

When There Is Nothing Left But Love

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Chapter 329

I raised my eyebrows. "Bingo!"

Seeing my reaction, he hesitated before saying, "Letty, you really don't care for your biological parents?"

I glanced at him again and frowned. "You've mentioned this at least a few times. Wasn't I clear enough? They've abandoned me, so that means they no longer wanted me. If I keep thinking about this, I can't move on. Why not let go and move on?"

He nodded, seemingly preoccupied.

My car came to a stop at John's villa. I turned my head and realized he was deep in thought.

It took him a while to snap back to reality. "Letty, do you still hate me?" he asked in a serious manner.

I was taken aback. "Huh?"

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"About Macy, and how I tortured you." His voice grew softer. This is unlike him.

My mouth snapped shut as my expression darkened. "John, that's in the past. Let's not talk about it anymore."

"So? Do you still hate me?"

As he insisted on getting an answer like a stubborn child, I was astonished. "It's over. Besides, it was just a harmless threat. But for Macy, the painful memory would remain with her forever."

Humans were complicated beings. I used to fear John, but now I relied on him as though he was my family. To a certain extent, I was very much like Sally, placing profits before feelings.

After a long silence, he rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "One day, if you found out I did something to harm you, will you forgive me?"

My eyes widened at his sudden question. "What did you do? Why would you need me to forgive you?"

He pressed on, "Will you?"

As he refused to answer my question, I pouted and responded, "Well, it depends on how outrageously wrong you are. John, you know me better than I do. I won't forgive you if you go past my bottom line. So, don't do anything to harm me. Let's be siblings forever, alright?"

He reached his hand out and pulled me into his arms. "Mm, we'll be siblings forever. Your parents aren't with you, but you have me and Uncle Louis. We'll be your family forever."

I nodded. Strangely, my sixth sense told me he was hiding something from me.

Yet, I knew he wouldn't say anything even if I urged him to.

Sighing, I pulled away. "It's late. Time to go home!"

After dropping John off, I returned to the villa.

It was already 10 p.m., so I was utterly shocked to see Rebecca waiting there.

Does she think this is her house? She comes and goes as she likes!

The moment she spotted me, she stood in my way as her lips drew back in a snarl. "Well, well. Look who's back home late at night. Scarlett, you can't stop being a player, huh? Now that Ash isn't home, you're acting like a horse that had just broken free from its reins."

Rebecca was the most incompetent love rival I've ever seen. If it weren't for Parker, she wouldn't even get to be here right now.

I glanced at her briefly and suggested, "Ms. Larson, why don't you rent a room here? If you agree to pay rent, I can consider renting out a spare room so you don't have to waste time traveling."

"Hey!" She pointed at me angrily.

I cut her off sternly. "It's late. Please leave now, Ms. Larson!"

With that, I spun around and strode toward the kitchen.

Rebecca refused to leave and grabbed my arm. "Scarlett, I swear I'll drag you down with me! You wanted to avenge your dead child, right?" She sneered. "Let me tell you the truth. Even if my mother did nothing to hurt you, your child will die soon from his abnormality."

Slap! I gave Rebecca a tight slap without hesitation. "Rebecca, don't cross the line. My child is already dead. Why would you curse him? You're such a wicked woman."

As I used up all my energy to slap her, Rebecca's head whipped aside. It took her a while to regain her composure. With that, she flew into a fit of anger. "Scarlett, how dare you slap me?"

I tamped down my irritation and ignored her. During dinner, I drank some cold juice, so my stomach was protesting slightly.

Every month, my period would torture me greatly. It was not easy to be a woman.

Mrs. Eriksen was still up and about. She came out of her room to welcome me home. At the sight of Rebecca, she frowned in displeasure. "Ms. Larson, you're still here?"

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Rebecca ignored her. However, she came towards me with a thundering expression. "You hit me because I hurt your feelings? Then, let me ask this. Do you really think that Ash cared about you during your pregnancy? All because he gave you those prenatal vitamins? Well, those vitamins can cause birth defects. You must be extremely stupid. Your baby obviously looked deformed in the ultrasound scan. Yet, you still continued to take those vitamins."

My eyebrows crumpled together. Narrowing my eyes at her, I asked, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" Rebecca scoffed. "I'm saying that the child in your stomach deserved to die. It was not wanted by anyone. If you don't believe me, go check the leftover vitamins you have. Just because Ash is biased to you now, doesn't mean he cares about you. He's only being nice to you because he feels remorseful! It's because he's plagued by a guilty conscience."

As my face paled to a ghostly white, a brazen smile slit across her face. She sniggered, "You deserved it. Your child too. It deserved to die, he didn't deserve to be born into this world."

This awoke the negative emotions in me that I had previously suppressed. Those awful emotions clamored inside me, their screeches clawed at my throat.

I raised my hand. She responded immediately by blocking my arm. A sneer came from her, "Oh? Trying to hit me again? Do you take me for a fool, thinking that I'd let you hit me twice?"

A bitter laugh escaped my lips. I looked at her grimly as I spoke in a lowered voice, "No. That's not enough to punish someone like you. A slap from me would be considered letting you off easy."

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I paced towards her one step at a time. My gaze locked onto a fruit knife nearby before flicking back to Rebecca, who was still sneering. "I thought I could live with a troublesome person like you and just put up with your nonsense. Unfortunately, it's clear to me now. You are not only a troublemaker but also plain loathsome! Since that's the case, why don't you just die!"

As the words left my mouth, I immediately lunged for the fruit knife and stabbed her with it. My actions were quick, without a trace of hesitation.

"Scarlett!" The shouting voice didn't belong to Rebecca, nor was it from Mrs. Eriksen, whose knees had given in from fear—it was Ashton's.

Right then and there, I fell into a momentary daze. By the time I came to, I had already pushed the knife too far, sinking it deep into Rebecca's abdomen.

Then, a warm vermillion liquid oozed into my hands. It dripped onto the ground, tipping and tapping away. Everything stained a hideous red—my hands, her stomach and the floor. It was all stained in Rebecca's blood.

Rebecca's eyes enlarged incredulously, her jaw dropped and her lips trembled, unable to utter a single word.

Almost instantly, Ashton rushed in. He shoved me aside and hurried to support Rebecca, who was about to fall to the floor.

Do you see? Another coincidence. It's as if everything had been pre-planned and scripted. My sudden desire to kill her, Ashton's precisely timed heroic rescue, and how he came in right when I stabbed Rebecca. It all made me the villain in this story.

A pool of red slithered down Rebecca's thighs, and the knife was still in her stomach.

Ashton's arms coiled securely around her before carrying her up. He stared down a frazzled Mrs. Eriksen and ordered in a deep voice, "Call the hospital immediately!"

I felt myself dissociating as I watched them move like panicked ants. And, truly, none of it frightened me. In fact, my thoughts were surer than ever—Rebecca must die. Only when she was dead will my life be cleansed of all the pain and suffering.

Ashton held Rebecca tightly in his arms. Those cold, piercing eyes of his struck straight into me again. His lips pursed tightly as all emotion drained from his face.

Our frightfully cold gazes met. His eyes stabbed me as if they were sharpened icicles, while mine howled like an ice storm at him.

Something tickled at the back of my throat. I felt like laughing loudly, but nothing came, not even a chuckle. My grinning lips parted slightly as I felt no fear. Instead, I felt joy filling up my chest like the air I inhaled.

He watched me. His handsome face had frozen over with hints of anger, blame, and indifference. There was not a trail of warmth left.

Seeing his stone-cold gaze, it felt like a pair of arms had plunged into my chest. They moved slowly yet haphazardly, sinking inwards. The pain made it unbearable for me to breathe.

Something sharp stung my chest as I took in a breath. Watching him carry Rebecca out of the villa, my legs gave way and gravity pulled me down.

"Letty!" Mrs. Eriksen exclaimed, extending a supportive arm around me. Distress flashed onto her face. "Don't worry, we'll get through this. Everything will turn out fine."

My head shook in response. I wasn't worried at all about Rebecca, it was Ashton who unnerved me. Rebecca was right. I will never get the truthful, genuine kind of concern that Ashton had for Rebecca because he only had space for her.

He would never move on from her, never.

I pressed hard against my chest, hoping to suppress the pain. Turning to face the woman next to me, I croaked, "Mrs. Eriksen, it hurts so much!"

She held me firmly, lifting me up and guiding me over to the sofa.

Ambulance sirens blared outside the villa. The harsh sound shot at high speed and it ricocheted around the walls, breaking the villa's initial peace and quiet.

Once the sirens grew distant, Sally entered the room in her nightgown. Her eyes roamed from my sullen face, down to my bloodied hands.

With a sharp inhale, Sally's voice shrilled with blame. "Even if you hate her that much, it doesn't mean you can blatantly assault her like that. An eye for an eye, Scarlett. The Moore family won't let you off the hook so easily."

My lips tightened. I felt my emotions slowly stabilizing as I sat in silence.

Ashton loves Rebecca. All those years of companionship and care for her, there was no way he could ever pick up and move on from that easily. He hid it so well just like how he hid the remorse for harming my child and turned it into an obligated, false love for me. He transferred the kindness he has for Rebecca onto me...

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God, I was so blind. I perceived his duplicated kindness as a genuine love for me. I never once thought of this. If anything bad happened to Rebecca, he would always choose her.

Seeing my silence, Sally knew that no amount of lecturing would get to me anymore. A soft sigh slipped from her lips. She headed to her bedroom for a change of clothes before leaving the house.

Thoughts engulfing me whole, I stilled for some time before getting up to leave. Mrs. Eriksen, who stayed with me, immediately got up to stall. "Letty, where are you going?"

"The hospital."

She hurriedly blocked the door. "No, don't! Mr. Ashton and the Moore family are most likely furious with you, so it's not wise to go there now. Come, let's stay here, okay? We'll deal with things once everyone calms down."

At her request, I sank back down onto the sofa and buried my face into my palms. The villa became abnormally quiet, save for the drums pounding in my head and heart.

Endless confusion weighed down the air around me.

After a while, footsteps drew closer in the villa. Mrs. Eriksen's voice sounded, "Dr. Crest. Why aren't you at the hospital?"

A huge shadow shaded over me. Irritation prickled under my skin as I looked up to see Jared's slender figure standing in front of me. A distant and indifferent frown etched on his face.

I glanced at the blood on my hands then warned, "Please hire a lawyer if you're here to accuse me of what happened. I'm in a very bad mood right now, so I can't guarantee whether I will have an emotional episode and start assaulting you."

Jared...

He looked at me with profound impotence. Some seconds slipped past before he finally challenged, "There are no knives here. How exactly do you plan to attack me?"

My lips pursed in sizzling annoyance. There was nothing more to say to him.

Then, he sat beside me as Mrs. Eriksen fetched him a glass of water. He sipped quietly with no intention of continuing our conversation.

I turned to him and frowned. "Aren't you here to lecture me?"

He raised a brow and questioned back, "Why should I lecture you? It's not like my daughter was stabbed by you."

I...

"So... you're here to get amused at my pathetic situation?"

An empty laugh sounded from him as he chuckled, "Do I look like I have nothing better to do?"

Neither? So he's just here to watch how things will play out...

Footsteps rushed closer from the yard. There was no doubt as to whose it was. Ashton is back.

With blood still tainted on his hands, his slender figure entered the villa. The gloom on his face emitted a dangerous warning, saying that he wasn't one to be messed with.

His lips parted and he instructed indifferently at me, "We're going to the hospital!"

"No!" I refused.

He lowered his voice at me as if he were trying to suppress his blazing emotions. "Get up," he instructed. Then, he pulled me up off the sofa without waiting for my answer.

He yanked at my wrist and dragged me out to the yard. After shoving me into the car, we raced for the hospital.

There, Rebecca had already been rushed into the ER. Perhaps it was Ashton's seething anger, his hold tightened as his fingers ripped into my wrist.

I felt the faintest tingle before numbness took over my wrist. I barked at him, "Let go of me! If she dies, I'll pay with my own life. You don't have to exterminate me in advance."

Hearing my words, he looked back at me and realized how roughly he gripped onto me. Then, his fingers finally slid off, freeing my wrist.

Purple and yellow blotches obnoxiously seeped across my bruised wrist.

His brows furrowed into an agonizing frown. For a moment, it seemed as if he hadn't intended to hurt me. He muttered, "S-sorry, I..."

I gnawed on my lower lip. "It's fine. It doesn't hurt."

His face scrunched up. The coldness in his eyes intensified and his lips clamped shut to steady the anger inside him. "How could you, Scarlett? No matter how much you hate her, she's already lost a child. She's already been punished. You've gone too far this time."

Empty laughter sounded from me as I asked him casually, "Really? I don't think I did enough. I didn't drive that knife deep enough to kill her, now she still has a chance to live."

My words rendered him speechless. He stilled for a second before responding, "It's a life for a life, Scarlett! Do you really think Zachary is someone you can mess with? He spent the last twenty years searching for his long-lost daughter, Rebecca. If anything happens to her, do you think anyone can protect you?"

We met gazes again. My eyes were bold, filled with a surety that was also reflected in my words. "If she dies, then I'll atone with my own death. There's nothing holding me back in this world—if my death can bring her down then it'll all be worth it."

His eyes narrowed again. Clearly disappointed with me, he said, "Nothing is holding you back? Do you even have a heart at all? What about the people around you, those who care about you?"

Annoyance tickled my throat. I slumped into a nearby chair, ignoring his disapproving words.

Seeing my devil-may-care attitude, Ashton rubbed at his temples resignedly. Not knowing what to do, he called for a doctor to check on my injuries.

The doctor scanned my vermillion-stained hands. After seeing that I wasn't wounded, he left briskly.

Ashton eyed me impassively. "Why did you stab her?"

I...

Why did I?

Now that I've calmed down, guilt poured over me like a bucket of cold water. How could I act so impulsively earlier? Regardless of how awful her insults were, they were still just harmless words...

After pondering about it, I looked up at Ashton. "She said that you caused our child's death. She told me that you gave me those prenatal vitamins to deform him and that you never wanted our child in the first place."

I was probably upset because of this, and also because of Rebecca's vile words.

He grimaced. "And you believed her?"

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I nodded, confidently staring him down. "You have every reason to do so!"

His eyes narrowed into a livid glare. "If you believed what she said, then why didn't you stab me instead?"

"You weren't there at that time—but she was!" I spat the words boldly, challenging his indifferent stare with my own fearless one.

"Huh!" He snorted.

It was sudden and cold. He dropped my hand immediately, looking at me with a grey face of disappointment. "Have you ever trusted me? No wait, I should ask you if you even love me, Scarlett?"

Glancing at him, the thoughts ruffled in my head. Have I ever loved him? I didn't know anymore. I couldn't tell if what I felt for him was even love.

He stared at me for the longest time. There was some kind of deep and intense emotion lingering in his eyes as he waited for my answer.

Then, he snorted softly at himself as if he already knew my answer. He stood and said coldly to me, "You should head back. Before Rebecca gets out of surgery, it's best that you stay home and not go out recklessly. The Moore family can't do anything to you for the time being, not while I'm around. So just go home."

I said coldly, "It's alright. I'll take responsibility for my own actions, so whatever punishment the Moore family decides is between me and them. It doesn't concern you at all."

He watched me without speaking. The indifference in his darkened eyes was enough to suffocate everyone around us.

Not long after, Cameron and Zachary dashed in. Anxiety overwhelmed Cameron's bulging red eyes.

When they saw Ashton, they rushed over and frantically asked, "How is Rebecca? Is she okay?"

Ashton spoke with a deep solemn voice, "She's still in the ER."

With a steady composure, Zachary asked Ashton for the name of the perpetrator that hurt Rebecca.

Though calm, a murderous air radiated from Zachary. It made the hairs on my fingers stand straighter. Despite this, I approached the man and announced, "I did it!"

Zachary looked at me with a pair of narrowed, bloodthirsty eyes. A murderous growl sounded as he threatened me, "Ms. Stovall. You'd better pray that Rebecca is fine, else I'll have your life to make up for hers."

After hearing my confession, Cameron jumped at me with lethal claw-like fingers. Ashton rushed before me, blocking her attack. He warned them, "Best save the confrontation until after your daughter awakes, Ms. Anderson. If Scarlett has committed a crime, the law will punish her justly. There's no need for the two of you to rush her punishment."

Still seething with anger, Cameron glared viciously at me.

Then, the ER doors suddenly opened. A nurse appeared and called out, "Where are the patient's family members? She needs a blood transfusion. We'll need to run some tests on you, in case our blood bank doesn't have enough of her blood type."

Cameron and Zachary quickly trailed after the doctor for their blood tests. They returned soon after.

We waited outside the ER for a long time. Cameron paced back and forth anxiously, occasionally throwing nasty glares my way.

When the ER doors opened again, the nurse from earlier came out. She frowned at Cameron and Zachary before asking, "Are you two really the patient's blood-related family?"

The two were taken aback for a moment, unsure of what the nurse was hinting at. "Yes, we're her parents. What's the matter with her?"

The nurse's eyes scanned the two of them. She explained in a puzzled manner, "It's impossible for a couple with blood type A and O to give birth to a child with type B blood. Could something be wrong with the test?"

Cameron and Zachary's faces paled to a stark chalk-white. They stared wide-eyed at the nurse. "What are you talking about? We're not blood related?"

The nurse stiffened in hesitation. She looked at the two and assured, "Don't panic. Perhaps it's just an issue with our test. Now, the patient needs two hundred ccs of blood and there's an insufficient amount in our blood bank. Does anyone here have type B blood?"

Ashton looked at the nurse and spoke up, "You can use mine!"

Promptly, the nurse ushered him away to have his blood drawn. Cameron's face froze grey and still with confusion at her husband. She kept mumbling, "The DNA test said that she's our daughter. How could this be?"

Zachary's face furrowed into a deep frown. He stilled for a second before consoling Cameron, "Don't stress yourself out. Maybe the hospital made a mistake."

A red shade had already tinged Cameron's panicked face. She nodded at him, repeating over and over again that Rebecca was their daughter, that there was no way she wouldn't be able to recognize her own biological daughter.

I pondered at the scene before me. What a dramatic irony. If Rebecca, the daughter they have suddenly reunited with, isn't blood-related to Cameron... then where is her biological daughter?

Cameron had dirtied her hands doing many unspeakable things for Rebecca's sake. It would be pitiful if Rebecca wasn't actually her biological daughter.

Ashton returned shortly after. Seeing that I still sat motionless in the same chair, he approached my side and hugged me. "Everything will be okay. The doctor said she's not in a life-threatening state."

He was clearly trying to comfort me. I pursed my lips, not saying anything more.

About half an hour later, Jared and Joe arrived. It seemed like they were all up to date with Rebecca's current situation.

Joe shot a threatening look at me, his face was tainted with gloom but he didn't say a word. Maybe it was because of Ashton's presence that Joe refrained from doing anything more.

On the other hand, Jared raised a brow at Ashton. "There's some time till the surgery's over. Care to join me for a smoke?"

Ashton glanced at him and nodded. Then, they left together for the stairway.

Cameron and Zachery were lost in a temporary daze. They were still hung up on the nurse's earlier conversation about theirs and Rebecca's incompatible blood types.