

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 743-747

Chapter 743

The rain pelted down harshly on our bodies. Laurel, who was completely soaked through like everyone else, peered at me with worry lining her features. "We have to go now!"

"This place is prone to sinkholes, especially on rainy days. C'mon, let's leave first!" Tabitha urged.

As though on cue, lightning streaked across the sky, followed by a deafening clap of thunder. Everyone couldn't care less about anything else and immediately scurried toward the tents.

"I think that area just collapsed!" Tabitha's boyfriend suddenly exclaimed.

Everyone glanced back as one and sure enough, a large area of the ground had sunken in.

"This place used to be a mine. Some spots were dug to a depth of approximately ten meters and no one has been managing this area in years. On rainy days, accidents are prone to happen," Tabitha's boyfriend explained.

Tabitha gasped in terror. "I saw many tea trees on the mountain. Isn't it dangerous for the tea farmers there? They could lose their lives!"

Laurel spoke up right then, aiming her words at Ashton. "Mr. Fuller, where did you guys go off to? If we weren't looking for you guys, Scarlett would never have been in danger and we wouldn't have gotten caught in the downpour either."

At that, everyone turned their attention to Ashton. He cast a fleeting gaze at them, but remained otherwise calm. In a polite and sophisticated manner, he expressed his regret. "What happened today was an oversight on my part. To show my sincere apology, I'll treat everyone to a meal tomorrow."

Laurel pursed her lips. "We're not blaming you. It's not exactly your fault, anyway."

While I was trapped in the pit, my entire body was pumping with adrenaline, but now that I escaped from that precarious situation, exhaustion hit me like a ton of bricks.

As I listened to their conversation, my knees suddenly gave out beneath me.

Ashton's quick reflexes kicked in and he caught me before I hit the ground, smoothly pulling me into his arms.

"Scarlett, what's wrong? Are you hurt? Let me take a look at you." Anxiously, Nora squatted beside me to inspect my body for injuries.

However, Ashton blocked her and contradicted in an authoritative voice, "She's not injured. She's just tired after the stress her body was put through. All she needs is a good rest."

I held Nora's hand and nodded reassuringly at her. Then, I tried to get to my feet, but Ashton hugged me close to his body and scooped me up. Both our clothes were wet, but thankfully, the weather wasn't too cold.

At such close proximity, I could feel his body temperature radiating and also the rhythm of his heartbeat.

Embarrassed, my face flushed a crimson red.

Finally, I was back in the tent after being subjected to the harrowing ordeal in the pit. Worried that I would catch a cold, Nora gave me the clothes she had brought that day and told me get changed inside the tent.

She squeezed into the tiny space because she was worried I wouldn't be able to change my clothes due to some unseen injuries.

Noticing how she was blatantly staring at me, I cleared my throat awkwardly. "You really don't need to watch me like that. I'm fine. Really. Perfectly intact!"

She nodded, but her eyes remained trained on me as she sighed. "Thank God Laurel's call for help was loud enough to travel through the forest. Otherwise, only God knows what would've happened to you if you were still trapped down there in this rain."

My hands paused their actions and I looked at her in perplexity. "Didn't you guys search for me because Tessa came looking for help?"

She shook her head with a frown. "Not long after we got separated, we trekked around the forest, but then returned to camp when we didn't find Ashton. He came back with Rachel later on. It turns out that she sprained her ankle and couldn't walk back. Ashton was supporting her when they returned. Seriously, that woman is nothing but trouble."

Flabbergasted, I blurted out, "Then, has Tessa come back?"

A small crease formed between her brows. "I would've forgotten all about her if you didn't mention her. We haven't seen her since you fell into the pit!"

"After Ashton and Rachel came back, we waited a long time for you guys. When it started to rain, we got worried, so we hiked toward the mountain. That's when we heard Laurel calling for help and found out that you fell into a pit."

I pursed my lips and fell silent.

After a brief moment, Nora's gasp broke the silence. "Did you guys tell Tessa to come back for help?"

I nodded solemnly. "Yeah."

Her lips pressed tightly together as her brows drew together. "Damn! That woman is seriously vile. She talks about virtue and kindness every chance she gets, but she's actually a cold-hearted b*tch!"

I kept mum and resumed changing my clothes. Suddenly, I felt all the energy drain from my body and only fatigue remained.

To play safe, we decided to rest in our tents for the night.

After experiencing a life-and-death situation, everyone was bone tired. Initially, Nora wanted to accompany me in my tent, but she was taken away by Armond after a while.

Too tired to inquire about the rest of them, I lay in my tent and fell asleep in a daze.

Chapter 744

The rain got heavier in the middle of the night, and I jolted awake when thunder cracked across the sky like a whip.

When I turned on my side, I realized with a start that there was someone lying down beside me.

Before I could release a scream, a hand shot out to grab mine and then came a man's soothing voice. "Calm down. It's me."

My chest heaved as I tried to recover from my shock. "Ashton, what are you..." I trailed off.

His unexpected presence had brought scared the daylight out of me, but gradually, I regained my bearings and furrowed my brows. Shouldn't he be with Rachel now? Why is he here?

I pursed my lips and uttered icily, "What are you doing here?"

His lips remained sealed, seemingly having no intention to answer me. Right then, another clap of thunder boomed overhead, and I flinched closer to him. However, he didn't seem to notice the subtle movement as he stuffed a pair of earplugs into my ears.

My surroundings instantly became quiet and for a while, I merely stared blankly at him in the dark.

Throughout it all, he didn't utter a single word. Instead, he hugged me and coaxed me to sleep by gently patting my back.

I was really sleepy, to begin with, I gradually dozed off in his arms and slept through the entire night.

The sky was already bright when I woke up the next day, and the morning air was slightly humid due to the heavy rain from the previous night.

Subconsciously looking to my side, I felt slightly incredulous when I found the space empty.

That man really comes and goes like the wind. I would've thought I hallucinated everything if not for the earplugs still stuck in my ears!

Putting aside those thoughts, I registered the headache pulsing behind my temples. Hence, even after waking up for a while, I remained in the same position. When Nora came into my tent and saw me lying down with my eyes open, she paused briefly and asked, "What's wrong? Are you feeling unwell?"

I shook my head and parted my lips to answer. "My head... hurts." My throat was so dry I could barely say more than two words.

Crap. I think I may be down with a fever.

Nora's brows knitted together upon hearing my scratchy voice. Upon touching my forehead with the back of her hand, she exclaimed, "You're burning up!"

Then, she rushed out in a haste and spoke to someone. "We should pack our things right now and go back to A City. Scarlett is down with a high fever!"

I wanted to say something, but my throat hurt too badly.

Ashton walked into the tent and scanned my face with his ominous eyes. Then, a frown appeared between his brows when he touched my forehead. "Jesus, you're burning!"

Nora trailed in after him and suggested, "Mr. Fuller, you should take her to the base to see a doctor first. There's a clinic over there."

Ashton nodded and picked me up. By then, my head was buzzing with a pounding headache. I knew that nothing I said would make a difference, so I simply went along with their decision.

Subsequently, Ashton brought me straight to the base while the others followed behind.

Due to my headache, I fell asleep again after getting into the car. My body felt light, as though I was floating in the air.

My body temperature fluctuated as I drifted in and out of consciousness, and I was plagued by an unending stream of nightmares, unable to break out of them.

In my semi-conscious state, I vaguely saw someone standing beside me. When Ashton's face came into view, I reached out to grab him, but my fingers just couldn't seem to touch him.

I was on the verge of breaking down after several failed attempts. As my emotions spiraled out of control, I began to cry.

Suddenly, I felt him hugging me. Then, the muffled sound of his voice reached my ears, but I couldn't figure out what he was saying.

The feeling of not being able to communicate with the outside world was horrible. After a few tries, I realized that I couldn't open my mouth, let alone speak. Hence, I chose to give up altogether.

Thereafter, I plunged deeper into my dreams. Some were horrifying, while others were beautiful, but most were indistinct. One thing they had in common was that they felt like things I had personally experienced.

In fact, many of those scenarios and emotions felt so tangible that I couldn't differentiate between dream and reality anymore.

This torment lasted a long time. When I finally opened my eyes, it was to see everything white. I'm in a hospital ward.

My mind gradually registered the pain and dryness in my throat. I shifted slightly, trying to get up to drink some water.

But my whole body was extremely sore.

"She's awake. Scarlett's awake!" Nora's familiar voice rang from nearby.

She ran over to the bed and grabbed my hand emotionally. "Oh God, you're finally awake. You almost scared me to death these few days!"

I opened my mouth to speak, but try as I might, I couldn't make a single sound. Left without a choice, I pointed at the cup.

She immediately got the hint and queried, "You want some water?"

When I nodded, she reached out for the cup, but someone beat her to it. Both of us glanced over in unison to see that it was Ashton.

Nora gave me a knowing smile before getting up to step aside.

Ashton sat next to me and supported me up from the bed to lean against his shoulder before bringing the cup to my lips.

My thirst was unbearable, so although I could feel the buried emotions within me threatening to surface, I ignored it and drank a few sips of water from the cup.

Even after my throat felt better, Ashton still kept his arms around me as he asked, "Do you want more?"

I shook my head and replied with much difficulty, "Thank... you."

His mouth tightened visibly, but he didn't comment. Then, he placed the cup on the bedside table and glanced at Nora. "We need to call the doctor over to check on her."

Chapter 745

Nora nodded and subsequently broke into a small jog out of the ward.

I tried wriggling out of Ashton's embrace, but he held me in place and commanded in a rich voice, "Don't move."

My brows drew together and I pushed through the soreness of my throat. "Ashton, this position is uncomfortable for me."

His forehead creased, but fortunately, he didn't refute. Instead, he raised the bed and guided me to lean back against it.

Nora called over the doctor to examine me. After taking my temperature, the middle-aged doctor who was clad in a white coat reported, "Your fever has gone down, but you might feel lethargic for now. Drink more water and take your medicine on time. If nothing goes wrong, you can be discharged in a few days."

"That's great. Thank you, doctor!" Nora expressed her gratitude. After sending the doctor away, she arched her brow at me. "Scarlett, you really survived a disaster. You were burning at forty degrees. I'm surprised you didn't fry a circuit up there. It truly is a miracle!"

I smiled feebly in response, too weak to speak to her.

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Ashton, being the perceptive person that he was, noticed this and bossily announced, "I'll take care of her. You can go about your day now."

I couldn't tell if Nora was doing it on purpose, but she met Ashton's gaze with a serious expression and countered, "I'm not busy at all. In fact, I have nothing to do at all!"

Then, a mischievous smile played on her lips before she continued, "I can't say the same for you though, Mr. Fuller. If I'm not mistaken, you should be quite busy recently, right?"

Ashton's face darkened. He had always been a man of few words, but right then, he looked like he was completely disinclined to speak.

Perhaps it was due to the medicine I just consumed, I started to feel tired again. Hence, I shut my eyes and gradually drifted back to sleep.

For the next two days, Ashton stayed at the hospital and took care of all my meals. He even accompanied me to the washroom each time.

Slightly exasperated, I peeked at him and argued, "Ashton, I'm all recovered now, so just go ahead with your work."

As though he couldn't hear me, he handed me a cup of water and ordered, "Drink some water."

I was rendered speechless and hesitated for a moment before speaking, "I'm getting discharged today. Thank you for taking care of me the past few days!"

He grunted in response, but disregarded the hint in my words and changed the subject. "Summer didn't go out at all during the summer break. She wants to come over and visit you."

I was taken aback because I never expected him to mention Summer. It was already August, which meant summer break was over. I previously promised to bring her to R Province, but then forgot about it because I was too busy.

"How has she been lately?" I asked in a small voice as guilt rose in me.

He pursed his lips and answered in a soft yet gripping voice, "She keeps insisting on visiting you. She's a child, after all. It's completely normal that she misses her mother after being apart for so long."

I bowed my head in remorse and absent-mindedly twisted my fingers together. After a short pause, I asked, "When is she coming over?"

After doing some mental calculation, I realized that it was almost September, so school was about to reopen. Even if she visited, she could only stay for a few days before having to return to school.

With a sharp glint in his eyes, Ashton shot me a sidelong glance. "Aren't you planning to return to K City to see her?"

My stomach lurched slightly before I timidly explained, "The Murphy Corporation project might take about a month to complete. I already caused a delay by being sick for a few days. I'm afraid it'd be quite some time before I can go back to K City."

His gaze dimmed and he didn't say anything.

Hence, this topic came to an abrupt halt and the atmosphere became slightly awkward.

Fortunately, my fever didn't cause any abnormal symptoms. After it went down completely, I rested at the hospital for a few more days before getting discharged.

I had initially planned to travel to Lavelian Village to resume work, but Armond told me to stay at the villa for a few days, explaining that he would get Linda to temporarily fill in for me.

But of course, that didn't mean I could slack off on my work.

Armond moved almost all of the documents to the villa for me to sort out.

The day Nora visited, I was huddled in the study with my head still buried in a pile of documents.

"Scarlett, open the door! Can you hear me?" she shouted from the yard.

Her voice resembled a loudspeaker. Those who didn't know might think that she was here to pick a fight with me instead.

I sprinted to the balcony and spotted her standing next to her black Cayenne with her hands resting on her hips. "Come down and open the door for me, woman!"

Amused, I rested my elbows on the balcony railing. "Are you here for a fight or something?"

She snorted and took out a suitcase from the trunk, then sent me a saccharine smile. "I'm here to shower you with love, honey!"

I was dumbfounded for a while before snapping back to my senses. "You're going to stay here?"

She nodded. "Yeah. Both my man and my woman need my care right now. I can't just sit back and watch."

This woman is really blunt with her words, isn't she?

Leaning against the balcony, I said, "There's no key to the gates. It's password and fingerprint based. Just enter the password one-two-three-four-five."

The corners of her mouth twitched slightly. "Are you sure it's one-two-three-four-five?"

I nodded and rubbed my nose. "It was something more complicated before, but I changed it because I can't remember overly complicated numbers."

She opened the door with ease, but paused at the threshold and nodded. "True. Based on that brain of yours, remembering a password is already worth applauding. Having a complicated one would just be making things difficult for you."

Excuse me...

That sounds like the exact opposite of a compliment!

Huffing slightly, I went downstairs to open the main door for her. She dragged her suitcase in like she owned the place. “You’ll give me a room, won’t you?”

There were five rooms in the villa. On the first floor was a guest room and the housekeeper’s room. I was using one of the rooms on the second floor, while another one was occupied by Armond. Hence, there was one more empty room.

I led her to the second floor and arranged for her to stay in that vacant room.

“The natural lighting isn’t too bad. It’s just a shame there’s no balcony!” she remarked and was about to unpack her suitcase.

“There is a large balcony in my room. Want to switch?” I proposed.

She shook her head with a small smirk on her lips. “No. This room is closer to Armond’s—much more convenient for me to take action, if you ask me!”

What?

I released a helpless chuckle and teased, “So, are you both together now?”

She paused her actions to look at me and spoke in a rather grave manner. "I have a very serious question to ask you."

Although I was puzzled, I nodded and turned serious as well. "Go ahead."

She pondered for a while before continuing, "When you and Ashton lived as husband and wife in the past, were there times when you guys wanted to do it but couldn't?"

I blinked in astonishment because this seemed to be a sex-related question. Then, I felt my cheeks heat up from embarrassment.

But faced with her earnest expression, I had no choice but to answer her seriously as well. Fidgeting slightly, I said, "Care to elaborate?"

She pursed her lips and complied, "Well, both people are obviously very turned on, but things always stop right at the most crucial moment."

I raised my hand to rub my nose and contemplated for a while. "Is it you or Armond?"

"Both of us!" Her expression was grave. "He bled that one time and I don't really know what happened. Later on, we tried doing it several times, but it was always so awkward. Whatever the case, we have not succeeded!"

This was the first time I was hearing of such a situation. Honestly speaking, I wasn't too sure myself.

Seeing me deep in thought, she inquired, "Did you and Ashton succeed the first time itself?"

The corners of my mouth twitched slightly as I looked at her. "Are you sure it's Armond's first time?"

She was taken aback by my question. "I'm not too sure. Well, it's my first time, that's for sure, but if it's not his first time; then why does this keep happening? And the thing is, he doesn't seem to have any problems!"

I clamped my lips shut, not knowing how to respond all of a sudden.

After some deliberation, I advised, "Why don't the two of you visit the hospital together? Such things involve both sides, after all. If you're considering marriage in the future, this would pose as a problem. So I think it's better you get yourselves checked. Usually, it's either a psychological or physical issue, but once it's resolved, everything will be back to normal."

She sighed and pouted slightly. "Scarlett, do you think he's only like this with me? Maybe he doesn't really like me and just feels comfortable with me. We happen to be almost the same age and he happened to meet me, not to mention we share quite a lot of common interests, so he decided to get together with me. Do you think that's it?"

I stared at her in surprise before chiding, "You are never like this before. Look at you, overcomplicating things! You've seriously fallen in too deep. Yes, it's an undeniable fact that a man's love for a woman can be reflected in bed, but many times, it's the little things that he does day by day that matters. Lately, I noticed how attentive he's been toward you."

Recalling the incident with the clothes, I piped up, "He even kept your clothes from before. I mean, he's the president of a company. Why would he keep a woman's clothes if that woman didn't matter to him, right?"

She looked at me in stupefaction. "What clothes?"

"The set of clothes he bought for you when we were in Archulea. It's quite similar to mine in terms of design, but the accessories and embroidery are slightly different. Yours was kept in Armond's private restroom at the company. I accidentally spilled water on my clothes previously, so he lent yours to me. I returned it to him after washing it and he probably kept it there again."

When I was done speaking, I noticed the frown on her face and her increasingly unsightly complexion. "What's wrong?"

She glanced at me and her originally puzzled expression morphed into one of sadness. “That set of clothes isn’t mine. Ever since we returned from Epea, I kept mine in the closet and haven’t touched it since then. Armond hasn’t been to my house before, so he’s never touched that either. How could he have kept mine in his private restroom? It’s definitely not mine!”

I was stunned for a moment and said, “Maybe he accidentally bought an extra set and decided to bring it back with him?”

She shook her head miserably. “Do you think a man like him would give a damn about a set of clothes? Even bringing it back all the way from abroad?”

I turned her words over in my head and tried to reassure her. “Nora, don’t take this matter to heart for now. Let’s talk about it again after we get to the bottom of this. You both owe it to each other. The worst thing that could happen between a couple is a misunderstanding caused by jumping to conclusions. We’re all adults. When it comes to relationships, we need to be clear-headed and rational. Don’t overthink it, okay?”

Having been together with Ashton for so many years, I realized that many times, the pain and suffering I endured was caused by my own reluctance to open my mouth and explain.

Chapter 747

For so many years, I had suffered too much in that relationship and I didn’t wish for Nora to go through the same pain. If a relationship started off as a sweet one, I believed that it could continue being that way.

She nodded and gradually calmed down. “Okay, I’ll listen to you and decide after I get to the bottom of this.”

With that, I helped her to unpack. Armond was at the office, so it was only the two of us. She went to the kitchen and barred me from entering, saying that it wasn’t good for a sick person to be in such an oily environment.

Hence, I was left with nothing to do. Because of the rain, there were many puddles of water in the yard. No one came to clean the villa in the past few days, so I grabbed some equipment and began cleaning the place.

Armond's abrupt return surprised me and my eyes traveled down to see the bags of groceries in his hands. Slightly confused, I asked, "What are these?"

"Aren't you guys cooking?" he said as an answer. Then, he handed me a bag of fruits and continued, "The villa doesn't have a housekeeper, so the two of you will have to settle it yourselves."

I nodded in response. He already told me about this, but shouldn't he be at the office now?

With the bag of fruits in my hand, I watched in perplexity as he strode into the villa in a haste.

Sensing someone's gaze on me, I looked toward the yard next door and was met with the sight of Ashton's slender and towering figure.

I flashed a faint smile at him and nodded slightly as a form of greeting.

With that, I went back into the villa with the fruits. Seeing Nora and Armond working together in the kitchen, I decided that it was best not to interrupt.

Thus, I busied myself with washing the fruits and sat at the dining table while waiting for the food to be served.

When the doorbell rang, Nora glanced at me and jerked her chin. "Go get the door, missy."

I got to my feet, walked out to the yard and saw Ashton standing beyond the gate.

Stepping forward and I asked, "Mr. Fuller, do you need something?"

He grunted in response. "I need to discuss something with Mr. Murphy."

I opened the gate and invited him in even though I was sceptical. Why is he looking for Armond at this hour? Is it about something work-related?

Nora and Armond, who were still busy in the kitchen, didn't seem surprised to see Ashton at all.

Armond nodded politely and said, "Welcome, Mr. Fuller. Have some fruits first. I'll be done soon."

Ashton returned his nod and sat at the dining table. Then, he reached out to grab my half-eaten pear and casually bit into it.

"Wait..." I wanted to stop him, but he had already taken a bite out of the pear and I couldn't very well tell him to spit it out, could I?

The point was, I had already eaten half of that pear, so it was mortifying to see him eat it just like that.

After taking a few bites, he raised his eyes to look at me with a hint of confusion. "What's wrong?"

I shook my head and withdrew my gaze, then grabbed another fruit to eat because I couldn't just snatch the pear out of his hand.

He watched me take the seat across from his with raised brows. As if realization suddenly dawned on him, he widened his eyes and asked, "Oh, were you eating this pear?"

Appalled, I started coughing violently and almost choked. What the hell is wrong with him?

I chugged down the glass of water on the table and gradually relaxed.

He was still staring at me with a profound gaze. "What's wrong?"

Peeved, I didn't even try to hold back my temper as I snapped, "Nothing!"

I seriously suspected that this man was doing it on purpose.

To my chagrin, he nodded and brushed off the matter altogether.

I drew in a calming breath before shifting my attention to the man and woman in the kitchen.

Nora may look like a rash and impatient person, but she was, in fact, a modest woman down to the core. Although she hailed from a wealthy family, she wasn't anything like those spoiled, rich brats. What was more, she had excellent cooking skills. Many girls would be repulsed by the hassles that came with cooking, but she seemed to enjoy being in the kitchen.

Armond was naturally a cold person. That was why he craved loving tender warmth.

As I watched them flit about the kitchen, I found that they looked good together in every way possible.

"Armond isn't the right one for you, so you should wipe off that wistful look from your face because it's useless!" Ashton voice broke my train of thought just then.

I looked at him with a frown and couldn't help but feel slightly annoyed by him. "What wistful look are you talking about exactly?"

He raised his brows tauntingly. "Don't tell me you don't feel wistful watching the person you like having such well-honed chemistry with another woman and listening to them bicker like long-lost lovers?"

Stunned, I glanced back at him. It seemed like he had been observing me all this time. As I met his gaze, I felt myself getting lost in those obsidian orbs. Flustered, I quickly averted my eyes and remarked, "Mr. Fuller, you seriously have a knack for misinterpreting things. I just find their interaction really sweet."

The corners of his mouth lifted imperceptibly. "Is that so?"

I pressed my lips together, giving up trying to explain as it would only make me more frustrated.

Hence, I rested my chin on my palm and continued watching the two people in the kitchen. Meanwhile, I felt Ashton's eyes boring into me, causing me to feel slightly edgy, so I got up and walked toward the kitchen instead.