

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1468-1472

Chapter 1468

"Do we know each other?" I stammered hesitantly, frowning.

"It's me," The man muttered thickly. He looked as if he was struggling to quell some intense emotion that was rising within him. He cleared his throat, then said, raising his voice, "It's me, John Stovall."

John's eyes were brimming with tears. When his statement elicited no response from me, he looked at rueful, then asked, "Have you really forgotten who I am?"

John? I pondered. That name sounds strangely familiar...

My eyes darted from him to the little girl standing just beside him. Realization dawned upon me.

John was a member of the Stovall family and "Scarlett"'s relative. I recalled briefly seeing him listed amongst the material that Ashton had given me. John had grown out his beard, which hindered me from recognizing him at first glance.

According to Ashton's plan, I was to battle John in court over custody rights.

Why do I feel such an overwhelming surge of regret within me now? I wondered. The sight of John and the little girl standing next to each other caused an unspeakable ache in my heart.

I felt sorry for agreeing to Ashton, for using the pretense of "Scarlett" to tear John and the little girl apart.

In the living room, John sat the girl down on the sofa facing me. He then placed the manila envelope he'd brought along with him on the table beside.

Before we'd entered, John had briefly announced, "I'm taking you with me."

He seemed to be in a great hurry. Once the maid had brought us a round of water, John immediately broke the ice by saying frankly, "The Stovall family and the Moore family have never given up on searching for you. To take care of the child, as well as to accumulate enough funds, we arranged to migrate. We'd even made the entire company move. It was all to no avail, however. That's why I was only able to finally meet with you today."

John sounded weary. He'd spoken calmly, but I could detect more than a hint of sorrow in his voice. In front of the child's inquisitive eyes, however, John had to maintain his composure. He paused and took several long, deep breaths. Lowering his gaze for a while, John's elegant fingers drumming furiously on the surface of the manila envelope as he contemplated how he should continue.

"I know you don't remember anything. I'm here for you. Don't worry about anything else. This envelope contains DNA proof of your relationship with Audrey, as well as a Share Transfer Agreement of half of Stovall Corporation's shares. When you return, you'll be the second-largest major shareholder in Stovall Corporation. Just focus on your own happiness for the rest of your life and leave the rest to me," John finally declared.

Before I could respond, John exhaled, then turned towards the little girl. He took her hand gently, then led her over to me. "Audrey, this is your mommy," he said tenderly.

Audrey bit her lip and looked at me uncertainly. She turned back to face John, who smiled at her encouragingly and gave her a nudge. Audrey turned back to look at me with an enormous beam on her face. "Mommy!" she called out with a sweet voice.

Audrey had initially appeared more cautious than Gregory had been at our first meeting. She seemed emboldened now by John's affirmation that this was indeed her mommy. Audrey ran towards me as fast as her short legs could carry her and wrapped her stubby arms around my neck. Sobbing, she cried again, "Mommy! I missed you!"

Audrey spoke in Ustranasion, and even though I wasn't fluent in the language, I was nonetheless moved by the earnestness with which Audrey cried. As she clung to my neck and wept, my heart broke. I, too, embraced her.

It was the oddest feeling. Just as I had when I'd hugged Gregory, I felt a sudden rush of tears now as I held Audrey's small body in my arms.

After a long time, Audrey stopped crying. Both of us looked at each other, smiling despite our tear-stained faces.

Audrey's resemblance to Ashton was uncanny. Their large, dark eyes were practically identical. The main difference, however, was that Audrey's eyes were soft and gentle, without a trace of the ruthlessness in Ashton's.

I opened my mouth to speak, but Audrey broke in, saying, "Mommy, it's my birthday today. Are you going to spend it with me?"

She smiled winningly at me. However, I could see undercurrents of grief ripple beneath her sunny eyes.

As much as I did not want to cooperate with Ashton, I could not bring myself to refuse Audrey and shatter her heart.

Thus resolved, I swallowed the words that were on the tip of my tongue.

I reached out and ruffled her hair, saying, "Audrey, you haven't met your brother, have you? Gregory will be coming back for lunch later. Do you want to go play in his room for a while? We'll give Gregory a surprise when he comes home."

"Sure!" Audrey bounced on her feet happily, clapping her hands in glee. "I have a brother! I want to meet my brother!"

Chapter 1469

I beckoned to the maid waiting to come over to clear the glasses of water, and gestured to Audrey, instructing, "Bring her to Mr. Gregory's room."

Excitedly, Audrey hopped over and took the maid's hand, demurely allowing herself to be led upstairs to Gregory's room.

I watched their departing figures until they had fully vanished upstairs, then turned back to gaze soberly at John. He looked a lot warmer and kinder than Ashton, but something about him raised my suspicions.

I vainly probed my memory in an attempt to uncover just what inspired my current feelings of uneasiness. In the face of John's apparent sincerity, however, I found myself defenseless.

John and Ashton each maintained their respective versions of the truth. However, the identity Marcus had bestowed on me back then was clearly Carlette. My mind was in a whirlwind, uncertain of who I could trust.

"Don't you trust me?" John persisted. His voice penetrated the fog of emotions in my head as if he could see right through my suspicion.

I felt strangely relieved that I no longer had to keep up my facade of confidence. I raised my head and met his eyes, saying gravely, "I'm sorry. I don't think I have the capability to make a decision now."

I shifted my gaze to the manila envelope on the table, then reached out to touch its smooth surface. I laughed awkwardly, then confessed, "To tell the truth, I've seen this DNA report more than three times already this month. It has outlined a different result every time. If even science can be as unreliable as all that, I really don't know who I can trust."

John was silent for a moment. He looked down, his nails digging into the flesh of his thighs. In a low voice, he muttered, "You're blaming me."

John's words pierced my heart like a knife.

I had decided to trust Ashton's claim that I wasn't Scarlett, largely because I could not bear to face the fact that my family had utterly abandoned Scarlett for six whole years.

One could blame it on either mishap or mistake, but didn't that mean that our familial ties couldn't even endure a hurdle like that?

Having lost my memory, I felt as if I was spending every waking moment on thin ice, not knowing whether my next step would be fatal. On the bright side, if one could call it that, any loss would mean absolutely nothing to me. Without any ties whatsoever, I was completely at liberty to do anything, or go anywhere I pleased.

Whether I was Scarlett or Carlette, I had been reborn. I no longer had any earthly attachments, nor was I under any obligation to forgive anyone.

I thus replied mildly, "I'm sorry, I don't know how to deal with this at the moment."

John appeared devastated. Looking into his dark, troubled eyes, I added, "If I'm really Gregory and Audrey's mother, however, I hope you will leave her with me. I'm thankful to you for having looked after her for so long, but raising her is my responsibility, after all. I don't want to trouble you any further."

"Trouble?" John blanched. He gave me a long, hard look, then said tersely, "I won't leave either Audrey or you here. Now that I'm here, I'm taking you along with me."

Are all of Scarlett's friends and family that domineering? I thought in despair.

I shrugged, then shook my head helplessly at John. "I'm sorry, but I can't go with you."

"You can't go with me? Then, who did you intend to go with? Were you planning on staying here with Ashton instead, that pathetic excuse of a man?" John demanded, his voice trembling with agitation.

Without waiting for my reply, John turned towards the stairs and bellowed, "Audrey, get down here now!"

When Audrey heard John's roar of rage, she raced out of the room and stood uncertainly at the top of the stairs. She was clutching a photo of Gregory tightly in one hand. In a meek voice, she ventured, "Uncle John, did you call me?"

Without saying a word, John bolted up the stairs two steps at a time. He swept Audrey up in his arms, then stormed downstairs. When they passed by me, John seized my arm and hauled me out together with them. "Follow me!" he commanded brusquely.

I hurried along with him. At the door, however, we almost collided headlong with an incoming Ashton.

The eyes of the two men met. I could almost feel the air crackling between them, charged with tension as it was. My hair stood on end.

Joseph followed behind Ashton, panting heavily. Both of them looked as if they had hurried over immediately after receiving the news.

Chapter 1470

Everyone froze. After a few moments, Ashton coldly surveyed our ensemble. His gaze landed on John's hand, maintaining its tight grip on mine, and lingered. Without betraying any hint of emotion, Ashton said coolly, "Wasn't it enough for you to take Audrey away? You had to come back and take Scarlett too, hadn't you? Did you think I'd stand idly by and let you do that?"

John laughed in derision. Narrowing his eyes, John looked at Ashton with evident contempt.

Ashton, however, did not take the bait. He slowly shifted his gaze to Audrey, who was still perched on John's arms. Ashton's gaze softened. Gently, he cooed, "Audrey!"

Audrey's face burst into an expression of rapturous joy. Squirming in John's arms, she proclaimed, "Mr. Fuller, you're so handsome!"

We were all rather nonplussed by Audrey's sudden confession. Bemused, I reflected, Is this really the best time to be talking about looks?

The charged atmosphere was abruptly reduced to a state of awkwardness.

John's face looked glum. Meantly, he snapped at Audrey, "Audrey, what did I teach you?"

"I remember now!" Audrey's features were squished in a moment of intense concentration. Suddenly, she raised her finger and intoned, as if she was reciting her lessons, "Other than Uncle John, any other men who are handsome are bad men!"

"That's right," John nodded his head in satisfaction. He gestured dismissively at Ashton, then turned to look at Audrey solemnly. "I'll give you another chance. What do you call this man?"

Audrey's mouth rounded into a perfect O. Proudly, she hollered, "You're a bad man!"

"Good girl! I'll buy you a new dress when we get home," John said approvingly. Even as he teased Audrey, however, his eyes never once left Ashton's face. The two men continued staring defiantly at each other, neither willing to concede.

What strange theories has John imparted to Audrey? I wondered in mild surprise. Does this mean that besides John, no other man in this world can talk to her?

I groaned inwardly. Men's egos can really manifest in the oddest forms!

Ashton, however, looked utterly unfazed by the ridiculous skit he'd just witnessed. Beaming brightly at Audrey, he said in a mellow, cajoling tone, "Audrey, it's Daddy! Are you sure you don't want a hug?"

Aghast, John immediately tried to intervene, but to no avail.

“Daddy?” Audrey’s ears instantly pricked up. Wide-eyed with delight, she exclaimed, “Are you really my daddy?”

“Of course.” “No!”

Ashton and John answered Audrey both at once. The difference between the two men could not be starker. John had spoken vehemently, his eyes wild. He looked as if he was on the verge of erupting with fury.

Ashton, however, had given his answer confidently, with a look of serene assurance on his face. Entirely blasé about John’s indignation, he continued, this time extending both his arms to Audrey, “Come to Daddy!”

As he spoke, Ashton threaded his arms beneath Audrey’s, coolly lifting her out of John’s arms altogether.

Audrey looked at Ashton, hesitating for a brief moment. She then leaned towards him tentatively.

John was astounded by Ashton’s audacity. He tightened his grip on Audrey, then quickly retreated a few steps backward, ordering hotly, “Take your dirty hands off her!”

Ashton’s hands were left barren. They hung limply in the air for a moment, then fell back to his sides. A wry smile hovered on his lips, “It’s fine. Thanks for coming all this way to deliver my daughter to me, anyway.”

A cold gleam flashed across John’s narrowed eyes. Maintaining his firm grip on my arm, John drew Audrey and me aside. After gently setting Audrey down, John knelt before her, saying meaningfully, “Princess, you haven’t sung for Uncle John in a while, have you?”

When Audrey heard those words, she immediately danced in glee, clapping her hands joyfully. “Oh, goody! Uncle John’s going to fight!”

Without another word of warning, Audrey turned me around. Our backs facing John and Ashton, she immediately began singing enthusiastically, “Jingle bells, jingle bells...”

I found this entire scene peculiar and twisted my body to look back at John and Ashton. In those brief moments, the air behind me had become charged once again with clear animosity.

Ashton glanced at Joseph. Joseph, immediately comprehending, walked forward and rested an arm on John’s shoulder. Briskly, almost apologetically, Joseph said, “Mr. Stovall, why don’t you step outside with me? Mr. Fuller will take care of Ms. Audrey here.”

Chapter 1471

He’d just finished speaking when John violently shrugged him off. Caught off-balance by John’s abrupt jerk, Joseph fell to the floor.

Joseph’s moans of pains mingled with Audrey’s piping voice. Joseph made a great effort to get up, but John cruelly stepped on him, hard, condemning him to lie pinned on the ground.

“You were never a match for me. How dare you touch me? You’re really a worthy sidekick for Ashton! A dog behaves exactly like its master. You’re both pathetic,” John spat resentfully. Every word, though directed at Joseph, was clearly meant for Ashton’s ears.

In one swift motion, John took his foot off Joseph, then spun around and sauntered over to Ashton. Without hesitation, John threw a hard punch in Ashton's face, then immediately followed it with a flying kick.

Ashton flew backward, landing on the grass patch by the curbside. He struggled to stand, but John lunged forward and wrapped both arms around Ashton's neck. He strangled Ashton and the latter's face instantly darkened into a deep crimson. The fall had entirely wiped off Ashton's earlier dignified manner.

"You didn't see this coming, did you? I wasn't able to take Letty with me six years ago. I will now," John jeered. Through gritted teeth, he continued, "Look at you. You haven't improved at all. Do you expect to be able to keep Scarlett with you based on that feeble amount of strength alone?"

By then, the servants had all crept out of the main house to watch the scene. They fretted over whether they should intervene but ultimately were overcome by their fear. No one stepped forward.

I, too, was dumbfounded by John's sudden violence. Recovering, however, I glanced at Ashton's pale face in worry.

Is John really intending to kill Ashton? I thought, horrified.

It seemed that I had no cause for concern, however.

When Joseph staggered over, however, intending to wrench John and Ashton apart, John had already taken a few steps back and was dusting his hands.

Beside me, Audrey was still singing blissfully. "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way..."

John coolly straightened his clothes, then directed an icy look at Ashton's crumpled body. John then stepped over to where Audrey and I had been waiting and said tenderly, "Let's go home."

He once again knelt down and tapped Audrey gently on her shoulder for her to turn around.

As if rehearsed, Audrey spun around on her heels gladly. She clung to John, babbling eagerly, "Did you win, Uncle John? Did you win?"

John gazed at her soberly, then thumbed her on the nose. "Of course, I won! How can Uncle John ever lose, huh?"

"Hooray!" Audrey cried. It all seemed like a game to her where Uncle John had warded off the bad guys. However, her eyes darted alertly to Ashton, who was stumbling to his feet behind John. Audrey's little brow furrowed at the sight. She pursed her lips, asking tentatively, "Uncle John, were you fighting that bad man just now?"

Audrey made it perfectly evident that she was rather unimpressed. Her frown had deepened almost into a sulk.

John looked behind him uncertainly. The arrogant demeanor John had been wearing from his earlier victory faded. He suddenly looked rather unsure of himself.

Ashton, to everyone's surprise, rescued John from his humiliation. "Audrey, it's all right. Daddy just tripped over and fell. It doesn't hurt at all!" he said brightly.

One would have almost believed him if not for the bright-red specks of blood around his mouth. His smile was almost a grimace.

As he spoke, Ashton occasionally drew in his breath sharply through his teeth. He was clearly in agony. Looking at the sorry sight he made before us, I felt a surge of pity well up within me.

Ashton, are you sure it doesn't hurt? I wondered.

Audrey was clearly moved. Her large eyes blinked rapidly, tears glittering in them.

Noticing Audrey's distress, John hastily picked her up, soothing her. He pressed Audrey's head into his chest, then turned to look at Ashton scornfully. "I raised Audrey for six years and can count the number of times I've made her cry on one hand. Look at her state after just meeting you once. Do you think she's really better off with you?"

Without waiting for Ashton to respond, John turned to me. "Let's go," he said curtly.

Ashton was clearly incapacitated and could not restrain John. I thus followed John out obediently.

John had parked his car outside the villa. Once the three of us had gotten on, he immediately stepped hard on the accelerator. The car flew towards the suburbs.

"Where are you bringing me to?" I asked curiously.

John gave me a look through the rearview mirror. He then said blandly, "To the airport. I've hired a private plane for us. It'll be arriving shortly."

Chapter 1472

John was evidently in a foul mood. I couldn't tell whether he was jealous of the liking that Audrey had taken to Ashton or if other matters were weighing on his mind.

The car rounded a corner. A gray van appeared bearing the Fullers' license plate, which I recognized as the van which had sent Gregory to and fro. I hurriedly wound down the car window, and in that split second in which our vehicles crossed, I caught sight of Gregory's round face.

Accompanying him on both sides were Tiffany and Thora.

As the distance grew between us, I felt a deepening sense of despair. I hadn't gotten to interact with Gregory much but felt an attachment to him nonetheless from our brief meetings. Now that we were leaving without a word of goodbye, I wondered if Gregory would miss me.

As if she could perceive my desolation, Audrey leaned against me, mewling. She was as soft and forlorn as a newborn kitten.

My heart melted. Casting Gregory to the back of my mind, I reached out and gave Audrey a tight hug.

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We soon arrived at the VIP lounge in the airport.

The Stovall private jet was estimated to land in two hours. Concerned that Audrey would be hungry, John regarded the fast-food restaurants that lined the hallway with disapproval. He disappeared, then soon returned with a portion of fish and chips that looked entirely superior to the rest of the meager fare offered there.

Taking a leaf out of Gregory's book, Audrey sulked, insisting on being fed before she would be willing to eat.

I was indefensible in the face of Audrey's adorable self. I took extreme pains to coax and flatter her to eat. Fortunately, Audrey was easily won over. As John had promised, she was a lovely, innocent girl who had been pampered but was not yet spoiled.

As Audrey and I took bites in turn, John sat facing us, smiling. It was as if he derived gratification just from watching us.

"I've dreamed of this scene countless times. Alas, it has finally come true," John muttered, half to himself. There was a slight choke in his voice, and I looked up, startled, to see his eyes shining with tears.

John swiftly wiped at his eyes, but he was overcome with emotion to compose himself immediately.

I felt a lump rise within my throat. I was both immensely moved by the depth of John's feelings and frustrated by my inability to remember anything.

I put down my fork. When I'd caught John's eye, I said gravely, "We're going back to M Country and getting together with the rest of the family, right? What happens after that? What do you plan to do?"

"Isn't that enough?" John broke into a wistful smile at the thought. "I'm no longer the devilish scoundrel I used to be. I'm managing both the Stovall and Moore Corporations, both of which are profiting tremendously now. I've also hired the best mercenaries for you and Audrey. They'll give you the best protection you could ever ask for. No one will ever be able to hurt either of you again."

"What about Gregory?" I replied briefly.

John looked troubled. "There are still days ahead of us. I'll definitely do my best to bring him over."

"When will that be?" I persisted. "If you couldn't manage it for the past six years, what makes you think you'll be able to do that in the future?"

John's face was stony. Grimly, he said, "None of us wanted that, but I was focusing all of my efforts on looking for you and had to give up the custody of Gregory. I'm a mere businessman, not God. I can't perform miracles, much as I try. Gregory was given to the Hall family. That's the only life he knows now. Even if I could take him by force, would he be able to get accustomed to the new environment?"

John's face grew flushed as he spoke, his eyes taking on a feverish glaze. He paused to suppress his agitation, then continued in a strained voice, "Letty, it's been six years. You can't, and neither will I allow you to, continue contacting Ashton and his family. The next time, it may be fatal..."

John's face blanched as he trailed off. I pressed him, however, saying, "Do you mean that what happened six years ago was the work of the Hall family? But the information I received from Ashton said that the person who wanted to destroy the entire island, including Ashton and me, was Armond. Wasn't it?"

"You almost died, yet you're still clinging onto Ashton's words as if they were the gospel truth," John noted disdainfully. "That was a lie spun by the Hall family to deflect blame. Without assistance from the Hall family, Armond would surely have been stopped and killed on sight in the open waters. How else could he have been able to successfully move all those explosives to the island?"

At John's explanation, the last piece of the puzzle seemed to finally click into place. Armond's ability to wreak such havoc no longer seemed that mythical after all.