

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 473-477

Chapter 473

I heard about the Crest family from Ashton. Though the Crest family had begun as a family of academics, its subsequent generations had made exceptional achievements in various fields ranging from business to medicine. They were well-known everywhere.

Over the years, the Crest family had gained extensive control over W City. Jared's return to W City would thus serve two purposes—he would be able to spend more time with his family as well as partake in his family's business.

This is all well and good, but what about Kristina?

Just as my thoughts drifted in that direction, Kristina appeared as if my mind had summoned her out of thin air. There weren't many customers in the Ferropenian restaurant, so her arrival was hard to miss.

After all, an impeccably dressed pregnant lady who still emanated a youthful air was an eye-catching sight.

I wanted to ignore her presence so we could have a peaceful meal.

However, it seemed like she had purposely dropped by to look for us. After she passed the front counter, she headed immediately for our table.

She looked at us with a sweet smile pasted on her face. "Jared, you're eating here too?"

It may look like a coincidence, but it's starting to seem more likely that she planned this. After all, why would a pregnant lady come all the way to a restaurant to eat alone?

Jared frowned as he nodded. His expression was wooden. "You're here alone?"

She nodded and answered in a velvety tone, "I got bored at home, and you weren't answering my calls. So, I decided to come out myself."

"Have a seat then," Jared spoke flatly as he ordered a steak for her.

When the steaks were served, Ashton carefully placed Summer on the seat next to his before gracefully cutting the steak.

Summer didn't know how to cut a steak, and I was too lazy, so I usually let him do it for her.

Jared placed some cut pieces of steak on Summer's plate as he spoke to her gently, "Summer, do you mind eating the ones that I've cut?"

Summer hesitated for a moment before nodding.

Kristina was cutting her steak and frowned at the sight of Jared's actions. She seemed displeased. She transferred her steak to Jared's plate and smiled at him. "Jared, my arms have been feeling so sore these few days. Won't you help me cut my steak?"

Jared's brows furrowed as he ate a bite of his steak. He looked around for a waiter and waved one over.

The waiter arrived at the table and inquired politely, "Sir, is there anything I can help you with?"

"Could you please cut this steak up, thank you."

Oh wow, he's actually asking a waiter to do it.

I chanced a glance at Kristina, who had paled and appeared humiliated.

Since it was requested by a customer, the waiter could only smile meekly as he cut up the steak.

The atmosphere instantly became awkward.

Ashton seemed to ignore everyone else at the table as he carefully placed cut pieces of steak on my plate. He spoke gently, "Just eat. Don't get distracted."

I nodded as I tore my attention away from them.

Summer looked at me, then turned to look at Kristina. I had no idea what was going on in that head of hers.

She suddenly asked, "Mr. Crest, do you not love this lady?"

I almost spit out the water I had drank. This kid doesn't have a filter at all.

Kristina's face paled as she lowered her gaze and chewed her lips. She looked utterly humiliated but somehow managed to squeeze out a smile.

Jared raised his brows and looked at Summer. "Do you know what love is?"

Summer nodded. "Uncle John told me. He said that if a boy loves a girl, he'll take care of her. Just like how Mr. Fuller loves my mommy. He always takes care of her by helping her cut her steak or cooks for her. He also calls her a lot to check if she's ok."

Looks like John literally teaches her everything.

At her words, Ashton's lips curved upwards in a smile. "Your Uncle John has pretty good observation skills."

Heh!

Summer nodded and continued earnestly, "Of course. He said that I need to learn to be observant so that I'll know if a boy loves me or not. Only then can I be happy."

"Summer, less talking, more eating," I cut in after seeing Kristina's dismal expression.

Pregnant women are prone to mood swings. I don't particularly like her but I'm not going to agitate or provoke her on purpose.

Summer hummed in acknowledgement and started eating.

Jared's gaze fell on Summer as he appeared to be deep in thought. I didn't know if it was on purpose or not, but he suddenly blurted, "That candor! Just like her!"

I frowned, knowing that he was referring to Macy. It's a bit pointless to be bringing that up now, though.

I made an excuse and left for the restroom.

Humans are strange beings. We don't appreciate things when we have them, yet we scramble for scraps when what we have is truly gone. What an irony.

Kristina followed me to the restroom with an upset expression on her face. "Since you've already adopted her, why must you parade her around and ruin other people's lives?"

Shocked, I turned to look at her. I asked with a frown, "Ruin people's lives?"

I couldn't help a mirthless laugh from escaping. "First of all, let's be clear that you won't meet anyone who's more reluctant to let him meet Summer than me. As for today's meal, he begged me to let him eat with Summer. And now you're blaming me?"

She looked at me as she sighed, "I hope we can avoid each other from now on. You can live happily with this child in K City. Just don't appear in my life ever again."

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I began to pity her. She'd become a bundle of nerves over the appearance of this kid. I scoffed, "Biological relationships are such fascinating things. No one can predict how they'll play out in the future, so here's a piece of advice for you—just focus on the baby in your belly and live your life without worrying about every little thing."

Jared obviously doesn't love her at all. The only bargaining chip she has is her unborn baby.

I didn't want to continue debating such meaningless topics with her, so I quickly entered the restroom.

Suddenly Stacey was calling me. I was reluctant to pick up the phone but decided to answer the call after some thought.

"Are you busy? Can we grab a bite together tomorrow?" She worked at Fuller Corporation, and I knew she was busy as she frequently commuted between K City and J City.

After some thought, I replied, "Tomorrow's the weekend. I may need to bring Summer to the book store. I can't confirm if I've any free time yet."

“We can just grab a quick dinner. It won’t take long.” She paused for a moment before continuing, “I know you have some misgivings about me, but Scarlett, you need to hear me out. We always have to put ourselves first. Besides, she deserved it.”

Stacey’s accusation against Nancy on the filming set—whether intentional or not—wasn’t a big deal to me. But I do have the right to choose my own friends, and I’d rather spend my time with people who share my values.

“Alright, see you this weekend then.” Phone calls were devoid of visual cues and could often be misleading.

She answered, “See you!”

As I hung up, I exited the restroom and noticed that Summer wasn’t at our table. Only Ashton and Jared were there. I frowned as I asked, “Where’s Summer?”

“She wanted to pick a dessert; she went to pick it out with Kristina,” Jared replied.

I was worried and a little angry, but I couldn’t take it out on Jared. I looked at Ashton and said, “Summer’s a cheeky kid, and Ms. Ludwick’s pregnant. How can you let her follow Kristina?”

Ashton sensed my panic and stood up, holding my hand. “They’re just in the restaurant. Don’t worry, they’ll be back soon.”

I shook off his hand and walked towards the dessert area. It’s not that I don’t trust Kristina. It’s just that her character is unreliable. Summer’s very existence is a threat to her unborn baby. There’s too much risk involved.

The restaurant was huge, and I walked a whole round before seeing Summer. She was busy choosing desserts from the display counter.

I let out a sigh of relief when I saw that she was safe. Then I noticed that Kristina was taking a photo of Summer on her phone. I frowned and strode forward, snatching the phone from her hands to delete the photos.

“Ms. Ludwick, that is my daughter. You can’t take or distribute photos of her without my permission.”

My sudden appearance surprised her. She appeared chagrined as she looked at me. “Scarlett, don’t you think you’re overreacting? I just thought her expression was adorable when she was choosing desserts, so I wanted to take some photos. I don’t have any ulterior motives. You can’t possibly think that of me.”

“I can and I will!” I replied coldly as I walked towards Summer. Pulling Summer towards me, I looked at Kristina. “For your own safety, please stay away from my daughter!”

Her smile was chilling as she kept her phone. “If she was really your child, I’d understand the extent of your concern. She’s not really yours though. And yet, you’re devoted to her. Don’t tell me the rumors are actually true? Is Mr. Fuller barren? And that’s why you’re treating someone else’s child like the apple of your eye?”

My expression darkened. My tone was simmering with anger as I replied, “If you don’t use your mouth for anything else, I’d suggest sewing it up so you can’t spew any more nonsense.”

“So? Are the rumors actually true? Ashton can’t have any children of his own?” she sneered.

She’d come closer to me and whispered this last bit into my ear. No one else around us would’ve been able to hear her.

I lowered my gaze. Raising my hand, I slapped her without a hint of hesitation. It wasn’t a hard slap, but it was good enough to teach her a lesson.

She held her cheek as she glared at me. “What? Is no one else allowed to mention it?”

“Try again if you dare,” I said calmly.

Slapping someone in a restaurant would inevitably invite attention. Ashton and Jared soon showed up.

At the sight of the two men, Kristina immediately switched on the waterworks.

“Jared, I only brought Summer here to pick out desserts, but Ms. Stovall didn’t want me to touch her child. She even slapped me! That’s too much!”

I pursed my lips and stared at her coldly. My anger hadn’t subsided. “Kristina, if you’re going to be this pretentious, I won’t mind sending another slap your way. Don’t think you’re untouchable just because you’re pregnant. If you like to act the victim, I can play along and be the villain.”

Jared frowned as he looked at me. “We can talk things out calmly. There’s no need to get physical.”

He’d uttered these words nonchalantly before turning towards Summer. “Summer, is there anything else you’d like to eat?”

Summer lifted her head to look at me before she turned to stare at a weeping Kristina. She apparently knew what was going on. “She made mommy angry. That’s why mommy hit her.”

Jared was stunned by her answer. He smiled meekly and nodded. “I know. I’m not blaming your mommy.”

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Nodding, Summer passed the desserts she’d picked out to Ashton and said softly, “Mr. Fuller, let’s go home. Mommy’s upset.”

Ashton's knowing gaze had never left me though he had yet to utter a single word.

Jared, on the other hand, appeared unconcerned over Kristina's feelings. His whole attention was on Summer. He had been trying to start a conversation with her even until we had already exited the restaurant.

Indifferently, we bid them farewell as we boarded the car. Summer fell asleep soon after.

When we stopped at a red light, Ashton reached out and held my hand. "Are you feeling better now?"

Slightly surprised, I shrugged. "I felt better a long time ago."

He smiled gently. "So, what did Kristina say to piss you off?"

He lowered his gaze and stared at my hand. He appeared to be suppressing his laughter as he asked, "Does it hurt?"

"I'm the one who slapped her. Why would I be hurt?" I removed my hand from his hold as I recalled Kristina's words. I couldn't help my gaze as it traveled towards Ashton's lower body.

Apparently, I wasn't as subtle as I thought. Ashton narrowed his eyes as he asked doubtfully, "What's going on?"

Aware that my staring was inappropriate, I quickly turned my gaze away. After some thought, I asked, "Did y-you take it out yet?"

He appeared shocked at the question, and it took him a moment before he was able to compose himself. The light turned green, and he began to drive forward. "Yes?" he answered confusedly.

Four years ago he had a vasectomy. I haven't been with him for four years; I wouldn't know if he'd reversed it or not.

Based on Kristina's words, maybe he hadn't reversed the vasectomy. This then became fodder for the rumors that were swirling around.

"Take what out again?" He looked at me out of the corner of his eye, a questioning gaze in his eyes.

Blushing, I said, "The vasectomy clips. Did y-you take them out?"

His shock soon morphed into laughter. He looked at me with his brows raised. "If you want to have kids, I'd be happy to remove them."

My brain stuttered as I pouted. So, did he take them out or not?

"You'll become infertile if you keep the clips on for too long!" Four years was a long time. I didn't know if his fertility was already affected.

He laughed lightly. "Don't worry. Your husband is a healthy man. If you really want to have kids, I'll be up for it too. Any number is good."

I didn't want to continue bantering with him over this. Adopting a serious tone, I said, "Let's make an appointment tomorrow and get the clips removed."

Even if we're destined to leave each other in the end, I don't want him to ruin his chances of ever having kids in the future.

He looked at me and laughed. "We're not in a rush to have kids."

In the end, we didn't manage to arrange for an appointment to reverse Ashton's vasectomy due to his busy schedule.

But little did I expect that I was the first person to be notified about Nancy's death.

It was the end of September when the autumn rains came frequently. I rarely left the house as I was busy preparing for my exams.

When I received the text, I was surprised. It was a short one: Turn on the TV. Wait for her death.

The message seemed like nothing more than a horrid prank.

I frowned and switched off my phone, turning my attention back to my revision.

Suddenly Stacey called, stumbling over her words. "Was it Mr. Fuller?"

I knitted my brows in confusion. What does she mean by that?

"What happened?"

As if sensing my confusion, she replied, "Nancy was apparently murdered in her own home. The police are investigating now. I heard that it was an ugly scene."

I was paralyzed with shock. My hands, however, seemed to move on their own accord as they closed my books and switched on the TV.

News of Nancy's death was being reported on every channel.

"Isn't Mr. Fuller with you?" Stacey asked.

I frowned and recalled the first thing she'd blurted to me when I answered her call. I answered coolly, "Ashton wouldn't stoop to such a level."

She probably heard the anger in my tone and quickly apologized.

People change. She'd spent so much time in the murky waters of the business world that she'd become a ruthless woman.

Now though, we no longer crossed paths. I hung up and looked at the text I'd received earlier.

The call didn't connect when I dialed the number listed as the sender of the text. I pondered for a moment and decided to call Ashton.

The call went through, and I heard some background noises. It sounded like he was in the middle of a meeting. "Scarlett, what's up?"

He didn't speak loudly, but the background noises disappeared once he spoke.

"What happened to Nancy?" I asked, not meaning to interrogate him. Realizing my tone was off, I composed myself before saying, "I received a suspicious text just now."

"You don't have to worry about her since her contract with Fuller Corporation has already been dissolved. Her future actions have no bearing on our corporation. Don't overthink things," he said, sounding soft and a bit hoarse.

I paused for a moment and nodded to myself. There wasn't anything else to say, so I hung up.

I was still weirded out by the text I'd received out of the blue, so I decided to try my luck and dial the number again.

The phone still appeared to be switched off.

The doorbell of the villa rang. I went downstairs and opened the door.

Sally was here.

I'd just opened the door and could barely react when she slapped me.

Slap! She'd landed a solid one on my face.

My head was stinging from the impact, and I had to take a moment to compose myself. Blood trickled out from the corner of my lip.

I looked down at her as I attempted to suppress my rage. "Ms. Fuller, have you always been this brash? Why are you slapping people for no reason?"

She let out a cold laugh and sneered, "Reason? Nancy's death is reason enough. Scarlett, I thought you'd know your place by now after being gone for four years. Clearly, I've underestimated you. After all, how good can a woman be if she can even destroy the reputation of her own birth mother? Nancy merely admired Ashton. If you weren't happy with that, you could hit and berate her. Why make her die such a painful death?"

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Did she think I murdered Nancy?

I almost laughed out in disbelief. Looking at her, I scoffed, "Ms. Fuller, you've actually overestimated me. If I were that ruthless, that slap would never have made it to my face."

She said disdainfully, "You can drop the act. I know Nancy slandered and humiliated you before, so you've been vengeful all this while! It's not impossible to get rid of her. After all, you have the backing of the Stovall family or the Moore family. It should be easy for you to get rid of an actress without leaving a single trace behind. I never took you to be this cruel, Scarlett!"

Nothing I say will make her change her mind. Plus, she didn't come here to ask if I murdered Nancy. She doesn't even care who really did the deed since she's already fixated on me being the perpetrator.

No one else was at home, and I didn't want to continue talking to her. So I said, "You've already slapped me and scolded me; you can go back now, Ms. Fuller."

But alas, if it was that easy to deter Sally, I wouldn't have been forced into tight corners by her several times.

She ignored me and entered the villa. Plonking herself down on the sofa in the living room, she tossed a folder on the table. Her voice was full of hatred and disgust as she said, "Scarlett, if you have any feelings for Ashton at all, you should leave him. Don't drag him into this mess."

I frowned and opened the folder she'd tossed on the table. As I flipped through the photographs that were inside, a cold sweat broke out on my body.

These photos were taken before Nancy's death. The faces of the men who were in the photographs couldn't be seen clearly, but Nancy's tortured expression was distinctly captured.

I lifted my gaze and looked at Sally. "Why are you showing me these photos?"

She returned my gaze as her expression darkened. "The police have begun investigating the scene. Just how long do you think you can keep this under wraps? Since your return to K City, Nancy's had her contract with the Fuller Corporation dissolved, and she also slandered you when she attracted media attention for her little stunt on top of that building. Now, she's dead. Who else can be responsible for her downfall?"

She paused as she attempted to control her emotions. "I don't know if this is revenge or just pure hatred. Frankly, your actions have nothing to do with me. But you must leave Ashton. He cannot have his reputation sullied by a wife like you. Just one misstep and it could destroy him and the Fuller Corporation. You will only ruin him if you stay by his side."

I almost laughed out loud at her audacity. "What makes you think I did it?" You didn't even get any facts right, and you're placing the blame on me already?

She sneered, "The Moore family has had its fair share of dirty dealings. Do you think Cameron hasn't seen the news? To them, Nancy's worth less than a dog."

I laughed. "And what does that have to do with me? Ms. Fuller, my patience is limited. I've tolerated you many times in the past because you're Ashton's aunt. After all, we're taught to respect our elders. But if our elders cannot behave rationally or reasonably, I think there's no longer a need for tolerance. Please leave my house right now!"

She was frozen in shock, not expecting me to retaliate. She looked furious. "Just who do you think you are, Scarlett? This house belongs to the Fullers. What makes you think you can kick me out?"

"She can because she's my wife!"

I was surprised at Ashton's sudden appearance. He walked into the living room and stood beside me.

He glared at Sally with barely concealed anger. "You may be my aunt, but I expect you to know your place better."

"Ashton! Are you going to cut ties with me over this woman?"

"If you continue acting like this, it wouldn't be impossible." Ashton was usually calm, and his emotions were hard to discern. Now though, his anger was palpable. As he stared at Sally impassively, he asked, "Do you need a lift home?"

As he uttered his words, it was painfully obvious that Sally had overstayed her welcome. With her chest rising and falling rapidly with anger, she glared at me fiercely before leaving in a huff.

Staring after her as she left, the pain in my head intensified. I also felt frustrated.

Ashton pulled me down onto the sofa. Already in a sour mood, I blurted, "What's with Nancy's death?"

He glanced at me. "Her mother owed a lot of money to the loan sharks. They probably knew she'd gone into hiding, and that it would be impossible to get the money back. So, they took drastic measures."

Frowning, I asked, "But murder's a little extreme, isn't it? Someone obviously wanted her dead. Did the Moore family have a hand in it?"

He chuckled, "Why didn't you guess it was me instead?"

"You wouldn't!" I said resolutely.

This stunned him. "You're that sure," he said as he raised his brows.

"Nancy may be a hateful woman, but you wouldn't stoop to murder. You have your morals. Plus, there are more than enough things in the company that deserve your attention compared to some C-list celebrities like Nancy. This whole crime reeks of revenge. That's something you'd never do." I didn't even wish Cameron dead for what she did in the past, and that was worse than anything Nancy has ever done.

I also knew that Ashton and I shared somewhat similar beliefs, and this further convinced me that he would never murder Nancy.

He paused slightly before pulling me into his arms. His chin rested lightly on my head as he spoke in a rumbling tone, "I didn't know your impression of me would be that honorable. I'm about to burst with pride."

I didn't banter with him but continued to ponder the situation, which felt strange to me. "The Moore family wouldn't do this. Let's exclude Cameron first and consider Zachary. He may have dallied with the mafia for years, but he wouldn't just end someone's life so carelessly."

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He nodded and whispered, "Don't worry about that. Focus on your coming examinations."

Indeed. Why bother? That was none of my business anyway.

Independence Day holiday.

Thanks to Emery, I got to sit in on classes at K University. That would really help with my revision for the examinations.

I met Emery's fiancé, Hunter Zane, as I got out of class. He was a tall, soft-spoken, bespectacled man, every inch of him was gentlemanly.

He was the one who wrote the recommendation for me to attend classes at K University. "Prof Zane!" Waving my arms, I called out to him from afar.

He saw me, smiled and stopped in his track.

I went up to him and saw he was holding some law books. He must have just finished his class. "Anymore classes later?" I asked.

He shook his head. "I am done for the day. What about you? How was the English class?"

"I have learned a lot!" I replied as we walked out of campus together. "Are you going to Clermont later in the day?"

"I may not be able to make it. I have guests coming, so I have to pick them up. Please help me get a message to Emery—ask her to join us for dinner tonight." Hunter replied.

"Sure! Your parents are coming?" I probed. He smiled and nodded.

Hunter's from J City. Since it was nearing their wedding date, I supposed the family came for the wedding.

We parted at the car park as he had to rush off for his next appointment.

I walked to and from class most of the time as K University was not far from Clermont. The weather was refreshing, perfect for a nice and relaxing stroll.

I did not notice the black Bentley that stopped by the side of the road until someone blocked my path.

It was Marcus.

"What's up?" I grunted.

"Where are you heading? Let me give you a lift." He stood there leisurely with a hand in his pocket and a cigarette between his long fingers.

A chance meeting? Or maybe he had it all planned out?

Well, it did not matter.

“That’s not necessary. I am just a short distance from home,” I replied with indifference.

“Home? The home with Ashton Fuller?” he responded sarcastically with a frown.

I had no intention of elaborating. I just stood and stared at him with impatience.

“Scarlett Stovall, how foolish can you get? If he is true to you, he would not have kept your relationship a secret.”

“That is between the two of us. Please mind your own business. If that is all you have to say, then I will take my leave.” I brushed him off.

“Are we worse than strangers now? We went through so much together in that one month. Does that mean nothing to you at all? Am I so repulsive that you would not wish to even talk to me?” He held me back and lashed out.

I let out a sigh and asked, “Camelia should be due soon, right?”

He was stumped. “Is that what is bothering you?” He paused and then continued, “That was an unplanned pregnancy. If that bothers you, I will send her back to M Country after she gives birth. She will not come between us.”

I pushed him away angrily. “What do you mean she will affect us and you want to send her back? Marcus White, do you know what sets Ashton apart from you? Ashton takes responsibility in a relationship. Even if he does not love someone, he would not hurt her. He may be a little clumsy when it comes to love but he shows respect to the other party.”

I took a deep breath to calm myself before continuing, “I know I have no right to criticize you. Four years ago, what I did was not to one’s satisfaction. I will make it up to you. You can state your demands. Just don’t ask me to love you. As for you, please man up! If you are not in love with Camelia, why did you

cozy up to her? How could you be so callous now? What has she done wrong? The only mistake she made was to fall for you.”

That was the problem with most of us. The grass would always be greener on the other side. We would fail to treasure the relationships we have and long for the ones who left. How tragic.

Marcus contemplated for a moment. “You will fulfill any demands I have?” he asked.

“Anything, other than to love you.” Sometimes, one just got to bite the bullet and face the consequence.

“Come work at White Corporation, move out of Ashton Fuller’s place, and do not see him ever again.” Marcus listed his demands.

“I will be having my examinations next month so I can’t take on any work for now. As for my relationship with Ashton, that is none of your business. Marcus, please quit pushing my buttons!” I was annoyed.

“No to everything? So that is what you mean by fulfilling any demands?” he sneered.

“I... I can agree to work at White Corporation. Just not now, since I am having my examinations soon. That is something beyond my control.”

Marcus deliberated over it. “Since you have your examinations coming, I wouldn’t get in your way. Let’s do this instead. Come to Moonlight Bay and cook for me every day. Take that as repaying me for saving you back in those days.”

