

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 683-687

Chapter 683

“Sure. What’s up?”

“Can you send me the address of the company? I’m bringing lunch for Armond today. By the way, I can’t enter the office without an appointment, right? So you’ll need to come downstairs and get the food from me when I arrive!”

“Sure!” I was just thinking about what to get for lunch. “Armond has gastric problems, and they’re flaring up now. If you could bring along some gastric medication, that’d be great!”

I heard her cackling laughter through the receiver. “Leave it to me. I’ll be there in half an hour.”

I hung up and finished preparing the milk. Linda showed up at the pantry to get some coffee, looking exhausted.

I couldn’t help but ask, “Linda, did you have a rough night?”

She took a deep breath and nodded. “School’s starting in a couple of days. My daughter hasn’t completed any of her assigned work, so I’ve been up the past few nights making sure she finished them properly! Really, women shouldn’t have kids at all. They’re adorable when they’re still young but become absolute nightmares when they’re older! Here, look at my wrinkles. There are so many extra ones now!”

She moved her eyes closer to me and pulled on them dramatically.

I burst into laughter. "How old is your daughter?"

"She's entering third grade soon. I'm telling you, you can never run out of things to worry about them!"

"My daughter's entering first grade soon!" I replied on instinct as I thought of Summer. Though judging by Summer's nature, I probably won't be the only one worrying about her.

My reply startled her. "You have a daughter? Wait, are you married?"

I nodded as her astonishment grew. "I've been married for almost ten years."

She clicked her tongue and immediately launched into gossip mode. "Then what's going on between you and Mr. Murphy?"

I was flabbergasted at her question. She must be mistaken. I laughed as I explained, "He's just my boss. We seem familiar with each other because we've met on a few occasions before this. It's not what you think it is!"

She rubbed her temples and sighed, "I should've known. Men like him are hardly approachable by women. He's almost forty and still single; old Mr. Murphy must be going bald with anxiety."

I couldn't think of a suitable response and left with the glass of milk.

I knocked on the door to Armond's office before entering. He was still reviewing documents as I walked in. I called out to him, "Mr. Murphy, I brought a glass of milk for you."

The sweets on the table were gone, and I saw sweet wrappers in the trash can. So he ate the sweets after all. Who knew a frosty, reserved president like him would be a fan of sweet things?

He lifted his head when he heard me. His gaze fell on the glass of milk on the desk. Frowning, he said dismissively, "I don't drink milk."

"Well, you should at least drink a little bit of milk. It'll help to soothe some of the pain."

He shook his head adamantly. "I'm not drinking this!"

He paused for a moment and stared at me. "Linda didn't tell you that I don't drink milk?"

I shook my head.

He smirked and gestured for me to bring the milk away. I pursed my lips and retorted, "Even if you don't normally drink milk, a little bit right now will definitely help with your gastric pain. Plus, milk doesn't taste that bad."

I didn't wait for his reply and left his office. Nora had arrived.

She sounded excited through the phone. "I'm downstairs. You should come here ASAP. I spy a hottie here. He looks like an absolute bad boy. He's even more enigmatic than Armond."

Speechless, I hung up and hurried downstairs. She ran towards me when she saw me and pushed the lunchboxes into my hands.

She said in a rush, "Scarlett, I prepared lunch for both you and Armond. Don't tell him I made it, or he might not eat it. I'm off to ogle the hottie now, bye!"

I... Didn't she say she wanted to drop off lunch for Armond? She's literally just dropping it off?

I watched her running towards another floor and couldn't help but laugh at her antics. A woman's infatuation with handsome men is probably similar to how men are obsessed with the idea of college girls; they all boil down to human nature.

I got back to the office just in time for lunch. She didn't forget about the gastric medication, and she'd prepared dishes that were gentle on the stomach.

"Hmm? Did your friend bring this over?" Linda poked her head into the office as she walked past.

I smiled happily and replied, "Yup, she is free today, so she prepared some lunch for me. Would you like to have some too?"

She shook her head as she raised her own lunchbox. "I packed lunch here too."

I guess she is on the way to the pantry to reheat her food.

I walked into Armond's office. He was still knee-deep in work, though he seemed to sense my presence. Thinking I was here to drop off some documents, he didn't lift his head as he said, "Just leave it over there."

The glass of milk I'd brought over was now empty. I stared agape at the glass and exclaimed, "I thought you wouldn't drink it!"

He finally tore himself away from his work and stared at me. He said jokingly, "It's not bad!"

Noticing the lunch bag in my hand, he raised his brows and asked, "What did you bring?"

"Lunch!" I sat down next to his desk and continued, "My friend made this herself, so it's going to taste great. She also made some for you. Want to try it?"

Chapter 684

He got up from his seat and walked closer to me. "Did Nora make this?"

I was surprised at his guess. "How did you guess?"

He laughed. "You don't have many friends here, let alone friends free enough to bring lunch for you. So naturally, I guess it's Nora."

That makes a lot of sense.

I began laying out the utensils and passed him the gastric medication. "Here you go. Remember to take this if you have gastric pain."

He looked at the medicine before turning his gaze toward me. "Did you ask Nora to pick this up?"

I nodded. "Something like that."

He took the lunchbox from me and paused for a moment before asking, "Did you see Ashton last night?"

I was taken aback by his question. I'm going to get whiplash from the way his mind works.

Seeing as I'd suddenly become mute, he took a few bites of his food before launching into a monologue. "Fuller Corporation is planning a project in A City. Technically speaking, Ashton doesn't need to be in A City for it, but he's here and it seems like he's planning to stay for quite some time."

I nodded, not intending to reply.

He frowned at my continued silence. "Since Fuller Corporation isn't a local business, they're planning to hold a public tender for the project tonight at Oasis Hotel. Murphy Corporation is planning to bid on this project as well."

I stared at him in surprise before finally speaking, "You can just let me know directly what you need me to do."

He chuckled at my words as a bright smile began to form on his face. "I'm putting you in charge of this project!"

I frowned at him in confusion. "I've just joined the company not long ago, as your secretary. My job is to take care of your odd jobs and organize your documents. Following up with Fuller Corporation is a job more suited to a project director. Even if you insist on putting me in charge, you need to consider my capabilities. Do you have that much faith in me?"

He raised his brows and put down the fork in his hands. With a serious expression, he said, "You've worked at Fuller Corporation for years, making your way up to the Director position from the lowest rung of the corporate ladder. Isn't that proof enough of your capabilities? A position is an abstract thing, and it doesn't dictate whether a secretary can handle the tasks of a project director. You can ask Linda yourself. She's always been an executive assistant since she first joined the company, but she has a hand in most Murphy Corporation projects."

I knitted my brows. Is he trying to hard-sell me or something?

He continued, "Besides if we send you to bid for the project, our chances of success are a lot higher. I'm not above playing some dirty tricks."

As if I didn't know what he had in mind. He's definitely trying to gain some leverage by using my relationship with Ashton.

I didn't really want to go, though I didn't say a word.

He looked at me, and his gaze softened. "I'm not going to force you if you don't want to. You'll just lose your twenty percent commission on the project, that's all."

Stunned, I blurted, "Twenty percent?"

He arched his brows and said, "Supervisors in charge are entitled to a twenty percent commission for all successful bids. This policy has been around since Murphy Corporation was first established."

I wasn't unaware of commission distributions for successful bids, but supervisors typically got a five percent cut. Even ten percent was pushing it.

A twenty percent cut was a mouth-watering prospect. A project from a company as big as Fuller Corporation would at least come with a six-figure commission. If it was a project on a larger scale, it could go into the millions.

A commission like that could set me up comfortably for years.

Armond noticed that I was in a daze. He continued eating for a while before walking toward the other end of his desk. He passed some documents to me. "These are all the details regarding the project by Fuller Corporation. The local council is planning to work with Ashton as well. Right now, we only have one advantage going into the bidding, and that's you."

I replied helplessly, "Ashton's not going to favor me in the tender just because of our personal relationship. You said it yourself; profit is the only thing that matters in business."

He smiled cryptically at me. "How would you know if you never try? The tender begins tonight, so you need to get the bid proposal out this afternoon."

Pursing my lips, I replied in a somewhat harsh tone, "Mr. Murphy, aren't you just making my life difficult now?"

He smirked. "So you can't do it? Or you won't do it?"

The words froze in my throat. Neither scenario was accurate, though my heart still hesitated.

He broke the silence first. "Scarlett, you should start thinking about what you'll gain from this. Just ask Linda if you're unsure about anything."

He turned his attention back to his documents after leaving me with that piece of advice.

Chapter 685

My head was muddled as I stared at my lunch on the table.

I shook myself out of my stupor a moment later and cleaned up before leaving his office.

It had been ages since I'd last written a bid proposal, and I didn't know where to begin.

When Linda came to my desk, I was staring blankly at my computer screen, my chin propped up in my hands. She laughed before imparting her wisdom to me. "Fuller Corporation is calling for bids in A City because they want to expand their market share. Since they're a listed company, you can more or less view Ashton as an investor. Since an investor's fundamental goal is to multiply their profits from an initial investment, any form of profit will be important to them."

She continued, "Public enterprises in A City are clamoring to work with Fuller Corporation because, like us, they believe that this project shows a lot of promise. No one wants to miss out on a cut of its potentially lucrative profits. Their advantage lies in their stability, though their bid may be lower owing to their limited funds. This also implies that they may end up cutting corners during the late stages of the project to save costs. So when you're drawing up the proposal, there's no point in bidding extreme prices. Price wars are meaningless, and you only need to come up with a price that guarantees quality and profitability. Then, you should consider and address any concerns that the Fuller Corporation may have when it comes to developing a project in A City. If there's a need for it, you can arrange for Mr. Murphy and Mr. Fuller to meet for a private discussion. It may be much more fruitful compared to whatever us employees can accomplish."

She leaned closer to me and smiled. "This is my advice to you regarding the proposal. You can gather more opinions from the others in the office. Everyone has different thoughts and strengths."

I nodded and got up to thank her.

Nora called as I was contemplating Linda's advice in silence.

She started chatting excitedly, "Scarlett, are you busy? I'm downstairs; let's go for tea."

Rolling my eyes, I replied, "Nora, I'm working now. Mr. Murphy just dumped a tricky project on me, and I'm panicking like mad. I'm definitely not in the mood for some posh afternoon tea!"

"You're joking, right? Aren't you just his secretary? How can he dump a project on you like that?"

I sighed, "It's hard to explain. Oh right, where did you go? You left in such a hurry."

"I was tailing that hottie until I lost him, but now I'm back! By the way, did you enjoy the lunch I made?"

"It tastes great!" I paused for a bit before saying, "Do you know about Tessa's work?"

She appeared befuddled by my question. There was a slight pause before she answered, "No, I don't. Why are you suddenly asking about her? Do you need her to help you with something?"

"No," I replied hurriedly. "Armond assigned a somewhat complicated project to me. I was thinking that Tessa might know some people involved in it; that's why I asked about her."

She tut-tutted before replying, “She used to be in the tea business. I believe she was selling premium tea. Some years back, it was quite trendy to gift overpriced teas, so she must have rubbed elbows with many rich people back then. I’m sure she’s at least acquainted with some of them, though I’m not sure she’s the most reliable person for you to approach.”

“We’re going up against public enterprises in this project. I need to ask around since I’m not familiar with the social landscape of A City. After all, it can’t hurt to know more about the competition!” The previous night, Tessa recognized Derek at first glance when he arrived with Ashton. She must know quite a lot of people in those circles.

Plus, going by the situation, it seemed pretty obvious that Derek was present to discuss collaboration opportunities with Ashton.

Nora spoke after a moment’s pause. “You might as well ask me or Tabitha instead of Tessa. My grandpa may be retired, but he’s still got some useful connections. He might be able to get some useful information for you. Tabitha’s husband is also in the premium tea business, and he might be able to find out some intel in his circle for you. He’s probably more reliable than Tessa too.”

I pondered her suggestion for a while before asking, “Are you still downstairs?”

“Yup. Come on, let’s go for high tea. I know I look like someone who’s got nothing better to do, but that doesn’t mean I’m totally useless!”

“Alright, give me a sec!” I packed my things and hurried downstairs.

She was playing a game on her phone when I reached the lobby. There were a bunch of shopping bags slung on her arm.

She shot me a radiant smile as I approached. “Yay, time for tea!”

The assortment of shopping bags on her arm seemed to be a myriad of luxury goods. I couldn’t help but exclaim, “Does your family own gold mines or something?”

She spends so much, but she doesn't even work.

Laughing, she replied cryptically, "No gold mines here, but my grandpa has owned a legal coal mine since a couple of years ago. It's not going to make me a fortune, but I won't go starving."

Some people are destined to struggle since birth, while others carry their silver spoon with them their whole lives.

I didn't probe into her words and just followed her to the cafe for high tea.

As I buckled myself into her white Cadillac, I commented, "You have no idea how many women would kill for what you have right now."

Chapter 686

I caught her looking at me out of the corner of her eye. "A car, a house, and some savings without a job, plus being able to go out whenever I want and do whatever I want?" She ticked these off her fingers as she continued, "Maybe it is a perfect lifestyle?"

I replied, "Correction, it absolutely is the perfect lifestyle."

She let out a brittle laugh. "Scarlett, you know what I think? We're always going to envy someone else's life. Take me for instance. You have no idea how much I'd love to be in your shoes. You haven't told us much about your old life, but I know it can't be as simple as we imagined. After all, you personally know Armond, who's a pretty big figure in K City. That alone already shows that you're far from just a plain Jane. There's also this perpetual air of elegance around you, with a dash of mystery that's just absolutely alluring. Do you get what I'm saying?"

I chuckled at her words. She's always lived a pretty straightforward life, so she's naturally intrigued by mysterious things.

The car came to a stop before a cafe famous for its high teas. She turned to address me, "Let's go!"

The cafe boasted an elegant ambiance, which was elevated by the soft, graceful music playing in the background.

After ordering some pastries, she asked, "Why did Armond give you a task meant for a project director?"

I shook my head and said, "I'm not too sure either!" I kept the bit about my relationship with Ashton to myself.

Frowning, she asked seriously, "Are you trying to find out more about the public enterprises because of this project?"

I nodded and explained, "I believe Armond wasn't planning to bid on this project in the first place since Murphy Corporation has never been involved in technology-related projects. So I was quite surprised when he suddenly mentioned his intent to take on this project and put me in charge. I can't say I agree with that decision. It's going to be pretty hard to snag a deal with Fuller Corporation."

She paused, and I could sense the gears turning in her brain. "When is the tender?"

"Tonight!"

"What? He wants you to come up with a bid proposal in one afternoon?"

I suddenly felt exhausted as I nodded. "I can't think of how to come up with a good proposal at such short notice. My brain's fried."

She stared at me and asked, "What can I help you with?"

I then proceeded to explain the details of the project to her. After some brief contemplation, she asked, "Where is the tender taking place?"

"Oasis Hotel!"

She nodded and said, "I know about that Derek you mentioned. I'll put out some feelers and see if we can find ourselves an advantage for the bid."

I agreed with her plan. Just as I turned my gaze away, I saw two familiar faces entering the cafe. I couldn't help the frown that took over my face. Why are they here together?

Nora followed my gaze when she saw my frown. Stunned, she exclaimed, "Why is Tessa here? And why is she with that hottie? That's the guy I was tailing this morning!"

I rubbed my temples. How does she make it sound so perverted?

I tried really hard to hold in my laughter. My eyes followed the two people as I said, "Maybe they have some things to discuss."

My gaze landed on Joseph, who was walking behind the two. If he wanted to meet her alone, Ashton would definitely send Joseph away on other errands.

Nora cried out in disbelief, "How does Tessa pick up these guys? She's so fat and flabby; how did she even get to know that hottie?"

We were sitting in a rather secluded section of the cafe, so Ashton and Tessa wouldn't be able to notice us unless they were deliberately looking.

Nora's penchant for gossip took over when she saw the two of them take their seats near a window.

She waved a waiter over. "Excuse me, we'd like to change tables. Is that fine?"

Naturally, he agreed.

Nora pointed to the table next to where Ashton and Tessa were sitting.

After the waiter agreed, I looked at Nora and said, "It's probably not a good idea to eavesdrop on their conversation. Both of us know Tessa, and if we take a table so close to them, she'll definitely notice us. And that hottie you mentioned? I know him. He's Ashton Fuller, the president of Fuller Corporation. We're bidding on his project tonight."

This stunned her into silence. There was a pause before she asked, "The president of Fuller Corporation?"

She glanced at them again before suddenly swiveling her gaze toward me as if remembering something. "When we were in Venria, you said you had some deep ties with the Fullers. What's your actual relationship with him?"

Pausing for effect, I said, "We're married."

Her jaw dropped to the floor. She asked with some incomprehension, "You're the wife of the president; why would you become a secretary at Murphy Corporation? I guess now I understand why Armond assigned this project to you; he's obviously trying to use your personal relationship to gain the upper hand! Why are you so worried about the tender then?"

She scoffed as she took another look at Ashton and Tessa. "So, was he the friend you mentioned last night? Did Tessa also meet him yesterday? But why are they meeting privately today?"

I shook my head, clueless about the meetup as well. I briefly explained my relationship with Ashton, "Nora, I'm not deliberately hiding things from you. It's just kind of a tangled mess. Ashton and I have a complicated past, and our differences have only grown bigger because of it. That's why I came to A City. I want to live a life that belonged only to me."

Chapter 687

Nora frowned and questioned, "Did you guys have a fight? Oh! Could it be he cheated on you with some other woman and you left because of that?"

I couldn't help but laugh. "Why is your mind full of these weird ideas?"

She clicked her tongue and squinted her eyes at me. "This is logical thinking. Aren't all rich people like this? Plus, he's handsome and rich. Any woman would want to get close to him."

I nodded in acknowledgment and explained, "He's not that bad a person. We have our own reasons. I can't have babies, so I left him. I wish he can have his own kids, and lead a normal life."

"The hell?" The woman looked at me in bewilderment, all the while furrowing her brows. "What is this logic? Have you not heard of test-tube babies? You're telling me you're giving a wealthy bachelor to someone else because of this?"

I didn't know what to say, so I pointed in the direction Ashton was in. If you want gossips, you can go there.

Nora snorted, "Stop changing the topic. Besides, Tessa knows us, and do you think she won't see me if I stand up?"

"She's sitting with her back against us. If I stand up, Ashton will see me, but he doesn't know you, so you can go with no worries," I reminded.

She pursed her lips and thought for a while. "So you're saying that I should go alone to enjoy the show?"

I shrugged in response. I have too many concerns.

She leaned against the seat and wore a bored expression. "It's no fun if I am to go alone."

Seeing this, I thought she had given up on the dose of gossips in front of her. Later on, she looked at me with a serious expression and asked, "How is Ashton's temper?"

Feeling confused by her odd question, I froze for a while before replying, "Why are you asking this?"

"Just answer me. How is his temper?" She glanced at Ashton before turning to me.

I replied, "He always has a cold look, but he is a gentleman."

Suddenly, she stood up with a grin on her face and walked toward Ashton and Tessa.

I was stunned when she walked away, as I didn't know what she was going to do. Then she called out to a waitress and whispered something to her.

The waitress' expression toward Ashton took 360 degrees turn, from admiration and respect to anger and disgust.

When Nora was finished talking to the waitress, she gestured toward me with a wide grin while the latter walked away.

After two minutes, the waitress walked out with a glass of fruit juice in her hand. When she passed by Ashton's side, her hands slipped and the juice splashed onto the man's suit.

The calm and poised man was surprised, and the waitress gasped in shock. It was until Ashton went to the washroom that Nora waved her hand at me, motioning me to sit beside her.

I sat beside her with a curious look. "Did you ask the waitress to do this? What did you tell her?"

The woman smiled cunningly and announced, "I told her Ashton is your husband, and he's cheating on you with a rich lady."

I...

The president of the Fuller Corporation actually became a man who lives off women just because of Nora's words.

No wonder the waitress' expression was written with disgust all over when she looked at Ashton.

"And she believed you?" I was surprised because Ashton's classy demeanor was on a significantly higher level than Tessa, and it was obvious that the man was richer than the latter.

She shrugged. "The waitress had just stepped foot into the society, so she doesn't have much experience. Although Tessa's bag is outdated, it is still one of the old collections of Burberry, which costs tens of thousands. To the waitress, it's a sizeable amount. Plus, Ashton's suit is tailor-made, and she doesn't know that."

I was totally speechless at how cunning Nora was. Soon, Tessa's voice sounded from behind. "Mr. Fuller, are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Ashton spoke in an indifferent tone.

"Holy sh*t!" Suddenly, Nora cursed out loud. I froze and lowered my voice. "What's wrong?"

"I need to go to the toilet for a bit." With that, she jogged to the washroom.

When I was still lost in a daze, I heard Tessa's voice from behind. "Mr. Fuller, is Scarlett really your wife?"

“Yes.” The man’s voice sounded cold and impatient.

After taking a sip of her wine, the woman said, “I couldn’t believe my eyes when I bumped into you guys at Zero Degrees yesterday. If I am to tell others that you guys are married, they wouldn’t believe it either.”

Ashton immediately asked, “Others?”

“Yeah!” Tessa immediately started blabbering, “We went to Venria recently and almost lost our lives there. We were trapped in the operating room and suffered, especially Scarlett. She was the most beautiful out of us.”