

When There Is Nothing Left But Love

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Chapter 265

Perhaps Stacey was right – the police officers were no match for the backings that were behind Felix.

With that being said, it would be close to impossible for a certain party to exert influence to such an extent in J City because it would take more than a fortune to get one's way around the law with ease.

"Mrs. Fuller, what a coincidence! I can't believe we get to meet again so soon!" Felix greeted me with a bright grin, concealing the despicable side of his which he had shown in the restaurant back then.

He seemed like a completely different person altogether. In fact, he appeared to be a well-educated gentleman who could carry himself politely in front of others.

I returned the favor and responded with a nod and a smile.

Since everyone had arrived, Thomas got himself engaged in a conversation with Ashton after he instructed the waiter to serve us our meal.

Most of their topics were regarding their work, including the operations of Fuller Corporation in J City. Thomas expressed AC Credit's intention to be Fuller Corporation's external audit for the upcoming quarter.

Ashton looked elsewhere and replied nonchalantly, "Mr. Lowe, my wife is the one in charge of most of the operation of Fuller Corporation in J City. Feel free to get in touch with her instead of me."

I couldn't comprehend the meaning behind Ashton's words because I wasn't given the task to oversee the operation of Fuller Corporation in J City.

Although the headquarter of Fuller Corporation had been relocated to K City, J City was one of the corporation's bases of operations. In short, I would never be given such an important role.

On one hand, Jared, who was about to finish his glass of wine, paused and looked at me when he heard Ashton's words. After he cast a skeptical glance at me, he regained his composure.

On the other hand, Thomas smiled and denoted, "I wouldn't have any idea of the change if you hadn't brought it up in front of me, Mr. Fuller! It turns out Ms. Stovall is the person in charge of Fuller Corporation nowadays!"

I peered at Ashton in the eyes in an attempt to figure out his motives, but my effort was to no avail.

However, since Ashton indicated he wanted me to engage in a conversation with Thomas, I was pretty sure the topic would revolve around the audit of the corporation.

The things that should be discussed had been brought to light since the last quarter, though. I looked at Thomas and initiated the conversation, stating, "Mr. Lowe, I'm not trying to boycott your company, but the incident that has occurred during the last quarter has brought about a huge loss for Fuller Corporation. As a result, I was no longer affiliated with the company. I will never allow myself to repeat the silly mistake twice."

"Mrs. Fuller, don't worry! I won't allow the same thing to happen twice either! In order to prove our sincerity, I have brought along Mr. Ludwick with me. He has always been in charge of Fuller Corporation's audits. Fuller Corporation is in good hands with him around." Thomas assured me everything would be fine as though he had been anticipating the occurrence of the conversation.

Judging by the tone of Thomas' words, I couldn't help but think Felix had a higher position in AC Credit.

When I turned around and looked at Felix, he responded with a bright grin and asserted determinedly, "Ms. Stovall, what happened was nothing but an accident. I assure you everything will be fine this time."

After much consideration, I turned and looked at Ashton while inquiring, "Can I turn down the audit request from Fuller Corporation?"

"Why? What's the reason behind it?" Ashton asked with his brows furrowed.

"I have no intention to get myself involved in such a nasty situation. Apart from that, I don't want to commit the same mistake twice." Most importantly, I was a member of White Corporation. If I were in charge of the said audit, things would end up miserably due to my ambiguous identity.

Ashton gave it a thought. A few seconds later, he told Thomas, "Mr. Lowe, I'm afraid the incident and the misunderstanding may have traumatized my wife. Allow me to make myself clear – AC Credit and Harrison Credit were given the task of auditing Fuller Corporation's financial statement. Although Harrison Credit was a relatively small firm, they did a great job while I was on the verge of bankruptcy due to AC Credit. Thankfully, things ended up well at the end of the day. Nevertheless, AC Credit was the reason my wife had to leave Fuller Corporation. Considering the factors that were mentioned above, I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I won't allow AC Credit to be in charge of Fuller Corporation's audit anymore."

Thomas and Felix were dumbfounded by Ashton's decision. "Mr. Fuller, I believe you're aware of the actual reason behind the incident that has occurred during the last quarter – our company might be one of the reasons the incident spiraled out of control, but we shouldn't forget about the underlying issues of Fuller Corporation."

"Mr. Lowe, does that mean you think AC Credit's neglect during the incident has nothing to do with it?" Ashton replied with a faint smirk.

When Thomas heard Ashton's question, his face turned pale and haggard.

I wouldn't lie, though; it was one of the most embarrassing meals I had ever had throughout my entire life.

After we finished our meal and returned to the car, Ashton stared at me with his abysmal pair of eyes and asked, "What do you have in your mind?"

I stopped looking out the window and had my eyes on Ashton instead. "Since you have no intention to acquire AC Credit's service, why would you invite them over?"

"Why don't you try to figuring it out?"

"Ashton, why do you always do that!" I responded with my lips pouted. It was very immature of him to ask them out just so he could get them back for the things they had done and humiliate them in front of me.

I was completely worn out and wasn't in the mood to carry on with the conversation we had after the feud. It wasn't necessary to get worked up over such a trivial incident either.

Initially, I would make a trip back to K City after taking a day's break.

I had the flight ticket ready, but I received a call from Stacey out of the blue. "Ms. Stovall, do you have some time for me?"

When I recalled the content of my conversation with Marcus on the day we signed the agreement with OrbitTech, I hesitated and asked, "What do you want from me?"

She started sniffing and murmured through the phone, "Ms. Stovall, I should have seen it coming, but I don't wish to be confined by the man for the rest of my life! Please spare me some of your time and allow me to tell you the things I have in mind!"

Since Ashton was not around, I was quite free. After much consideration, I gave in to her request and told her to meet me at Bridge's Court at Barbara Road.

She heaved a sigh of relief and told me she would be there on time.

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After I hung up the call, I got changed into a set of winter clothing and departed. By the time I reached the venue, Stacey was already there.

She put on an old-fashioned cashmere jacket and wrapped herself up. In order to conceal the bruises on her face, she had applied light make-up, yet they were still visible because she was heavily bruised.

"Why didn't you wait for me inside? It's cold outside." I couldn't help but ask when I caught her shivering while waiting for me outside of Bridge's Court.

"I-I have been waiting for you!" She responded with a sheepish grin, yet it could barely conceal the fact she had been having it tough. I decided to stop poking my nose into her business.

Bridge's Court wasn't the most premium eatery in town. A meal or two at Bridge's Court wouldn't take a toll on her financially at all because she had considerably high pay while she was affiliated with Fuller Corporation back in the day.

However, she was nowhere close to her prime anymore.

I wasn't aware of her actual condition, but even if Felix mistreated her or she was jobless, she shouldn't end up so miserable because she was a capable woman.

After we made our way into Bridge's Court and placed our orders, we returned to our seats. She attempted to tell me the things she had in mind a few times, but she couldn't do it.

In the end, I was the one who broke the silence and asked, "Stacey, why have you—"

She got ahead of me abruptly and asked, "Ms. Stovall, do you remember the time you were abducted from the parking lot?"

I was taken aback by her words because only a mere few were aware of the incident that had occurred back then, and she wasn't one of the few.

"Did Felix told you about it?" I recalled encountering the man back then. He was there on behalf of AC Credit to secure a deal with Fuller Corporation. Apart from that, Joe and Rebecca seemed to be the masterminds behind the abduction.

Since it hadn't impacted me, I decided not to go after them and didn't bother to make a fuss out of it. I didn't want others to figure out I was abducted.

Stacey shook her head. In spite of her make-up, it couldn't conceal her pale look. "I've overheard some stuff. Have you thought of the possibility of a third party that was aware of the forged abortion apart from Dr. Ludwick? Is anyone else aware of the things you have done to keep Mr. Fuller by your side?"

I thought about it, but I couldn't think of anyone else apart from Jared and Caleb.

To be honest, it had been quite some time since the incident occurred. Thus, I couldn't recall the details anymore.

"Don't you find it odd when there were only a mere few who were aware of the incident? Why would those who had abducted you decided to leverage your child as the bargaining chip to secure the tender of the project?" Stacey added.

"Felix is Dr. Ludwick's son, isn't he? I saw the mastermind by Felix's side... Am I thinking what you're thinking?" Once Mr. Tuffin showed up by Felix's side, I could rule out the possibility the abductor was aware of my pregnancy back then.

Stacey shook her head and rebuked, "Dr. Ludwick would never share it with Felix when he didn't even tell Mrs. Ludwick about it. The father and son duo aren't on good terms since a few years ago. Frankly, they rarely talk to one another."

Apart from Caleb, the only person I could think of was Jared. I asked with my brows furrowed, "Dr. Crest is one of Ashton's close friends. Are you indicating that he's involved in the incident?"

"Do you think I'm lying to you?" Stacey stared at me and asked in a quivering voice; she couldn't suppress her emotions anymore.

I shook my head and sighed. "Jared wouldn't have done this." It was the truth – Jared wasn't the shareholder of Fuller Corporation, so he wouldn't put my life at stake for Rebecca's sake because they weren't that close either.

Yet, Stacey got worked up because I expressed my doubts over her words. She paused for a few seconds before adding, "If you don't believe me, why don't you confront Ashton and get him to tell you about the things that had occurred between him and Jared back then!"

I was surprised by the overwhelming news Stacey had brought up out of the blue. "Stacey, I know you're trying your best to leave Felix, but you don't have to stir things up to achieve your goal. I have moved on from the past."

As compared to the miscarriage, the abduction was a relatively trivial incident in my life.

"Are you going to believe me if I tell you Jared is working with the Moore family and plotting something against Ashton? Correct me if I'm wrong, but the president of AC Credit has approached Ashton again, hasn't he? They're not coming after the fortune, but they're coming after the foundation of the Fullers! They can only get the better of the Fullers by jeopardizing Fuller Corporation from within, bits by bits. Otherwise, the Fullers will be unstoppable if Ashton continues to lead the corporation to its prime! The Moore family wants to take the Fullers out from J City once and for all!"

I was dumbstruck because Stacey finished her orated speech so sincerely as if it was the actual truth. "What is Jared going after?"

"Something happened between Jared and Ashton back then! You have to ask Ashton to get to the bottom of the truth!"

"Why does the Moore family want to take the Fullers out when Rebecca has a thing for Ashton? Rebecca's dotting parents will never put their daughter's crush at stake."

She sneered and queried, "Ms. Scarlett, I finally figure out the reason you're terminated by the management of Fuller Corporation. Do you think Rebecca's parents are fools? Rebecca has a thing for Ashton because she can't get her hands on him no matter what! When she's sick of him, do you think her parents will allow him to get away unscathed? In fact, they're disguising their actual motives through their daughter's crush on Ashton – they're trying to acquire the Fullers through hostile takeover!"

Stacey thought of something else after pausing for a few seconds. "Ashton has decided to penetrate K City because of his ambition and the potential the city has to offer. Why don't you put yourself in the other conglomerates' shoes? There was only so much the five parties that were involved had to share. Do you think they're willing to share the limited fortune with another outsider? They won't get as much as they initially would since Ashton has shown up. If you're one of them, do you think you're going to allow Ashton to get things his way? Are you willing to share the limited fortune with a late-comer?"

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Ashton had moved the headquarter to K City due to the abundant resources and information that was available there. Stacey was right – the conglomerates from K City would never allow such an ambitious and capable man to get a share of the limited wealth the city had to offer.

The Moore family did a great job of disguising their actual motive – they wished to acquire Fuller Corporation through Rebecca's relationship with Ashton.

If Ashton and Rebecca got married, the Moores and the Fullers would be affiliated with one another. By then, the Moore family would have nothing to lose. Instead, they would gain access to all sorts of information and resources through Ashton.

All things considered, I couldn't figure out the sort of past Ashton and Jared had.

"I can barely recall the things that have occurred back then, but allow me to express my utmost gratitude to you, Stacey. Although I'm grateful, I can't possibly put my future at stake for your sake because helping you is going to expose me to immeasurable risk."

Even though I couldn't help but sympathize with the things Stacey had to go through, I wouldn't necessarily offer my help because I was never a kind woman.

In fact, if the Moore family couldn't win Ashton over, they would consider him a foe in the future. Since I was Ashton's wife, I would have to get myself ready to go against Jared and the Moore family with him.

Considering the number of foes we had to be wary of, I couldn't afford to offend the nasty and pretentious Felix anymore.

Stacey felt dejected and decided to push her luck for one last time. She said, "Ms. Stovall, I'm conscious of your concerns, but what if I trade my future for my freedom? I'm sure you're aware of my capabilities and educational background, aren't you? As long as I get to leave Felix, I'll infiltrate the Moore family on your behalf!"

She's willing to infiltrate the Moore family on my behalf?

I peered at her in the eyes and confronted, "Are you trying to deceive me? Cameron and Zachary can easily get their hands on our relationship. What are you going to do if they find out you used to be my subordinate for two years?"

She chuckled because she found my words hilarious. "Do you really think the Moore family has time for such a trivial matter?"

"You can't deny the fact you used to be affiliated with Fuller Corporation, can you?" Stacey was a capable woman. Hence, it would be odd if she were to tell others she had been unemployed ever since her graduation.

She looked at me in return and asked, "As long as you get John to do you a favor, he will never say no, won't he?"

I raised my brows in surprise as I was shocked by the amount of information she possessed regarding my closed ones.

Due to my skeptical look, she sat upright and asserted, "Ms. Stovall, you don't have to worry. I started gathering all sorts of information after Felix showed his true colors once you left J City. I had been keeping an eye on the things back in K City because I was pretty sure I was the only one who could be of aid to you."

"Are you insisting I should offer my help?"

"I don't have another choice! If you don't help me, I'll end up living a miserable life with him! No! I don't think I can make it through another few months, let alone my entire life!"

I was clueless about the things that had occurred over the past six months. She used to live a blissful life with Felix, yet things took a drastic turn for the worst within six months.

"You have been acquainted with Felix for so many years. Have you only discovered his true colors after both of you are married?"

Stacey smirked as though she found herself pathetic and foolish when she heard of Felix. "You're right. I used to think he was the right one after the years we spent together. However, I was wrong because he had been putting on a show to deceive me! I wasn't the only one he had deceived. In fact, he even tricked his parents and his friends into believing he was a gentle and innocent man!"

Halfway through her speech, she started trembling and avoided my gaze. Perhaps she started recalling the horrifying memories she had with him again. "If I hadn't witnessed the vicious things he had done behind others, I would never figure out he was such a cruel man! After we got married, he became another man. In the first few months, he would throw a tantrum and vent his anger on me, but eventually, he started abusing me. I once thought of acquiring the cops' aid, but others would step up and vouch for him, stating he was a gentle and kind man. They blamed me for his vulgar acts and said I was the reason behind the change in his attitude! You saw how he behaved and got infuriated abruptly for no apparent reasons when we were in the restaurant, right? I had nothing to do with it, and I couldn't figure out the reason behind it either!"

Hearing what she had said, I decided to stop poking my nose into her horrifying experiences and asked, "What sort of help do you need from me?"

I wasn't in a position to judge, but I could definitely use another reliable ally instead of making myself another foe.

Perhaps Stacey didn't expect I would give in to her request just yet; she stared at me wide-eyed and replied excitedly, "Felix is a perverted man deep down. He enjoys going after women who are hard to get, and that's you! I need you to join me for a meal."

"Have you been thinking about this all this while?"

She looked elsewhere and nodded because she felt guilty deep down. "You're the only one who's capable of taking Felix out once and for all amongst the ones I'm acquainted with."

I cast a skeptical gaze in return and exclaimed, "I'm impressed because that's actually a brilliant plan, Stacey! Once you're ready, feel free to call me."

She suggested and handed over a name card to me. "What about tonight? The address, contact number, and room number are listed on the card."

I couldn't help but scoff when I saw the name card. "What makes you think I'm going to give in to your request?"

"Haven't you already agreed to it?" Stacey replied with a determined look.

"Great! I guess I'll look forward to working with you!" I took over the name card and initiated a handshake.

She returned the favor and replied, "I won't let you down!"

At 8 p.m., I reached the private dining room of a relatively miniature bar at a hidden alley.

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Stacey had arrived by the time I entered the private dining room, but Felix was nowhere to be seen. Ten minutes later, the man finally showed up and joined us.

He was surprised by my presence and greeted me with a courteous smile the moment he saw me. "Stacey told me she has a friend that's keen to have some wild and raunchy fun together. I didn't expect it would be you, Mrs. Fuller! To be honest, I'm surprised by your kink!"

I responded with a smirk, but I couldn't get used to the odd set of outfits I had put on. It was a set of exposing outfits that I would rarely wear.

On top of that, I had gone to great lengths to doll myself up because I knew what it would take to charm a man like him.

"Mr. Ludwick! Have a seat!" I offered him to take a seat by my side and flashed him a bright smile.

Meanwhile, he sized me up over and over again as though I was some sort of exhibition item.

"Mrs. Fuller, aren't you afraid that Mr. Fuller would find out that you're here with us today? I mean, no ordinary man can accept the fact their spouse would, you know, have fun with another man," he expressed his concerns, but his expression suggested he wasn't worried the slightest.

The messed-up man had a vicious grin on his face because he was thrilled by the malicious thoughts in his mind. I recalled Stacey's warning – Felix was corrupted to his very core.

With that, I tucked my hair behind my ears and denoted, "Well, all we have to do is to keep him in the dark, isn't it?"

"Hahaha!" Felix laughed and announced, "I have always wondered the reason Ashton neglected you and spent most of his time with other women! It turns out you're special!"

I was disgusted by the conversation we had, but I forced a smile and asserted, "We only get to live our life once, don't we? Thus, shouldn't we live our life to the fullest and enjoy ourselves to our heart's content?"

Felix swirled his glass of wine and had his eyes glued to me since the moment he walked into the room.

He guffawed at my words because I was spot on. As revolting as it was, he enjoyed being around a woman with the same interest as him the most.

Then, Stacey took a seat beside me and whispered, "I'll head out for a short while. Get in touch with me as soon as possible if you need me."

I nodded and muttered under my breath, "You better make your way back soon."

Once Stacey departed, Felix leaned over. Despite his gorgeous-looking face, I frowned subconsciously because I was disgusted by his superficial disguise, and the smell of his overpowering cologne made me gag.

I inched away and asked, "Have you always been so easily excited, Mr. Ludwick?"

I guess he can't resist his urge anymore since his wife isn't around, huh?

"Since we're here for some fun, don't you think it's perfectly fine for us to be who we truly are? I mean, we don't have to put on a show when we're aware of the preferences we have, don't you think? So why don't we have some fun and forget about it after the night ends!"

As he announced his sickening plan, he leaned over and ran his fingers across my lap.

Although I could barely resist the urge to throw a punch at him in the face, I had no choice but to carry on with the act.

Nevertheless, I couldn't stand it anymore because he wouldn't stop caressing my thigh. Suddenly, I raised my head and smiled while stating, "M-Mr. Ludwick, I need to use the washroom because it's the first time I'm involved in such an activity! I-I think I'm nervous!"

It was evident he didn't have enough of me yet. Although he was displeased, he nodded and said, "I'll be waiting for you, darling! Hurry up!"

After I made it to the washroom, Stacey approached me and asked, "You alright? Can you handle it?"

I nodded and started washing my face with the running tap. As I was completely baffled, I couldn't conceal my curiosity anymore.

"Have you been asking others out on his behalf through such a peculiar method all this while?"

Stacey signaled her acknowledgment with a nod and explained, "I would get in touch with university students on his behalf. If he had fun, he would allow me to live in peace for a few days. Otherwise, he would take things out on me if he had an awful session."

I glanced at her openmouthed because I had never heard of a woman desiring her husband to have some fun with another woman.

"I want you to spike his drink with this once you have the chance. He's an extremely observant and cautious man, so if he notices something's off, things may head south. However, this will make him less rational." Stacey handed over a pill to me after she finished her sentence.

"What's this? Ecstasy?"

"Yeah! It's best to take him out as soon as possible to avoid unwanted outcomes!"

I thought it was a great idea and walked out of the washroom after I took the pill from her.

A few steps later, she told me, "Ms. Stovall... please take care of yourself!"

Stunned, I turned around and paused for a short while. I then responded with a nod and left the washroom.

On the way back, I caught a glimpse of Felix while he was smoking in the corridor.

At first, I intended to pretend I wasn't aware of his presence. However, I brought myself to a halt when I noticed his disgusting pair of slitted eyes because he had his eyes glued to me.

I had no choice but to suppress the frustration I felt and forced a smile as I greeted, "Mr. Ludwick!"

He seemed to enjoy the process of seducing me. After he had one final whiff of smoke, he put off the cigarette and walked over to my side.

"Scarlett, has anyone ever told you that you look great? Your smile is what kills me!" He was merely a few inches away from me by the time he finished his flirtatious remark.

I nodded and said, "Yes! You just told me that!"

The perverted man chuckled in return and offered, "The night is still young! Why don't we go somewhere else for another round of drinks?"

"Huh? S-Somewhere else?" I queried with my brows furrowed.

"What's wrong? Do you enjoy staying here?"

I paused for a short while and asked, "N-Not really, but don't we have to wait for Stacey?"

He got slightly irked when I brought up Stacey in front of him. "Why should we wait for her? We can have all sorts of fun without her! It's better for her to stay out of our ways anyway. Let's go!"

As soon as he brought up the suggestion, he reached over in an attempt to grasp my hand, but I evaded his hands and said, "But she's your wife. Shouldn't you have at least waited for her?"

"It's fine! She'll make her way back home on her own!" Once he assured me everything was fine, he gripped my hand tightly and brought me out.

Even so, I stopped him and rebuked, "Mr. Ludwick, I don't think that's fine at all! You should allow me to tell Stacey we're heading elsewhere!"

"No!" Felix seemed to be too eager. Initially, I thought the session would be conducted in the private dining room, but I was wrong because he indicated his will to bring me elsewhere.

