

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1553-1557

Chapter 1553

Darkness shadowed Ashton's eyes. He stood by the bed with a deadpan expression for a minute before turning and walking toward Gregory and me.

"Go home," he said nonchalantly. His voice was devoid of any emotions as though the cruel scene before had never occurred.

I lifted my hand and patted Gregory's shoulder after glancing around the room.

As he left the room, I followed him with Ashton close behind. He didn't even look back as he left.

Once I was seated in the car, I asked, "Why didn't you tell me about Tiffany wanting to abduct Gregory?"

His gaze was focused on the road ahead of him as he answered, "I have nipped that in the bud, and I didn't want you to worry. But it's not too late to know now."

It was his habit to immediately solve a problem instead of discussing it with others.

Gregory was lucky to come out unharmed, but he might not be as lucky next time. "I hope you can discuss with me when you encounter a problem and we can make a decision together. Now that everything has settled down, the Stovall family is no longer what they used to be. You need to change your habit of carrying all the burdens yourself."

Genetics decided chauvinism in a man and also their ability to not register a single word their partner said.

An overseas scholar had said, "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

A married couple will be together for their whole life. Honesty, tolerance, trust, and synergy are important in a marriage. And the marriage scale will tip one-sidedly if the burden only falls on one shoulder.

Ashton's lips curled into a smile. He turned and leaned closer to me. "Honey, you're stomping on my pride by complaining about me in front of our son."

I glanced toward Gregory who was sitting in the safety chair in the back seat. He was in his own world, staring intently at the laptop in his hands, not having a care for anything else happening around him.

I felt a hand on my back when I turned around. I slapped his hand away after contemplating it for a second. "Ashton, stop playing around."

Ashton pulled his hand back and placed it on the steering wheel at my rejection. He shrugged his shoulders, then started sweet-talking. "Loving parents promote family harmony. Gregory will develop a fear of marriage if you're so violent all the time."

I glared at him. He even has a noble excuse for being touchy-feely.

Right then, Gregory piped up, "I won't."

I turned around at the same time as Ashton. Gregory was still in the same posture as before as if we were in two separate worlds.

Did I just imagine the whole thing?

The next second, Gregory shut the laptop and looked up at us naturally. "My wife will be a beautiful woman like Mommy, and I'll have an adorable daughter like Audrey. This is my dream. It will never change." Then his gaze landed on Ashton precisely. "Daddy, Mommy is right. A fascist will be eliminated with time like in the histories."

Ashton's expression darkened. "Did I hear that correctly? You're planning to eliminate me? Your father? Is that right, Gregory Fuller?"

Based on my experience, when your parents call your full name, it's time for you to escape, else you might end up with a beating.

Gregory realized his slip of a tongue. With an arch of his brow, he quickly turned his face to the side, firing up his laptop naturally as though he had never said anything.

His movement was so quick I almost missed it.

Watching his actions, I couldn't suppress the rising laughter. He's rational and knows when to take a step back. Gregory is growing up well.

My anger was all gone from his interruption. Indeed, a child is a mother's biggest strength.

Meanwhile, Ashton's face had clouded over. No one knew what he was thinking.

Gregory instantly unclipped his seatbelt and rushed into the house once the car came to a stop.

He was gone with the wind. Not a shadow to be seen by the time we reached the living room. Ashton halted in the hallway briefly before glancing at the whole house fiercely.

I saw through his intention and warned, "Ashton, you're dead if you dare bully Gregory. As a father, aren't you embarrassed to hold a grudge against your own son?"

Chapter 1554

Ashton laughed at my warning. "You don't understand. This is between men," he said as he took off his coat.

I shrugged. "I truly can't understand how a man can bully the young."

"What's happening here?" Cameron asked with concern. She thought we were arguing.

“It’s nothing. Just something about the kids.” Ashton ended the discussion before it could continue further.

I shook my head resignedly and rolled my eyes at him when I caught his gaze. His authoritarianism and chauvinism are obvious in his actions, yet he continues to deny them. Men!

Having experienced getting his full name called by Ashton, Gregory didn’t come out of his room for dinner. Instead, he locked himself in the study. Even Audrey couldn’t get him out.

After several futile attempts by the maid, Ashton got up from his seat and strode toward the stairs.

I recognized that look. He was about to use force.

“Wait,” I called urgently, following behind him. “I’ll call him down. You stay right behind me.”

When I first met Gregory, I thought Ashton was stressing him out too much. That kind of absolute obedience and expectation to execute every order without fail is too inappropriate for a six-year-old child.

I can understand Ashton’s hope for Gregory to shoulder all his burdens. However, I hope Gregory can understand he has another parent he can relax with.

I soon arrived at the study with Ashton.

Knock! Knock!

“Gregory, can I come in?” I asked after knocking on the door twice.

A child's opinion should always be respected.

However, there was no response from within.

Shortly after, I heard footsteps approaching the other side of the door. "Mommy, don't worry about me. You can eat first. I should be punished for disrespecting Daddy earlier."

He was merely joking and agreeing with my opinion. How did it escalate to this?

Ashton was too cautious and strict on matters related to Gregory.

"Gregory, I want to come in and talk to you. Can you let me in?"

Another silence followed.

I spun around, narrowing my eyes at Ashton as though telling him that I was the one in charge of educating the children.

Just as I was about to give up, the door opened from inside.

Gregory gave me a glance, then noticed Ashton behind me. He looked down immediately and walked out of his room with his head down.

I bent down so that I was at his eye level and grabbed his arms. "Are you not hungry? Your sister is not eating because you're not there. You don't want her to starve herself now, do you?" I said with a gentle smile.

Gregory shook his head and muttered, "I don't want that. But it was my fault, so I need to be punished."

I pondered briefly, then said in a somber tone, "Yes. You were in the wrong."

Gregory lowered his head even further.

"And do you know what you did wrong?" I asked.

"I shouldn't have disrespected Daddy." Gregory pressed his lips into a thin line. "I can't say Daddy is wrong."

"Hmm... Then does that mean you think your daddy was right and Mommy was wrong?"

"No." Gregory raised his head. "That's not what I meant. I..."

In the end, the rims of his eyes reddened.

My heart melted at his expression. I quickly pulled him into my arms and comforted him, "Don't be upset, Gregory. You're not in trouble here. You should insist on your opinions and express them if you're confident that you're right. We, as parents, are not always in the right. We can be wrong at times and make mistakes. Always remember to improve and become a better version of yourself. You made a judgment today and expressed your opinion to support me, so you deserve a compliment. Okay?"

Gregory sniffled, suppressing the tears welling up. He lifted his head from my chest and asked, "Really? Then is Daddy wrong?"

He sneaked a peek at Ashton. Catching Ashton's serious expression, he skittishly snapped his gaze back down.

"You and your daddy were both wrong." I shook my head and pursed my lips. "Your daddy was wrong for being too stubborn and unwilling to accept another family member's opinion, while you were wrong because you disrespected him. You know, your daddy and I have tried long and hard to bring you and Audrey into this world. To protect every one of us, he has suffered a lot. He's quick-tempered, but he's a man who shoulders his responsibility. Don't you think a man like that is worthy of respect?"

Gregory nodded his head seriously. "Yes, he is."

Seeing that he understood the gist of it, I continued to guide him patiently, "Then is it right for you to compare your daddy to a fascist in the car today?"

"No." Gregory shook his head, sincerity in his eyes.

I let out a breath, then chuckled. "So what should you do next?"

Gregory pondered for a moment. He looked up at Ashton and pouted. "I'm sorry, Daddy. I shouldn't have called you a fascist. I was wrong. Can you forgive me?"

He caught on quickly. As expected, it's easier to communicate with a precocious child.

I stood up, sighing in relief.

With a hard look on his face, Ashton casually grunted an acknowledgment, showing that he accepted Gregory's apology.

However, he was not going to let him off so easily.

Perhaps Ashton had guessed my intention as he turned to leave.

I reached for his arm with a playful smile. "Mr. Fuller, shouldn't you be an example for your child?"

I was winking at him madly. There was no way he could have missed my hints.

He frowned at me, then locked his gaze with mine briefly and finally gave in.

Schooling his expression, he bowed his head and apologized in a low voice, "I was also in the wrong. Gregory, forgive me, will you?"

I couldn't suppress my laughter at his embarrassed look.

Gregory's eyes were wide and sparkling. His entire face had lightened up. "I forgive you, Daddy."

Ashton pursed his lips awkwardly. After a moment of silence, he headed downstairs.

Gregory blinked, wondering if he had said something wrong. "Is Daddy not happy?"

I draped an arm around his shoulder with a smile and whispered, "He's just embarrassed to admit his mistake. You have to keep it a secret."

"Okay." Gregory's lips formed a little O at my explanation. He placed his finger over his lips and made a shush gesture.

Two days after the incident.

Our plan that day was to meet up with the couple who adopted Shaun, but we received word that Simone had attempted to commit suicide by knocking her head against the wall. Having no choice, we excused ourselves and left urgently.

Simone's head was already wrapped with layers of bandages when we arrived. Despite the thick layers of bandages, there was still blood seeping through them.

She had lost her usual dignified look. Her hair was untied, and they fell messily to her shoulders. She was lying immobile on the ground with half of her body leaning against the wall like a homeless beggar on the verge of death.

Meanwhile, Nicolas was still tied to a chair. The speed of water dripping from the pipe above his head had increased. The droplets were hitting his face so quickly that he couldn't even open his eyes.

After we stood there for a while, Simone opened her eyes laboriously. She began to crawl toward us when she noticed our presence.

Shocked by her sudden movement, I quickly took a few steps back. Ashton immediately came up in front to shield me and she used that opportunity to grab onto him.

"Ashton, son, please give me some water. I haven't had water for a couple of days. Please have mercy on me..."

Her unkempt appearance and her indecipherable mumble were dirtier than a beggar's.

A memory of the first time I saw Simone crossed my mind. She was beautiful, young-looking. Some even called her an ageless beauty.

But now, the face, which she had spent thousands and thousands on, was filled with lines and wrinkles. Her eyes were empty and lifeless, which showed that she didn't have much time left on her clock.

Chapter 1556

Who could bear not to give in to an elderly's wishes when she was begging so pitifully?

However, Ashton was an exception. He merely snorted at her, then pushed her away with his leg. He crossed the room toward Nicolas, who couldn't even open his eyes with the water dripping on him.

Simone, unwilling to give up, wanted to crawl over to him to beg again, but her attempt was halted by the guards standing by. I quickly followed after Ashton once I was sure that the bodyguards had held Simone down.

I feared Ashton wouldn't get any results since Nicolas had a strong mental fortitude. I thought he would be able to hold out.

However, I had underestimated the fear of having water dripping onto one's face for a long time. That fear would unconsciously destroy one's will.

As I neared Nicolas, with a slight bend of my body, the first thing I saw was his wide-open eyes filled with terror.

My heart started to pound from fear. My hand instinctively settled over my chest, trying to keep myself calm.

Not sure if it was from the endless water dripping onto his face, but Nicolas couldn't shut his eyes. Having been soaked in the water for a long time, his face was starting to bloat. The water would drip directly onto his eyeballs and that was the main cause of his fear. Even when Ashton and I came into his line of sight, he had no response.

I couldn't bear to look at his twisted expression. I flinched and moved aside.

Ashton's face was still devoid of any emotion. He looked down at Nicolas and said indifferently, "You silently acknowledged when Nicolas abandoned me and left me to fend for myself. When he laid his hands on me and my children, you feigned ignorance. He even killed off the last line of the Fullers who had raised me, and yet, there was not a peep from you. Do you think you're worthy of being called a good wife and mother?"

His words were directed at Simone despite the sharp gaze he had fixed on the unresponsive Nicolas.

Ashton was right. Even the law would punish those with omission charges.

As Nicolas' wife, Simone had countless opportunities to urge him to stop his bad deeds. Even if her attempts proved futile, she could have at least reminded him of the consequences of his actions, and that could have saved many lives. Yet, she never tried doing anything. She pretended not to know about Nicolas' merciless torture and allowed him to seize lives brutally, corrupting his own humanity. She did nothing and everything.

Perhaps they had been a couple for so long that she had unconsciously considered him to be her God. And that exact ugly, twisted perception of considering others' lives to be nothing had allowed her to accept Nicolas' actions naturally.

Simone opened her cracked lips and begged in a hoarse voice, "You're right. I'm not worthy. I was wrong. I'll change. I'll make sure to persuade your father. So please, let us go. Please let your father go. Have mercy. Your father has always been an arrogant person, so it will be difficult for him to admit his mistakes. Let me apologize on his behalf. I'll apologize for all of his mistakes. Is that okay, son? He hasn't said a word since last night. He'll die if this goes on. You can't be so cruel, son..."

She hadn't had a single drop of water for the past few days, but despite her parched throat, she had managed to croak out those words. While some of her words were indecipherable, she persisted, hoping for mercy and forgiveness.

In the face of death, nobleness and decency meant nothing. The virtues Nicolas had upheld so religiously couldn't even be used in exchange for a break. He had destroyed many lives, including Ashton's, for those exact virtues.

A woman's howling voice echoed throughout the dungeon; the dark environment became even more depressing.

With both his hands tucked in his pockets, Ashton ordered his men to release them after a long silence. "Untie them."

Thinking she was finally free, Simone excitedly placed her palms together as if in prayer and bowed her head to the ground. "Thank you, son. Thank you. I knew you were not as cold-hearted as you—"

"Then you don't know me well enough," Ashton cut her off before she could finish. "Throw them onto the most bustling street. Have them kneel there and beg for food and water from those they look down upon. Let all of them have a look at the noble decency of the Hall family."

Chapter 1557

That kind of humiliation would undoubtedly deal a devastating blow to Nicolas. But, one could understand where Ashton was coming from if one empathized with the hatred he had been keeping in him.

The man who gave him life had wanted to take it back, but he had luckily managed to escape and survive to this date.

He didn't owe his life to either Nicolas or Simone. But he would pay them back a hundredfold for all the humiliation, lies, and contempt he had suffered from them.

Soon, the bodyguard filed into the room and untied Nicolas.

Nicolas lay on the ground, immobile, his eyes wide open. They would've thought he was dead if it wasn't for his moving chest.

Simone immediately broke free from the bodyguard's hold and crawled over to him. "Nicolas, answer me! Say something, Nicolas!"

The room was silent, other than their breathing.

After a short pause, the bodyguards continued to carry them both outside.

Ashton's car was right behind the van transporting Simone and Nicolas. Once he had reached the bustling street, he pulled the car to a stop at an area with a clear, wide-angle of the square.

It was precisely in the middle of lunch hour. People were moving about everywhere. The majority were white-collars and the elites.

The black van stopped at the most crowded square. Over a dozen bodyguards carried Simone and Nicolas down from the van and to the middle of the square. Without any hesitation, they dropped the two onto the ground. Then they spun around and left.

The people at the square stared as the black van sped away, leaving the worn-looking couple in the middle of the square.

It was lunch break, so crowds of white-collars were moving about hastily, hoping to grab a bite at their favorite restaurant. They were used to the beggars filling every corner of the street, so they didn't even spare them a glance.

Simone kneeled on the ground and begged every passerby for help, "Please help us call an ambulance."

"Please give us some water, sir. I know you're a kind man. I haven't had any water for three days. I'm going to die soon."

"Miss. Please help us, miss. I beg you, please..."

"I'm begging you with my knees on the ground. Please help us..."

Finally, a few spectators stopped to look, and slowly a crowd circled them.

Someone recognized Nicolas. "Isn't this guy Nicolas Hall, the world-class psychology professor who came back from overseas a few years back?"

"That woman is his wife. But how did they get those injuries? Maybe they have done something bad, and the victims' families took revenge?"

"Should we call the police? We can't just let them die."

"Are you crazy? Don't you watch TV? If anyone was thrown here, someone must be keeping watch around. If you dare help them, you and I will have to face their wrath. Besides, I've seen many of these

people. Their greed knows no bounds. If they got their hands on you, they would waste your time and you would be late for work.”

And so, those who had wanted to help immediately had that thought crossed out.

Never had Nicolas imagined that these average people he had always looked down upon would decide on his life and death with just a few simple words.

The crowd in the square all fell into silence. Only the sounds of Simone’s cry and the advertisement jingle playing on the huge LED screen could be heard. And soon her hoarse cry for help was swallowed by the loud jingle.

For the white-collars working from nine to five, time was of the essence. It was generous of them to pause and watch. Slowly, the crowd surrounding Simone and Nicolas began to disperse.

They left without even a glance back. They probably wouldn’t even remember seeing Simone and Nicolas in the square.

The people who merely stared on and passed by without any sympathy couldn’t help but focus on their lives more than anything else. They were merely pawns for those who stood at the top of the hierarchy.