

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1318-1322

Chapter 1318

"Fine. I'll allow Jared to continue using his identity as a teacher to help Summer with her emotional struggles, but only for this. You must warn him not to expose his identity or even think about gaining custody of her. Also, I'm only giving him two years. Two years, that's it. If Summer still hasn't returned to normal by then, he has to leave immediately."

"Understood. If you want to, I can get him to put it down in black and white," Ashton suggested.

"There's no need for that." Although I had acquiesced, I wasn't going to go easy on him. In a tone oozing with sarcasm, I spat, "Knowing Jared's character, we can forget about having it in black and white. Even if he makes a blood oath, he won't deserve my trust. You're his guarantor, so if anything happens, I'll hold you accountable."

"Then, you probably won't get the chance," Ashton countered in a lighter tone, probably relieved that I had conceded.

"Let's hope you're right." Women weren't as forgiving as men and worry still gnawed at my chest. "I'm gonna be frank with you. I still don't fully believe that Jared has turned over a new leaf."

"Trust me. You won't be disappointed." I could hear the smile in Ashton's voice.

"We'll see."

Not in the mood to joke around, I hung up the call immediately.

The moment I turned around to head back into the house, I saw John leaning against the glass door with his hands stuffed into his trouser pockets, looking me with a long face.

"Lemme guess. You heard everything." I raised my brows.

"Yeah." John inhaled deeply and straightened up before walking over to give me a solemn look. "Summer likes me and I like her too. You might as well transfer all rights to me and let me take her in as my own daughter."

"Huh? What the hell are you talking about?" My eyes went wide with shock.

"Is there anything wrong with my suggestion? Look at what Ashton said about giving Jared a chance. Does someone like him even deserve a chance? Summer can't handle anymore trauma. Let me adopt her and I'll see who'd dare to harm a hair on her!"

It was very rare to see John disagreeing with Ashton. Seeing how dead serious he was, I couldn't hold back my laughter. John seemed to really regard Summer as his biological daughter.

I shook my head helplessly and stepped forward to smack him on the shoulder. "When you show the same amount of concern for Kiki, then we'll talk about handing my daughter over to you, hmm?"

Without waiting for his response, I walked past him and went upstairs.

It was approximately eight o'clock when Emery called me. Her appointment for her treatment overseas had been brought forward. We chatted for a while and she had to hang up the call to board the plane. She was an easy-going person, but I hoped that she would come back with good news this time.

The next day, John insisted on sending Summer to school with me.

I parked the car at the same spot as the previous time. Jared's tall figure was particularly eye-catching among the group of children, but he had deliberately dressed in a simple outfit. His jaw was covered with stubble, making him look like he had aged a decade.

Having not seen him for a few days, Summer broke into a run toward him the moment she got down from the car.

Jared instinctively crouched down to hold Summer. Both of them were all smiles, garnering a lot of envious gazes. Of course, those who felt that way were merely outsiders. John, on the other hand, was dripping with jealousy.

He watched Summer and Jared laughing heartily with a murderous look on his face, looking like he was only a step away from tearing down this scene. I noticed his lips moving subtly as he mumbled something under his breath. From his expression, I could tell that it wasn't anything sweet.

Jared nodded at us in greeting, seemingly much more courteous than the previous day.

His behavior reminded me of Ashton back then. I had seen it too many times. Thinking about the scheming mind behind the kind facade, fear gripped my heart.

Afraid that I might regret my decision, I stopped looking at him and simply said, "I'll have to trouble you to take care of Summer in school, Mr. Cress."

"It's no trouble at all. It's my job. Besides, Summer is a very good girl." Jared stroked Summer's head and they smiled at each other, getting along very well.

Finding this scene absolutely unbearable, John's brows scrunched together as a grim expression took residence on his face. He and Summer were still not on talking terms because of the matter about the school transfer. Unable to let go of his inflated ego to initiate a conversation with her, he felt all the more depressed.

Chapter 1319

John's becoming more ridiculous the older he gets. I can't believe he's being so serious with a child.

Pursing my lips, I discreetly signaled Summer with my eyes, to which she instantly understood. With that, she walked over to hold John's hand and started behaving adorably. "Uncle John, will you come pick me up tonight? Can you bring me for some ice cream? You know I love eating ice cream with you the most, Uncle John!"

It was difficult for a man, no matter how old he was, to remain unmoved when a little girl said such sweet words to him, especially in such a cute voice.

True enough, the sullen look on John's face was replaced by delight. Although he proudly raised his chin, he couldn't conceal the smile on his lips.

He feigned indifference as he looked down at Summer, clearing his throat mechanically before saying, "It depends on your performance. If you're a good girl, then I'll reward you. If not, there'll be no ice cream for you!"

"Okay!" Summer raised her chubby hand and made a salute gesture, almost losing her balance and looking absolutely adorable.

John finally caved, crouching down to take Summer's hand as his gaze abruptly softened. "Be a good girl, mm? Listen to your teachers and have fun with your friends, okay?"

He was an imposing man who had once raised a colossal uproar, but he was like a tamed lion in front of Summer. The cautious way he treated her made others envious, thinking how nice it would be to have such a warm man as their family.

But I knew that he was actually overwhelmed with worry about Summer's safety just like me.

Still a child, Summer didn't understand the hidden meaning in a grown-ups' words and took it literally. "Mm! I got it, Uncle John. I'll make many, many new friends and work hard to become mini Superman!"

Witnessing a child's innocence was the best way to wash away all our troubles and sorrows. Summer's brilliant smile was immensely reassuring, and I found myself relaxing considerably. Without saying anything else, we let Jared lead her in.

This time, as I watched this so-called "Mr. Cress" walking into the building hand in hand with Summer, the weight in my heart was no less lighter than the previous time.

While I was lost in my thoughts, John suddenly leaned over and confidently announced, "Don't worry. I've arranged an assistant for Jared, to make sure that he'll never get the opportunity to be alone with Summer."

Hearing this, I visibly slumped with relief.

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Bryson's court trial received quite a lot of media attention. There were reporters waiting outside the courthouse, while the courtroom was filled with people there to bear witness.

Surprise filled me when I saw Zander in the defense attorney's seat. He had only recently passed the bar examination but was already defending a business tycoon like Thora in court. For a newly qualified lawyer, this was a form of recognition as well as an honor.

Unfortunately for him, although he tried very hard to defend his client, he failed to gain the upper hand over Brooklyn in the face was numerous valid pieces of evidence.

The first verdict stated that Ziegler Investment was required to compensate Bryson eighty percent of his investment, totaling up to a hundred and sixty million.

After emerging from the court, seeing as there was a high chance he was going to win the lawsuit, Bryson decided to bring us out to celebrate. Before we left the premises, Zander caught up to us with his assistant in tow.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Hoffman? As a lawyer, you should know that I can put in a request for you to be disqualified in court if you contact our witness in private." Brooklyn was an eloquent speaker in court and someone you wouldn't want to offend in private.

"Of course, I know that, but surely it's not against the law to have a chat with Ms. Stovall?" Zander replied calmly.

My brows furrowed in dubiety. He's doomed to lose the lawsuit. As his opponent, what is there for us to talk about?

Despite being uncertain about what Zander was playing at, I still agreed to his invitation and went to the pantry in the courthouse alone with him.

“Go ahead and get straight to the point, Mr. Hoffman.” If he wanted me to order Brooklyn to go easy on him, then I would immediately end this discussion.

“I admire your candor, Ms. Stovall. Since you insist, I’ll cut straight to the chase. My client, Ms. Ziegler, hopes you can persuade Mr. Queen to drop the lawsuit and settle things privately. As for the compensation, Ms. Ziegler said that she can pay the full amount of two hundred million.”

Chapter 1320

I was mystified by what he said. They refused to entertain Bryson before, but all of a sudden, they want to settle things privately? What are these people really up to?

When I remained silent, Zander took in a deep breath and continued explaining, “Both the Zieglers and the Queens are prominent families in K City. There’s no need to go head to head with each other for merely two hundred million. Ms. Ziegler has also expressed that Mr. Queen’s investment will reap the most profits in the future. So, do we have a deal, Ms. Stovall?”

“You’re asking me?” I feigned cluelessness. “Mr. Hoffman, I’m afraid you’re mistaken. The plaintiff in this lawsuit is Bryson. I’m just the assistant of the lawyer representing him and don’t have much of say in such this. Sorry, but I’m afraid I can’t help you.”

Probably never expecting that I would be so uncooperative, a frown formed on Zander’s face, obviously displeased about the outcome. “Ms. Stovall, don’t fool around with me. No law firm in the entire city dared to accept this lawsuit; all except yours. It’s easy to see that everything about this has very little to do with Mr. Queen.”

A small intern couldn't possibly have the authority to make his own decisions when two hundred million was involved. Needless to say, he must be acting under Thora's instructions.

Before the lawsuit was officially filed, Thora behaved very arrogantly. Seeing that Bryson had no connections or status in K City, even though she knew she was in the wrong, she still abused her power and bullied him, forcing him to suffer a loss. Now that things weren't in her favor, she wanted to make peace to preserve her company's reputation. Businessmen were indeed cunning little b*stards.

Alas, just like Zander had expected, both Bryson and I weren't doing it for the money.

I lowered my head and chuckled softly, intentionally avoiding giving him a direct answer. "Mr. Hoffman, both of us were in the same batch before. I really never thought that my first lawsuit would be against you as well. This must be fate, don't you agree?"

Zander's face darkened subtly, but he refused to give up and tried to convince me again. "Ms. Stovall, let's not discuss personal matters during work hours. Perhaps you're not satisfied with the conditions I stated? Could you be more forthright, so that it'd be easier for both sides to continue cooperating? What do you say?"

Zander was as rigid as ever.

Pressing my lips together, I walked past him toward the exit. "If it's a truce you want, show some sincerity. Get your client to come and see us personally, or you can forget about this."

Worried that something might happen to me, Brooklyn and Bryson both waited by the corridor. When they saw me coming out, they immediately came up to me.

"How did it go, Ms. Stovall? Did he make things difficult for you?" Bryson asked with concern.

Before I could answer, Zander emerged from the pantry with a gloomy face. As he passed by us, he nodded expressionlessly and left without looking back.

“He’s definitely bad news since he’s defending that woman,” Bryson spat while staring after his retreating figure.

My mouth curved into a helpless smile. “Well, then. It’s a good thing I rejected that bad man’s request to settle things peacefully for you. Mr. Queen, you won’t accuse me of overstepping my boundaries, will you?”

“Of course not!” Bryson exclaimed with a grin. “I can’t even thank you both enough for helping me. Naturally, everything else is for the two of you to decide.”

“Great.” I nodded and told the truth. “The defense attorney said that they can pay two hundred million in full with the condition that we drop the lawsuit. I’ve rejected the offer on your behalf and expressed that unless Thora personally comes forward to apologize, we will not settle it peacefully.”

“That’s an additional forty million. How generous of Thora,” Brooklyn joked.

“Forty million is nothing! It’s won’t bring me the same satisfaction as winning this lawsuit! You really do understand me well, Ms. Stovall.” Bryson beamed with joy. “Today’s such a happy day. This calls for a celebration and it’s my treat. Both of you don’t have a say in this!”

Having said that, he took out his gilded phone and called his subordinate and instructed, “Book the largest private room in The Jade and get the manager to open their most expensive bottle of red wine. I’ll be there with my guests in fifteen minutes...”

I mentally rolled my eyes. This man was constantly flaunting his wealth, but unlike those truly filthy nouveau riche, he treated others with sincerity and knew when to show gratitude. Hence, it was impossible to dislike him.

Chapter 1321

Pitcoin continued trending, but the Queens and the Zieglers' court case had become a piping hot topic and everyone was waiting for the final verdict.

Some people looked forward to seeing the nouveau riche cum business legend emerge to victory miraculously, while others envisioned K City's number one career woman bowing in apology. They had different reasons for wanting to see her fall, but ultimately, everyone was eager to push Thora and her investment company into the eye of the storm.

However, before Thora announced her response, it was Bryson's father, William's birthday.

Bryson had already sent an invitation to the Stovall residence, stating that the entire Stovall family was invited. Due to Louis' status, he found an excuse to politely refuse. Hence, only John, Emma and I attended the banquet.

The Queen family managed to knock Ziegler Corporation down a notch because of the lawsuit. Once word got out, businessmen all over K City no longer treated Bryson coldly. On the day of the banquet, the scene was surprisingly lively. When we arrived, there were already a few rarely-seen owners of listed companies chatting away happily with Bryson.

"Oh, Ms. Stovall!" Bryson instantly spotted us when we passed through the doors, leaving his guests to come over and greet us. "I don't know why the staff didn't announce the arrival of my distinguished guests. I'm so sorry for my poor hospitality."

"This must be Mr. Stovall. I've heard a lot about you from Brooklyn and I have to say, your reputation precedes you!"

Then, turning a blind eye to John's stoic expression, Bryson grabbed his hand with both hands and flashed a flattering smile at him.

John wasn't a snob. Moreover, he had heard that Bryson was a decent person from me. Thus, he wasn't angry and instead, spoke in an amicable tone. "You're too kind, Mr. Queen. It's your father's birthday today. My uncle wanted to drop by to see him, but he's just too busy with his official duties and really couldn't step away, so he wanted me to wish your father a blessed birthday and a long life on his behalf. However, I'll have to trouble you to relay this message, Mr. Queen. There are too many guests, so we won't be going over."

"Thank you, Mr. Stovall. I'll definitely pass on your message. Please, enjoy yourselves tonight!" Bryson smiled from ear to ear and quietly surveyed his surroundings. Then, he leaned closer to us and whispered, "Socializing is exhausting. If you guys get tired, go out from the side door and walk all the way to the end. I've specially prepared a private room for you to rest. When the banquet is almost over, you can come on out again. Nobody would know."

We were dumbfounded by the degree of Bryson's double standards. I never thought that such a burly and rough-looking man would be so thoughtful.

However, the Queen family was the star of the night after all. As soon as he finished speaking, more guests poured in.

"Mr. Queen!" A man came over with his family and shook hands with Bryson. Subsequently, his gaze landed on John and I. "This must be Mr. Stovall and Ms. Stovall. I've heard so much about you both."

"You flatter us." I smiled lightly and nodded in greeting before smoothly steering the topic back to Bryson. "Mr. Queen, we'll leave you to attend to your guests."

Before he could respond, I exchanged glances with John and Emma before walking toward a corner.

As soon as we left, many guests crowded around Bryson, sandwiching him in the middle as they engaged in a merry conversation.

John stopped a waiter who was passing by to ask for three glasses of champagne, then handed Emma and me one each. "I never expected Bryson Queen to be so well-known in K City. It's a shame we didn't get acquainted sooner."

"The Queen family only made a fortune in the past few years." Emma lifted her champagne flute to her lips and took a sip before calmly analyzing, "I find it rather peculiar though. All three generations won the lottery one after another. Then, they relied on other capitalists to become capitalists themselves. Ordinary people can only dream of having such luck."

"Relying on luck isn't realistic. Sooner or later, that luck would run out and their entire fortune with it," John commented disapprovingly.

Emma rolled her eyes at him. "Does Bryson look like an idiot to you?"

"Stop being so cryptic. Just say whatever it is you want to say." John's face instantly clouded over.

I noticed that this was a frequent occurrence lately. Whenever Emma started talking, he would immediately get defensive.

Chapter 1322

Emma didn't feel like arguing, deliberately turning her gaze to me, as though she could avoid him this way. "Don't be fooled. Although the Queens' older generation weren't that refined or cultured, they had an eye for investment. Whatever they invested in would surge. Stocks, private equity funds, corporate bonds... They even have investments abroad. After so many years, they didn't suffer any losses, and their assets even doubled!"

I didn't really listen to the details, but I got the whole picture.

Bryson wasn't some kind of rich idiot who had more money than sense. On the contrary, he seemed to have the Midas touch when it came to business and investments. Thinking of this, I turned to look at Bryson. Indeed, he had the look of an honest man. Right then, an inexplicable emotion rose in my chest.

He was an accurate example of how the idiom "never judge a book by its cover" came about, and it was the first time I felt this way about the same person twice.

A seemingly gentle person turned out to be a nouveau riche, and just when you thought he was naive and easily deceived, he proved you wrong by being a legend who had talent in making money. Who would've expected such a turn of events?

While I was lost in thought, there was some noise at the door. It seemed like a prominent figure had arrived. Glancing over, I saw Thora in a blue tube top dress. Appearing together with her was Ashton, who was clad in a well-tailored black tuxedo. Due to his height, he was particularly eye-catching among the crowd.

As far as I knew, Bryson did not send an invitation to the Zieglers. It seemed like Thora had listened to Zander's advice and made the right choice.

Ziegler Corporation had been in close contact with the Trivetts lately. Rumor had it that the matter regarding Pitcoin was final. Those who desperately wanted a piece of the pie were already slowly making their way toward Thora.

Ashton stood expressionlessly beside her, his impatience showing. After whispering something to Thora, he strode toward the washroom.

Emma's eyes lit up all of a sudden and she raised her skirt slightly to walk somewhere to our left. "I saw a few friends. I'm going over to say hi. You guys go ahead without me."

“Hey, what friends? Hey...” John was clearly anxious, but he couldn’t put down his ego to go after her. Seeing that she didn’t respond after calling out to her twice, his face darkened and he looked like he wanted to punch someone at that moment. I could even hear him murmuring through gritted teeth, “She’s only been Mrs. Stovall for a few days, but look at her, she has become a social butterfly.”

I craned my neck slightly to look in the direction Emma went and realized that her so-called friends were a group of handsome young chaps. At that moment, they were gathered around her, laughing and chatting at the same time.

Emma was undoubtedly a beautiful woman. Seeing as she was unaccompanied, the men naturally assumed she was single. Hence, they were all attempting to ingratiate themselves with her.

I cracked a wry smile. My dear brother, just admit that you’re jealous. If you’d just go over and stand beside her, who would dare to spare her a second glance?

I shook my head helplessly and patted John on his shoulder. “Women need to be coaxed sometimes.”

With that, I abandoned him and walked into the crowd, not once looking back to see the baffled expression I knew he was wearing.

He probably never expected that he, one of the most well-known and handsome men in K City, would be abandoned by two women on the same day.

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The party had just begun right then, so there was basically no one nearby the washroom. As I made my way over, the sound of my heels clicking on the ground was especially clear.

I stopped right outside the men’s washroom, contemplating how I should pretend to run into Ashton when a hand suddenly grabbed my wrist and pulled me into the washroom.

The world spun for a moment and by the time I regained my bearings, I was already pressed against the door by Ashton. Our faces were barely inches apart. His warm breath tickled my cheeks, causing my heartbeat to turn erratic.

“Mrs. Fuller, I’ve been waiting a long time for you.” Ashton’s voice was already deep to begin with. When he deliberately lowered his voice, it sounded even more sultry and sexy.

How could I hold on to my anger in the face of such temptation?

Sighing helplessly, I shied away from his heated gaze and muttered feebly, “Why would you wait for me when you have such a beautiful companion, Mr. Fuller?”

Ashton deliberately moved closer. I quickly turned my face away, so his breath ended up tickling my neck instead, causing me to subconsciously bite my bottom lip.