

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1533-1537

Chapter 1533

Ashton's entire life of pain and suffering had been a direct result of the Hall couple's actions. It was time for them to reap the consequences of their actions.

But Nathaniel and Tiffany were just byproducts of the twisted, toxic environment cultivated by their parents. They didn't despise us, and we had no reason to kill each other.

Ashton supported my weight as he helped me walk out the door, merely saying, "Let's just get it over with."

I knew the severity and emotions behind that simple sentence and stayed quiet as I let him lead me.

The entrance to the basement was in the garage next to the villa. The mercenaries that John had hired had all changed into casual clothes and were patrolling the area, but that didn't change the fact that they looked intimidating enough to scare off anyone who might come to rescue the Halls.

Ashton kept one arm firmly around me as we passed them and entered the basement, the floor at our footsteps barely illuminated by the dim overhead lights. After a few turns, we finally saw Nicolas and Simone, locked up in a makeshift jail cell.

Nicolas was still wearing his pajamas, clearly having been taken straight from his home in the middle of his sleep. He stood up straight in the center of the dark cell, stubbornly refusing to let his clothes get dirty as if that would help him maintain his image of a "noble".

Simone wasn't sitting either, her face looking wrinkled and as pale as a ghost without the help of makeup to cover up her flaws.

They seemed drained, not even noticing us when we entered the room. It was only when we walked forward and stood right in front of Simone that her eyes widened suddenly, lunging forwards to get closer to us. "Ashton! You're finally here! Let us go, we can't stay here a second longer! Please, Ashton, I'm begging you, let us go..."

Nicolas peered at us down his nose, still wearing the same expression of contempt from before.

Ashton ignored Simone, raising his head to stare straight at Nicolas. "You've lost."

"Hmph..." The older man rolled his eyes. "What do you mean, I've lost? Isn't losing to my own son further proof that I was a successful father?"

"You wish!" spat out John.

Nicolas pushed his glasses further up on his nose bridge before holding his hands behind his back. "I have to say, the drastic measures you took came as a surprise. You've grown up, Ashton. Now I know that I can leave the family business in your hands without any worries."

"Is that so...?" Ashton's gaze grew sharp, and the temperature around us seemed to drop several degrees as he spoke. "Am I supposed to thank you for that?"

"Of course!" Nicolas raised his voice, strangely confident in his own convictions as he frowned at his son. "Do you really think that you would have survived until now if it weren't for my precious blood running through your veins?"

I'd seen people blow their own trumpet before, but never to this shameless extent. I wasn't even a part of the conversation, but I could feel my jaw clench unconsciously.

Ashton was where he was right now because of his own hard work. If there was anyone he should be grateful towards for having helped him, it should be the Fullers who raised him, and certainly not the Halls who had nearly turned him into a monster.

I glanced at the back of Ashton's large silhouette. He stood unmoving, the only visible proof of his suppressed rage being his clenched fists.

He took a moment to regain his composure and calm himself down. "You could have publicly come out with the truth when you first found out that you were a Hall," he told them calmly. "Why did you have to set up an accident and bring Letty's grandma and the Murphys into this...? You abandoned me, and now you will do nothing but push me up the corporate ladder?"

I swore that I could hear his heart shatter as soon as he got that last sentence out.

My vision blurring with tears, I stepped forward and took his hand in mine, hoping that my touch provided him some comfort.

But Nicolas, the truly twisted being that he was, had the gall to want to take credit for this delicate scene between us.

Chapter 1534

“Look at you two! You were made for each other. If I hadn’t planned all of that, do you think you would have ever met in the first place? I was the one who gifted you with such a beautiful marriage, my son. How could you bear to blame me for it?”

What?

The culprit is suddenly playing the victim?

“I’m just speaking the truth, but it’s up to you whether you want to believe me or not. Our original plan that year had been to completely wipe you out from existence and forget that we’d ever given birth to such a defective product. If I hadn’t pitied you, you would have disappeared because of that car crash a long time ago! What right do you think you have to stand in front of me pretending to be a victor and interrogate your own father?”

Ashton immediately started trembling, digging his nails into his palms so tightly that I could see the veins on his forearms.

In the Hall couple’s eyes, Ashton was not only an obstacle blocking their way, he didn’t deserve to continue living either.

From their point of view, “family” was nothing more than a manufacturing process. They expected only perfect products and destroyed any that were not “up to par” with the high standard of quality that they’d set.

But they were talking about a person. How could someone say “you should have died a long time ago” to another person so easily?

Ashton didn't speak for a long time. I related to his feelings; the more precious something is to you, the harder it is to cope when it's suddenly destroyed.

Yet, for some reason, Nicolas viewed his silence as silent agreement.

He turned his attention towards me, squinting at me as if we were the ones currently being locked up in a cage. "I must say: your grandma, Winona is a smart woman. She knew to team up with George Fuller and match you two together in order to resolve Ashton's grudge against the Murphy family. Her hard work and care are large reasons why Ashton is where he is today."

"Too bad that the lower-class will always stay lower-class for a reason," he shrugged, starting to pace around the cell. "They never realize when the thing they're trying desperately to protect is stolen from them right under their noses. No, that's not the right way to say it. If it weren't for that petroleum contract, I wouldn't have returned to the Hall family so easily. I should thank her for that."

"You stole the contract?"

If that were the case, then what was the reason for Armond's stubbornness all these years?

A horrid idea abruptly crossed my mind as soon as the words left my mouth.

Nicolas' lips quirked up into an evil, satisfied smile. "I guess you're not as stupid as you look. What do you think? Don't you want to applaud my perfect scheme and praise my smarts after realizing the truth?"

Praise?

Applaud him for taking away the contract and manipulate Grandma and George in his hands as if they were mere puppets and leading them to their demise?

Or does he mean his scheme to make the Fullers and the Murphys hate each other so that Ashton would live the rest of his life in wrath and loathing?

Ashton might have found himself unable to talk back to his birth parents, but I found no problem in doing so.

“So you saw through the Murphys’ plan since the very beginning and took the chance to pull the wool over their eyes,” I inhaled deeply to calm myself. “Not only did you take away the contract for the petroleum farming project, but you also used the fake death case to escape from the public eye. You left a bunch of crippled victims behind, then proceeded to let Ashton battle the Murphys tooth and nail all alone. Am I right?”

If my assumption was correct, it would mean that I had also been a part of his calculations.

Nicolas merely shrugged in admittance.

The relief of closure was quickly followed by a wave of fury and shock, crashing down and overpowering my rationality.

“You were the one who ruined Ashton as well as Armond! You knew that you could just take the contract away because of your background as a Hall, and the Murphys wouldn’t be able to do anything to stop you. Instead, you wanted Ashton to harbor those unnecessary feelings of revenge against his parents, and you wanted him to be tortured daily by nightmares and guilt! How could you do that to him?”

Nicolas spread his arms wide in a show of self-proclaimed innocence. “If I could perfectly wipe out the bloody past, why would I need to take the risk and get myself involved with those low-class vermin? Besides, I was merely acting in self-defense. The Murphy family had been planning for us to take the fall for their mistakes, but I was brainy enough to find a way out and escape my fate. They wanted to kill me, and Ashton is my son, so it makes sense that he would want to avenge me. What did I do wrong?”

Chapter 1535

“The problem is that you’re standing right in front of us, alive and well!” I screamed at him. “You even wanted to take Ashton’s life! You ruined the first half of his life, so who the f*ck do you think you are to stand here and call him your son? A piece of sh*t like you doesn’t deserve to be called a human, let alone a father!”

Nicolas tilted his head, the hints of a smile tugging at his mouth. “I don’t deserve to be a father? And what about you? Do you think that you’re above me? Do you think you deserve to stand up on Ashton’s behalf more than I do?”

“At least I never treated him like a product and threw him away when he was no longer of any use to me,” I spat out venomously. If Ashton didn’t have the heart to deal with this piece of trash, then I wasn’t going to back down on his behalf.

I must have been a sight, my face contorted in rage as I saw red, wishing for nothing more than to tear Nicolas to pieces with my bare hands.

But in the back of my mind, I knew that all I really wanted was to protect the man I loved. Getting myself worked up over Nicolas wasn’t worth it.

Upon hearing my rant, the man in question broke out into a chuckle that grated my ears, grinning meaningfully at me.

“What are you laughing at?” I scowled, unable to stop myself from responding.

Nicolas’ expression was now toned down as he stared at me, but his eyes were devoid of emotion. I felt chills run up my spine at the sight of them. “Women always like to make everything into a soap opera, don’t they? You’re selfless and you’re not scheming, so you expect the same from your partner? Should I tell you about Ashton’s hereditary blindness, and how he kept it under control for so long...”

“That’s enough!” Ashton suddenly interrupted, seemingly refusing to entertain Nicolas any further.

He raised one hand in the air. Soon after, Joseph approached us and opened the cell door, dragging Nicolas out with his arms pinned behind him.

At that same moment, two bodyguards entered the basement carrying a wooden chair. They made a beeline for the cell and set the chair down, taking some ropes out to tie Nicolas up to the chair. After that was done, they secured some sort of metal device to the back of his head, exposing only his face.

Then, some other bodyguards hauled in a large, flat bucket and placed it behind the chair, as well as set up a water pipe right above where the bucket was.

Ashton walked over and kicked the legs of the wooden chair, causing Nicolas to fall backward and land his head in the bucket behind him.

He slowly circled around the older man, observing him carefully. When he reached the water pipe, he turned it on.

A continuous string of drops of water came rushing forth from the pipe, hitting Nicolas’ forehead one after the other without pause.

My breath hitched in my throat. Is this... another form of waterboarding?

Ashton leaned down slightly to make sure that Nicolas would be able to hear him, his eyes fogged over with murderous intent and his tone as cold as ice. “Have a taste of the pain you caused me for months and years.”

With that, he walked over towards me and helped me up the stairs out of the basement, stopping in his tracks briefly to call out over his shoulder, "Don't feed them food or water for a week straight."

When we went back to the living room, a group of people in white coats were already there waiting for us.

From what I could recall, the only people associated with Ashton that would look like medical officials were the ones that had been in charge of researching medicine and drugs.

"They invented the very vaccine that Nicolas gave you," Ashton explained to me, confirming my suspicions.

Taking a good look at the group, none of them seemed particularly evil or villainous. If anything, I spotted some fear in their expressions.

John approached the eldest-looking researcher. "Where's the antidote?"

The man, who had been hanging his head, ducked into himself even further. "T- There is no antidote..."

"What?" John grabbed ahold of his collar, shaking him violently as he growled out through gritted teeth, "So you're just going to let her die?"

Chapter 1536

"No, it's not like that, Mr. John. Please listen to my explanation. I said no antidote means Ms. Stovall doesn't need an antidote. She had fully recovered from the poison a few years ago!"

Hearing that, John's anger subsided. However, in the next second, his gaze turned cold again. He lifted Dr. Perez off the ground and queried through his gritted teeth, "What the hell is going on? You'd better tell me everything now!"

After all, John used to be a frivolous and vicious young man in K City. When he was angry, the aura exuded was quite terrifying. Gripped by an irrepressible sense of dread, Dr. Perez started to twitch, and his eyes turned white.

Old people always got shocked easily.

Seeing that, John's heart softened. He loosened his grip, although he was angry at that time.

Just as Dr. Perez fell to the ground, a young researcher who was standing beside him took a bottle of medicine and passed it to the former. After breathing in the medicine deeply a few times, his condition became better.

As soon as Dr. Perez let out a long exhale, John bent down to grab the medicine and raised it above the former's head. Then, he continued to ask with a dour expression, "I don't have much patience. Count yourself lucky just now. Next time, no one will bring you medicine. Quick, spill the beans!"

Upon hearing that, Dr. Perez and the young researcher looked at each other with the conflicted looks on their faces while sneaking a peek at Ashton from every now and then.

Rather than saying they were afraid of John, it seemed more like they were darting their inquiry gazes at Ashton.

Soon, John had also noticed that, so he turned to look at Ashton. At that, his expression changed.

Just as he was about to ask them, Ashton said, "Go ahead." His tone was firm and domineering.

After that, Dr. Perez tugged on the cuff of John's trousers and explained as he sobbed, "Mr. Hall is the mastermind. We just followed his order. We did not expect things to turn out this way... Ten years ago, Mr. Hall took Mr. Fuller and Ms. Stovall's DNA samples back. After examination, it was found that Mr. Fuller encountered a genetic mutation. But surprisingly, we found that a component of Ms. Stovall's genes could treat Mr. Fuller's genetic deformity! Mr. Hall was very concerned about the genetic quality of his descendants, so he established this project team to figure out a way to perform genetic editing. Ten years ago, studies that had looked at how genetic editing worked on animals had shown that the technique was working well. Hence, after examining Ms. Stovall's genes thoroughly, Mr. Hall decided to perform the experiment on Ms. Stovall. Actually, the experiment would cause side effects. Mr. Hall knew that Mr. Fuller wouldn't agree to it, so he kidnapped the children to check if they were healthy. At the same time, he injected the drug into Ms. Stovall's body."

Human genetic modification had always been severely restricted in many countries. Although the experiment was at odds with the principles of human rights, it was not hard to understand why Nicolas did this. The worst situation was basically sacrificing one life to save another. To put it bluntly, he was buying life.

Maybe I had died once, so I didn't get frustrated upon hearing Dr. Perez's words. Instead, I felt a sense of relief at that time.

When the toxin took effect, it was agony. I felt dizzy and vomited badly. I was barely conscious throughout the period. I used to worry that I couldn't accompany my kids as they grow. But luckily, everything was over, and Ashton was healthy now. My sacrifice was worth it.

Nicolas knew Ashton very well. If the latter knew that I would need to suffer so much for his health, he would definitely not agree to it.

But the former didn't know me. If he told me the truth about who he really was and explained his intentions, I would definitely agree with his plan and be willing to sacrifice for Ashton.

At that moment, I couldn't read John's expression. He narrowed his eyes and fixed his gaze on Dr. Perez as he inquired, "So six years ago, Letty frequently passed out and vomited blood because of this? Those are the side effects of the drug?"

Upon hearing the question, Dr. Perez relaxed his grip on the former's trousers. He slumped onto the ground with his head lowered and looked around anxiously with a fearful look on his face.

John had sharp eyes. When he noticed Dr. Perez's unusual behavior, he immediately raised his leg, stomped at the latter, and bellowed, "Stop stuttering. Just spit it out!"

Chapter 1537

The kick was powerful. John didn't hold back his strength at all. At that moment, Dr. Perez pressed a hand against his chest because he was in so much pain that he couldn't speak.

Seeing that, the young researcher rushed toward Dr. Perez, stood in front of him to stop John, and begged for mercy, "Mr. Stovall, please stop it. I'll talk. I'll tell you everything. Vomiting blood, dizziness, and prolonged sleep are the side effects of another poison that we injected into Ms. Stovall's body to deceive the public. But shortly after Ms. Stovall lost her consciousness, she was given the antidote under someone's supervision. As for the side effects of human genetic modification, we know nothing about that, so I don't know how to explain it."

"What the f*ck... Speak human language! I just want to know will Letty be alright!" John yelled as he grabbed onto the researcher's collar angrily.

"I don't know, I don't..." The tall and well-built man who was wearing glasses was frightened to tears. "We extracted the gene fragment that was cultivated. Theoretically, Ms. Stovall will go blind shortly after the experiment. But it had been so long since we injected the medicine, and nothing had happened to Ms. Stovall, so we really don't know if the gene fragment will undergo mutation or trigger any other

pathological changes. Ms. Stovall is the first person involved in the human genetic modification experiment. We haven't gathered the statistics for the analysis of experimental data yet, so we can't even estimate the probability of the occurrence of gene mutation and the symptoms."

At that, the young researcher broke down completely. He dared not look John in the eyes.

In the meantime, we were at a loss, too, when we heard that.

It turned out that I had to sacrifice my vision for Ashton's eyesight.

God really did bless us that I didn't encounter genetic mutation, but the medicine that remained in my body was like a ticking time bomb, ready to be activated at any moment.

At that time, I felt as if I was treading on thin ice. I was too familiar with this feeling that I broke into laughter and said, "It seems like God envies me for being too blissful." I was talking to Ashton, but his expression was grim upon hearing that.

I knew that he felt extremely guilty toward me, but it wasn't his fault at all.

Just as I was about to console him, an idea struck me. I turned to the young researcher and inquired, "You said I am the first person who involves in the experiment. Does this mean that you are still conducting the experiment now?"

It was only then that I remembered the babies that were taken captive by Armond at M Country.

The success rate of gene modification would be higher if the subjects were younger. Therefore, Nicolas chose to do this to the defenseless children.

Survival of the fittest was nature's law that had never changed. But to the Hall family, it had become an excuse for them to take others' lives.

In order to realize the "Perfect Gene" plan, the Hall family acted against the principle of human rights and used newborns as lab rats. They sacrificed other families' happiness in order to keep their wealth.

Upon hearing my question, all the researchers lowered their heads and remained silent.

Their reaction had proved that my speculation was spot-on.

At that moment, anger overpowered me. I couldn't hold it in and shouted, "What the heck?"

Becoming a human lab rat was very scary. Those people would be treated inhumanely like the animals in the circus. The rich people always tortured the "lower class" and ruined their hopes while enjoying the fruits of the latter's efforts.

Children were gifts from heaven. They were the purest people in the world. But the Hall family got those children involved in the experiment for the sake of their benefit.

I couldn't bear to imagine what would happen if the technique was fully developed one day. What would the Hall family do? Would they just use it to ensure their descendants inherit the perfect genes? Or would they use the technique to harm the descendants of ordinary people by introducing the "bad" genetic material into their bodies?

At that thought, I shot the two researchers a cold stare and gritted my teeth as I scolded, "You helped them with those evil deeds. You are not good people as well! Where are the other researchers and subjects that are involved in this experiment now?"