

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1048-1052

Chapter 1048

He was stunned by my sudden outburst of laughter, furrowing his eyebrows at me. "What are you laughing about? Do you find this funny? Did I say something wrong?"

It took me a long while to calm down, wiping away tears from my eyes. "There's no way you believe the words that are coming out of your mouth, right?" I said sarcastically. "How could you say such a thing so confidently? You say that she'll lose everything if she goes to jail, but I honestly want to ask you: are you absolutely sure that you have no way of getting her out of there? Is the Kane family so powerless that they can't rescue a single person from prison?"

Besides, did you think that she was really going to become famous, even if she hasn't been sent to jail? Of course not. Everyone in our circle is aware that she's your and Ashton's precious little doll. Did you think that she would find a partner among us when you let her fly out of the nest? You know more than anyone else that she's just going to end up relying on some old man's money to survive and become nothing more than a toy.

"Admit it. You've fallen out of love with her a long time ago and started to resent her. Why else would you tell her such horrible things at the hospital? You wanted to force her to leave you, yet didn't want to be stuck with the reputation of an asshole, so you just let go of her reins and watched as she made mistake after mistake, until she'd finally reached the point of no return. You are half the reason why she's turned out this way. You were satisfied with the outcome, but you despised the thought of having to take responsibility for your actions! So, in an act of fake self-righteousness, you came to interrogate me and pushed all the blame onto me, making me out to be the villain in the situation. Although, to be honest with you, you really shouldn't have wasted your efforts. Even if you force me to take the blame for your actions, you'd still be regarded as a scummy human being in other people's eyes. So please quit the whole good guy act, or I might just throw up."

I hadn't meant to verbally abuse him, but I couldn't stop myself.

Joe was flushed all the way up to his neck in anger, and I let out an internal scoff at the sight. Nothing about this man was genuine. He'd already committed so many evil acts, yet still insisted that his hands were clean. How ridiculous!

There was no point in continuing the conversation any longer. "You better watch out!" I warned, turning on my heel and walking away.

"You have some nerve—forcing other people to take the fall for you!" he roared out from behind me. "No wonder Ashton is head over heels for you! You're a conniving, sneaky witch!"

I glanced back over my shoulder at him, flashing a polite smile. "You flatter me, Mr. Quinn. Look, if you really can't let go of this, I have a suggestion for you: wait until she gets out of prison, then you can bring her back home to be your precious little doll once more. But by that time, she'd be old and wrinkly, and you'd probably refuse to take her in. There's no way you could appreciate a woman like that, right?"

After saying so, I left him and headed for the restaurant. Ashton was already waiting outside for me, approaching me as soon as he spotted me. "What took you so long?"

Looping my arm through his, I said cheerily, "Just met a familiar toilet and had a chat with him, so I figured I might as well take out the trash! My mood's greatly improved, and I feel so refreshed."

"What are you talking about?" His eyebrows knitted together.

"I meant to say that I had a nice trip to the loo!" I grinned.

Sighing in exasperation, he flicked my forehead lightly. "Watch your mouth."

Joe, who was trailing behind me, brushed roughly past us as he stormed off towards the lobby, spitting out, "Shameless woman!" as he did so.

"What did he say?" Ashton looked at me, perplexed.

I shrugged. "It's about Rebecca. He didn't want to abandon her in a distasteful manner and wanted to keep his image squeaky clean. When that plan failed, he got frustrated and took out all his humiliation on me."

Ashton's lips pursed as he stared at the back of Joe's silhouette. "He's getting married to that woman from the Harrett family soon, so it's about time he moves on from Rebecca. The Kanes and the Harretts' future business cooperations will benefit each other greatly."

I wasn't interested in any of Joe's business. "Rebecca's life has all gone down the drain. She didn't have any good people around her, and she didn't have a career of her own," I lamented.

The worst thing a woman could do was to entrust all of herself to a man and spend all of her time and energy on him only to get dust in return. Then, there was nothing she could do except to wait until she had become useless to him and get thrown away like an old rag.

Perhaps Rebecca's misfortune had started from the moment Parker entrusted her to the group of friends.

The poor woman had never gotten a chance to plan her life out properly. She had not only lost her pride and independence because of love but had now also lost the motivation to continue living. There was nothing more she could do now except be another rich man's eye candy, but her beauty could only last for so long. She had already ruined her own life with her own two hands.

"I have to go to A City tomorrow to handle some things," Ashton suddenly spoke up. "It's time we start living for ourselves too, Scarlett."

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A little surprised by his words, I squinted my eyes at him. "A City?"

The corners of his lips quirked up into a smirk. I could see the bloodthirst and fury swimming deep in the depths of his eyes, even if he was doing his best to hide them.

“We can’t let the child’s pain be for nothing, can we?”

Oh. He was finally going to make a move on Armond. After a slight pause of hesitation, I asked, “Can I come with you?”

“Why? Will you miss me too much when I’m gone?”

I nodded, smiling up at him. “I guess. So, how about it? Can I go with you?”

As long as the issue with Armond was left unresolved, we would both have sleepless nights. Although we would have preferred to live a peaceful and mundane life, we knew that we might face even more pain and suffering in the future if we didn’t handle the issue as soon as possible.

So, Ashton agreed to let me accompany him on his trip.

Joe didn’t even stay for the remainder of the meal, merely telling Ashton the date of his and Zelene’s engagement before dragging her away with him. It seemed that their marriage had been confirmed.

I hadn’t expected two weirdos like John and Emma to get along, but to my surprise, they exchanged contact details before they left, and even made plans to eat dinner together tonight at the Stovall residence. John later approached Ashton and me to inform us that he wanted to host a small party to celebrate Kiki’s birthday, thus coming up with the idea of inviting everyone over to the Stovall residence for dinner.

Hannah and Chandler were likely to be there because of Kiki. Hannah had also moved on from everything, so what was John’s motive in bringing Emma along?

After leaving the restaurant, Ashton handled some work issues before going to the shopping mall with me to make sure that we didn't show up to Kiki's birthday party empty-handed.

We strolled around the mall for a bit, where Ashton ended up choosing a Transformers toy as well as a customizable black race car. His reasoning was that all children enjoyed driving around tiny vehicles of their own, and the Stovall residence's yard was large enough for Kiki to do just that.

We bumped into some familiar faces as soon as we left the mall. It was Sally, and with her was the professor that we'd seen once before at the restaurant, Jim.

Having met once prior to that, the atmosphere between us wasn't as awkward anymore. Sally waved at us, politely inquiring, "It's rare to see Ashton in the malls. Did you come to buy something in particular?"

Ashton nodded, but said nothing.

His dark gaze fell upon Jim, an unrecognizable emotion in his eyes as he stared at the man. I didn't understand these sorts of non-verbal cues between men, so I chose to ignore them.

I couldn't help but feel like Sally was glancing down at my tummy on and off as she spoke. "I know we've all been incredibly busy recently, but I've been thinking if we should all return to J City and celebrate the new year as a family. Ashton, you know Uncle Charlie and Aunt Helen are getting older with no children to accompany them. Besides, you're usually so occupied with work that you rarely visit them. It'd be nice to take a break for a family reunion. I doubt you've even been to the old Fuller family home these past few years."

Ashton nodded, simply replying, "We'll see."

"By the way, Jim and I are planning to hold a wedding soon," Sally told him, sounding slightly apprehensive. "Do you have any opinions about that? We're both in our late forties already, and we want to start living a happy life..."

"Have the Murphys agreed to you two being together?" Ashton interrupted, turning his attention to Jim.

“That is solely between your aunt and me,” Jim answered, as elegant and self-composed as ever. “The Murphy family has no business interfering with our relationship.”

The Murphys?

There were very few “Murphy” families in K City. Was the Murphy family he mentioned the same as the one on my mind?

Ashton’s mouth quirked slightly, but the rest of his expression revealed no emotion. “Maybe you should wait until next year. It’s still too early to make this decision.”

Sally’s face fell, presumably feeling as confused as I was. “What are you talking about, Ashton? There’s nothing problematic between Jim and me, so I didn’t think you’d oppose our relationship.”

“Scarlett and I are busy. Let’s talk about this another time. I suggest you ask him about his family and find out more about his background before deciding on anything.” Not wanting to continue the conversation any further, he tugged on my arm and we left the mall.

While in the car, I spoke up, “Let’s make a stop at the local pet shop. I think Kiki would like to have a small puppy friend to play with.”

He nodded in response, pressing the gas pedal and driving off.

We sat in silence for a while before I stole an uncertain look at him. “Are you sure Uncle Jim is one of the Murphys that we know of?”

Ashton made a sound of admittance. I continued on, “Did you find out after looking into him, or did you know since the beginning?”

Even though the Murphys had a lot of children and Armond was likely one amongst many descendants, they had always been a very lowkey family that rarely made any public appearances.

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“The Murphys have many children, but there is only one who controls the family fortune and business,” Ashton explained while driving. “Robert Murphy and Armond aren’t immediate family members. Robert has three sons—all three of whom are not employed at the Murphy Corporation. The rest of his grandchildren have all also started up their own businesses in fields of their own choosing. Jim is Robert’s third son and loves literature, so he focused solely on learning literature and arts since young.”

“So, Armond is...”

“He’s Robert’s eldest’s son’s grandson. He was chosen to inherit the family business because he has a strong interest in business and earning money. Unfortunately, Armond was so determined to make a profit that greed consumed his morals, bringing lots of trouble to the Murphy family. That’s why the Murphys have fallen far from what they used to be in the past.”

“I see.” It made sense that not every child in a large family would have the talent to go into business. Some would prefer arts, some would prefer research, and others would prefer to live on their parents’ money and not ever having to work for a living. If you wanted your family to continue expanding and growing, you had to pick and choose among those children the best candidate to manage the family business. Sadly for the Murphys, Armond has no virtues in his business dealings.

There were always blurred lines between right or wrong. Once someone was cornered, they would resort to whatever methods possible to get out of that. Armond was way too ambitious and predatory, and as a result, the Murphy family hadn’t expanded as well as his elders had expected.

“But even so, it shouldn’t affect Aunt Sally and Uncle Jim’s marriage much. After all, Jim didn’t take part in his family’s fight for power.”

“Idiot.” He chuckled, giving me a sidelong glance. “It’s impossible for a family to expand if it’s solely reliant on one person. It relies on everyone in the family’s hard work and effort. If nothing happens to the Murphys, they naturally stay out of each other’s business, but once problems arise, the family name becomes everyone’s top priority. They will each utilize all their power and resources to defend their

fellow relatives. It's just like a country; everyone usually minds their own business, but if it comes down to a life-or-death situation, we'll band together and do our best to contribute even the slightest of efforts for our country."

He has a point.

Once the Fuller family tries to take on Armond, it will become a full-on war.

At the pet shop, I bought a month-old golden retriever puppy so small that it could fit in one of my palms. I was clueless about how I should take care of it properly. The staff kindly wrote down a list of possible situations and what to do when facing those situations on a piece of paper for me. He also advised me to visit the pet shop again any time if I was truly at a loss. They also gifted some dog food and toys along with my purchase.

The sky outside was already dark as I left the pet shop, having given the Stovall residence's address to the staff and requesting for them to send the puppy to the house. Then, Ashton and I got in the car and headed for the hospital. Summer had gone through her check-up last night and wanted to come home tonight to sleep in her own bed. Cameron had been busy with her own work, so I had no choice but to hire a caregiver for Summer, who had insisted on returning back to the Moore Residence and on Ashton personally picking her up from the hospital.

When we got there, I waited downstairs in the lobby, resting my sore legs while Ashton went upstairs to her ward.

I didn't expect to see Kristina stumbling into the hospital lobby. She seemed to be in an incredibly bad shape, barely taking a few steps into the building before collapsing onto the floor. Luckily, several observant nurses immediately noticed her and hauled her away to the ER.

Out of curiosity, I followed them over.

Standing at the entrance to the ER room, I waited for one of the nurses to come out before asking, "Excuse me, is the woman inside alright? What happened to her? She looked to be in a horrible condition."

"Of course she looks horrible, she has lung cancer," the nurse sighed, shifting the weight of some medical instruments in her arms. "It's already in its late stages. We kept asking her to come to the hospital for treatment, but her family didn't take any of our advice to heart. She's finally come back after her health has deteriorated this much, but I suspect she doesn't care much for her own life at all."

"Lung cancer?" I did a double-take. "How could she have gotten lung cancer? What happened?" Kristina had grown up in a healthy, clean environment. Usually, lung cancer patients were workers at chemical plants or had lived in an environment with a lot of dust and air pollution. But Kristina's life hadn't been like that at all!

"It was caused by a respiratory tract infection. Probably because of long-term contact with some sort of chemical. Are you her friend? Advise her to receive treatment and don't let it drag on any longer. It won't do her any good at all if she continues like this."

I nodded, in a daze as I watched the nurse walk off. How could Kristina have gotten lung cancer, of all things? I couldn't believe it.

It was only when Ashton called my phone to ask where I was that I realized what we'd come to the hospital for. I quickly rushed back down to the lobby and spotted him helping Summer into his car. "What happened? I thought you told me that you'd be waiting in the lobby," he asked when he saw me.

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"I just met an old acquaintance, so we chatted a bit," I answered. "Come on. We have to go to Uncle Louis' later tonight, too!"

Summer clung to me during the entire car ride. The poor thing had become so fragile that she was nearly just skin and bones, and it felt slightly unnerving when she hugged my arm. "Mommy, are you guys going out on a business trip again? Can you take me with you this time? I don't wanna be alone again. You've been so busy that you never come to visit me. Do you not want me anymore, Mommy?"

Her words reminded me that she was still an innocent and naïve child. Running a hand over her smooth scalp, I smiled wryly as I responded, “I will never abandon you, Summer. It’s just that I still have a lot of tasks left unfinished. When everything is over and done with, we’ll stay in K City with you every day, okay?”

Puffing her cheeks out indignantly, she nodded in acknowledgment and tightened her grip on my arm. When we arrived at the Moore residence, her caregiver helped bring Summer into the house before Ashton and I left for the Stovall residence.

“Did Jared get out of jail early?” I asked while on the way there.

“Why do you bring him up so suddenly?” Ashton was stunned as he looked at me out of the corner of his eye. “What happened?”

“Nothing. He just randomly came to mind.” I shook my head. “Knowing the Crest family’s influence, I thought that they’d try to get him out as soon as possible. After all, he’s one of them.”

Ashton didn’t seem as sensitive regarding the topic anymore. Perhaps he would feel relieved and even happy if Jared could get out of jail sooner rather than later. After all, they used to be best friends. Even though there had been some arguments, he had likely chosen to forgive and forget and let time heal his wounds.

“I’m sure the Crest family will take care of Jared’s situation,” he said, keeping his eyes on the road. “Besides, he might be going to W City in the future, so we’ll probably fall out of contact with each other.”

I pursed my lips. Ashton’s resentment and hatred towards Jared had all disappeared by then.

I turned and fixed him with a solemn stare. "If I didn't want him to come out, and prefer him to stay in there forever until he dies alone, would you be against that?"

I wasn't even sure what my own answer to that question was. "Is it because of Summer's illness?" He glanced at me in confusion. "You resent him and don't want him to come out because you want him to suffer more?"

"Yes, but not completely." If I had only felt shocked by Jared initially, those feelings had all turned to detest by then. Everyone had a dark side to them, even the most angelic and righteous of people. Some were just better at hiding it from others.

Jared was especially despicable because he appeared to be a good person, but there was not a single trace of kindness to be found in his heart at all. If Summer's illness was an accident, then Kristina's couldn't have been an accident too.

He was clearly out to commit murder. I didn't know what he did to Kristina to cause her to be diagnosed with lung cancer, but I was absolutely sure that he had placed Summer in the chemical plant with the intention to make her sick.

It couldn't be a coincidence that Kristina and Summer had both stayed in a chemical plant before, and both had gotten sick. That meant that the rest of the employees at that plant also had to be suffering some side effects from working there in order to earn money for their families. Unfortunately, those employees might now have to live with a crippling sickness for the rest of their lives.

The blatant disregard for other people's wellbeing was exactly why I resented Jared so much. After leaving the hospital, I couldn't stop thinking about how much I wanted him to remain in jail forever, and about how I would never let Summer near him ever again.

Ashton's eyebrows knitted together as he stayed silent for a minute. "What do you want to do?"

"Have you ever thought about investigating the chemical plants in W City registered under the Crest family name?"

He frowned. "Exactly who did you bump into today?"

"It's Kristina. She is diagnosed with terminal stage lung cancer!" I was aware that my way of handling this problem might have been a little extreme, but I couldn't think of any other methods to go about it.

Ashton wasn't dumb. He understood what I was implying, deep in contemplation before saying, "I'll instruct someone to go and investigate for you. If Jared really has something to do with this, I'll contact the police and get them involved. You don't need to get your hands dirty or think about matters that have nothing to do with us anymore, Scarlett. We're just normal people now. All we can do now is protect those we hold dear to us, you understand?"

His words took me aback, causing a wave of unrecognizable emotions to rise within me. It was as if I had suddenly realized the true nature of the person I was in love with. He had a point—we were all just a small part of this huge world, and being able to care for those around us was good enough. We didn't have an obligation to sacrifice our time and energy to interfere with other people's lives.

Chapter 1052

Hannah and Chandler were already at the Stovall residence when Ashton and I arrived. Clearly excited to be with Kiki after a long while, Hannah was holding her son in her arms as they played together in the child's room while Chandler watching over them warmly. The whole image looked very heartwarming.

I had a sneaking suspicion that John might actually be a masochist of some sort. He knew that he would be upset by the sight, yet insisted on making up random excuses to keep going to Kiki's room to take another look at them, and then returning to the living room and plopping down on the sofa in a daze. Even Louis couldn't stand it anymore after watching this process repeat itself over and over, scolding him outright, "Get ahold of yourself! Didn't you invite Ms. Lyons over? Go out and welcome her in; this house is too large for her to find her way around."

"There are servants at the door that will help lead the way, so why should I go?" John kicked back and leaned against the sofa lazily.

“Greeting people at the door is the very basic manners of the Stovall family!” Louis shouted at him. “You know damn well why you should go greet her!”

Silently admitting defeat, John slumped away to the main entrance to wait for Emma to arrive.

Ashton then started up a conversation with Louis while Kiki started sticking by Chandler’s side, insisting on playing with him and him only.

Realizing that she was being left out, Hannah left the bedroom and sat down beside me. “I can’t believe I spent ten months fretting and worrying over my pregnancy only to give birth to a traitor,” she joked. “I couldn’t even get a good night’s sleep, but look at my son now.”

“Kiki kept looking for you these past few days, though,” I pointed out, laughing. “And his Uncle Louis has already been tormented enough. Kids are born mischievous and playful, so don’t blame him for it. He’ll come back to you when he gets tired and sleepy.”

She nodded and sighed. “I think Kiki stopped drinking breastmilk way too early. I’m a little worried whenever I see that his body is smaller compared to other kids his age. Did Summer not drink much breastmilk as well?”

“Macy left right after Summer was born,” I explained. “At that time, there were too many things happening at once and I was unable to take care of Summer, so Jackson and Nick essentially raised her. I did consider later on feeding her breastmilk, but it loses nutritional value after it expires, so I never ended up doing it. She used to be smaller than what Kiki looks like now, actually. Afterward, I brought her to live in R Province for a few years, where the environment was great and clean. She was getting better and healthier, and then I brought her back to K City again. Looking back on it now, my neglect and failure to plan ahead was a large reason why Summer fell sick.”

“There’s no way you could have planned for this, so don’t blame yourself,” she argued. “Besides, Summer still has a chance at growing up healthily if she just focuses on recovering right now. By the way, I heard from Uncle Louis that there are more guests coming?”

“My brother invited his blind date, a woman from the Lyons family. I think you’ve heard of her.”

Hannah nodded. “The Lyons family have a reputation in K City for being made up entirely of scholars, and their children have all studied literature. But, why would the Lyons want to arrange a marriage with the Stovalls?”

“The woman is around thirty years old, and this would be her second marriage. She doesn’t have any children because she’s physically unable to give birth to any. Maybe they agreed to let John marry her purely because they were afraid no one else would. On the other hand, John already has a child, so he doesn’t need to produce any more heirs or anything; he just wants to get married solely because he wants someone to stay at home to take care of the children and Uncle Louis. When Uncle Louis eventually grows old and weak, there will be a lot of chores at home that need a woman’s help.”

“Oh.” Hannah glanced at me. “But John is such a prideful guy. Do you think he’ll agree to the marriage?”

“Uncle Louis told him that it’s all up to him. Besides, John was the one who invited Ms. Lyons over, so he clearly knows what he’s doing. We don’t have to worry about him.”

John and Emma had entered the living room during our conversation. Emma had changed into an outfit with softer textures and warmer, lighter colors, and had also removed some of her makeup to appear kinder than usual.

Hannah and I both stood up, smiling politely at her. “Welcome to the Stovall residence, Ms. Lyons!”

I had already met Emma once before, so she greeted me casually. When she turned to Hannah, something flashed through the depths of her eyes. “Are you Hannah?”

Wow. She came prepared.

Hannah’s mouth fell open at the sudden question but quickly regained her composure. “Yes. It’s nice to meet you.”

John stayed silent in front of Hannah like he always did, gazing at her with a cold stare that had hints of regret and pain.

It seemed like he was determined to marry Emma.

Now that everyone was accounted for, Louis called for the maids to serve the food. Chandler carried Kiki in his arms as he came downstairs, giving Emma a polite smile as a greeting.