

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 663-667

Chapter 663

When I looked closer, I realized he was stabbed by a stake, and I frowned again. "How did this happen?"

"I crashed into something during the fight," he said nonchalantly. "Nothing to be worried about. It missed the vital organs."

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Barely. God, it's just a few millimetres from his kidney. He had a lot of wounds, but they were minor, just like what he said, but the one on his waist ran deep.

I cleaned his wound for him. Since there was no anaesthetic for him, he felt all the pain from the cleaning up. Lodophor wasn't as painful as alcohol, but the cotton swab was still going to irritate the wound.

Even so, all he did was frown. He didn't even flinch, so I asked, "Does it hurt?"

He smiled at me. "No."

As if. His wound was finger deep. I knew he must be in pain, since he was just human after all. I sighed. "You don't have to lie. The wound's too big not to hurt. You aren't Superman, you know."

The blood was still flowing out, and I crushed some haemostatic drugs before spreading it on his wound. Even so, the wound wouldn't stop bleeding. I had to do it a few times before the drugs took effect.

I heaved a sigh of relief. That was an intense session, and I was even starting to sweat. Luckily, the wound didn't seem to cause any more complications. After I bandaged it, I felt something warm on my forehead, much to my surprise. I looked up and stared into Armond's eyes. Awkward.

"It shouldn't be infected as long as you stay clear of water." I looked away.

He smiled and pulled his hand back from my forehead. "Do you cook?"

"Huh?" I was stupefied, then I nodded when I noticed him smiling at me. "I do. Are you hungry?"

He nodded and arched his eyebrow. "I was in a hurry, so I didn't have anything to eat. I am starting to feel hungry now."

"I'll make something light for you. Lie down, please." I helped him to the bed, and I was confused about why he kept staring at me. "Are you allergic to anything? Is there anything you can't eat?"

"No." He was still staring at me, which made it awkward. I tucked him in and went downstairs. There was a lot of food in the kitchen, but they were mostly bread, jam, and some beef. Western Europe alright.

I was going to make chicken soup for him, but there wasn't anything in the fridge for that. There was only flour there. In the end, I decided to get some wild vegetable outside, but there were a lot of guards there.

It felt like a prison, but I knew Armond did that for safety reasons. Since it was a remote area, there was a two kilometre distance between each house, so there was ample space. Wild plants grew abundant in those places, so there were some good wild veggies.

Grandma used to make chowder for me when I was a kid. She'd boil the water and toss the vegetables in, then she'd stir it for about ten minutes, and a serving of chowder was done. It was thick and melted easily. Not great, but a good substitute for chicken soup.

Armond seemed to have fallen asleep when I went back to his room, since his eyes were tightly shut. I whispered, "Are you asleep, Mr. Murphy?"

He didn't stir, so I hesitated for a while before setting the chowder down beside him and covered him with the blanket. Out of a sudden, he held my hand down, much to my surprise, and I noticed him staring at me.

"Did I wake you?"

He smiled and shook his head. "I wasn't asleep in the first place." Then he looked at the bowl. "What did you make?"

I pulled my hand away and sat beside him with the bowl in hand. "You don't have much here. All I can make is some vegetables chowder. See if you can take this."

He tried to get up, but that jolted his wound, and he gasped. I held him by reflex, but I moved too fast and fell down on him. "I-I'm sorry. I... I..." Well, that was awkward, but at least I didn't spill the chowder.

I put the bowl down and helped him up again, but he was staring at me silently. I thought he was angry about earlier, so I mumbled, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I was going to help you up, but I lost my footing."

He laughed. "I know."

Then why are you looking at me like that? I helped him up and handed the chowder to him. "Try it."

He didn't take it. Instead, he looked at me. "Aren't I a patient now?"

I nodded. "Yes." The wound was big enough to warrant him a ward in a hospital.

"If that's the case, then I think you should feed me, right?"

I was surprised he would say that, and I looked at him sternly. "I thought you're too uptight to crack jokes like that."

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He smiled and took the bowl of chowder from me, then he sipped from it. He nodded, probably thinking it was fine. "Do you cook a lot in the past?"

I could never understand how he managed to shift the topics that fast. I shook my head. "No. I often saw my grandma making this when I was little."

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He nodded and sipped the chowder in silence, as if reminiscing the past. I didn't want to break the silence, so I observed him. A short while later, he looked up at me. "Was it hard living in R Province?"

I stared at him, stupefied. "How did you know that's where I lived?"

He found that question amusing. "That's not too hard to figure out. I told you I helped you out so I can get my hands on that sandalwood box. Is it that surprising that I'd look into your past then?"

Well, that argument was sound, so I nodded. "I see." He waited for me to continue, so I said, "Not really. I didn't starve or die out in the cold. At least it was better than how I live now."

He smiled at me again and put the bowl away. "Have you ever regretted at choosing Ashton?"

That question took me by surprise, and I couldn't answer him. "There's still some in the kitchen. Do you want more?"

He squinted at me and shook his head, then he stopped asking any more questions.

I went back to my bedroom, spaced out. Have I ever regretted marrying Ashton? Nope. Never.

Midnight came, and thunder rolled in the skies as rain poured. I thought of Armond and his wound, and I wondered if the curtains in his room were closed.

I went to his room and knocked on the door, but nobody came to open it, though I heard something crashing inside. Surprised, I went inside, but Armond was nowhere to be found, though the night light was on. Then I heard sounds from the bathroom.

The lights inside were on, so I heaved a sigh and went to knock on it. "Are you alright, Mr. Murphy?" He didn't answer, and I started to worry. "Mr. Murphy, are you—"

"I'm fine," he interrupted, but he sounded weak.

Worried, I pushed against the door, but it wouldn't budge. Looks like I'll have to wait. He came out a long while later and was covering himself with a towel. Did he take a bath?

I frowned, upset. "I told you to stay clear of water. Your wound's going to get infected, and more so when the weather's hot." I dragged him to the chair, fuming. Then I pulled his towel away to check his wound again, but I overlooked one thing. He just came out of the bathroom, and he only had a pair of boxers underneath the towel.

It was awkward between us, but it only lasted for a second. I calmed down, since I was just going to check his wound. Nothing else. I noticed that he was getting tense, so I said, "Relax. I'm just going to take a look at your wound. It might have to get bandaged again to prevent any infection from happening."

I took the medical kit and hunkered down beside him. Armond had a smoking hot body. He looked thin when he was clothed, but he was really lean. "Dammit. Water got into it, and a pus is forming," I cursed

and looked at him. “Just wipe yourself off with a towel if you want to take a bath. Going under the shower is going to infect your wound.”

He smiled at me again. “I’m used to it, so it’s fine.”

I thought he was being a bit too nonchalant, as if his life didn’t matter, so I glared at him. “I don’t care how much you hate yourself, but at least don’t try to harm your body. Can’t you just live your life to its best? Take the blessing of life and live on, will you?”

He was still smiling politely. “Do you talk to Ashton like that as well?”

I froze, almost losing my composure, and I frowned at him. “When are you taking me back?” I paused for a moment. “Ashton’s my husband so of course I care for him. As for you, well, I’m just helping out because I owe you one.”

He smiled, dismissing the snarky remark. “I have something to settle here, but we can go back right after that. And your friends might have to rest up for a bit before they can go home, or their wounds might spell the end of them.”

I knew about that, and I nodded. “Thank you.”

He smiled silently.

The pus in his wound was caused by an infection, and his injury ran deep, so I moved gently in case he was hurt.

“Does your family’s business cover the whole globe?” They opened up shop in Venria and Western Europe, so I thought it must be a big conglomerate.

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He nodded, and I continued, "I've known you for a while now, but I know nothing about the business you run."

He stopped for a moment. "Petroleum. And we're dabbling in tech now."

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"Petroleum?" I was reminded of Mr. Murphy, whom I met during Emery's wedding, then I looked at him. "You're a Murphy?"

He arched his eyebrow silently, then I was reminded of the auction in J City. "Have you held an auction in J City before?" If the answer was yes, then that'd explain his appearance in the cemetery and his 'coincidental' help.

I gazed at him sternly, then he said, "You're going to kill me at this rate."

I looked down and was shocked to see the cotton swab poking his wound and drawing blood. I pulled my hand back and apologized, "Sorry. I didn't mean it."

I rubbed the salve on his wound and bandaged it. Then I realized he wasn't wearing anything else but his boxers. Awkward, I covered his body with the towel. "It's getting late. Sleep tight."

He grunted. I kept the first aid kit and left the room without saying anything.

Nora and the girls had the kyanine extracted from them, but they were just ladies after all, so needed the rest to recuperate. Armond had a lot to deal with, so he had no time for me. In that case, I took up the job of caring for Nora and the girls.

I was going to call Ashton and tell him about my situation, but it couldn't get through. He must have set up call forwarding. I gave up after a few tries, then I tried to call Emery, but my phone was taken by the female officer when I was in Venria. I lost all my contact, and I forgot their numbers, so it was impossible for me to call them.

Nora and the girls were almost all healed up after a week. Armond was done with his affairs too, and the girls moved into the villa the night before our return.

The brush with death seemed to have taken Nora's lively attitude away. Tabitha and Laurel refused to speak, while Tessa kept reciting mantras as usual. Noticing the awkward silence around the table, Laurel said, "We can go back home tomorrow, guys. Let's drink to it." She raised her glass and smiled at us.

Nora looked surprised, but she raised her glass and looked at me. "We owe our lives to Scarlett this time. She saved us all. If it weren't for her asking for Mr. Murphy's help, we would have been shark food by now."

"Yeah." Tessa stopped reciting her mantra and smiled at me. "All thanks to Scarlett. A toast for her. Bottoms up, girls."

Everyone raised their glasses and finally started to chat. Good. At least the ice is broken.

Everyone started chatting, and Nora huddled closer to me. "Are you friends with Armond?" she whispered. "Are you related to the Stovalls, Fullers, and the Moores?"

Her barrage of questions stunned me, and I paused for a moment. "Not an easy question to answer, so I refuse to say anything, Nora."

"Why? Worried we might be a hassle?" Tessa grinned.

I answered a moment later, "No. I just think it's hard to explain. We've been through life and death. I won't think of you guys as a hassle."

“Oh, stop right there. The girls were the ones who have been through life and death with me, not you. You relied on men and your connections along the way, and you were never hurt, so give me a break,” Tessa mocked, but she was telling the truth, so I took no offense.

I smiled awkwardly, trying to continue the conversation, but I was at a loss.

“Tessa, that’s rude. We wouldn’t have survived if not for Scarlett’s connection with Mr. Murphy. Don’t look the gift horse in the mouth.” Nora glared at Tessa angrily.

Tessa sneered. “You think I’m the one who’s looking the gift horse in the mouth? The horse was never there to begin with. Do you really think she’s the one who saved us? She could have stopped the surgery in Venria if she wanted to, but no. This hypocrite only ‘helped’ us after Abe stuck that thing in us. That caused unnecessary pain, and I bet she’s just trying to win our favor.”

Tabitha frowned, upset. “You could have gone off on your own when we landed if you didn’t want her help. But I believe you went to Scarlett’s room one night and showed her the scar, obviously begging her to help. Do you really think she owed you?”

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Tessa had no good retort for that. Her face turned red with anger, and she frowned, ready to rebuke, but Laurel quickly stopped her, “Calm down, guys. Let’s talk this through. We don’t have to fight. It’s pointless. And we’re all safe and sound, and that’s a cause for celebration.”

Everyone fell silent, and Tessa stood up. “I’m full. You guys go ahead.” Then she went upstairs.

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Tabitha and Nora said nothing, while Laurel looked at me and shifted the topic, “Are you going straight to A City after you go back, Scarlett?”

I nodded. “Yeah. I want to see my daughter.”

“You have a daughter?” She was surprised. “But you look so young. How old is your daughter now?”

“Five. Almost six, actually.”

They looked at one another, and Nora threw me a look of curiosity. “So you’re married? Does Armond know about it?”

That question was weird, but I nodded. “He does.”

“Huh?” The girls were stunned. “He knows you’re a married woman, but he’s still that nice to you? Is he sick in the head?”

“Didn’t know hotties like him love young MILFs.”

The conversation went in a weird direction, and I laughed. “Don’t think too much about it. He’s helping me out for something in return. I have something he needs, so this is nothing but a transaction.”

“Transaction?” Nora was surprised, and also flummoxed. “Is the thing he’s looking for worth the lives of five?”

“It’s a box my grandma gave me before she passed on. It’s a puzzle box. I have one, but the other one was auctioned off. He’s looking for this box, but I don’t know why.” I wasn’t sure who Armond was. His last name was Murphy, so I thought he was probably a part of the Murphys.

But if that was the case, why did he take the trouble to hold that auction in J City and sold off the box he had? If he wasn’t a part of the Murphys though, then why was he aiming for that box?

Nora rubbed her chin and nodded. "Rich guys like him like to waste their time on stuff we think are unnecessary." She then looked at me. "Thank you, though. I'll treat you to something good when we get back. You're my friend now."

I smiled, and Tabitha looked at me. "My wedding's in October, but I don't know if that's going to change after what happened. You have to come if it's proceeding as usual though."

Laurel smiled. "Yeah, we're besties now. Hey, I have an idea. Do you guys want to open a company?"

We were taken aback by that proposal, and Tabitha looked at her. "Don't tell me you want us to be your partners."

Laurel nodded incessantly. "I have been giving it some thought back in the glass room. I thought I'd open a company with you guys if I managed to get out alive, and I did get out in one piece. We're going to work together for our whole life."

Tabitha frowned. "You are so greedy! You just got saved from one hell, and now you want to bind all of us together?"

Laurel smiled. "I mean, we can do anything together after the hell we went through. We met by chance, and I want this friendship to go on. We come from different places, so we're going to drift away if we have nothing to connect us. I don't want that to happen."

Nora found it amusing. "That so cheesy. That won't happen. We can always chat online."

"What kind of company do you have in mind?" I asked. "Any idea about where you're going to establish it? What's the company going to sell?"

Laurel gave it some thought. "I haven't thought about that in detail. All I have is a rough idea, but I know where the company should be established— A City. Sure, it's not the best city, but the infrastructure's well established, and it's developing well. It's in a strategic location, and the weather's perfect too."

"I have an idea," Nora said. "Why don't you open up an inn or tea shop? We can gather round at any time for a little vacation."

Tabitha nodded. "Good idea." The girls kept on talking, while I looked at the second floor, and I went upstairs after some contemplation.

I knocked on Tessa's door, but it took a while for her to open it. She was surprised to see me, then she asked, "Anything?"

"Let's talk."

She frowned and took a step back to let me in.

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She was obsessed with Buddhism. The moment she was saved, she erected a Buddha statue in her room and started worshipping it. Tessa sat cross legged before the statue and put her hands together as she muttered the mantras under her breath.

"What do you want to talk about?" she said.

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I looked at her and answered, "Do you really believe he'll bless you?"

She looked at me from the corner of her eye and replied sternly, "I wouldn't be talking to you now if he doesn't."

Well, that was one woman far gone in religion. I paused for a moment. "They said you live in A City. Laurel's going to open up a shop there once we get back. Want to join us?"

“No,” she refused firmly.

I nodded. “I didn’t mean it, you know. I didn’t want to hurt you guys. I really didn’t. I never expected Dante to hurt you like that. I—”

“Enough!” she interrupted me and threw me a dirty look. “Do you really think you’re that noble, Stovall? You keep looking down at us from a pedestal. Has anyone ever told you you’re one heck of a hypocrite?”

I looked at her, stunned.

She sneered. “I don’t think you even realized this yourself, but you’re a cold, selfish woman. And yet you keep trying to make yourself out to be some saint. You come from a privileged background, men fawn over you, and people would help you out no matter what. All you did was sit on your *ss and reaped the rewards. Ask yourself: have you ever gotten something through your own two hands? I knew it.”

I gaped at her, having no retort for that.

She was spurred on by my silence. “You’re just pretending to be a good guy, but you hate me more than they do, don’t you? That’s why you kept quiet when Dante chose me. Because you’d feel less guilty if I was the one who’s hurt. Because you never liked me. Am I right?”

I kept quiet, for I thought she had a point. Humans would tend to be sentimental, and even though I knew some part of her answer was fueled by her own rage, I couldn’t help but feel that I had the same thought at some point too.

I wanted to save them, yes, but I didn’t do my best either. I just went with the flow and didn’t do everything I could. even though I knew Ashton might be looking for me in Venria, I was still staying in Western Europe without a care.

“What? Got nothing to say to that?” She sneered with disdain.

I got up and left without saying anything. Not many people could face their own darkness head on. Me included.

...

The morning sun shone through the glass and covered the bed with golden dust. It was already August before I knew it. Fall’s around the corner.

Everyone gathered in the lobby early in the morning to prepare for the return. We managed to get to Western Europe from Venria without any passport or ID since the security was lax thanks to Armond, but it wouldn’t be so easy the other way around. Fortunately, Nora and the girls called their families and asked them to send the necessary documents over.

Not mine though. I couldn’t call anyone else, since the only number I memorized was Ashton’s. That proved to be a headache for Armond, and he had to talk to a lot of people in power to get the authorization for me.

We came to the airport, and Armond sent his men to take our flight tickets. At the same time, he went to settle his matters, leaving us alone.

Nora and the girls were exhilarated. Nora held my hands. “You can’t imagine how happy I am right now.”

“We can go home! Yay!”

“Yay for me too!”

The girls held each other’s hands, looking excited. Tabitha suggested, “Our flight’s one hour away. Why don’t we buy something to bring home?”

“Sure!”

And then everyone was silent. Laurel said carefully, “But we don’t have money.” Well, that killed the mood.

“Get Scarlett to lend you some then. She’s friends with Mr. Murphy, and the Murphys are rich. I don’t think she’d refuse, would she?” Tessa blurted.

Everyone looked at me. Well, this is awkward. Nora gave me the puppy-eye look and said nothing. Tabitha hesitated before speaking up, “Scarlett. I know it’s a bit much to ask, but can you lend us some money? I really want to bring something home with me. It’s been a while since I left, and my parents must be worried sick. I want to get something for them.”

“Yeah,” Laurel said carefully. “Same here. They must be worried sick. I know they must have searched high and low for us.”