

# When There Is Nothing Left But Love

## Chapter 345-348

### Chapter 345

As I watched him slam the door and leave, my mind buzzed away. It was fine in the beginning, so how did it become like this?

Moments later, Mrs. Eriksen came upstairs. When she saw me on the floor, seemingly at a loss, she merely sighed. "Oh dear, you two..."

"Mrs. Eriksen, I want some peace!" I said, overcome by fatigue. I rose from my spot, stumbled out of the study and into my bedroom, where I proceeded to lock the door.

I must have blacked out after that.

I laid on the bed, in a daze, until midnight, when I was awakened by a nightmare.

There was no one beside me. I got up to pour myself a glass of water. I checked the time. It was three o'clock in the early morning. I supposed I would not be able to fall asleep again after this hour.

I had not eaten anything that night. I opened the door and went downstairs. Mrs. Eriksen had left some food for me. I took several bites but, honestly, I did not have much of an appetite.

As I headed upstairs, I glanced at the study out of habit. There was no one inside. The chaotic mess had been cleaned up.

It seemed Ashton did not return at all that night. I retired to the bedroom and looked through the email sent by OrbitTech again.

It did not take long for the weather to get cold, as the second round of heavy snowfall in K City came as expected.

The entire yard was covered with snow. To avoid traffic jams, people have already begun to shovel snow outside their homes.

Mrs. Eriksen was surprised to see me up and about when she came in for work. She said, "The new year's rolling in soon. People are stocking up on new year goods and decorations. Letty, what do you say we go shopping after breakfast? See what the stores have on sale."

I grinned at her. "I have somewhere to go in the afternoon, so I'll have to pass. Has Ashton purchased the air ticket to J City for you?"

Mrs. Eriksen's son and daughter lived in J City. She usually spent the new year break with them every year. For me, I used to spend it with either Grandma or George. It was great while it lasted.

Now that both of them were gone, it had become quite lonely during festivities, as though the holidays had become meaningless.

I wonder what's going on at Macy's. With that thought, I had the urge to give Jackson a call, but I shrugged it off when I checked the time. It was too early to do that.

I simply turned to Mrs. Eriksen and said, "I'm heading to the company in a while. Ashton's not here, so you don't have to make breakfast for us."

She looked like she wanted to say something, but I had already grabbed the keys and gone out the door.

Work at the White Corporation started at nine. I got there early, so I waited in the office for a while before I went looking for the person in charge of OrbitTech to discuss work.

Research and development of AI could not possibly be achieved in a few short days, but I was pleased to see the progress we were making.

As I came out of the R&D Department, I bumped into Sally. It had been a few days since she moved back to the White residence, and it seemed she had officially returned to work at the White Corporation as well.

She saw me egging to leave, and said, "Are you in a rush?"

I shook my head. "No. What's up?"

She clasped her hands and spoke, "The new year's just around the corner. What plans do you and Ashton have this year? Are you returning to J City or staying here in K City? I heard that the Stovall family is adding you to the family register. What are your plans for the coming year?"

"Not sure," I said, facing her. "Why don't you ask Ashton?"

With that said, I got ready to leave, but when I reached the lobby I chanced upon a group of people just entering the building.

Among them were Ashton and Joe. They must have come to talk about work.

In the reception area, Ashton's slender figure was particularly eye-catching. He stood with one hand in his pocket and seemed to be chatting with Joe about something important.

Our eyes met. He frowned at me, apparently still bitter about what happened. Briefly stunned, I pursed my lips and looked away as I headed towards the exit.

"Scarlett, have you had your breakfast?" Joe spoke as he came up and blocked my way. I could not pretend that I did not see them.

I stopped walking. My eyes darted to Ashton, who was still wearing the suit from last night. I could see the wrinkles.

"Later!" I replied. Other colleagues greeted me from the side and I responded to them in turn, ready to leave.

I looked back at Joe and said, "I have other matters to tend to, so I'll get going!"

"Come on, Scarlett. Ashton and I are going for lunch soon. You should come with us!"

"No, thanks. I really have other things to do. You go ahead!" I said, feeling for my car keys.

Ashton's face grew cold. He threw an icy glance at Joe and uttered calmly, "Are you that free?"

I pressed my lips. I had no intention to linger, so I said to Joe, "I'm leaving. See you!"

Then I left without waiting for Joe to respond.

I managed to hear Joe's petulant strife with Ashton from behind me. "You're saying I'm too free? Ashton, you're one to talk. Who was the one who didn't sleep at all last night and spent every waking moment drinking? Who's the depressed one here?"

I was not sure what to make of that.

I got out of the building and into my car. I had barely got the engine started when my phone rang. It was Stacey.

I turned the engine off to take her call. "Hi. What's up?"

"Can you come to J City, hopefully by today?" she said, sounding quite serious over the phone.

I froze at her request. "What happened?"

There was a pause before she continued, "I don't really know how to put this. I think they want to keep this a secret from you. That's why they haven't called. But the truth will come to light sooner or later. So... why don't you come back and take a look at it yourself? You need to know the cause."

## **Chapter 346**

For a moment, there was a rumbling in my mind. My heart skipped a beat. Eventually, I took a deep breath and asked the unthinkable, "Did something happen to Macy?"

She did not reply me. There was a moment of silence before she stressed again, "Just come here. You'll see!"

"Fine!"

Right after I hung up the phone, I booked an air ticket to J City. I was lucky because there was still time. There was a flight from K City to J City in an hour.

When that was done, I started the car again. It was then I saw Joe exit the White Corporation office building. He jogged towards me, arms waving.

His appearance surprised me. I stopped the car and peered at him. "What now?"

"Scarlett, Ashton's booked a table at a Western restaurant in South Metro. Do you want to join us?" He extended an invitation to me with a broad grin on his face.

Wait, South Metro? Where young folks in K City like to go to hang out at night? The most lavish place to enjoy nightlife?

I looked at the time. I could barely make it to the airport in under one hour if I set out now. I did not have time for lunch.

Ashton also walked out of the building to join us, his face still void of emotions.

I could not help but bit my lip and turned to Joe. "Sorry, Mr. Quinn. I won't be able to join you. I have other things to do later. Why don't you give Rebecca a call? She should have time to join Ashton... and you for lunch!"



With that said, I started my car once more. Joe seemed furious. "Scarlett, what's that supposed to mean? Don't you know why Ashton booked a table at a Western restaurant in South Metro? He's making up for that feud between you two. You should accept it. Why do you have to add more to the tension?"

I pursed my lips as time ticked away. I looked at Ashton standing by the door, then at Joe, and said stiffly, "Mr. Quinn, I thank you for making the effort to help Ashton and I sort things out. And I appreciate Ashton's kindness. But, please tell him this. Since we can't go on anymore, we can end the relationship on a good note. He and I are on a break in the meantime. Anyway, I have other places to be, so goodbye!"

I hit the gas and sped off onto the road, feeling extremely irritated.

It was not that I refused to ease the relationship between us, but I still had some resistance. Resistance against what, even I was uncertain.

It should be fine. I was off to J City, where I would take a short break, and perhaps everything would turn out alright.

There was always a lot of foot traffic at K City airport every day, in addition to the congestion on the road. Fortunately, I made it in time.

I retrieved my air ticket in a hurry and boarded the plane. I found my seat and sat down, finally relieved. Pretty soon, the plane took off.

"Attention, all passengers. The plane is ready for takeoff. For your safety, please put up your tray table, buckle your safety belts, and kindly turn off your phone or set it to airplane mode. Thank you." The sweet voice of the air stewardess rang from the speakers.

I subconsciously fished my phone out from my bag and was about to turn it off when I was notified of the dozen of missed calls, all of which were from Ashton. There were also a few text messages, all sent by him too.

Since I had to turn it off quickly, I merely scanned through them. The first one asked for my whereabouts, and the rest were just usual greetings.

The plane was taking off. There was no time for me to reply, so I just shut it down.

It was a four-hour journey from K City to J City. I barely slept last night so, not long after the plane took off, I asked the air stewardess for a blanket and took a nap.

By the time I woke up, the plane had landed. I turned on my phone and checked the time. It was six o'clock sharp.

Stacey was already there to pick me up when I got off the plane.

The sky got dark earlier during winter. It was barely six and it already looked like night had fallen. Stacey was wrapped in a thick padded jacket. She chuckled when she saw that I came with only one bag and nothing else. "Did you come directly after receiving my call?"

I nodded and said, "Yes. Take me there right away!"

Her expression was undecipherable. After a pause, she spoke, "Let's get something to eat first. I've booked a restaurant. After that, I'll take you to their residence."

Since she had made the arrangements, I had nothing more to say. I nodded in agreement.

I did not have much of an appetite, to begin with. I simply ate what I could. After dinner, Stacey took me for a drive to the Glenwood residential area.

At the entrance to the residence, I froze. "Does Macy really live here?"

Stacey nodded and explained, "Well, they basically take walks around the residence at night. The weather's been cold recently, so I guess they just take a brief stroll before returning home."

The information left me stunned for a couple of seconds. I thought Macy should be staying at the house we had previously bought.

I asked Stacey to get us inside, and then we went straight to their apartment building.

We keyed in the passcode, opened the door, and found ourselves an empty house. No one had been living here for some time. It was in the exact condition when we left.

Stacey came to a realization. "No wonder they would rather live here than stay at their villa. You guys have a house here!"

The news caught me off guard. "What villa?"

She nodded. "I've checked. Nick used to stay at his villa at the Peakville Estate but, for whatever reason, he moved here."

We left the place and headed downstairs. It was not snowing in J City, but the temperature was exceptionally low. Stacey led me to the residential rest area for a short break.

## **Chapter 347**

She turned to me and said, "When you see him later, do you intend to say hi?"

That was a strange question. "Why not?" I responded.

She shrugged. "Have you ever considered why they're all in J City, but they lie to you about being in M Country?"

"Maybe they don't want me to worry!"

"If that's the case, what do you think their reaction would be when you appear out of the blue? I have an idea. Would you care to listen?"

"What do you have in mind?"

Stacey sat up straight and faced me. "You'll see them tonight, but don't go up to them first. Wait until tomorrow. I'm taking you somewhere to have the whole story sorted, and then we'll deal with this calmly, alright?"

I was taken aback by what she said. It felt like she had overestimated the seriousness of the matter. I wanted to ask for more information but she silenced me. "Look, there they are!"

I looked in the direction she was pointing and saw two men, both about six feet tall, pushing a stroller as they talked.

There was some distance between us and them. I was a bit short-sighted anyway, so I could not make out exactly who they were but based on their silhouettes I could tell they were Nick and Jackson.

I really wanted to go over and talk to them, but Stacey stopped me. She urged me to call them on the phone first.

Alarmed, I took out of my phone. The screen showed some more missed calls from Ashton.

I had set my phone to silent mode after getting off the plane and since then I had not had the time to look at it.

"Didn't you tell Mr. Fuller that you're coming?" She said hesitantly after taking a peek at the number of missed calls on my phone screen.

I nodded. I looked through the contacts for Jackson's phone and dialed his number.

Before long, the call went through to Jackson's phone. From a distance, I watched him hesitate to pick it up. Nick muttered something to him, and after that, he answered the call.

"Scarlett, how's it going?" Jackson answered the call.

I lowered my voice and said, "Hi, Jackson. Where are you? I'm coming to J City in a few days and I'm wondering if you'd like to visit as well. We can celebrate the new year together in J City. What do you think?"

There was silence at first, and then he said, "Hi, Scarlett. I'm afraid we can't go. We're still in M Country at the moment. It's cold here. It's not good for the baby, traveling back and forth. Maybe after the celebration, when it gets warmer. Then we can go back to see you."

I watched as the man standing not far away fed me with lies. The feeling was unbearable. Why is he lying to me? If I had not come here and see them with my own eyes, I would think they were in M Country.

Pushing aside the disappointment, I asked, "What about Macy? How's she doing these days?"

From afar, I saw Jackson exchange glances with Nick. There was a moment's silence again, before he said, "She's at home. I'm outside right now and, if you don't mind, I have stuff to do. I'm hanging up. See you."

Afterwards, he ended the call without waiting for me to finish what I had to say.

I was stunned for a while as I watched them walk further away, pushing the stroller ahead of them and talking between themselves.

If Stacey had not stopped me, I would have run up to them and demanded to know why he lied to me.

It was sometime later when I finally calmed down. I took a deep breath and turned to Stacey. "So, what did you find? Lay it on me."

After everything that had happened, I was confident that I could accept whatever would come my way. I had lost my baby, my relationship with Ashton had hit the rocks, and the same had gone to Rebecca.

Things are actually going quite well!

She looked me straight in the eyes and pursed her lips. "I suggest you give Mr. Fuller a call first. There are about one hundred missed calls from him. He must be worried sick about you!"

I got annoyed. Ashton happened to be calling me again when I peeked at my phone. In cases like this one, a fight would most likely ensue if I take the call.

I chose to turn it off. Then I looked at Stacey and asked, "Is your place far away from here?"



She replied with a shrug, "It's around here. I originally planned to return to my hometown for the new year. How's this? Tomorrow, I shall take you to that place I've been talking about, and after you get that sorted out, I'll make my way home. I heard that the Stovall family in K City is planning to add you to their family register. If things work out, you'll have a lot on your plate."

I was not one who liked to get to the root of whatever we were dealing with. Since she had made all the arrangements, I would not want to interfere. Ashton's calls kept coming. I spoke to Stacey for the final time that night, "Alright. I'll head back first. See you tomorrow!"

She nodded as she got out her car key from her handbag. "That's that, then. I'll pick you up tomorrow!"

"Right!"

After we separated, I went straight to the Glenwood residential area. It had been a rough day. I did not have the energy to go all the way to the villa at Peakville Estate.

There was no one there waiting for me. The emptiness would be unbearable if I stayed there alone.

When I got back, I received another call from Ashton's phone. This time, I answered it. "What's up?" I said.

"Scarlett, where are you?" Is that Joe?

He startled me. I asked, "What's the matter? Is something wrong?"

"Scarlett, can you come to Joy Luck Boutique? Ashton needs a pickup. He's had one pint too many. Jared and I can't do anything to stop him. Can you come over and take him home?"

It was rather noisy on Joe's side. From what I could hear, they must be at a bar.

I pressed my lips and, over the phone, turned down the man's request. "You can wait for him to blackout, then bring him back. I'm not at home right now. I can't go there!"

## **Chapter 348**

"No, Scarlett, you don't get it. You don't know how much Ashton can drink. If he's not drunk, he can drink all the way until the sun rises. He's causing harm to himself, but nothing Jared and I say can deter him. If anything happens to him because of this, we can't bear the responsibility!"

Joe described Ashton's situation so vividly. I could feel the anxiety manifested in his tone.

I stood on the balcony, allowing the wind to blow softly against my face. Irritated, I spoke on the phone, "If he can't bother to take care of himself, then let him drink to death!"

"Scarlett..."

"Scarlett, are you a woman at all?" Apparently, Joe's phone was snatched away by none other than Ashton. He spoke to me in a strong nasal voice, obviously drunk.

"What's that got to do with anything? Ashton, you go drinking at this hour and now you're throwing tantrums at me? How old do you think you are? Three?" The other side of the line might have been put on speaker because Joe seemed to fly off the handle once I finished my rant.

He called out Ashton in a drawl, obviously in a teasing tone.

But Ashton probably shot him back an eerie look, thus the other end of the phone went quiet again.

I was really not in the mood to be dragged into this sort of nonsense, so I said, as casually as I could, "Ashton if you're doing fine, don't call me! I'm hanging up!"

Before he could think of a comeback, I hung up right away and turned off the phone for good measure.

That night, I could not sleep well, as per usual. I kept having nightmares. I finally managed to get some sleep when dawn broke, and then Stacey called.

She could hear the exhaustion in my raspy voice. She asked, "Ms. Stovall, you didn't sleep well, did you?"

I affirmed her query, and then said, "Give me the address. I'll be there soon!"

A throbbing headache assailed me. I got up and sat on the side of the bed for several moments before regaining my senses.

After listening to the sound of my voice, Stacey paused and said, "Let's do it this way! I'll come to pick you up in a while, so you can catch a little bit more sleep. I'll even bring you breakfast along the way!"

I wanted to reject her but she was faster. "Open the door for me later, okay? I'm hanging up. See you!"

And that was what she did.

Still in a daze, I checked my phone. Other than the bunch of missed calls from Ashton last night, there were no other messages or phone calls from anyone else.

When Stacey arrived, I was not in bed anymore but my head still hurt. It subsided after I swallowed some pills.

She brought breakfast and, upon seeing the dark circles under my eyes, said, "How about you take a rest for the day?"

I shook my head. "The Stovall family is throwing a banquet on Monday. John's arranged a fitting session for me but I kept ditching him. After we sort this out, I still have to get back to K City!"

She went quiet for a bit, her eyes darkened as she muttered a confusing choice of words, "I'm just afraid that... things won't go too well."

And then she turned to me. "Come on, eat up!"

I nodded, my head still pounding terribly.

After leaving Glenwood Apartments, I experienced discomfort straight away. It was like being hounded by a daunting aura, trapping me in an anxious state, on top of that pulsating headache. My mood was at an all-time low.

I realized she was driving towards the suburbs. That raised some questions. "Why are we going to the suburbs?"

She pressed her lips before replying, "I'm taking you to someone you'd want to meet!"

Someone I'd want to meet?

I ran a lap in my head but nothing came up. I could not think of anyone I would want to meet who stayed in the suburbs.

Turning to her, I prompted, "Who, exactly?"

She did not answer. It was another half-hour drive before we came to a stop in the parking lot of a cemetery.

I had been to this cemetery many times in the past. Grandma and George were buried here, so I was quite familiar with this place.

She got down from the car, bought a bouquet of chrysanthemums from the entrance, and handed it to me. "Take this!"

Then, she dragged me into the cemetery.

My mind was still buzzing, not quite getting why she had brought me here, of all places. "Is it one of your friends, or someone in your family? After we pay our respects, where are we going next?"

She was walking in front of me. In a low voice, she said, "Probably Mr. Harrison, but they should be here today."

"What for?" She led me a little more ways into the cemetery before stopping in front of a tombstone in the back row.

I froze as my gaze fell on the tombstone. My thoughts came to an abrupt stop as an epiphany struck. The chrysanthemums in my hand fell to the ground.

I stared at the black-and-white photo and epitaph on the tombstone in disbelief.

I shot a glance at Stacey, suppressing the pain and shock growing in my heart, my voice trembling as I exclaimed, "Is this a prank?"

She pursed her lips and, when she spoke, her words bring no mercy, "Do you think this is a prank?"

I looked at the tombstone again and examined the black-and-white photo. Here laid the one person I was most familiar with, the closest friend I had ever had!

I could clearly see that she was buried on September 28. It was around the time of my accident. How could she...

I shook my head, still unwilling to accept the matter of her death. Angrily, I confronted Stacey. "I don't understand why you have to do this to me. But I'm quite certain I haven't done you wrong in any way. Don't you think this is too much, even for you?"



