

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1258-1262

Chapter 1258

Maybe I should be reflecting on my taste in clothes. If Ashton's wearing the same suit as Hunter, might we be in a similar situation ourselves?

I had always thought that keeping secrets from someone was nowhere near as difficult as pretending nothing was wrong in front of them.

Emery's attention had been consumed by Audrey and Gregory these few days. She brought Xavier along with her on her daily visits, and she typically spent an entire day at our house. Before Emma and I had even left the mall, we were bombarded by a slew of WhatsApp messages from her, urging us to go back.

Emma and I were terrible liars. We exchanged looks and prepared to stay out until it was late.

We had only just settled down in a cafe when Hunter showed up.

He found us easily thanks to his towering height. He then started walking toward us.

Emma gave up her seat and sat on a chair directly next to mine.

The cheating men that I had encountered in the past typically behaved in a stiff, panicky, or furious manner. I had never seen one as calm as Hunter.

He sat opposite us, exuding the confident and cultured charm of a university professor. His courteous exchange with the waiter almost made our meeting seem like a casual get-together rather than a damage control session for our awkward encounter.

I guess we were all fooled by his polite manners.

Once the coffee was served, Hunter looked at the cup for a moment before lifting his gaze to us. Upon seeing my impatient gaze, he spoke sheepishly. "You saw everything just now."

We didn't ask any questions.

Hunter sighed before taking a sip of his coffee. He stared directly at me and said, "I'll talk to Emery about this, so I hope you won't intervene."

"When are you going to tell her?" I asked calmly.

He took a deep breath and adjusted his glasses. He answered resignedly, "Soon."

"Good. I hope you keep your promise, Professor Zane, or you'll lose whatever little respect we have for you."

He had pushed his glasses up his nose bridge countless times in the past, but the action merely disgusted me now. I placed a few bills on the table to cover the cost of our drinks and left with Emma.

On the way home, my emotions were in turmoil.

From what I could see, I couldn't understand how that woman was better than Emery. Yet this had happened.

Maybe in the world of the literati, love is but a cheap commodity to be discarded once it has run its course.

We reached home at about seven at night. We thought Emery had left, but there was a hubbub in the living room when we walked in. Louis was here.

"Mommy, let's eat dinner!" Summer ran toward me and dragged me toward the dining room.

I exchanged a look with Emma before we sat down at the dining table.

Emery happened to be seated on my other side. She nudged my elbow gently and asked, "Where did you two go? You didn't reply to my WhatsApp messages either. Was there an emergency?"

"I'll tell you about it later." I glossed over her question, pretending I couldn't talk about it openly in front of the others.

Emery had always been an easygoing person to begin with, so she dropped the topic good-naturedly.

Clink!

Louis suddenly tapped on his wineglass with a fork, catching our attention.

"The incident this time has taught me many valuable lessons!" Louis was the picture of a natural leader as he raised his voice before continuing, "Most importantly, I've learned that steering clear of others doesn't necessarily mean that you'll remain unscathed. I've always been proud of my morals, yet I never expected to be a victim of sabotage, let alone dragging my own grandchildren into this mess. I've disappointed my own family and the Stovall name."

He shot me a regretful look before he continued in better spirits, "From this day on, I promise not to put my family in harm's way again. I vow to spend the rest of my days getting rid of Ezra's syndicate!"

On the first day of my apprenticeship, John insisted on sending me to the office.

Chapter 1259

The car stopped in front of the office. I took off my seatbelt and was about to alight from the car when John shouted, "Don't move!"

He then exited the car and came around to my side. Opening the door in a valet-like fashion, he completed his act by offering his hand to assist me out of the car. He teased, "Ms. Stovall, we've arrived at the office. Please."

I burst into laughter as I laid my hand in his. "Why are you joking around? I'm just a legal apprentice, not a full-fledged lawyer."

Passing the lawyer qualification exam was only the start. I also needed to undertake a year-long apprenticeship to obtain a license to practice. Within this year, I would need to complete ten cases independently as well. Only then I could officially practice law.

“You’ll be one soon enough. I need to start practicing now,” John teased playfully.

“If you’re that bored, you should spend more time with Emma. I don’t know why you’re playing games with her when you’re obviously crazy about her,” I deadpanned.

John arched a brow at me before stuttering, “Y-You... Hey, you’re going to be late! You should go in now, go on then!”

John didn’t give me a chance to retort as he pushed me into the revolving doors of the building. He smiled mischievously at me after forcing me into the lobby. I couldn’t tell if he had taken any of my advice to heart.

After I registered at the reception, I was brought to Zander’s office. “Mr. Hoffman is in a meeting now. Please wait here, Ms. Stovall.”

I smiled in acknowledgment. I looked around the office casually after the receptionist had left.

I heard that Tinsel Group was the best law firm in all of K City. Yet the office that had been assigned to Zander was barely a hundred square feet. There were two desks in his office. While the decor was decent, it was a far cry from what I had imagined.

About fifteen minutes later, the door opened from the outside. Zander entered the office with an older man in tow.

“Good morning,” I greeted with a smile.

“Mr. Baker, this is Scarlett, whom I’ve mentioned on several occasions. We went to school together. Scarlett, this is Mr. Eugene Baker. He’s one of the most prominent property lawyers in the field.” Zander quickly introduced the two of us.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Baker.”

“The pleasure’s all mine.” Eugene continued, “Zander has very high praise for you; I hope you don’t let him down.”

I smiled, not knowing how to go about replying to such civilities.

As if he understood my thoughts, Eugene left to give us some space. “I won’t bother the two of you then. Zander, you should bring her around the office. The two of you will report to me from now on.”

“Yes, Mr. Baker. Thank you.”

With that, Eugene left the room with a cigar in hand.

Now, only Zander and I were alone in the office.

“This table is yours.” Zander pointed at an empty desk.

I looked at the desk before turning my perplexed gaze back on him.

We’ll be facing each other?

“Isn’t this kind of inappropriate, Mr. Hoffman?” I tried to assume a civil manner. “I just came here, and I already have a private office? I’m sure some colleagues will be displeased.”

Zander stared at me for a moment as he pondered something. “So you think you’re like the other people sitting there? If that’s the case, why would I try so hard to bring you to our firm?”

I blushed in embarrassment, my words caught in my throat.

Instead of addressing my discomfort, Zander picked up some documents from his desk and passed them to me. “These are the case files for a divorce trial involving the renowned billionaire, Aaron Gomez. Please familiarize yourself with the details of the case. We need to accompany Mr. Baker to court in two days.”

“Aaron Gomez? Aren’t the news always reporting on his bachelorhood? When did he get married?” I opened the documents, and my jaw dropped as I read the contents. “He has three kids? And it’s a cheating scandal?”

This obviously wasn’t a great time for gossiping, and I could sense Zander’s confused gaze on me at my outburst. I felt like crawling into a hole out of embarrassment, but alas, I could only close the documents meekly and return to my seat to review the information.

Chapter 1260

It was finally time to get off work. I was dying to see my kids, but Zander entered the office with a stack of documents before I could leave. He stared at me in confusion.

We stared at each other for a moment with me feeling awkward while Zander frowned.

After a while, he said, "You're getting ready to head off?"

"Yes." I pointed at the clock as I asked, "It's six, right?"

Zander glanced at the clock before he said coolly, "On the first day of my apprenticeship, I was in the office till six in the evening the next day. Ms. Stovall, I hope you understand that Tinsel Group is where it is today because of our hard work. Becoming a lawyer isn't child's play."

As if agitated by his own statement, he carried the documents back to his own desk silently. The mood of the room cooled several degrees.

Being thirty of age this year, I didn't think I would be told off this badly by a man a few years younger than me.

Despite my embarrassment, I knew Zander was absolutely right. Being a lawyer was never going to be a piece of cake.

As such, I tossed my purse back on the desk before walking out of the office in search of a paralegal. I had her produce all the case files related to Eugene in the past year. I was determined to work my ass off and make up for my inexperience.

When I re-entered the room with the paralegal and piles of papers in hand, Zander's expression told me he was viewing me in a different light.

However, his impression of me was the least of my concerns. I wanted to do a good job for my sake, as well as Ashton's and my children's. No one else's opinions mattered.

I soon realized that the situation was more complicated than I had imagined. Zander was working like a machine. The clock struck eleven but he showed no signs of getting off work.

While I didn't want to give up like this, I began to feel annoyed. Frankly, poring through the case files was a bore. I was no longer used to sitting in an office for long periods of time as well. Every second I stayed here felt like torture.

Finally, at eleven thirty, a welcome voice rang through the office. "Scarlett? Where are you?"

It's John!

"I'm in here!"

I felt immense relief at his arrival. I jerked up from my seat and looked out the office for him, holding back the urge to rush out straight away.

John had planned to fetch me home that day but I sent him a WhatsApp message about my plans to stay late in the office that day and didn't check my phone afterward. Luckily, he was smart enough to come knocking on the office himself. Otherwise, I might really have to stay here till the next morning.

John followed the sound of my voice till he located our office. Pushing open the door, he looked at the chaos within. Zander stopped whatever he was doing and met John's gaze. There was suddenly an awkward tension in the air.

"You're Letty's supervisor?" John raised a brow, putting on an intimidating stance.

"You're mistaken. I'm just her colleague." Zander placed his hands in his pocket, an indifferent expression on his face.

“Right, then we’re leaving.” John turned his head away from Zander before tilting his jaw in my direction. “Come on, let’s go home.”

John exuded a natural commanding aura. Though he didn’t introduce himself, his arrogance hinted at his powerful position. A smart person would avoid offending him.

However, there were smart people in this world who held different beliefs. While they were well aware of the social niceties associated with such figures, they chose to ignore them in favor of the rules and regulations.

“As Scarlett’s family, you should be happy that she’s working hard toward her goal. You shouldn’t be blocking her path.” Zander spoke firmly, further souring the mood.

I froze in the middle of slinging my bag on my shoulder.

No one could deny Zander’s diligence when it came to working, but I felt that he had crossed the line with his provocative statement. He seemed like a totally different person compared to our previous interactions, and I felt somewhat cheated by my earlier impression of him.

“I’m sorry Mr. Hoffman,” I interrupted before John could open his mouth. I planted myself next to John before declaring to Zander, “I hope you understand that John is the closest family I have. What he does or says isn’t any of your business. I know that you’re a senior here, but that doesn’t mean you can criticize anyone as you please.”

Chapter 1261

Zander probably hadn’t expected someone who looked as meek as I did to fire back at him. As such, he frowned in surprise but didn’t say anything else.

I didn't have the time to unpack his emotions, so I turned and dragged John out of the office with me. "John, let's go home! Maybe I should quit after all. I'm sure our family can support me, right?"

"Of course. This law firm isn't that great anyway. The office is even smaller than our bathroom. I'll set up a bigger law firm for you tomorrow, and you can be the boss!" John played along with me, catching on to my flippancy.

We sounded like a pair of petty upstarts.

As I got into John's car, I replayed our conversation in my mind. I put a hand over my chest worriedly. Offending a senior on my first day as an apprentice was something I would never have done in the past.

I noticed that after giving birth, I had become even more protective of my family.

Just then, my stomach suddenly grumbled in protest, pulling me back to reality.

"Let's get supper. I'm starving." I perked up as I turned to look at John, only to realize he had been staring at me smugly. "Why are you looking at me like that? Is there dirt on my face or something?"

John twisted his body so that he was leaning on the steering wheel. He said lightly, "No, I was just thinking that you seem alive again."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I muttered awkwardly; I couldn't stand sappy situations. I made a show of rubbing my stomach as I changed the topic. "Come on, let's get something to eat. I haven't eaten since this afternoon and I feel like I'm about to faint from hunger."

"What do you want to eat?" John asked as he started the ignition.

“Anything’s fine. Let’s just look for a shop that’s still open. I can’t wait that long,” I said.

John thought for a while before picking up his phone to dial someone. “Mrs. Dune? Can you whip up something simple for us to eat? I’ll be home with Ms. Stovall in a bit.”

I didn’t want to disturb anyone at home at this hour, but I didn’t protest since John had already called them. My taste buds were also pampered by all the delicious food that Mrs. Dune frequently prepared, so I wasn’t particularly upset that we weren’t eating out.

When we got home, Mrs. Dune had whipped up some pasta and a few snacks. As I was eating, I could hear the chicken soup bubbling away in the kitchen.

“Mrs. Dune, you don’t need to rush around for me. I’m stuffed with all the food you prepared. Besides, it’s late, and you should get some rest too.”

“It’s no trouble at all, Ms. Stovall. I’m at that age where I tend to sleep less anyway. Besides, Mr. Stovall and Mr. John are still awake in the study too. I believe they’re not sleeping so early tonight as well. I’ve prepared some chicken soup for them so they won’t starve later.”

I pondered her words and stayed silent. After I had filled my stomach, I went upstairs.

As I walked past the study, I was surprised that it was quiet. I paused my track and decided to knock on the door.

Knock! Knock!

“What are the two of you talking about?”

The only thing that could give both Louis and John a headache was Ezra's syndicate. It was also a topic where I could contribute little to the discussion.

At my entrance, John got up and gave me his seat. "Uncle Louis is thinking of indicting some members of Ezra's syndicate who are in the department. To send a message of warning."

Louis nodded with a serious expression. "Ezra's syndicate has remained powerful in K City over the years, thanks in part to the support from the Zieglers and the Trivetts. We need to think carefully before making our next move, or they might strike our weak point again."

When Louis was taken away for interrogation for over a month, his group of trusted officials had suffered greatly in his absence. As Ezra took the opportunity to restructure several departments, now, the departments that had actual acting power were almost wholly under Ezra's control. The officials who really wanted to help the citizens suddenly had no means to carry out their plans. Louis was furious at the change, which led to his impassioned speech when he finally returned home.

Their concern was warranted. They had to be more cunning if they wanted to defeat an enemy like Ezra and force him into a dead end.

"Our biggest problem is the promotion next year that Ezra has in his sights. He's going to be desperate, and I'm worried that the Fullers' tragedy might repeat itself if he takes extreme measures to secure his position," Louis sighed deeply.

Chapter 1262

Years ago, Ashton's parents had been framed as the scapegoats for Ezra and a few prominent families in K City. It eventually led to their deaths. That tragedy meant that Louis was naturally cautious about his actions when dealing with Ezra.

Like Ashton had said, though, excessive caution would only allow them to behave even more lawlessly. Facing them head-on is inevitable. The only thing we can do is to reduce the number of people caught in the crossfire. If we don't act now, our future generations will suffer under them as well.

"Uncle Louis, can I say something?" I finally blurted after some hesitation.

"Of course. What's on your mind?"

"Well, here's what I think. If I remember correctly, the promotion process and the candidate details are supposed to be announced to the public. In that case, can't we do the same for those corrupt members in the department? We can show the entire trial procedure online through the official channels. The public can be the judge." Strength in numbers may even bend the law, and it might be a good strategy to catch them unawares.

Ezra may be powerful, but even he is no match for public outcry.

Louis's expression changed as he mulled over my suggestion.

Meanwhile, John looked at me as the joy he had displayed in the car returned to his demeanor. "I guess it's really different once you become a lawyer. Even the way you look at things is craftier."

I rolled my eyes. "Are you trying to say that I was dumb before? That doesn't really come across as praise, you know."

"You're just imagining things." John walked over and leaned on the desk. He teased, "You're my sister. I'm always proud of you, and I mean every word that I said."

“Letty, have you started your legal apprenticeship?” Louis changed the topic abruptly. “Which law firm did you go to?”

“Tinsel Group,” I answered. After a moment’s thought, I added, “But my first day at work was rather unpleasant. I was wondering if I should transfer to another law firm. I haven’t signed any contracts, so it’s not too late for me to change my mind.”

“Why are you still thinking about that? Just buy yourself a brand new law firm and be the boss. Then you won’t need to do overtime,” John voiced.

John never blinked an eye at his spending, no matter how extravagant the sum. His nonchalance with his wealth was exceptionally obvious in this situation.

“Stop joking around. Legal apprentices can’t go around opening their own law firms. You think I can just hire some bigshot lawyers and their apprentices or something?” I knew he had good intentions, but I needed to nip this impossibility in the bud.

Louis hadn’t uttered a single word until now. When I finally looked at him, I realized he had knitted his brows in contemplation.

John followed my gaze. He didn’t hesitate before he opened his mouth. “Uncle Louis, what are you thinking about?”

Louis came to with a jerk. Sighing, he said tiredly, “That law firm has helped the Zieglers and the Trivetts with countless cases in the past. If we really go to court, I don’t think any lawyer we have could win someone from Tinsel Group.”

“No wonder Tinsel Group has been giving me so many special privileges to keep my apprenticeship. Turns out they had ulterior motives all this time.” I was stunned at the revelation.

I should've thought of this sooner. Tinsel Group's the best law firm in the country, and they must've helped Ezra and his lobbyists to clean up a bunch of his dirty acts. They probably gave me such good benefits to entice me to stay, so that I would become entangled in their dirty acts. Then, they could use that to manipulate the Stovall family.

An image of Zander flashed through my mind. He had always looked like a young man on track to fulfilling his dreams of exacting justice. He may have seemed wooden, but that wouldn't have stopped him from becoming an impressive lawyer. What a pity he's dirty like the rest of them. Alas, he can only be a lackey to their wrongdoings.

"Then, you shouldn't report to work tomorrow, Letty. It may seem peaceful out there, but it's a bloody battlefield. It's much safer to stay at home," John cut in.