

# When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1773-1777

## Chapter 1773 Pedestal

"True." Nathaniel turned his head to face the front again. "Gregory is like me. He should spend more time improving himself."

Gregory stared at us, seemingly realizing what was going on. Before I could stop him, he said, "Uncle Nathaniel, can you promise that you won't let Mommy get hurt?"

"Of course," Nathaniel replied. "I always stick to my promise."

Gregory nodded vigorously and hummed, "Okay."

I then quickly crouched down and held his arm before saying, "Daddy's not around, so Gregory's our big boy at home. I'm going to go out with Uncle Nathaniel to deal with some stuff now, so can you take care of your siblings?"

Gregory stared into my eyes for two seconds before replying confidently, "Yes. Audrey and I will be waiting for Mommy to come home for dinner."

I stiffened, knowing that he was telling me to come home to them.

"Got it. I'll be back as early as I can," I said as I reached out to pinch his soft cheeks. I knew my son was smart enough to know what was going on.

"Not necessarily." Nathaniel was impatient, so after saying that, he walked off.

I had reassured Gregory earlier, but when the boy heard Nathaniel's words, he drew his brows together worriedly.

"Gregory, look at me." I quickly patted his cheeks to catch his attention. "If I say I'm coming back, I will. Do you believe in Mommy?"

Gregory visibly hesitated. Nevertheless, it seemed like he knew he could not make me stay, so he reluctantly nodded. "Okay."

Furthermore, to not worry me, he put on a smile on his face and said, "Mommy, go now. You can come back earlier if you leave now. It's fine even if you come back late. I'll make sure Audrey doesn't kick up a fuss."

"Thank you, sweetie." Moved, I kissed his forehead before steeling myself and rushing after Nathaniel.

Nathaniel was a man who changed his mind quickly; I had to go through my plan before he changed his mind again.

When I got into the car, Nathaniel was looking at his WhatsApp. The moment he saw me, he kept his phone away.

"Overprotecting a kid doesn't necessarily help them," Nathaniel commented as he looked to the front, expressionless.

So, what he means is that children should be among people who scheme all the time? So Gregory should learn to be cold-blooded like the Halls and become a menace to the peaceful society?

His words reminded me of my first meeting with Ashton's biological father; they both enjoyed preaching.

Self-centeredness was what was written in Nathaniel's bones. It was impossible to change him in such a short amount of time, so I could not outright disagree with him. Instead, I huffed out, "If you keep looking down on everything I do, you'll never be able to truly fall for someone."

"This is just education for children. It has nothing to do with love," Nathaniel replied, unfazed.

"Of course it does!" I turned around to look at him. "You're the one who chose a woman with children. I'm but an ordinary woman, and that's a fact you can't change. Love is fair. If you want to fall for me, please step down from your pedestal and start living like a normal person! But of course, you're the one who started this game. If you want to add on a rule that states that you get to interpret anything however you like and reject my suggestion, then there's nothing I can do. I can only wait for my doom."

With that said, I turned around to look out of the window, not wanting to engage in a talk with him anymore.

I could sense Nathaniel staring at me for a long time, but I knew that I could not relent. Hence, I never once turned back to him.

The car came to a stop by a port. We then changed to a yacht. Two hours later, we reached an island in the west.

The moment I stepped out of the yacht, I supported myself by leaning against a rock and began retching.

Beside me, nothing good came out of Nathaniel's mouth. "You used to not have motion sickness. Is your health getting lousier the older you become?"

### **Chapter 1774 Factory**

Suppressing my nausea, I straightened up and side-eyed him. "Yes, that's right. My health isn't the only one getting lousier; my temper is too. You better pray to God that you won't fall in love with me, or else I'm going to make your life a living hell."

Hearing that, Nathaniel wiped away the smile on his face and uttered, "I don't believe in gods."

At that, he left me alone and walked further into the nameless island.

I gritted my teeth as I watched him go. Maybe the only god in his world is himself. Good. As long as I have my hand around his heart, it'll be easy for me to destroy him. But I won't stop there. That's not even a tenth of what he had done to the Fuller family and us. When that day comes, I'll make him pay ten times what he has done to us.

The sea breeze caressed my face and disrupted my train of thoughts. However, it lessened my symptoms of motion sickness. When I noticed that Nathaniel was only a few steps away from the car that had come to pick us up, I rushed over before I had any time to compose myself.

It seemed like Nathaniel was well-respected on the island. As we drove down the road, almost everyone was bowing and smiling at our car.

The smiles of the villagers were genuine, but the person beside me did not react as if he had seen it thousands of times.

It felt like I was on a tour with a god. The god—Nathaniel—needed to do nothing but silently enjoy the love that the villagers gave him. It was as if his presence alone was already a blessing to them.

Right then, my heart raced, and I looked away from the villagers. I did not know whether I should describe them as foolish or naive.

Soon, we arrived at the largest factory on the island. The workers there must have been pre-informed, for they were standing in a line outside, waiting to welcome us.

All of them were wearing blue uniforms, and they were all young, energetic people. Like the generations before them, it seemed like all they needed was an order before they began working until the sun went down.

“Welcome, Mr. Hall!”

Both of us came down from the car as they greeted us enthusiastically. However, Nathaniel did not stop to talk to his admirers. Instead, he walked past the crowd emotionless with a managerial-looking young man and entered the factory. I had to follow him closely so that I would not be pushed to the side by the workers.

The assembly line in the factory continued its usual routine, seemingly undisturbed by our arrival. Perhaps it was because the employees there were all well-trained enough to not do anything out of the place while they were working.

However, I noticed something odd. Regardless of whether it was the group of people outside welcoming us, the workers at the assembly line, or even the supervisors, they were all young men.

I could not believe that I could not find a single woman in a factory of that size.

Even as I stepped into the elevator, I was ruminating about whether or not I had somehow missed out on seeing the female employees. Right then, the walkie-talkie in front of me buzzed, and I raised my head. Then, I saw a flash of white on the screen that had been showing the floor number earlier before the display turned into a scanning window.

The manager who had led us in then leaned closer. It only took a second for the words—successful recognition—to appear on the screen.

Just as I was looking around and waiting for the elevator to go up, loud groaning sounds came from behind me. Then, it was the feeling of falling as the elevator began moving downward.

Almost a minute later, the elevator slowly stopped. When we stepped out, I noticed a fork that branched out into three tunnels. Each of the paths was in complete darkness, so I could not see where it led to. Furthermore, we were underground, so it was humid. It only made the darkness of the paths even creepier.

Right then, Nathaniel turned to look at me. A smile that did not reach his eyes appeared on his face as he said, “Maybe you’ll change your impression of me after seeing my factory.”

As if, I thought as I frowned at him. “I’ve seen it, but nothing’s changing. I’m sorry to disappoint you.”

## Chapter 1775 Going Underground

Instead of getting angry, Nathaniel chuckled and looked toward the front instead. Then, he clapped.

In the next second, a rhythmic clicking sound came from the dark paths before the row of lights slowly turned on, starting from the ones closest to us. They lit up the concrete path, and at the end of the path, a steel door slowly opened to reveal a whole new world to me.

Who would have ever thought that there would be a factory deep underground which was identical to the one above ground?

Despite myself, I walked toward the center path and into the illuminated world. When I locked eyes with one of the employees, I knew I was not hallucinating.

Perhaps a better way was to say the underground factory was Nathaniel's real factory. Here, what they manufactured was not unnamed parts but ice.

Not only had that man make himself a god to others, but he had also created a world for himself.

The place I was in was meant to be a bomb shelter, but he had made it into a drug factory.

On the conveyor belts were packets and packets of crystals. I could not help but think about the ferocious look Joseph had when he was controlled by ice.

What was on the belts were not mere chemicals but lives; human lives.

“Are you surprised?” came Nathaniel’s voice beside me. “Even Citraïne’s largest group of drug dealers have bare minimum factories. They can’t exist anywhere, so they’re usually shabby places. But look, the place I’ve made here is essentially a masterpiece!”

The way he was gleeful about his factory made me tighten my fists to hold myself back from wanting to destroy the entire place.

“What about the people? Don’t you know how many lives and families you’d ruin by creating so much ice?” I asked.

A cold look appeared in Nathaniel’s eyes as he muttered, completely unperturbed by my words, “Everyone has to pay the price for their choice. Everyone’s the same. It’s just that the strongest will survive.”

“But they shouldn’t even have this choice in their life!” I yelled out, arguing with him as fury overwhelmed my mind. However, a second later, I belatedly realized I was only wasting my breath, so I buried my face in one hand and bitterly laughed.

“Don’t do that, Scarlett. I’m not as fragile as you think I am,” Nathaniel abruptly said as though he was teasing me.

Calm down, Scarlett Stovall. I kept repeating that to myself in my mind. Only when you’re calm can you continue to fight with this heartless creature.

It was that moment I thought about Ashton. Did he come here too? Is that why he decided to strike a deal with Nathaniel? But fate plays cruel jokes on people sometimes.

Just as the last thought flashed past my mind, a faraway elevator slid open.

The pale man who had to be supported by Joseph to stay upright was none other than Ashton.



His breathing was heavy, and it seemed like he had sustained an injury to his left chest. Blood had stained a large section of his clothes, and when he lifted his head, our eyes met. However, he only spent a second looking at me before he turned to glare at Nathaniel.

Joseph was hurt as well. That man was wearing a thin dress shirt with dirt and blood coating it. He looked much more disheveled than Ashton, but his glare was much more feral than Ashton's. Like Ashton, his glare was directed at Nathaniel.

Staring at them ached my heart so badly to the point I could barely take in any breaths. A beat later, I choked out, "What happened?"

Ashton pressed down hard on his wound before forcing a sneer onto his face. "Yes, that's what I want to ask too. What's going on, my dear brother?"

Nathaniel glanced at him before half-heartedly gasping. "Oh my, did the cops find you when you were doing the deal? Why are you careless?"

Please. Did you even try to put on a convincing act? It's as if you're scared that no one would realize you're the one behind this.

## **Chapter 1776 Ashton And Joseph**

A chill ran down my spine, and I abruptly recalled Nathaniel messaging someone when I went into the car a few hours ago.

Now that I thought about it, I realized that he had planned for everything. Bringing me to the factory for a tour was a lie, and having Ashton intervene in the business was a lie too. He wanted to use this opportunity to make me see Ashton hurt for his choice.

So that was what he meant when he said that everyone had to pay the price for their choice.

His words were not only directed to the people on the island but also to me.

I was foolish enough to presume that Nathaniel would stick to the rules and protect the man I love; I was foolish to assume that Nathaniel would be too preoccupied with the game to care about Ashton. As it turned out, I had underestimated how cruel he could be.

He wanted to play the game, but he also wanted to kill Ashton.

What do I do now?

My hands shook. Before I could think of anything, I slapped Nathaniel.

Smack!

At that very moment, the world fell silent.

One observant employee who witnessed the scene dropped his jaw and nearly made a mistake in his work. Despite recollecting himself, he could not wipe away the look of shock on his face.

No one thought that their god—Nathaniel Hall—would be treated in that way.

Nathaniel's face was turned to the side by the force of the slap, and he did not turn his head back as he went still for a moment.

When the numbness of my palm traveled up my arm, I finally sobered up a little.

Oddly enough, the most genuine reaction was my only way of getting away with things when I was around Nathaniel.

I nervously gulped before shooting him a glare. "You deserved this."

It was then Nathaniel came back to his senses and turned to me. As he grimly stared at me, he cracked his stiff neck.

If I were to let my fear appear on my face at that moment, I would lose. Thus, I gritted my teeth and steeled myself for what I was going to say next. "The game is over. I'm not going to play this anymore. It's a waste of my time to play a game with someone like you—someone who has no principles and won't even stick to the rules."

"When have I not stuck to the rules? I promised that I would leave Ashton alive. Is he not alive right now?" Nathaniel narrowed his eyes as he studied me. "So can I assume that you've made a mistake slapping me?"

For a moment, I was so taken aback by his words that no words formed in my head.

However, Nathaniel did not urge me for a quick reply. Instead, he abruptly reached out his hand to grab my chin.

He then leaned his face closer to mine. For a second, I thought his breath was as cold as he was. "Since you've done that, you'll have to endure the punishment. Now, coax me in front of everyone else."

I thrashed, but that only made him tighten his grip on me. A pang of pain shot up into the top of my skull, and I was forced to relent and mutter, "What do you want?"

"It's simple." Nathaniel smiled. "Kiss me. Hug me."

I frowned when I heard that before silently letting my eyes flick toward Ashton.

At that, Nathaniel tightened his grip and used pain to force me to pay attention to him. "I've fulfilled many of your requests, and you should do the same. You shouldn't reject me. Otherwise, I'll have to use another way to resolve this misunderstanding."

With that said, he turned to grin at Ashton and Joseph with a homicidal look in his eyes.

It was right then I realized what kind of situation Ashton was trapped in. He would sacrifice everything to save the one he loved, and so would I.

"Okay." I dropped my arms and let them hang beside me before closing my eyes. After a heavy sigh, I continued, "I'll do as you say, so let go of me."

Instantly, Nathaniel released his grip on me and started caressing me gently instead. "I love the way you are right now."

What way? The way I'm forced to submit to him even though I feel nothing but hatred? The way I have to let him order me around as if I'm his maid? Forget it. I can't always have the upper hand in this. That'll only raise his suspicion.

“Let’s start then.” Nathaniel patted my cheeks before retracting his hand. He then hunched over and waited to receive his reward from me.

### **Chapter 1777 Another Slap**

There was no use crying over spilled milk, but I could not help but glance at the silent Ashton. All of a sudden, a thought popped into my head. The moment Nathaniel closed his eyes, I raised my hand to swing it downward again, leaving a clear palm print on his face.

Finally, Nathaniel was infuriated. He immediately grabbed my neck and hissed, “You’re pushing your luck!”

“Mrs. Fuller!” Joseph tried to rush over to rescue me, but after a loud bang, he collapsed onto his knees.

At some point in time, Nathaniel had fished out a gun and shot Joseph’s calf.

By the time I came back to my senses, the warm muzzle of the gun was already pressed against my forehead.

He won’t pull the trigger. That was what I guessed.

However, at the same time, I realized that Nathaniel’s choices were always different from an ordinary person’s choices. That bullet was something I would not be able to avoid.

Bang!

“Ah!”

Before I could think about what I should do next, Nathaniel swung his gun to the side and shot the other leg of Joseph, who was trying to clamber to his feet again. Blood pooled underneath him, and he could only support himself to a partially upright position with his hands.

Perhaps he was afraid that he would infuriate Nathaniel. Joseph bit down hard on his lip as he shook from the pain, forcing down the whimpers that threatened to escape past his lips. He endured it to the point where even the veins on his temples popped.

Meanwhile, Nathaniel was bloodthirsty. He slowly shifted the gun to point it at Ashton, who was already injured.

I have to stop this.

Before anything else passed through my mind, I fixed my eyes on the gun in Nathaniel’s hand.

In the next second, I grabbed his hand and pulled to make the muzzle point at my left shoulder instead. Then, I pressed down on Nathaniel’s index finger and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

It was too late for Nathaniel to stop me. The bullet buried itself into my flesh, and it felt like I had fallen on a pit of spikes. The agonizing pain nearly rendered me unconscious.

Forcing the pain to rest at the back of my mind used up all my strength. I could not gain control over my body anymore, and I gradually lost balance and consciousness.

Even though I knew that the bullet had not hit anything vital, I could not help but look toward Ashton longingly as my vision blurred.

He's looking at me.

Upon registering that, I let go of everything and fell.

The last bit of memory I had before passing out was a tug on my waist.

My eyes rolled in their socket, and I realized that I was alive. Instantly, I opened them.

From the decor of the space around me and the scent of disinfectants in the air, I deduced that I was in the hospital.

I then moved my fingers and pinched my thigh. The pain told me that I was not in a dream—that I was still alive. Soon, the sharp pain on my shoulder sobered me up for good.

I won. What about Ashton?

In a rush to find out the answer to that, I pulled away from the blanket and struggled upright on the bed despite the pain. Just as I stuck on a foot and before I could put it onto the floor, a familiar low voice above my head said, "Are you that eager to die with Ashton?"

Ashton's dead? No. He must be lying. If he killed Ashton, then he wouldn't let me alive either.

"Of course." I lifted my head to glare daggers at him. "I live only for him. If he dies, there's no meaning for me to keep living. You can save me once, but you won't be able to be there in time forever. As long as the opportunity comes to me, I'll definitely follow in Ashton's footsteps."

“Do you think I care?” Nathaniel questioned, his voice devoid of emotions. The icy and prideful look on his face made him seem like a grim reaper who just came from hell.

Of course you do, I thought. Otherwise, you wouldn't do all these to keep me alive. Soon, you will know how terrifying one person's intense emotions can be.

“I know you don't care, so...” Halfway through my sentence, my eyes flickered toward the television stand. A second later, I jerked upright and slammed my head at it.

Although I managed to avoid its sharp corner, the force of the collision made the world spin around me. I slumped against the stand and collapsed.