

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1548-1552

Chapter 1548

"Audrey likes him, so what can I do?" asked Emma. "You're just a pot calling the kettle black. Based on how you spoil children, if it were you, wouldn't the result be just the same?"

John did not get the response that he was hoping for. He pursed his lips and helplessly said, "We were talking about the children. Why did you start criticizing me instead? Oh, woe is me..."

Emma glared at him with narrowed eyes and didn't bother to respond to him.

These two were destined to be a bickering couple.

Drew went along with Gregory. Of course, Emma and John followed closely behind.

Ashton and I trailed behind some distance away from the rest of them.

Side by side, we walked through the corridor together. It was a rare moment for the two of us. Looking at the lanky young boy shuffling along at the back, I felt a flurry of mixed emotions in my heart.

I was not against Ashton doing charity, but how he did it did not sit well with me. Even though he did so out of consideration for Audrey, we couldn't foresee what would happen in the future. Maybe one day, the boy would grow up and think that he was humiliated and started to harbor evil thoughts.

"Besides," I paused before continuing in a serious tone, "I don't like the look in this boy's eyes. He may look young, but he doesn't have the youthful exuberance of a young lad. His eyes are like a pool of dead water..."

Just like that person.

I was lost in my own thoughts when I felt a familiar warmth on my shoulder. I turned my head. Ashton had slid his arm around me and enveloped me in a comforting side hug.

"Audrey is pure-hearted by nature. We must handle the situation carefully to keep it that way," replied Ashton. Each step he took was calm and steady. The way he spoke, as if he had it all under control, somehow managed to put me at ease. "My daughter will grow up safely and peacefully. No one can disrupt that. A few days later, I will look for a chance to send the boy away. By that time, I'll need you, my dear wife, to help cover me."

He was two steps ahead of me the whole time. My worry was all for nothing.

I smiled and agreed to his plan. "If necessary, I can be the bad guy. Audrey is already not that close with you. I do not want anything else to drive a wedge between your relationship with her."

In order to maintain a happy family life, husband and wife need to work together as a team.

Ashton lightly squeezed my upper arm and smiled to himself. I wasn't sure if he took what I said to heart.

It soon became apparent that our concern was not unfounded. Audrey was very fascinated with this boy who followed us back from the orphanage. She even paid more attention to him than to Gregory!

The moment we stepped into our home, Ashton ordered our maid to see to the boy's cleaning up. Every few minutes, Audrey would approach them and secretly stare from the side.

This made me rather uneasy.

Excessive fascination is often the start of sinking into a bottomless pit. Even with familiar people, we could never know what covert schemes were simmering in their hearts. Not to mention this time around, we have an orphan with unknown origins.

After some careful contemplation, I called over Gregory to have a little chat.

"Greg," I said with a smile while tenderly stroking his wet hair that was sticking to his head after a wash, "can you do Mommy a favor?"

Gregory, being the good-natured boy that he was, nodded and agreed at the drop of a hat. "Sure, Mommy. What do you need me to do?"

I thought for a while. Then, I moved to his side and whispered into his ear. "Audrey spent too much time playing today. Can you think of a way to get her to go back to her room and sleep?"

"Sure," answered Gregory. With that, he went over to Audrey, who was pretending to play with some toys by the pillar. She was actually peeking at the boy the whole time.

Soon, the siblings were engaged in a discussion.

I looked from afar, feeling satisfied and confident. I guess having more children around really did have its perks!

In Audrey's eyes, Gregory was far more appealing than Ashton and me. Asking him to persuade her was more effective.

I had full confidence that Gregory would succeed, but I didn't expect it to be that quick.

In less than a minute, Audrey threw her Barbie doll to one side and happily scampered upstairs.

Feeling surprised, I hurriedly stopped Gregory and asked him what he had done. "Greg, what did you say to your sister? Why did she agree to go sleep so quickly?"

Chapter 1549

"Nothing much," replied Gregory calmly. "I only told her that if she goes to bed now, I will play with her tomorrow right after I come home from school."

"That's all?" To say that I was dumbfounded would be an understatement. Thanks to John, Audrey was so cheeky that even Ashton could not handle her. Yet, Gregory managed to convince her so easily?

“That’s all,” confirmed Gregory. Without any change in his expression and tone, he continued, “So Mommy, if I can make Audrey sleep early again tomorrow, can I play on the laptop for half an hour more?”

“Okay...” I was still reeling in disbelief that Gregory persuaded his sister with just a simple offer. I gave my consent unknowingly.

“Thank you, Mommy!” Gregory grinned triumphantly. “Good night, Mommy!”

He turned to walk upstairs without a backward glance right after saying that.

His indomitable aura and unfazed manner reminded me once again that everyone would have their own Achilles’ heel.

Thinking of how Audrey had Ashton and John wrapped around her finger as well, I laughed helplessly.

I looked to the side and saw Ashton walk over. He had come in from the balcony when I was unaware. He eyed me with amusement and asked, “What are you thinking of that made you so happy?”

“Nothing much,” I replied. I couldn’t let him know that he was inferior compared to his son in the eyes of his daughter. Therefore, I swiftly changed the topic. I looked at his phone and asked, “You’re done with work?”

“With Joseph around, there’s nothing much for me to worry about.” Ashton proceeded to sit down on the sofa next to me and placed his phone on the coffee table. “I have found a well-to-do family. The husband and wife are both infertile. They would be happy to adopt a son.”

He had been on the phone the moment we reached home. I see, so he had been busy making arrangements as to that boy.

The Fuller and Stovall families were wealthy; thus, the money needed for bringing up a child was not a big problem. Out of goodwill, we were more than willing to take up this responsibility.

The only problem was that we could not obtain any information about this child. Hence, his past was a mystery. My women's intuition kept alarming me that this could mean he potentially posed an unimaginable threat to my children.

When it came to our own children, all mothers would inevitably be selfish.

Perhaps it was out of guilt, I couldn't help but comment on what Ashton told me. "Material wealth is a secondary factor. The most important thing is that they are of good character. Good family education and environment are crucial for a child to grow healthily."

Ashton was about to respond when I glanced at him from the side and noticed a silhouette quietly standing by the door. I was caught by surprise. Upon seeing my reaction, Ashton put a pause to whatever he was about to say as well.

The boy had just bathed and changed into pajamas. His hair was still quite wet, and his fragile body was next to the door frame. When our eyes met, I could see a brief flicker in his eyes.

Did he hear everything we said just now?

I felt awkward about it, but Ashton lightly beckoned for him to come over.

Soon, the boy trudged over in slippers and stood before us. The flicker in his eyes a moment ago was now concealed.

“What is your name?” asked Ashton.

The boy looked up at me, then answered, “My name is Shaun.”

“You could remember so clearly?” If I was not mistaken, children who were experiment subjects were taken away from their families at a very young age. They would not have such a clear memory of their original names.

Ashton scrutinized the boy closely. He did not say anything, but he gave off a very imposing vibe.

Unexpectedly, under Ashton’s gaze that could make a grown man cower in fear, the boy was unruffled and unaffected. He was as bold as ever, like how he had been at the orphanage. He nodded his head to show affirmation. “I remember everything clearly. I was just captured and held there a month ago.”

After hearing him say that, I came to a realization.

Nicolas’ experiment was to verify the flexibility of the genes in Ashton’s body. Naturally, he would have to select research subjects of different ages. This boy who called himself Shaun was just the right age, so he was abducted.

This explanation justified everything, but I couldn’t help but feel something didn’t add up somewhere.

It was just like he was purposely leading me to think in that direction so that my suspicions toward him would be abated.

However, I quickly denied my own doubts.

This boy standing before me was just a child. He was a poor soul who lost his family. Even staying alive was a challenge to him. How would he have the capacity for deception?

Chapter 1550

At that moment, I felt that I was too cynical. I had assumed that a child would behave in the same way as a scheming adult.

“Alright,” said Ashton. He didn’t seem to be suspicious of anything, he just nodded and excused Shaun. “It’s getting late, you should go get some rest.”

“Yes, sir.” Shaun bowed slightly in a respectful manner and turned to leave the living room.

Everything was silent once again. I noticed that Ashton’s gaze was pinned on Shaun’s retreating back. Evidently, he was just as suspicious of him as I was.

“What are you thinking?” I asked.

Hearing my voice, Ashton turned to face me. Out of nowhere, he said, “No matter how obedient or cultured he may sound, these are not reasons for him to stay and get close to Audrey.”

After saying that, he lifted the cup of hot tea to his lips. He then took his time savoring the tea and did not say anything else.

Since our thoughts were aligned, there was no need to say everything out loud. Seeing that Ashton was as concerned as I was, the uneasiness that I felt arising out of worry for my daughter’s safety was repressed.

The next day, Ashton woke up early in the morning. After having breakfast, he took Gregory and me to the villa in the western suburbs.

The normal accompanying staff was replaced by M Country mercenaries who were hired by John. After they changed into casual clothes, they were put under Millie's command.

Joseph was already waiting at the entrance of the villa.

"Where is she?" Ashton asked coldly.

"In the master bedroom on the first floor. Ms. Hall kept begging for us to get a doctor..."

Ashton simply ignored what he said and went into the villa with long strides.

I expected a Hall property to be either luxurious yet low profile or high-class and extravagant. Upon entering, I immediately noticed the peculiar interior of the villa. Colorful graffiti covered the walls. There wasn't much furniture in the living room, but there were many carefully placed items in various shapes. It seemed to be for practicing skating.

Tiffany always appeared before everyone in heels. Who would have known that she had such a hobby in private?

While curiously studying the house, we followed Ashton to the room where Tiffany was.

As soon as Joseph opened the door, we saw a man and a woman huddled together at one side of the bed.

Looking more closely, the woman was none other than the haughty Tiffany Hall. Perhaps due to lack of rest, her face was pale at the moment.

The man was seated on the bed, with the lower half of his body covered under the blanket. He did not make a move to get down from the bed even after seeing us.

Both their eyes were slightly red and swollen. It was quite obvious that they had cried before we came in.

“Ashton! What right do you have to chase away my personal doctor? Can you bear the responsibility if someone dies?” Tiffany started yelling at us the moment she saw us. “He is your brother-in-law! How could you be so heartless?”

Tilting his head slightly, Ashton glanced toward the bed indifferently. “So? Isn’t he still alive and well?”

“You...” Tiffany was so angered that she could not speak. She kept sputtering and was unable to form a coherent sentence. “I... You. You’re being unreasonable!”

Ashton was unfazed by the maniacal Tiffany. He walked to the side of the bed and stared down at the man. Even while standing at the door some distance away from them, Ashton’s formidable aura could still be felt.

Except for Tiffany, everything else in this villa was unusual. From the bizarre renovation to the baffling furniture, it was hard to tell whether the scruffy and bearded man was an artist or a reclusive shut-in.

If I wasn’t mistaken, when Tiffany mentioned “brother-in-law”, she was referring to the man on the bed.

From what I remember, Tiffany was not married. Moreover, based on her identity and status, it was hard to link her and the man together with the concept of love and marriage.

Tiffany seemed to be very afraid that Ashton would harm the man. As soon as he got close, Tiffany sat on the side of the bed and held the man in her arms tightly. Her eyes were alert and panicked. "Ashton, please don't hurt him. I was the one behind everything. I will bear responsibility for all of it. Please consider the fact that I am your sister and hire someone to care for him. I have already caused him too much harm. I cannot drag him into my mess anymore."

Chapter 1551

I thought the man was deaf. "T-Tiffany..." He suddenly called out in a fearful voice.

Hearing his voice, Tiffany turned to look at him. Her eyes immediately became watery, and tears were about to spill out at any moment.

Ashton was not bothered with their act of being star-crossed lovers. He coolly said, "Speak up now, my dear sister. Besides the obituary, what other good things did you have a hand in?"

There were no warnings or threats, but Ashton emphasized heavily on the words "good things".

Perhaps she knew that this was the calm before the storm, or maybe she thought back to all the times she nearly died at Ashton's hands – Tiffany was terrified. In a shaky voice, she said, "I-I was the one who suggested hypnosis to Dad. But I was forced to do so! Dad was too frightening. In these thirty years, he controlled everything I did. Which school I went to, the people I saw, how many assets I have under my name... Everything had to be according to his wishes. Only by doing so would I be considered a child of the Hall family and become an emotionless robot like he was!"

"But he didn't stop there. He wanted to control not only everything we did but also how we think!"

She paused and turned to caress the man's cheek. Her expression was suddenly full of sadness. "I chose Keith, but Dad ordered for people to break his legs. He threatened me that if I wanted Keith to stay alive, I have to go back and fulfill my duties as his obedient daughter. I could only compromise, but the seed of hatred was deeply planted in my heart. I swore I would escape from this hell hole one day!"

"Finally, you appeared, and Dad had a breakthrough in his genetic experiment. If you had brought back the children, I would have successfully completed my escape plan. As fate would have it, you were too headstrong. You were even tougher than Nathaniel and me. Hence, you would never bow down before Dad. I was about to give up on this plan until our headquarters was completely submerged in the ocean. The flame of hope in my heart was ignited once again. The explosion on the island dealt a great blow to the Hall family and gave me a chance. I proposed to Dad that we could hypnotize you so that the Hall family could have a perfect puppet. I, on the other hand, would be able to amass resources under your cover and wait for the best chance to leave."

Hearing Tiffany's confession, I couldn't help but feel that her whole life had been tragic and pitiful. "Even so, you had six years to leave, but you dragged on until now. To put it simply, your greed has caused your own demise."

"So what if I was greedy?" Tiffany raised her voice all of a sudden. "It was what I deserved! Do you think my ranking in the Forbes list meant anything? In reality, all those assets were monitored by the Hall family! Besides daily expenses, I didn't even have the right to take a million for myself. Therefore, I could only turn my attention toward the company. I was about to leave, but all of a sudden you decided to freeze the company's assets. I was left with no choice but to kidnap Gregory in exchange for sufficient money to elope with Keith. I swear to you Ashton. I had no intention of harming Gregory!"

While prattling on about her predicament, she clasped her hands together and kept begging for Ashton's forgiveness. "Please let us go, Ashton. I promise you. We will never appear before you ever again..." Tiffany was betting on Ashton's mercy. She did not appear to be the slightest remorseful at putting her own nephew at risk.

If we had not tagged along and followed Ashton here, Gregory and I would never know that this woman, who kept preaching that we were all family, would betray us all in a heartbeat for her own gain.

“You are truly the good daughter of Nicolas Hall,” I said with gritted teeth. My hands would have balled up into fists if I hadn’t been holding Gregory’s shoulders. “If Ashton had not seen through your plan, Gregory would have been kidnapped by you. Did you ever consider the trauma you could cause to a six-year-old child if that were to happen?”

Chapter 1552

The woman who was sobbing earlier fell silent all of a sudden. Knowing that she had wronged us, Tiffany couldn’t bring herself to glance at me and Gregory. Her eyes flickered and were out of focus. “My men wouldn’t go overboard and scare him. Besides, Ashton seized them already. What else could happen? You’re trying to frame me...”

“Are you still denying that it’s your fault?” Ashton’s deep voice sounded.

Tiffany bowed her head even lower and shuddered. “Gregory is completely fine. What have I done wrong?”

“You unrepentant woman!” Ashton said through gritted teeth.

Afterward, he gave me and Gregory a sideways glance, asking impassively, “Gregory, did you hear what she said? Do you see her true colors now?”

Only then I noticed that Gregory had been furrowing his brows.

“Okay.” He nodded his head. “I got it.”

Tilting his chin back slightly, Ashton squinted his eyes. His gaze darkened for a split second. "From now onward, you have only one name, that is Gregory Fuller. The Halls aren't your family."

"I understand." Gregory nodded again, though he didn't fully grasp the meaning of his father's words. Suddenly, he thought of something and asked, "How about Uncle Nathaniel?"

"I'll explain to you later." Ashton's voice was flat. I couldn't tell of his mood right now, but I knew that this was not the time to ask any other question.

Knowing his father's temperament, Gregory took note of his words and fell silent.

Afterward, the man turned to look at Tiffany again. His gaze grew much more frigid. "I've given you enough chances."

Anyone with common sense could easily read between the lines and tell of his murderous intent. Tiffany went hysterical, standing up and backing away. "No, you can't do this. Nothing happened to Gregory. You can't kill me!"

Ashton's expression remained nonchalant as he stood rooted to the spot. Nevertheless, his overbearing aura was so palpable that she felt like she was about to get crushed anytime.

"Death is an easy way out for you. You're as good as dead the moment I found out that you're the one who published the obituary. Yet, I let you off because you're my sister. Now it's time for you to get a taste of your own medicine. I'll make your life a living hell."

The man heaved a long sigh. His thin lips parted as he commanded, "Come in."

As soon as those words left his mouth, Joseph came in with a few bodyguards. Thinking that they were going to take her away, Tiffany hid in a corner with her back pressing against the wall. Reluctance was written all over her face.

Unexpectedly, the bodyguards made a turn and headed to the bed. Bending over to pick Keith up, they took him out of the room straight away.

“What are you guys trying to do to him? Let go! Let go of him now!”

“Ah!”

Just like his subordinates, Joseph strictly executed the order. With no mercy, he shoved Tiffany forcefully onto the floor. Her forehead hit the bedside table, and blood gushed out instantly.

“Ouch...” The woman shook her head to stay conscious, reaching out to touch her forehead. Her face contorted with pain as she looked at the crimson blood on her palm. In the next second, she struggled and stood up to chase after Joseph and the others.

Striding around the bed, Ashton grabbed her shoulders and pushed her onto the bed.

The knock on her head and the fall were too much for her. Closing her eyes, Tiffany was too weak to get out of the bed. Moving her lips, she mumbled inaudibly.

“Since you refuse to let people who genuinely love each other stay together, I’ll help you fulfill your wish. In this life, you’ll not get to see Keith ever again. One thing is for sure, I’ll get someone to feed and take care of him until he breathes his last. But you’ll never find him.”

There was no punishment more cruel than endless mental torment.

The only way to make Tiffany realize her mistake was to put her through the agony of being separated from her loved one.

For Keith's sake, she ruined Ashton's relationship with me, went against Nicolas, and disregarded the safety of her own nephew. She was madly in love with that man. Sure enough, she would never be at peace with herself in her lifetime.

In a daze, Tiffany heard Ashton's words. Unable to move an inch, she murmured pleadingly, "No... Ashton, I'm sorry. It's my fault... Please, I beg you..."