utterly brutal words with a leer that revealed the extent to which he despised Rebecca.

Rebecca's eyes had gone red. Stammering, she said, "Am I a nobody to you then? Someone who's merely a waste of your time and who you have no business with?"