

When There Is Nothing Left But Love

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Chapter 223

He nodded with a sigh. "You're safe. That's what matters." He looked down at my bloody feet. A frown crossed his face. "You walked all the way here?"

I nodded, too, my head hanging low. "My phone's not with me, and I don't have any money. I can't get a taxi!"

"Can't you call me to get you?" He closed his eyes in frustration and then sighed. "Forget it. I didn't think this through."

He led me to the sofa and went to get the first aid kit. Then he knelt on the ground, placed my foot on his knee, and started cleaning the wound.

When the cotton swab came into contact with the wound, I winced from the pain and sank back into the sofa. He let out a loose sigh. "It'll be over soon!"

To reduce my pain, he blew on it several times while applying the ointment. I got a little distracted seeing him at work.

I should not be staying with him. Sally was right. If word got out that there was something between us, the Fullers and the White family would be subjected to public opinion. The outcome would be much more horrifying than what we imagined.

"What's on your mind?" He said, looking my way as he kept the first aid kit.

I retracted my feet as I watched him put away the kit. And then I watched him sit next to me. I watched him pour me a glass of water.

There was a pause before I answered, "Marcus, you... don't have to come here again!"

He paused, his dark eyes gazing at me. "What do you mean?"

"Thank you for taking care of me all this time. If there's anything you need in the future, I won't hesitate to help you. But for now, Aunt Sally's right. You and I are but a single man and a single woman. We have such a close relationship... and if anyone with ill intentions

starts to spread rumors, both the Fullers and the White family will be dragged into the mess."

I should not have said those words. I should not have said them so bluntly.

But what had been said could not be unsaid.

His face hardened, looking rather grim. "What are you worried about?"

I pinched my own palms as I spoke, "I owe you too much. We can't keep going like this!"

"I don't care!" He exclaimed as he looked at me with mixed emotions. "Scarlett, if you're worried about what other people will say, then I can stay away from you. But know that you only have one other option, and that is going back to Ashton. Otherwise, I can't leave you alone here."

I kept my head low as I muttered. "Don't worry. I'll be fine. I... can't deal with pain, and I'm afraid of heights!"

Even if I considered suicide, I might not have the courage to commit it. I was awfully afraid of pain.

He was still staring at me, his eyes unreadable. "There's no way to hide it. I can never hide it now!"

I looked at him in alarm, not understanding what he said, "What does that mean?"

He shook his head, chuckling. "Let's talk about it when you feel better. Right now, the Independence Day celebration is coming to an end. I'll be real busy soon. I won't have as much time to spend with you. You'll have to take care of yourself from this point forward."

I nodded. Exhaustion and the desire for sleep were beginning to creep on me. The medicine I had taken must have come into effect.

I rose and announced, "I'm going to rest!" Then, off to the bedroom, I went.

I had a dreamless sleep that night!

It was several days later when I learned that Ashton had been coming to the residence. Because my emotions were still unstable, Marcus hardly let me go out.

I believed he really understood me inside and out. He knew how to keep my mood in check. And he certainly got busy after Independence Day.

On the other hand, I had started working for the White Corporation. Marcus had arranged for me to work in project management. Since I just started, there were many aspects of the job that I knew nothing about. Therefore, he arranged an assistant to help me.

Working on projects was different from other jobs. It was almost impossible to have fixed working hours because I had just started. Hence, I usually kept myself busy until late at night.

Benjamin had been admitted to the hospital because of a stroke, so Marcus got the assistant to take me home.

These days, I could manage well on my own. He had little to worry about me.

Lindsay, my assistant, dropped me off at the residential entrance. Before leaving, she told me, "Ms. Stovall, Mr. White wanted me to give you this. He also reminds you to eat well."

I nodded as I took over the documents from her and got out of the car. It was only a five-minute walk from the entrance to the residential building. I walked slowly, thinking about the new project along the way.

Marcus already had a company abroad, but for now, he might prefer to develop domestically. Both were tech companies, which made me think of OrbitTech in J City. They had excellent technicians.

The quality of their products was guaranteed too. The one thing I worried about was their management issue. The White Corporation was a listed company. It would be a wise choice if the company could acquire OrbitTech.

I was very engrossed in my thoughts when the phone rang. It was Jackson.

I had been calling him almost every day for some time now, but I could never get through. Macy should be going into labor anytime soon. I wondered how they were doing.

Now that he had finally called, I quickly picked it up. "Jackson, how's Macy? How are you two doing? Has she delivered the baby?"

On the other end of the phone, Jackson probably got caught off guard when he heard my voice. There was a long pause before he eventually spoke. "She's fine. The baby's fine. It's a girl. So... where are you? How's your baby?"

My heart ached. I was beginning to feel sick. I took a detour to the nearest resting spot and sat down. "I'm fine. Where are you? Why can't I contact you at all? Where's Macy? Why can't I get through her phone?"

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"She's doing great. She's in postpartum confinement now and is caring wholeheartedly for her child. That's why she probably didn't have time to answer your call." I had a nagging feeling that he sounded weird, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was.

So I replied, "Then where are you guys now?"

I could vaguely hear the voice of a kid crying over the phone. It brought tears to my eyes, and my heart clenched in pain

"We're still in the countryside. We'll come to visit you in K City once Macy is feeling better."

I quickly nodded and couldn't stop the feeling of happiness from welling up in me. At least Macy's child is doing good.

He was probably busy taking care of his child. That was why he hung up hastily after talking for a bit more.

As autumn approached, the temperature in K City dropped by the day. I already felt cold even though I had only been sitting outside for a while.

After taking a few steps, I stopped walking when I saw the familiar black Jeep with the car plate number JA888C on it. Ashton.

What is he doing here?

Instinctively, I turned and walked away.

However, I only managed to take a few steps when he grabbed hold of my arm. "When do you plan to stop hiding from me, Scarlett?"

My body froze, and I started to feel suffocated. "Let's get divorced, Ashton."

Not only was I running away from my problems, but I was also hiding from him. I just couldn't continue living with that man anymore.

Initially, I could accept the fact that he didn't love me. I could also tolerate the complicated relationship he had with Rebecca and the way they flirted with each other.

As long as I could keep the child, I was able to keep going. Even if he didn't love me, he would still love the child since it was his.

But now, I had lost our child, and I couldn't find a reason to stay with him anymore. I didn't want to lie to myself, nor did I want to go berserk whenever I saw him and Rebecca being intimate.

"Divorce?" Hurt flashed across his face as he added, "Must it end this way, Scarlett?"

I nodded. My face looked much calmer by then, but I was hurting inside. "I can't go on with you anymore, Ashton. I married you back then all because of my gratitude toward George for taking care of Grandma and me. I was willing to repay him at all costs. But now that I've gone through so much, I've already done my part. So just let me go now."

A cold smile appeared on his lips upon hearing that. "So you married me because you wanted to repay him?"

"Yes," I said with a nod.

Ashton's face turned ugly. "Well, since you married me to repay Grandpa, you should finish what you started by staying with me for the rest of your life. Anyway, I never planned to break up or leave you."

I was stunned by his words and was close to an emotional breakdown. "Can't you understand, Ashton? I hate you. I don't want to be with you, and I don't want to see you!"

He narrowed his dark eyes, hiding the pain in them. "Then get used to it slowly. Get your revenge since you hate me. The best way to take revenge is to pester me, isn't it?"

"You're crazy!" I broke down and screamed. "You'll get your karma when the time comes. I don't want to dirty my own hands."

With that said, I walked toward the door. He quickly followed suit. "Marcus wouldn't be able to take care of you forever. Go back with me!"

He grabbed my arm, but I didn't want him to touch me. I couldn't care less even if I fell down the stairs as the only thought in my mind was to push him away.

Realizing that he was falling backward, Ashton was afraid that I would be dragged along with him, so he quickly released my arm.

I watched expressionlessly as he collapsed onto the floor and turned to open the door before stepping into the elevator.

Once I was home, I quickly ate my medicine to control my emotions. Then, I got into bed and waited for sleep to come.

Suddenly, my phone rang, and I answered when I realized that it was Marcus calling, "Hello?"

"Remember to eat. Don't just go to sleep immediately." His words made me suspect if I was being spied on.

I couldn't stop myself from asking, "How did you know I was going to sleep?"

"Because I know you too well." He chuckled.

I bit my lips as I continue lying in bed. "I took my medicine earlier. Now I'm too lazy to move."

"Why did you take them all of a sudden?" His voice turned serious.

"I met Ashton downstairs a while ago," I said.

Since my emotions had been more stable these days, I didn't need to take my medicine anymore.

He kept silent for a moment before saying, "There's food in the fridge. At least eat a little before you sleep. Otherwise, you might not be able to fall asleep at night."

I nodded and took a glance at the clock. It was only around seven. After some thought, his words actually made sense. If I slept now, I might not be able to fall back asleep if I woke up at night.

I went into the kitchen to get something to eat once we hung up. Marcus must have expected that I would be too lazy to cook. Hence, he prepared a meal for me beforehand and left it in the fridge. All I needed to do was reheat it.

The medicine started to kick in after I took a few bites. I quickly went to bed and fell asleep soon after.

After some time, I was woken up by the sound of thunder, trembling from the cold when I opened my eyes. As thunder roared outside, I realized that I had forgotten to close the windows before going to bed, which explained how the cold rain invaded my room.

Fumbling around in the dark to get my phone, I looked at the time to find that it was only midnight. I couldn't help but frown. Now that I was awake, I might not be able to fall asleep anymore.

Then, I noticed that there were multiple missed call notifications shown on the phone screen. Even though there wasn't a caller ID, I knew that the familiar numbers belonged to Ashton.

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Irritated, I was about to turn off my phone when another call came in. I frowned as I answered the call, "Are you still not satisfied with how miserable I am now, Ashton? Do you want to see me die?"

"You know what I actually want, Scarlett. If I could stay by your side..." His voice was hoarse, and I could vaguely hear the sound of rain over the speaker.

Feeling more irked, I had a strong urge to hang up immediately, but he added, "I'm downstairs."

I was stunned. The next thing I knew, I was walking to the balcony. The moment I looked down, I saw Ashton standing in the rain by the lamppost downstairs.

Instantly, I was infuriated. "Are you crazy, Ashton?" Is he trying to torture himself by standing in the rain in the middle of the night?

But he chuckled. "You're angry. Does that mean you're worried about me?"

What the...

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He's crazy!

"You need to see a doctor, Ashton." I hung up after saying that, a wave of frustration rising in me.

It was still pouring outside, and it wasn't warm like the rain during summer. I was worried as he would definitely get sick if he stayed out there any longer.

After thinking about it, I gave Jared a call, but it went unanswered, so I called Joe. After some time, he finally picked up.

"What's wrong, Scarlett?"

I pursed my lips. "Ashton is harming himself at the residence near Central Park. You'd better come and get him if you don't want him to die. And please tell him that if he wants to die, he should do it far away from here. I don't want to watch him die. Thanks."

"What the hell! I knew you weren't a good person! You—" I turned off my phone before he could finish his sentence. Joe was known for having a sharp tongue, and I didn't want to hear him insult me.

There was no sign of the rain stopping anytime soon, but Ashton remained rooted to his spot nonetheless. Joe finally arrived to pick him up after half an hour.

I was too high up in the building to hear what they were talking about, but I watched as they fought for a little before they left.

After that, I drew the curtains shut and sat on the bed, knowing well that I wouldn't be able to sleep anymore.

The next day at dawn, I got out of bed and went straight to the company after washing up.

Marcus came early in the morning. When he saw that I wasn't in good spirits, he frowned and asked, "Didn't you sleep last night?"

I nodded. "Ashton was downstairs. It was so annoying."

His brows knitted together but said nothing else about it. He then changed the topic, "Did you read through the document I gave you yesterday?"

I froze immediately. It was all because of Ashton's sudden appearance that I forgot about my work. Without a choice, I replied truthfully, "I forgot."

Rendered speechless, he gave me a helpless smile. "There's a meeting that you have to attend later. You'll have to think on your feet since you didn't read the document."

Me?

Alright then!

I nodded and glanced at him. "What is it about?"

He got up and poured me a glass of water before telling his secretary to hand me my breakfast. "I'll talk you through it as you eat."

I was beginning to suspect that he was worried that I would starve to death. That was why he was always trying to feed me something.

I started to eat after taking a seat on the sofa. "Go on."

"It's about the research and development of new technology. White Corporation made a fortune by selling automotive and electrical appliances. A few years ago, when the market

for new technology blew up, many companies were trying to benefit from it. White Corporation managed to get a slice of the pie, mainly focusing on phones and computers. Currently, the company intends to dabble in the AI field. However, the IT Department of the company has been stumped. That's why we need to discuss whether or not we should continue pursuing AI technology. And if we do, how should we promote it? Besides, we would also need to hire a group of skilled technicians to work on the project."

I nodded before stuffing a few mouthfuls of bread into my mouth. "Are all the current technicians in the IT Department the same ones as before?"

He shook his head and said, "No. We spend a fortune to hire the best technicians to work for us every year. But we haven't managed to get any results so far."

"The meeting starts in an hour, right? Can I meet these people first?"

Marcus was stunned by my question, but he nodded nonetheless. Seeing that I was almost done eating, he got up and said, "Of course."

I followed him out of the office. White Corporation valued AI a lot and had reserved two floors just to do research in this field.

Since it was a research laboratory, the protocols for the entry and exit of staff were stringent. Marcus and I had to put on protective gear before going in.

I glanced around at the equipment around me but didn't really understand their usage, so I immediately went to meet the technicians.

Since there wasn't much time, we only talked for a little before Marcus and I had to return to the office.

"How was it? Do you have any afterthoughts?" he asked with a slight smile as he plopped down into his seat.

I only answered after giving it some thought, "Why are all the people you hired foreigners? And why do they have so much authority?"

He raised a brow. "So far, there aren't many great technicians in our country. Since they have the skills and qualifications, of course I have to give them more benefits."

"But have you ever thought about the fact that AI is being researched and studied by every country? What if the foreigners return to their own countries with these research results?" Although I knew that I might be wrong, I still couldn't help but worry about it. After all, we weren't the only ones who loved our own country.

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His brows were knitted tightly as he drummed the table with his fingers and only looked at me after a long time. "We've considered this possibility previously, but if we want to get

involved in the AI field, we need their help. Never hire the person you doubt and never doubt the person you hire."

Nodding, I took a glance at him. "If I can find a batch of elite local technicians and guarantee to make a breakthrough in the AI field, would you dare to give it a try?"

He froze for a moment before letting out a smile. "How can you be so sure?"

"I'm not, but I want to give it a shot!" If this project is successful, I'd probably have a way to go up against the Moore family.

After all, most of the Moore family's success in the business world was attributed to technology.

Marcus kept silent for a moment before he nodded. "Go ahead."

Almost all of the higher-ups of White Corporation were in the meeting room, including Sally. When she saw me, she furrowed her brows slightly, but her expression was back to normal almost immediately.

Marcus told me to take a seat, then got up to turn on the projector. "Let me introduce the person who just came in with me. This is Scarlett Stovall. I have appointed her as White Corporation's project director, and she will be in charge of the company's AI project from now on."

A commotion broke out in the meeting room in an instant. Someone questioned, "Mr. White, even though the project director's position is currently empty, White Corporation isn't like other small companies. Not anyone can take on this role. Besides, we're all here today to discuss if we should continue with the research on AI. We haven't even finished our discussion and yet you have already made a decision. Don't you think you're being a little hasty, Mr. White?"

Marcus nodded his head slowly and raised his brows. "Am I?" He smirked, showing his unruly side. "It seems like all of you are used to being overambitious. That's why you think the people you recommended are more competent, isn't it? This isn't a problem for me. If you feel that you have someone who is much more capable than Scarlett to take on this responsibility, you can make your recommendations anytime. My only goal is for AI to be introduced to our country's market within a year."

Someone replied, "Does that mean we won't be discussing whether we're continuing with the AI project?"

He nodded. "Yes. Within a year, if all of you decide that Scarlett isn't suitable to manage this project, you can recommend someone else. But I expect to see results in a year. Otherwise, don't waste my time."

"Alright!" Sally said. The soft demeanor she had at the White residence was nowhere to be seen, and she resembled a lady boss as she spoke. "We've already invested billions in this AI project after all. Not only that, but we've also spent so much time and energy on it, so of course it would be great news if Ms. Stovall is capable of producing the results we want. And if she isn't, we can just cancel this project."

For a second, the people in the meeting room exchanged glances with each other before they started to discuss among themselves. After a moment, someone finally said, "Since Ms. Fuller has said so, let's just give it a try. It would be great if we manage to achieve our goal. However, if we fail, half of White Corporation's assets will go to waste, and Ms. Stovall will have to compensate for that."

I got up and assured them, "If I can't make any progress with the AI project after a year, I will bear the losses that White Corporation suffered due to the project."

"Hah!" someone snorted. "Which prominent family are you from, Ms. Stovall? Did you come to White Corporation to experience life? White Corporation invests at least a billion per year in AI research. It's easy for you to say that you'll bear the losses for it. But the corporation will still be the one paying if you leave by then."

Unperturbed by his harsh words, I put on a faint smile. "I'm willing to hand over HiTech to you as collateral. If none of you believe me, we can sign a contract. In the case that our AI research doesn't make any progress after a year, then HiTech will be placed under the ownership of White Corporation through acquisition. How about it?"

Even though HiTech wasn't considered a big company, the new products they developed were hot sellers, and the source of Fuller Corporation's profit came mostly from HiTech.

Back when George put HiTech under my name, he wanted to make sure that Ashton and I would be entangled for the rest of our lives. If I wanted to get a divorce, I had to make sure that I wasn't the legal owner of the company anymore. But this process was extremely troublesome.

Everyone in the room began murmuring among themselves except for Sally. She glanced at me as she said, "From what I know, Ms. Stovall, even though you're the wife of Fuller Corporation's president, you don't have the rights over HiTech. Don't you think you're being a little too ambitious here?"

"You might not know this, Ms. Fuller, but while HiTech is indeed under the Fuller Corporation, George already arranged a lawyer to transfer the company to me before he passed on two years ago. To be precise, I'm the legal owner of HiTech. Although it is under the Fuller Corporation, it doesn't legally belong to the Fuller family."

Her face darkened, but she said nothing else.

All of them could not find anything to pick on after they heard what I said. If HiTech was under the White Corporation, there would be more technical resources available. At the same time, the company would rise to a whole new level.

