

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 161

"I'm so stupid. Why am I still thinking about father-daughter relations? It's not like they don't have daughters." As I scolded myself for being an idiot, I walked to the park opposite and sat down.

When I was a kid, I used to go there a lot since Dad and Mom always brought me to play on the swings. Every time I said I wanted to go higher, Dad would pretend to be angry as he said, "Any higher and you're going to fall. Be good, Eve."

Then, when the swing was at its highest point, I would smile and reply, "But I'm not scared. If I fall, Daddy will catch me, right?"

"Of course, Daddy and Mommy will protect you forever, our little princess."

However, the more beautiful the memory was, the harsher the reality. I sat amongst the flowers with my head on my knees, feeling a little upset. Although I no longer felt heart-piercing sadness, as someone who had been hurt a lot, I still felt pain. At most, the feeling of pain was no longer as strong as before.

I then took out my phone and clicked on Christopher's contact. He should be in Coldbridge at that moment. Not knowing whether the call would bother him, I soon hung up after dialing his number. I'd better not bother him. After all, if a woman was too clingy, the man would get annoyed over time. Both parties had to have some personal space.

However, just as I hung up, Christopher called back. I blinked, taken aback as I picked up the call. Before I could speak, he asked, "Why'd you hang up after only one ring? You'll make me worried."

"I'm just afraid that I'd disturb you. It'll be a bother if you're doing business with a client right now," I mumbled. Then, I counted the hours. Since Christopher left Moon Village Restaurant and headed to the airport, it had only been two hours since he arrived in Coldbridge.

"The contract's only worth two billion. Don't worry. Your man can handle it. I'm not so busy that I don't even have time to pick up a call." I could feel his smile from the other end of the line. Just then, I heard someone talking beside him. It seemed to be his secretary, who was asking him to speak softer in case the client heard him.

Hearing the secretary's words, I pressed my lips together. Christopher was very daring to make such remarks with was a client around. He was acting a little too mighty and scornful.

"Why? Did you miss me? They say separation makes the heart fonder. For me, a second of separation already feels like a lifetime. I really want to go back and see you. I'll be back in three days, max. Remember to be good and wait for me at home," he said with a smile.

"You don't need me to pick you?" I asked.

"I don't want you to come to such a messy place. Just wait for me at home. I'll bring you a present when I'm back. I promise you'll like it, hehe," he replied while laughing.

I immediately became nervous then. "Don't give me weird presents. I don't want them."

"What counts as weird?" he teased.

However, I could not bring myself to say it out loud. He had always joked around and said he would buy some sex toys for us to use. Although he only talked about it, he had a very quirky personality. Thus, I could not guarantee that he would not buy it when he saw it. What should I do if he asks me to wear it?

"Excuse me, Christopher. You clearly know what I mean. You're not allowed to distort the facts."

"Oh," he said, dragging his voice out, "This is what you meant. Thanks for your reminder. I'll go and research properly about which is better to buy. Anyway, how has your day been?"

"Good, because you called me," I replied truthfully. Although such sweet words would thoroughly expose my thoughts and let him know what he meant to me, I did not want to hide it.

I was indeed happy because he had called me back so quickly. It was as if the sky had cleared after a storm. After we spoke a little longer, I heard the secretary urging him to meet the client again. Thus, I said goodbye and hung up since I did not want to interrupt his work.

Just as I was about to leave, I heard people arguing in the woods behind.

"Crystal, why're you doing this?"

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I turned back, quietly looking out from the flower field. Lyle and Crystal were talking in the woods and happened to be right behind me. Immediately, I mentally scolded myself for having such bad luck, for I saw them no matter where I went.

"Lyle, do you really not know why I'm leaving?" she asked, leaning against the tree trunk with an expression full of sadness and melancholy. "The same reason why I came back; you've always been very clear of it."

"I know. I really do. But Crystal, you know my feelings. Why do you suddenly have to leave? Are you going to abandon me?" he asked, pulling her into a hug. "I've torn the plane ticket. Let's not leave. We'll stay in Avenport and never separate ever again."

"But I don't want to go on like this anymore. You have a wife and family, so every time I go out with you, everyone looks at me strangely. Public opinion of me has also been poor. For you, I can accept the public condemnation, but I can't accept that my identity is merely your wife's cousin."

She sighed, then laughed again. "Recently, I've been thinking about something. Am I wrong to come back? If I didn't come back, you'll always be with Yvonne and won't be in such a difficult position either."

"I'm not in a difficult position. Really. Crystal, I don't want to lose you." His voice was full of affection every time he said Crystal's name. Then, he leaned forward, wanting to kiss her, but she pushed him away.

"I don't want to wait anymore, Lyle. Since you can't get over her and don't want to get a divorce, why shouldn't I fulfill your wishes? If you actually tore the ticket, I can book another one. It's really goodbye this time, Lyle."

The moment I heard her words, I recalled what Christopher had said to her that morning at Moon Village Restaurant. It seemed as though she indeed wanted to force Lyle. Otherwise, she would not use the plane ticket trick.

"Okay, I'll get a divorce. I'll do it tomorrow. Don't leave. Once I get a divorce, and everything subsides, we'll hold a grand wedding so that you can marry me in style, okay?" he replied. He finally gritted his teeth and talked about the divorce.

"Really?" she asked, turning her head to look at him.

"Of course. You know me, Crystal. I've never lied to you. All these years, no matter how many women have stood next to me, you've always been the one in my heart. I can't give up on you," he said, looking at her affectionately.

"Lyle!" With tears in her eyes, she suddenly moved forward, pressing Lyle against the tree forcefully and kissing him. He responded enthusiastically, the two quickly pressing themselves together in ecstasy.

Since the sky was turning dark, he quickly flipped them around and pressed Crystal against the tree. Then, he lifted her off the ground such that she could only hold onto his neck to prevent herself from falling.

There were sounds of a zipper unzipping before I saw Crystal's two pale legs rocking rhythmically. They were in the middle of it. I quickly turned around, hoping to wash my eyes with water as soon as possible.

Although society was open at that time, and many couples dated and did indescribable things in the woods, they were still a little too open. It was already not the first time I ran into them doing it in the woods.

"Don't lie to me, Lyle. I'll be very upset!" Crystal said as she tilted her head back, exposing her neck. Her skirt was pushed up to her waist, gathering in a lump, and her graceful figure was rocking in time with the tree.

"I won't... I won't... You're most important to me in this lifetime. No one can replace you," Lyle replied as he panted.

Quietly picking up my bag, I covered my eyes and quickly left that filthy place. Then, as soon as I got home, my phone rang. It was Lyle. "Come to City Hall tomorrow morning. We'll get a divorce."

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I was very calm when I heard that news. After all, I had already witnessed what happened between Crystal and Lyle in the woods.

Crystal's strategy was indeed very effective, for Lyle had called me so quickly. I guessed that they were either continuing their business in Crystal's bedroom in the Tanner residence or a hotel because Crystal was purposely making noises for me to hear.

"Okay," I whispered, "I'll wait for you outside City Hall at eight tomorrow morning."

"Yvonne, you... Forget it. See you tomorrow," he said before quickly hanging up. He was probably afraid that I would want to continue getting involved with him. However, he miscalculated something. I had no intention to do so at all.

I smiled to myself, feeling unprecedentedly relaxed. Although I was slightly worried about the situation with Sharon, I could not spend my entire life with a man who did not love me.

Moreover, my love for him had long dissipated with time along with all the sorrows.

That night, I slept very peacefully. There were no nightmares, and I instead dreamt happy dreams. In the dream, there was no Lyle and Crystal. Instead, I was living happily with Christopher.

When I woke up, there was still a smile on my face. Although I could not remember what I dreamt of, I knew that I was satisfied and happy.

Sometimes, I did not know whether I would actually marry Christopher. However, I was greedy for his kindness toward me. Even though such a feeling was unfair toward Christopher, but it was all I had.

It was a little sad, yet lucky.

Since I missed him a lot, I then gave Christopher a call. If he were in front of me then, I would pounce on him and press my face into his chest, absorbing his warmth to fill up the coldness in my heart.

As the phone rang, I had thought that I would hear Christopher's low and magnetic voice. However, I was disappointed, as a woman picked up the phone instead.

Christopher's assistant was a man. Yet, the voice was beautiful and womanly. It was very pleasing to the ears and also sounded rather familiar.

"Hello, this is Christopher's phone. May I ask why you're looking for him?"

Immediately, I squeezed the phone tighter, my fingertips turning white from the force. There was an uncomfortable feeling in my heart the moment I remembered that it was Monica's voice.

At that instant, I was afraid that she would make out my voice. It was a kind of innate inferiority that could not be removed.

"I'm looking for Mr. West. Is he there?"

There was a pause on the other end of the line. "Sorry, I think you got the wrong number." Monica's voice was gentle and generous and was neither eager nor slow. It carried the air of a noble lady.

I quickly hung up, my heart beating wildly as I put the phone down.

Christopher's on a business trip, and Monica went to find him. Maybe it's because of business, or maybe they coincidentally ran into each other. Right, that must be it. I desperately tried to make excuses for him in my mind, finding various reasons to conceal the panic I felt inside. However, only I knew exactly how sad I felt.

It was only six in the morning, yet his phone was with Monica. It was a very weird timing.

Afterward, as I washed my face, the cold water splashed into my eye, causing it to turn red. I raised my head and took a deep breath, trying to calm myself down.

I did not have time to think about the matter with Christopher, for I had to go to City Hall right then to find my freedom. Conveniently, I could also get out of that tragic marriage.

Just as I went downstairs and was about to hail a taxi, a Porsche suddenly appeared in front of me. The window rolled down, revealing Lyle's haggard face.

His eyes were bloodshot, looking as if he had not slept the entire night. There were also dark circles under his eyes. He said hoarsely, "Get in the car. Let's go there together."

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Since he had come to pick me up in person, it seemed as though Lyle was indeed afraid that Crystal would leave. I did not refuse; I simply opened the door and entered. After all, I was going to meet him later anyway.

He slowly turned the car in one direction, then drove for a while before stopping by a street filled with food. He parked and got out of the car, then shouted, "Get down!"

I frowned. City Hall's not here. What's he trying to do?

Probably understanding what I was thinking, he said in displeasure, "I haven't eaten breakfast. Don't tell me you can't even have a meal with me?"

I was indeed reluctant to. Although I had not had breakfast either, I did not want to eat with him. "It's fine, I'll wait for you in the car. Go and eat."

"City Hall only opens at eight!" he replied coldly as he stared at me indifferently. "You can't wait to go?"

Of course, I could not wait. I wanted to dump him right then if I could. However, what he said did make sense too. Anyway, it's our last meal. I'll treat it like a breakup meal. It's better not to anger him. I don't want him to cause even more trouble and make everyone unhappy.

That street was busy in the mornings, with many people coming and going. Although it was only six in the morning, those who had to go to work were already eating breakfast there.

I followed Lyle into a small shop. I did not even look at the menu, leaving the ordering to him. Then, as soon as the food arrived, I did not say anything before I began stuffing my mouth.

It was better to keep eating during a meal. After all, having a full mouth meant that no accidents would happen. He was unexpectedly quiet as well, merely eating while occasionally placing some food onto my plate.

I did not refuse and proceeded to eat the food he gave me. My attitude toward him was so good that it almost seemed like I was currying favor with him. It's because the divorce agreement will only take effect if both parties sign it.

When I was done eating, he suddenly said, "We had our first meal in this shop. Do you remember?"

I kept silent at his question, as I no longer remembered. Since I now had better memories to keep, I had already slowly forgotten the sad ones. Besides, so what if I did remember?

Was I to reminisce about our failed marriage with him?

He had never liked me and had always despised me. Now that we were about to get divorced, he was the one who reminisced the past, which only added to the trouble.

"You said you liked the fish stew here the most. Why'd you only take a mouthful today?" he asked quietly as a trace of melancholy flashed across his eyes.

I pushed the full bowl into the center of the table, raised my eyebrows, then said, "You forgot again. I don't like to eat fish. I didn't before and don't like it now either."

His expression then turned strange again. He stared at me, his gaze looking as if he were struggling with something. After a while, he sighed and took out the divorce agreement. "Read it. If there's no problem, then sign it."

I immediately took the file and read through it carefully. The last divorce agreement gave me too many bad memories. Thus, I had to read it carefully so that I would not fall into any traps.

Lyle's expression worsened when he noticed my actions. Moreover, there was a profound, meaningful look in his eyes. If it were the past, I would have said something about having to treat a villain in a manner suitable for their status. However, I held myself back.

Unexpectedly, the divorce agreement was written satisfactorily and had no major issues. He had also given me ten million as compensation.

Although the ten million was not a big deal to him, I was a little surprised. I crossed out that line and said quietly, "I had nothing when I married you, so I also don't want anything when I leave. Let's settle it like that."

Although I had helped him win the contract with the Ziegler family, which saved the Smiths' plight back then, I no longer cared about that.

"I only have one request."

"Tell me," he said.

"You have to keep our divorce from Grandma for now. She's always been worried about us, so I don't want her to be sad."

No matter what happened between Lyle and me, Grandma was an elder who treated me well. The shares from the last time were enough to show me that she did not harbor any ill-intention toward me.

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I didn't want to consider the real reason behind her exchanging my place with Crystal. I quickly passed the signed document to him.

"Okay." Lyle finally nodded after looking at me for a long time. Surprisingly, his hand shook slightly while signing the document.

We arrived at the City Hall and noticed it was still closed when we got out of the car. Since we seemed to be early, Lyle lit a cigarette and started smoking.

I stepped back. I still hated the smell of cigarette smoke and especially disliked anyone who smoked apart from Christopher.

At the sight of me stepping away from him, Lyle walked toward a tree in front of us and leaned against it. Suddenly, he pulled out a card and passed it to me. "Ten million may be a bit much, but at least take a million. It's your living expenses from the past two years. I helped you withdraw it since you never used it."

I didn't reach out for the card, so Lyle decided to just shove it into my hands. "Take it. I'll feel more at ease."

At his words, I finally tucked the card into my pocket. I had been living so frugally, always keeping money away for a rainy day in case Lyle ever ran out of money. I just hadn't expected it to be used like this.

So Lyle feels remorse too, I thought. Too bad that his guilt toward me was never a priority. I always came last to him.

His phone rang before he could finish his cigarette and as he picked up, his gaze softened.

"Yeah, go ahead and eat without me. I'll be home soon, okay? Sleep in for a bit if you're still tired. I'll bring breakfast back for you. Okay, sure."

I didn't have to think too hard to figure out that it was a call from Crystal. The City Hall finally opened its gates and Lyle walked in as he continued talking to Crystal.

I checked the documents to make sure we brought everything. I was about to follow Lyle when I suddenly noticed a small car that was zig-zagging rapidly in Lyle's direction.

In the split second before the car hit him, I leaped forward and pushed Lyle out of the way.

"Lyle, move!"

The car brushed past me and barely skimmed my arm. The adrenaline caused me to stumble and fall on the road, sending a sharp jagged ache down my ankle. I instantly paled in pain.

Lyle was standing, probably shell-shocked from what just happened. He stared at me with his phone still in his hand, not even thinking of walking over to help me up.

I cursed at him inwardly and tried to stand up when the sharp pains in my ankle forced me to sit down.

"Yvonne, you-" Lyle stammered as if he had gotten a concussion. He suddenly came to his senses and rushed over to help me up. "Are you okay? Did you get hurt?"

"I'm fine! Let's go to the City Hall first," I said as I bit my lip and balanced on one leg. Cold sweat dripped down my forehead.

"Who cares about the City Hall right now? We have to get you to the hospital." Lyle picked me up bridal style and rushed into the car.

"Lyle! What are you doing? We need to go to the City Hall first!" I said urgently. If we left now, we'd have to make the trip back here again and that was just troublesome.

"Shut up!" Lyle yelled as he slammed on the accelerator and sped toward the hospital.

The moment we reached the hospital, Lyle started shouting for a doctor to come and give me a proper check-up. A doctor walked over and asked about our situation, but when he noticed that it was simply a sprain, he seemed slightly annoyed.

Still, it was quite a serious sprain seeing as my ankle had swollen to the size of a tennis ball. I also remembered seeing the car drive across my foot.

After an X-ray, the doctor explained that I had sprained my ankle and had a slight fracture in my foot that would heal over a few weeks. I let out a sigh of relief.

"You're such a good husband. I bet you two must be deep in love. Don't worry. She'll only have to stay here for a couple of days so we can make sure she's alright, then she's all yours to take care of after that. She'll get much better in just a few days," one of the nurses consoled Lyle at the sight of him pacing anxiously.

Lyle froze at the sound of the nurse's words and so did I.

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This was the second time I heard that. The first time was when we were in the restaurant and the waiter complimented Lyle for being so attentive toward Crystal in almost the exact same words.

I simply smiled in response, choosing not to explain too much.

At that very moment, the divorce papers in Lyle's hand fell to the ground because of his restless pacing. When the nurse bent to pick them up, she noticed that they were divorce papers and finally realized she had said the wrong thing with a surprised expression on her face. She quickly picked them up and passed them back to me before rapidly finishing up the bandage and leaving the room.

I heard her mumble as she walked away, "I shouldn't have been jealous at all! They're not even married anymore!"

I waved the documents in my hand. "What about I call Sabrina and ask her to bring me to the City Hall so we can get this over with?" I suggested to Lyle.

He simply reached out for the documents and looked at me as he muttered, "Why did you have to save me? Don't you hate my guts?"

I rolled my eyes. As if one could pick and choose when to save someone else! Lyle was way too calculative of a person. Apart from Crystal, he gauged everybody else based on what they could do for him.

At my silence, Lyle continued. "I used to always feel like you only married me for my money, but I finally realized that that's not the case. You love me, don't you? If you

don't, you didn't need to save me over and over again while putting your own life at risk."

He was starting to change topics rapidly and I didn't like where it was going, so I quickly cut him off. "I don't think we need to talk about such things anymore. What about you?"

He never used to care about whether I loved him or not, so why would he start now? Besides, I had a crush on him for eight years and everyone could tell except for Lyle himself. There was no point in thinking about such things anymore.

"Of course we need to. Eve, you threw yourself into danger for me time and time again and I never appreciated it."

Lyle suddenly tore the divorce papers right down the middle and I inhaled in shock. "Lyle, have you gone insane?" I yelled.

"No. In fact, I'm more sober than ever. Yvonne, I don't want to lose you." I reached out in an attempt to save the two halves of the documents, but Lyle was quicker and he ripped them to even smaller pieces.

I stared at the ruined documents as Lyle tossed them into the trashcan. If it weren't for my injured leg, I would have already started beating Lyle up.

He walked toward the bed and embraced me. "Since you love me so much, let's not get divorced anymore, okay?" he said gently.

"Wait!" I was barely coherent in my urgency. "I didn't save you because I loved you! I just didn't want Sharon to be sad over you! Even if it was a random passerby or a stray cat in your place, I would still save them. Call me Mother Teresa for all I care, but it wasn't because I love you, got it?"

"You don't have to hide it anymore, Eve. The way you looked when you ran toward me and pushed me out of the way without hesitation...the worry in your eyes was so beautiful. Rest up, okay? I'll go settle some things and come back as soon as I can."

Lyle ignored my struggling and bent down to kiss me on the cheek before walking out of the hospital ward, leaving me completely stunned.

"Lyle, get your *ss back here right now! B*stard!" I yelled as I threw a glass of water in his direction. It slammed into the wall and shattered all over the ground.

Sadly, Lyle had already walked away. I continued destroying everything within arm's reach in my ward before collapsing on the bed and pummeling my pillow. What the h*ll do I do now?

My phone continued to ring incessantly, as it had been for the past few minutes. Annoyed, I picked it up and hung up when I saw Christopher's name on the screen.

He went out with Monica behind my back after all. Why should I answer his calls?

Despite me not picking up, Christopher seemed adamant to talk to me and kept calling until I finally picked up out of irritation. "Yvonne's not here!" I yelled, frustrated.

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Regret quickly settled in after I shouted. I had always been a little too easily frazzled and never learned to keep my feelings to myself.

I didn't think I could be blamed, though. Christopher and Monica were off at God knows where having the time of their lives, and being kept in the dark really rubbed me the wrong way, despite constantly saying otherwise.

I could feel those emotions slowly festering in my heart.

I continued punching the pillow relentlessly. What the h*ll is going on? Has Lyle gone insane? Should I have acted as if I didn't see the car about to run him over and just let him die?

Maybe I should have let him die and just shed a couple of tears before sending him to the emergency room. It's up to fate whether he lives or not, right?

Almost instantly, I felt like explaining everything to Christopher. He treated me so well and yet I always exploded for no reason. It was as if I was trying to stay single for the rest of my life.

The phone rang again and I quickly picked up. "I'm sorry! I'm in a bad mood and didn't think before yelling at you. Don't be mad at me, okay?"

The person on the other end was silent for an eerily long time before I heard a loud chuckle coming through. "Yvonne, who did you think I was? First, you yelled at me and now you're apologizing?"

"Huh?" I quickly went through my recent calls and discovered that I had never gotten a call from Christopher. Sabrina had been on the other end of my sudden outburst.

"Ah, that really scared me." I wiped off the cold sweat forming on my forehead. "Thank God it was you the whole time, Sabby. You won't get mad at an idiot like me, right?"

"If you know you're an idiot, then maybe you should start learning from your mistakes." Sabrina clucked her teeth. "Recently, you've just been a bit quicker with the comebacks. Everything else is still the same ol' Yvonne. Where are you? Let's go shopping."

"In the hospital," I said with a sigh.

Sabrina reached the hospital surprisingly quickly. She knew that I must have been alone since Christopher wasn't around to take care of me.

Once I told her the whole story of what happened, her eyes shone in surprise. "Next time this happens, you probably should just close your eyes. Lyle's brain must have short-circuited."

"It's not like I wanted this to happen!" I cried out as I burrowed into my blankets. "Why did I have to be such a busybody?"

"Poor thing!" Sabrina looked at me pitifully and pulled the blanket off my head. After a second, she said, "What about you bring this up with Christopher? He'll definitely think of a solution."

I shook my head and massaged my temples in frustration. I always made everything out to be way too simple, but in reality, everything was much more serious than I thought.

I had a strong gut feeling that I would have a very intense rival if I wanted to date Christopher, and that rival's name was Monica.

They were a brilliant match no matter what you were looking at. When I stood next to Christopher, it was as if I were a scarecrow standing next to a handsome farmer.

"Did you argue?" Sabrina blinked in confusion before realizing, "So the one you wanted to scold was Christopher. I thought you were talking about Lyle! Calm down a bit. Don't scare away the man of your dreams."

I groaned in frustration. "Don't get it wrong. we're not involved in any way."

"Not involved? What exactly is 'being involved' supposed to be, then? Just let Christopher come up with a solution for you to get divorced. After that, you can live out your dreams with him for the rest of your life. You might even become a CEO. Doesn't it sound like heaven to get married to someone as rich and handsome as him?"

Sabrina's teasing gaze caused me to flush in embarrassment. She was definitely aware of the relationship between me and Christopher. The last time she saw all the marks on my body when I was changing at the Lane house was enough for her to laugh at me for a long while.

This time, though, her words only served to get on my nerves and I huffed. "As if I want anything to do with him."

Sabrina patted me on the head as if I was a child, which only served to make me feel even more like I was throwing a petty tantrum.

"Don't make a fuss. He's good for you."

I was speechless.

What exactly had Christopher done to Sabrina for her to go over to his side completely?

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I was stuck in the hospital for a whole day. Lyle actually treated me like his wife for once, which I was completely unused to. Even though I tried to be petty and pick here and there, he treated my complaining as flirting and let me be.

I lost count of the number of times I had sworn at him in my heart. Even my appetite was affected and all I wanted was for Crystal to swoop in and take Lyle away.

My prayers didn't go to waste. At Lyle's second visit, Crystal walked in all decked out. Her elaborate outfit almost lit up the room as if she were a disco ball.

"Crystal! What are you doing here?" Lyle stood up nervously and put down the apple he was peeling for me.

"I just wanted to visit Yvonne," Crystal said and she stared at me like she was trying to bore a hole through me. I lay there, letting her stare me down. I even returned her stare with a goofy smile.

If this had happened before, this smile would have seemed like confirmation that I was small fry to her. However, in this context, I knew this smile came across as mocking.

As expected, Crystal's expression darkened and she walked toward me.

Her stifling perfume threatened to choke me and I sneezed. Impatiently, I said, "Ugh, I don't like that smell. Please don't come closer."

She was practically hissing at me now. "Rest well, Yvonne. I'll be going now."

After that, she stalked out of the hospital ward. I even heard her sobbing faintly, and Lyle did too as he shot up and started running toward her. Before he stepped outside, he turned back to glance at me as if asking for permission.

I shrugged with a grin. "Go ahead. If you don't go now, you might really lose her. You can get tickets to Anglandur any other time."

"How did you know?" Lyle asked in shock.

Innocently, I said, "Next time, don't bang in the middle of a public park. It pains me to have to bump into that. Cleansing that scene from my brain took a long time, you know."

Lyle couldn't handle my eerie calmness and finally left, but not before he said, "Yvonne, give me three days to settle everything, okay? I won't forget your feelings for me."

Can someone please come and take this absolute fool away?

The hospital ward fell into silence once again after he left. I sighed softly, completely at a loss for what to do.

How long was Lyle going to drown himself in this puddle of infidelity? He was acting as if it were a heroic decision to only remain loyal to one of us.

He would just lose the housekeeper he had for years, but he could very well just hire another one.

I took out my phone and checked my caller history. Christopher hadn't called or texted.

I almost called him, but I didn't even know what to say if he picked up. I ended up sending a text after what seemed like hours of typing and erasing, only to settle on a lame 'Have you eaten yet?'

I was seriously cringing at my own awkwardness.

Someone knocked on the door and I called out, "Come in!", expecting the doctor to enter. I didn't expect Sabrina to suddenly show up with a package that the hospital guard passed to her when she came back from my place to help me pick up some things.

I was kind of surprised. I hadn't bought anything and I wasn't a regular at this hospital, so how did the sender know to deliver it here?

I glanced at the address and my heart skipped a beat when I noticed that it was from Coldbridge. Excited yet nervous, I tore open the package and saw a simple ribbon-entwined box inside.

There was another box within the first one that was also quite pretty. What is this? I opened the second box again only to see another box nestled inside.

I was more confused than ever. Did Christopher just send me a bunch of boxes?

I patiently opened all the boxes up and the true present finally showed itself: a set of paintbrushes and a box of regular paints.

At the sight of the art supplies, my eyes started to tear up.

I carefully positioned my fingers around one of the brushes as tears dripped silently down my face. Once upon a time, paintbrushes never left my hands and I painted artwork after artwork, never thinking of the day I would finally stop.

Even during my hard times in the Tanner family, I still saved up and bought some paints and brushes whenever I could. I would lock myself in my room and painted all my dreams and hopes for the future.

Painting remained my one true love until I got replaced by Crystal and got chased out of the Tanner residence. Then, I lost all faith in my skills and truly gave up on my future.

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 169

I didn't know how Christopher could have known that I used to love painting. My tears fell relentlessly as I gripped the brush tightly, sobbing my heart out.

No one knew how much I loved and yearned to paint again. All of my love and hope for painting could be seen in Autumnal Panorama.

That oil painting took me two whole months to complete. After that, I sent a picture of it to an online friend called Key, who complimented it and told me that it could really be worth something.

At the time, I thought so too. The art teacher I've had since young had always told me that I was very talented and even felt sorry for me when he learned that my drawings didn't get selected.

Someone called and I saw Christopher's name on the screen. I stayed silent after picking up, so Christopher started speaking first. "Why are you so quiet? Did you forget me already? It's only been a few days. That's kind of sad."

I continued feeling the smooth handle of the brush in between my fingers. Even though it was just a normal paintbrush, the meaning behind it was completely different to me.

"I don't know what to say," I said softly, almost getting choked up.

"What's wrong? Did you cry?" Christopher asked both urgently and helplessly. "Did something happen?"

"No!" I shook my head and asked, "Are you mad because I didn't pick up your calls the past few days?"

"Why would I get mad over something so small, silly? I would be angry about plenty more things if I were that short-tempered. Since you asked, though, you should tell me why you didn't pick up my calls," Christopher said in a faux-angry voice.

I couldn't see him, but I could hear the gentleness and love in his voice alone. How could I bear to bring up Monica and ruin it?

No matter what they had going on between them, I could only feel gratitude toward Christopher right now.

I knew that I lost my principles when it came to Christopher, just like how I was with Lyle. If they treated me well, I was willing to leave everything behind for them.

"Something happened that morning and I sprained my ankle, so I was in the hospital when you called me and couldn't pick up," I said, trying to gloss it over. However, Christopher had already started to pester me about the foot injury.

"I can't leave you alone at all, can I? How many times have you gone to the hospital since we met?"

I thought about it and was genuinely trying to remember when I realized that it was way more than I could count on one hand. With a pout, I murmured, "Just once or twice."

What a lie. I could barely count all the small burns, sprains, and minor injuries that I had suffered at this point.

"If I could see you right now, I would spank you for being so careless," Christopher said in a low voice.

I felt slightly warm. Spanking had become part of our bedroom activities and usually ended up getting pretty heated. He always said it was the best punishment for me to truly remember.

"Christopher!" I said urgently. After a pause, I asked, "Did you send me a package?"

"Why, do you have another boyfriend in Coldbridge?" he asked me instead.

Obviously I didn't have a proper answer. If I could manage to attract so many men at one time, would I be in such a state? I would at least be someone like Crystal, who had people falling over for her left and right.

"Why did you send me brushes and paint?"

"Take a guess," Christopher purposely teased.

I honestly had no idea, but it didn't matter. I loved the gift too much to think too much of it. He always seemed to know more about me than myself, and could guess what I truly wanted before I even thought about it.

"Do you like it?" he asked with a chuckle.

"I love it. Thank you so much," I said, feeling choked up again.

"Then draw something with it, alright? When I come back, you can give it to me in return."

I jerked at the thought. Can I still paint? Could I actually go back to my long-lost hobby again?

"I don't know what to draw," I said. My mind was completely blank.

"Why don't you paint me a pair of eyes that shed no tears?"

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 170

After crying for so long and talking to Christopher for a while, I continued zoning out with the paintbrush in hand as all my emotions clouded my mind. I almost jumped out of my skin when I looked up and saw Sabrina's face in front of me.

"Earth to Yvonne! I've been here for ages, so don't tell me you forgot I was here," Sabrina said huffily with her hands on her hips, looking like an interrogator.

I giggled and scratched my head sheepishly. "Of course not. I just got a little overwhelmed."

Sabrina took the paintbrush from me and played around with it. When she accidentally dropped it, I picked it up tenderly and said, "Be careful. Don't break these before I even get a chance to use them."

"These are just normal brushes, aren't they? Are you thinking of becoming an artist?" Sabrina chuckled. "I see how it is. You would probably treasure a piece of tissue paper if it was from Christopher."

Sabrina and I met in college when both of us were fighting for our futures, so she had no clue that I could draw. I also didn't plan on telling her.

It started feeling like my little secret. If Christopher knew, then it could be our little secret.

"It's not just because of that! These are good brushes." I blew off the dust on the bristles slightly, despite the brush still being speck-free. I felt as if I had gotten a set of new babies.

"Who was the one who said she wanted nothing to do with Christopher? I really wonder who that could be," Sabrina said teasingly.

"Yeah, who would say such a thing? Come out so I can beat you up!" I said, playing along.

I continued zoning out with the paintbrush in hand for the whole afternoon. There were so many people in the world who had to let go of their dreams in exchange for the harshness of reality, and I was one of them.

I did think of painting throughout my university years, but after getting married to Lyle, I threw all that to the back of my mind.

What else did I lose during that cage of a marriage? I wondered. Perhaps I threw everything else that made me who I was away, too.

I opened a messaging app and looked at the grey profile picture under the name 'Key'. I remembered adding him as a friend in high school.

Key was always extremely understanding and kind. I never got to know his gender, but he was a great conversationalist and was always ready to listen to me when I needed to rant.

I painted Autumnal Panorama in my last year of high school. After what happened after that painting, I tried to find Key relentlessly so he could give me advice. Sadly, I never found Key again.

I didn't know where Key went, but I continued sending messages to the account every time I got wronged or beaten down. I even told them everything about Lyle.

Now that I had a paintbrush in my hands again, I felt like telling Key about it.

I sent a message. 'I think luck has been on my side recently. I got to know someone and he means the world to me. If I were to pick up a paintbrush again, do you think I could finally fulfill my future?'

I was used to waiting for a reply that never came, so I continued to type another text when a new message suddenly appeared onscreen.

Key: 'Your future is something you need to fight for. Don't get used to waiting. It's not good to always wait for something to happen. If you have the chance, you might as well try again.'

My heart leaped in my chest. After four years of university and half a year of being married, I stopped sending messages to Key. Now that I got a reply, it felt like I was dreaming.

I sent the text I was originally going to send after that. 'What do you think a pair of eyes that shed no tears look like?'

Key replied almost instantly. 'Why don't you draw the most beautiful pair of eyes you've ever seen? That's a pair of eyes that you won't shed tears over.'

The moment I read that message, I thought of Christopher's deep yet lively eyes. His gaze was like a beacon that shone through my fog of grief and lit up my life.

I chuckled and replied: Thank you, Key. I would love to draw your eyes one day. I'm sure they're absolutely stunning.

Despite meeting Key online, he was an important part of my life. Without him, I might never have gotten closure about all those things and I wouldn't have had someone who listened to me.

Have you been well? I texted.

Key: I wasn't too well a while back, but now I think happiness isn't too far off for me.

I replied: Same goes for me too. I'm glad we're both doing well.

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 171

I had a hard time painting the image I had in mind. After countless attempts, I decided to give up because none of the paintings I have produced could justify Christopher's pair of gleaming eyes.

In the end, I tore the paintings with a self-deprecating smirk.

It had been a long time since I last painted something. I couldn't get used to holding a brush, let alone having myself focused for the session. The only thing I had in mind was Autumnal Panorama.

Although I was conscious my painting wasn't as unworthy as they mentioned, I couldn't move on from the incident that had been bothering me for years.

Autumnal Panorama was sent back shortly after it was submitted. However, I wasn't made aware of it and thought I would soon acquire the result.

Nathan tore the painting into pieces before I could get my hands on it.

Overwhelmed by the shattered pieces I saw in the dustbin, I paid no heed to the details and failed to notice it was a replicated piece.

What makes you think you have the right to draw when you can't even contribute to the family?

Get the hell out of my sight at once! If you refuse to get married for the family's sake, don't consider yourself a member of the Tanner family from today onwards!

I thought I had shrugged those memories off my mind. It turned out they had long become part of my identity.

Although I had long given up on Nathan, whenever he showed Yvette and Crystal the lovely side of his, I would get jealous.

He's my father, why do I seem to be the outsider instead?

I made up my mind to leave the hospital because I had enough of the place full of the lingering scent of disinfectant.

As that was the only place that might lead me to the answers to my queries, I was determined to make my way back at all costs.

The moment I retrieved my phone to acquire Sabrina's aid to leave the hospital, I hesitated because she had her own commitment. It wouldn't be wise to approach her for such a trivial matter.

In the end, I hailed a cab and acquired the nurse's aide to head downstairs. The nurse was conscious of my divorce. Thus, she had been taking great care of me during my time at the hospital.

When she brought me to the cab, she urged me to return to the hospital for regular check-ups from time to time. She even offered to drop by my place if I needed her help.

I expressed my gratitude with a smile. Her act of kindness had reminded me to not lose faith in others just yet.

Meanwhile, little did I know the ones following me would soon turn my life upside down.

It felt great to be back. I drafted a text with a smile and sent it to Christopher. I'll be waiting for you at home.

I couldn't be bothered by the fact Christopher and Monica had taken part in a party together because I had faith in him.

It would be fine as long as he told me nothing was going on between them.

Shortly after I made my way into the elevator, two mysterious figures joined me. I requested with a bright grin, "I'll be heading off on the fifth floor."

One of them had their eyes glued to me in an odd manner. My heart started racing as I had a bad feeling about it.

Upon a simple glimpse, I noticed the surveillance camera was perfectly fine. Therefore, I told myself everything would be fine. The moment the elevator reached the designated floor, I brought myself out with the aid of the crutches.

When I was a step away from the entrance, someone covered my mouth and strangled me in an attempt to stop me from yelling for help.

No matter how much I retaliated against him, my effort was to no avail. After a few seconds of retaliation, I could barely catch my breath. When I thought I was about to pass out, the man moved away from me. His accomplice covered my mouth with an ether-infused handkerchief when I tried to catch my breath.

Consequently, I started feeling lightheaded and collapsed in between their arms with my head drooping over my shoulders. No longer could I feel my limbs as well.

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 172

I could vaguely feel someone lifting me into a car. The bumpy ride to a certain somewhere was the only thing I could recall after I heard them starting the car.

As much as I wanted to shout for help, I couldn't. In the end, I passed out with fear lingering in my mind.

By the time I regained consciousness, I found out I couldn't even stretch my limbs because I was confined in a cramped and pitch-black space.

"Have you brought her back? Are you sure you have gotten the right person?"

"I'm pretty sure because she looks just like the one in the picture!"

"Get her there and teach her a lesson immediately!"

When I heard the content of their conversation, I started shivering in fear. I must have gotten unlucky to be kidnapped when I was as poor as a church rat.

Who are they? Why have they abducted me?

I was certain no one would want to abduct me because of my limited wealth and connection. In other words, abducting me would just be a waste of their effort and time.

Someone once told me ether was usually made use of by the criminals to take out their targets. I couldn't believe there would be a day I got to experience it firsthand.

I tried to reach my phone in an attempt to reach out to somebody for help, but I noticed it had been taken away from me.

The moment I heard the muffled sound produced when I accidentally knocked on the wall behind me, I ruled out the possibility of me being confined in a gigantic box.

While losing myself in the process of thought, someone pried the box open from behind and grabbed my hair, dragging me out of the box.

It took me a few seconds to snap out of confusion and bring myself up. Someone approached me and raised my chin against my will. He yelled, "She's the one! Tie her up!"

I tried to flee, but I was taken into custody after a few seconds. They brought me back and tied me up as instructed.

I shrieked and asked, "What do you guys want from me? I'm just a poor woman! I can't even afford to pay you anything!"

"Ha! You're not able to pay us, but someone acquainted with you can!" The man grinned and added, "I can't believe you're the wife of the almighty CEO! I guess you're worth quite something, huh?"

Upon a simple glimpse at the men surrounding me, I saw the two at the elevator and another man standing next to them. That particular man remained silent and stared at me in the eyes with an eerie look.

I gulped and blamed Crystal for my misfortune. Had she refrained from displaying the affection she had for Lyle in the restaurant, these bunch of men wouldn't have gotten their hands on my whereabouts.

Ugh! Why am I the one suffering because of someone else's action? If they're that capable, why don't they abduct Crystal instead?

If Crystal has been abducted, Lyle will get them everything they desire! As for me, Lyle will just deem it a waste of his money!

I tried my best to calm myself down and negotiated with the vicious-looking man, "Aren't you aware Lyle is filing for divorce with me? You won't get anything if you abduct me! Why don't you set me free? I'll keep everything to myself!"

"You don't get to order us around! Also, don't try anything silly unless you wish to spend some quality time with my friends over there!"

He caressed my cheek with his fleshy palm. "I guess you're quite a skillful one when it comes to having some raunchy fun, huh?"

I felt a chill running down my spine because of the disgusting thoughts they had. If they were to carry out the things they had in mind, I wouldn't get to retaliate against them.

The only source of illumination available in the pitch-black room was the patch of sunlight coming from the hole above.

As soon as they departed, I started surveying the surroundings to see if there was anything I could use to cut the rope. Unfortunately, luck wasn't on my side. I had no choice but to break the rope with brute force.

Spending time alone in the pitch-black room had sent me to the endless loop of despair. Christopher was my only hope. I secretly prayed he would notice something was wrong soon.

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 173

It wouldn't be necessary for the man to threaten me as it would be impossible to break free. There was nothing that could be made use of to escape the spacious basement.

The desolate environment was so eerie I could hear my heart racing.

I started cursing Crystal for bringing upon my misfortune by exposing the messed-up relationship to the public, including the kidnappers.

A short while later, I could barely pull myself together anymore because the pent-up fatigue had caught up to me.

The kidnappers never returned after their departure, leaving me starving in the dark. My fear grew stronger as my stomach started growling.

Where are you, Christopher? Can you come over yet? You're the only one I can rely on! You have to save me! As long as you save me, I'll promise you whatever you have in mind!

It was a tormenting experience to be confined in a pitch-black room. When someone opened the door again, it felt as though an eternity had passed.

I could barely open my eyes because of the strong shaft of light. While closing my eyes to get used to the illuminated environment, I heard a woman's voice.

As it was a familiar voice, I widened my eyes in disbelief and looked in the direction of the entrance.

Crystal was being dragged into the basement by a few buff-looking men. When they placed the equally startled woman next to me, she yelled, "Yvonne, are you the mastermind behind this? I will never succumb to you!"

I rolled my eyes in silence because I no longer had the energy to pick a fight with the shrieking woman next to me.

"Idiot!" I snorted at her in return and turned around, staring elsewhere to avoid engaging in a conversation with Crystal.

"Are you reprimanding me? Yvonne, you're such a jinx! Why the heck have you persuaded them to abduct me? What exactly are you up to? I'm telling you Lyle will never return to you even if I'm dead!"

If others were around, they would be shocked by Crystal's true color as she had always put on a considerate and adorable front when she showed up in the public.

Unable to withstand her remarks anymore, I rebuked, "Can you stop accusing me of something I have never done? Do you really think I'm as vicious as you are?"

Infuriated by my remark, she tried to kick me in return. "You know what? I'll get you back for today's incident! Lyle won't leave me alone, but I'm afraid that's not the case for you!"

Hello? I'm not waiting for that jerk, okay? I'm waiting for my one and only to rush to my rescue!

With that being said, he isn't in Avenport at the moment! Is he going to return to my corpse in a few days?

Irked, I yelled at her in return, "Alright, I'm well aware you're having an affair with him. Why don't you keep that to yourself and stop bringing it up?"

Suddenly, a man approached us and slapped me in the face. I was frustrated by the fact that he decided to take things out on me when Crystal had been yelling as well.

"Get in touch with Lyle and tell him his wife and mistress has been abducted! If he wants them back safe and sound, get him to prepare a billion! Warn him not to get in touch with the cops! Otherwise, we'll allow him to make it to the headline with his beloved women's death!"

A man reached for his phone and took photos of Crystal and me. He then proceeded to get in touch with Lyle and instructed him to meet them in the basement at five o'clock in the morning.

It turned out it had been twenty-four hours since I was abducted. That must be the reason my entire body had been aching since a few hours ago.

"Lyle will definitely rush to my rescue! Do you think you get to salvage your marriage by playing the victim in front of him? No way!" Crystal yelled at me with a provocative look.

I had no intention to carry on with the fight Crystal started because she wouldn't stop mentioning Lyle when Christopher was the only one I cared about. It would be such a shame if I couldn't get to meet Christopher for one last time before my death.

Lyle soon showed up with the demanded sum, but the kidnappers refused to set us free. They announced, "A billion for one of them!"

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 174

He showed up sooner than I had expected. When I was about to experience an emotional breakdown because of Crystal, Lyle showed up in the basement.

The well-built man's silhouette seemed so familiar, yet there was something odd about it. I couldn't see his face, but I was certain he had his eyes glued to me for a few seconds.

Lyle instructed in a callous tone, "I have brought you a billion as demanded! Set them free at once!"

"How am I supposed to ensure you're here on your own? You have brought quite a few bodyguards with you, haven't you?" Someone stepped forward in an attempt to take over the suitcase with a billion, but Lyle took a step back and requested, "I need to ensure they're safe!"

"Lyle, save me! I need you!" Crystal sniffled and looked at Lyle with a pair of welled-up eyes.

To my surprise, Lyle looked at me and asked, "Eve, are you okay?"

I gasped in silence when the kidnapper kicked me in the leg, instructing me to answer Lyle's query. As much as it hurt, I tried my best to resist the racking sensation I felt and answered, "I'm fine."

Lyle heaved a sigh of relief and handed over the kidnappers the hefty suitcase he had brought along. He seemed to have upheld his promise and brought them the demanded sum.

"I won't lodge a police report as long as they're able to leave safe and sound! On top of that, I promise not to go after any of you! Please leave at once!"

The three kidnappers gaped in silence at the presence of the suitcase of money. To be precise, I was equally inundated by the sum available.

No ordinary person could possibly remain calm in the presence of such an astronomical figure, let alone a housewife like me.

As the kidnappers went dead silent, Lyle repeated his question, "Can you set them free yet?"

"Wait!" Thrilled, the kidnappers' emotions were written all over their faces. They announced, "Initially, we're supposed to set them free, but the amount you have brought us only enables you to bring one of them away with you."

Lyle rebuked with his eyes narrowing to a slit, "Don't you think that's too much? I have adhered to every demand of yours and brought the requested sum! Since you're after the money, it's better for you to set them free at once!"

Honestly, when he made himself clear and stood his ground, he seemed like the man I once had a thing for. However, I had long lost faith in him.

As a result, my heart started racing the moment the things awaiting the one left behind crossed my mind.

"Mr. Smith, that's quite a persuasive speech, but I don't think you're in a position to negotiate since they're currently under our custody! If you can't make up your mind, do you need my help to make the call on your behalf?"

Halfway through the kidnapper's orated speech, he ran the dagger across Crystal's neck and asked, "This is your mistress, isn't she? Do you think she's able to paint if I amputate her fingers?"

"No!" Lyle was at the top of his lungs. He added, "I'll get my assistant to bring another billion over immediately! Stay away from them!"

"I can't be sure if you're going to send the cops our way or not! Hurry up and make up your mind! Otherwise, I'll make the call on your behalf!"

The moment Lyle witnessed the kidnapper trimming Crystal's hair without any hesitation, he yelled, "Crystal!"

"Save me, Lyle! Haven't you promised to keep me safe for the rest of my life? You're not going to abandon me, are you?" Crystal started weeping with her eyes glued to Lyle.

When I caught him looking in my direction, I started stuttering as I was at a loss for words, "I-I—"

What am I supposed to tell him? Am I supposed to beg him to save me? Should I ask him not to abandon me when he had abandoned me for more than once? After much considerations, I asked, "Are you going to abandon me again?"

When he heard me, he stared at me openmouthed. It was evident he was taken aback by my question. Seconds after he snapped out of bewilderment, he announced with his teeth gritted, "I'll bring you four billion as long as we get to leave!"

One of the kidnapers broke the silence, reprimanding Lyle, "Stop messing with us and make up your mind! Otherwise, we'll randomly take one of them away with us!"

Lyle kept glancing at Crystal and me with his face scrunched up. Never had he shown me the hesitant side of his.

Suddenly, Crystal broke the silence, asserting while sniffing, "Lyle, please bring Yvonne away with you! She's your wife! However, I'm afraid our child won't get to meet you! O- Our child—"

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 175

"You're pregnant?" Lyle started trembling in fear. He looked at me in the eyes with an apologetic look. It was then I knew he had made up his mind.

He stuttered, "I-I'm so sorry, Yvonne! I'll owe you once and think of something to save you once I'm back!"

Once he finished justifying himself, he shot daggers at the kidnapers and yelled, "I'll be bringing Crystal away with me!"

His announcement sent to me a vicious cycle of despair. Thereafter, I went dead silent as he rushed over to Crystal's rescue and brought her out of the basement.

I was about to spend my remaining few hours in despair while they would start a brand-new day without me.

Why has it gotten to me again when his decision isn't that much of a surprise? Well, I guess luck was never on my side!

As they strode their way out, Crystal beamed in satisfaction and mouthed in silence, "It's time for you to enjoy the upcoming session!"

I could feel my limbs turning stiff as the door was kept shut once again. A chill ran down my spine as the three vicious-looking men approached me as though they were up to no good.

"It's such a shame to be abandoned by your husband!" One of them started undressing me, exposing the undergarments I had put on.

"See! She's not even in her right mind anymore!" Another of them tore my shirt in half as he couldn't wait to feel my skin.

All of a sudden, I started retaliating against them. The racking sensation coming from my tied-up hands was nothing as compared to the tidal waves of emotions I felt. "What are you guys doing? Stay away from me!"

I had rushed over to Lyle's rescue over and over again in the past, but he had never hesitated to leave me alone whenever I needed him.

As someone removed my pair of shoes, I launched a powerful kick at him at the crotch area. Subsequently, he collapsed to the ground and crouched in pain.

"Ugh! You're such a useless man!"

"What the heck!" The struggling man brought himself up and slapped me in the face. As a result, I started feeling lightheaded.

Crystal was right! I'll soon end up being their tool to satisfy their lust because no one will rescue me!

As they surrounded me with lust written all over their faces, I tried my best to shrug their hands off me when I felt them. They seemed to be deriving pleasure through teasing me.

They soon burst out laughing while inflicting pain on me by pinching me. They enjoyed seeing me groaning in pain. Unable to hold back their lust anymore, one of them grabbed my legs and raised them against my will.

I started trembling in fear as there was nothing else I could do to salvage myself. When the last piece of garment I had put on was removed, I could feel another man's legs around my thighs.

That was the moment I made up my mind to defend my dignity, even if it meant coming at the cost of my life. I started biting my tongue with all my might in an attempt to kill myself, but they soon figured out my plan and grasped my chin to stop me.

Consequently, my jaw was dislocated because of the men's brute force.

"You're such a stubborn b*tch! I'll let you have the best time of your life for one last time, even if you're dying!"

"Hahaha! I wonder if there's anything different from having it with someone from the upper echelon!"

"Hey, hurry up! We're still waiting for our turns!"

Someone, please! Christopher, where are you? Save me! I need you!

As torrents of grief streamed down my cheeks, I started wondering if I had the courage to move on after pulling myself through the humiliating session.

I was completely rendered incapable of motions as my legs were tied to the armrests of the chair. Soon, my entire face was drenched in tears and blood.

Why can't I even kill myself? Am I not even allow to make the choice? C-Christopher!

When I thought that would be the end of my miserable life, someone barged into the basement and rushed over to my side, throwing punches at the men surrounding me.

Although it was an intense session, I couldn't care less until I felt myself nestling in a man's embrace.

"I'm so sorry I'm late!"

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 176

I could hear someone talking, but I had a hard time telling if he was a friend or a foe. The moment I could feel my hands again, I threw punches at him, yelling hysterically, "Stay away from me!"

"Eve, it's me! I'm Christopher!" Judging by the man's hoarse voice, I was certain he was equally anxious. Inundated by remorse, he kept me safe in between his arms.

At that point in time, the only thing I had in mind was to flee the scene. In another attempt to escape, I launched another powerful kick at the man, but my effort was to no avail because I was still confined in between his arms.

After one last attempt to bite the man failed because of my dislocated jaw, I tried to knock the man off with my head while yelling, "Just kill me! Kill me instead of humiliating me!"

"I'm so sorry for being late, Eve! It's my fault for not being there for you! I'm Christopher! I'll never hurt you!"

Who's Christopher? Oh! Is he the one I have been waiting for? He's the only one who cares about me, isn't he? I returned to my senses and stared at the man with a look of disbelief. He was in an equally pathetic with his forehead drenched in blood and his face puckered in despair.

He couldn't care less by his look and continued holding me firmly in between his arms. Over and over again, he caressed my back and assured me, "You don't have to worry because everything's over! I have taken out those vicious men!"

I repeated after him, "C-Christopher?"

He placed his blazer over me and asserted, "Yes! It's me! I'm here! I'll always be here!"

"Christopher!" As the pent-up emotions came flooding out, I nestled in between his arms and started wailing hysterically, "I'm horrified! I almost killed myself to end my misery!"

While Christopher brought the traumatized me out of the basement, I caught a glimpse of a few men in their military uniforms, including Zachary.

My pupils constricted in fear the moment I saw the men drenched in a puddle of blood on the ground. My heart skipped a beat, and I passed out after shrieking.

When I was unconscious, I heard a few people around me engaging in a heated discussion. They seemed to be having another fight. As much as I wanted to figure out the things going on, I couldn't open my eyes.

The faces of three vicious-looking men flashed back in my mind. They kept running their hands all over my body. In the end, they tore my clothes into pieces with lustful intentions written all over their faces.

I tried my best to run away from them, but I couldn't seem to shrug them off. All of a sudden, they pounced on me and rendered me incapable of motion.

I could feel blood splashing everywhere as soon as I heard several consecutive shots being fired.

"N-No! S-Stay away from me!" As I started shrieking in fear, I grabbed something and started biting it with all my might. I could feel my jaws aching, but I was reluctant to stop until I felt blood in my mouth.

Someone stopped me from moving around and held me firmly in between his arms. I felt a strong urge to cry when I detected the gentle kissed on my forehead.

He repeated himself in a remorseful tone, "Eve, you don't have to worry anymore because everything's fine! They're all dead as of now! I'll keep you company and safe! It will be fine!"

As the nightmare stopped haunting me, I could finally fall asleep. I was unsure if it had merely been a few hours or had it been a few days by the time I woke up.

I surveyed the surroundings and tried to reach out to someone, but the racking sensation coming from the jaw stopped me from speaking. On top of that, I could feel my eyes aching.

Zachary approached me and asked, "Hey, how are you feeling?"

I shook my head, asserting the anxious man everything was fine. Actually, Christopher was the one I had been searching for, but upon a simple glance around the ward, he was nowhere to be seen.

Unable to speak, I had to communicate with Zachary using body language. I made some noise because I was afraid he couldn't grasp the meaning behind it.

"You need to calm down because your jaw has been severely dislocated. In the upcoming few weeks, you won't be able to speak." Zachary proceeded to summon the nurse over.

As he couldn't get my query, I tried my best to form a complete phrase. "C-Chris—"

"I'm here!" Christopher barged into the ward and sprinted over to my side. Holding my hands, he repeated the same thing over and over again. When I heard him, I finally regained my composure.

"You don't have to worry because I'll always be here for you."

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 177

His words worked like a charm and warded my concerns. After taking the prescribed medicine, I closed my eyes and fell asleep once more.

I ended up sleeping for three consecutive days. Zachary then told me I had been having a high fever ever since I was rushed to the hospital. The doctor once warned them to get themselves ready for the worst, but I managed to make it through the crisis.

After the routine check-up by the doctor, I turned around and asked, "Where's Christopher?"

My voice was still hoarse, but I no longer felt the pain bothering me on the day I first regained consciousness.

"H-He—" Zachary stuttered with his brows furrowed as though he was supposed to keep Christopher's whereabouts confidential.

I could vividly recall Christopher's forehead drenched in blood when he brought me out of the basement. As my heart sank to the bottom of my stomach, I asked, "Where is he?"

"Chris wants me to keep you in the dark, but I don't think that's necessary. When he couldn't reach you, he noticed something was wrong. Immediately, we made our way back. Unfortunately, we were involved in an accident, but he insisted on rushing over to rescue you."

After a few seconds of pause, he said, "Chris decided to keep you company since you had been having it rough over the past two days. In addition to excessive bleeding, the pent-up fatigue caught up to him. Thus, he passed out in the morning."

When Zachary told me Christopher was still unconscious, I was on pins and needles. Thus, I begged him, "Can you please bring me to him immediately?"

Zachary took a step back and told me to calm down since I had gotten overly worked up again. "I'll bring you over once the doctor's done."

I wondered if his response had something to do with my response while I was unconscious. It must have been something extreme to be able to intimidate him. I couldn't care less and repeated my request, "Please bring me over to him immediately!"

After hesitating for a few seconds, Zachary nodded and answered, "Alright!"

Someone had to wheel me over in a wheelchair because I couldn't stand on my feet just yet. When Zachary wheeled me into the ward, I saw the man on the bed.

I wheeled myself over and stared at the man in disbelief. He had a pale and haggard look with his eyes closed and his head swathed in bandages.

A few seconds later, I tried to bring myself up in an attempt to join him in bed.

The moment the blanket was uncovered, I caught a whiff of the stench of blood. Christopher's wounds were worse than I had imagined. Zachary mentioned it was just an accident, but Christopher's condition indicated otherwise.

The moment I nestled next to him, I caught a whiff of the stench of blood. Christopher's wounds were worse than I had imagined. Zachary mentioned it was just an accident, but Christopher's condition indicated otherwise.

Afraid of hurting him, I lay down next to him in silence after kissing him on the cheek.

My wandering mind finally became at ease when I caught another whiff of the familiar scent of tobacco exclusive to him. I started weeping in silence while lying next to him.

Although weeping wouldn't do me any good, it enabled me to take out the emotions I had been suppressing over the past few days.

Christopher had once again rushed over to my rescue. If it weren't because of him, I might not have made it out without being humiliated.

Had I been humiliated by those vicious-looking men, I might make the call to put an end to my miserable life instead of spending the rest of my life in horror.

"Hey!" All of a sudden, I heard Christopher's voice. Immediately, I looked at him and placed my head next to his. "Have I roused you from your sleep?"

"I just feel the urge to wake up since I can feel you next to me. I'm really glad you're fine." Christopher tried to hold me in his arms, but he could barely move around.

"No! Stop moving around! I'll move over!" I turned around and wrapped my arms around his waist and started reprimanding him, "You shouldn't have neglected your condition! Just leave the rest to nurse and take care of yourself!"

"I have to ensure you're fine. Also, I'm afraid you're going to disappear again the moment I leave." Christopher instructed in a callous tone, "Can you not resort to such an extreme countermeasure no matter what happens in the future?"

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 178

It was the second time I brought up the attempt to commit suicide in front of Christopher. He seemed to be startled by my determination to take myself out in times of emergencies for real.

Conscious of his concerns, my heart ached. I answered, "Chris, I'll rather kill myself than living a life full of shame! Never will I allow others to take advantage of me!"

"If you don't stop it, I'm going to be infuriated for real!" Christopher glared at me in the eyes and repeated himself with a stern look. As much as he tried to force a strong front, he was pretty much vulnerable.

"No matter what lies ahead of us, we'll brace through everything together even if it's the end of the world! I want you to promise me not to give up on life!"

I nodded and started weeping again when the incident that had occurred over the past few days flashed back in my mind.

That particular incident wouldn't stop haunting me. As a result, I started wailing once again, "Christopher, I'm so scared!"

He was flustered as I burst into tears in front of him. As much as he wanted to hold me in between his arms, he couldn't.

In the end, he asserted while caressing my head, "I'm so sorry for raising my volume against you. It's my fault for not taking your safety into consideration. I should've kept an eye on you."

I shook my head and stammered, "It's not your fault! I'm just afraid of losing you as I don't think I deserve you! You're the only one I have, Christopher!"

"I will never leave you, okay?"

We spent the entire afternoon next to one another. I insisted on keeping Christopher company when the doctor dropped by for another routine check-up. The doctor even made fun of us and said we were a pair made in heaven.

Truth be told, as absurd as it might sound, I had always longed to be his wife. With that being said, it might just be another one of my unrealistic and ambitious goals.

I wouldn't mind being just another woman of his as long as I had the chance to stay with him. Nothing could possibly drive us apart from one another.

The moment I saw the appalling wounds, including the one on his chest, I found out it wasn't just another accident. It was a staged assassination meant to take him out. He almost had his lungs permanently damaged because of the shot.

"Miss, it's time for another injection. Can you please come with me?" The nurse repeated himself since I went dead silent again.

I shook my hand and inched away from the nurse, returning to Christopher's side.

Christopher showed me his hand and assured me everything would be fine, "It's not a big deal. In fact, it's not even going to hurt. See? I'm being pricked as well."

I looked at the nurse in the eyes with my lips pursed. A few seconds later, I brought up a seemingly absurd request. "Can you please get a female nurse to tend to me? I don't feel comfortable being around a male nurse."

Having a hard time comprehending the rationale behind the request, he arched his brows in confusion as though he. In the end, he showed me his tag and announced, "I'm one of the best around here."

Not even Zachary could approach me without startling me, let alone a stranger. I would feel tingling sensations all over my body the moment others came in touch with me. Thus, I shook my head and turned him down.

Christopher's eyes glinted when he recalled something. He instructed the nurse, "Please get another female nurse over to tend to her."

Once the nurse departed, he grasped my hand and caressed my cheek, asserting in a gentle tone, "It's time for you to leave everything behind because it's over."

I was glad he could easily rule out the reason behind my seemingly absurd request. I assured him, "I'll try my best to forget about it."

We ended up lying next to one another in the ward. As odd as it might be, it was one of the few best moments I had in life. I couldn't stop staring at Christopher in the eyes. After a short while, I yelled, "Christopher!"

He ran his fingers through my unkempt hair and asked in a hushed voice, "What?"

I repeated myself in a silly manner, "Christopher!"

"What is it?" he asked with a gentle beam.

"I just want to ensure you're here with me." Smiling, I carried on with the session for some time. I was glad he wasn't against the idea of playing along with me.

The session was brought to a halt when someone knocked on the door. I thought Zachary was at the doorstep, but Darius showed up and took us by surprise.

Unable to think of something that could get me out of the situation, my eyes widened in disbelief as my limbs started getting stiff once again.

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 179

After spending the past few months together, I was serious about my relationship with Christopher. Nonetheless, the thought of his family members driving us apart once they figured out our relationship had stopped me from seeking their acknowledgment.

I might not get to join the Lane family as a household member even if I was the heiress of the Tanner family. To make things worse, I was just a pathetic woman whose husband had an affair with another woman.

On top of that, only a mere few were made aware of our actual relationship. As a result, my mind went completely blank when Darius showed up out of nowhere.

Similarly, Darius seemed to be shocked by my presence. He sized me up while standing at the entrance.

It would be fine if I was seated next to Christopher. At least I could make something up and tell Darius I was just here to visit his brother. Unfortunately, I was next to Christopher on the bed, nestling against one another.

Darius wasn't the mayor for no reason. He could carry himself as though it wasn't a big deal and made his way into the ward once he closed the door.

Shortly after he nodded with a smile, he took a seat on the chair next to the bed and started perusing the medical record that was placed nearby.

"What's wrong with both of you? Can't you guys take good care of yourself and stop giving me the shock of my life?" Darius raised his volume once he finished perusing the medical record.

"Darius, I guess I can't keep anything from you when you're the mayor of Avenport, huh? It has only been a few days since my return, yet you manage to figure out I have been rushed to the hospital." Christopher held my hand, indicating it would be fine.

Instead of just lying around, I felt the urge to greet Darius. Thus, I blurted out the things I had in mind, "Hey, Darius—"

I couldn't even finish my sentence when I recalled I had addressed him as though we were affiliated with one another. It was so embarrassing I couldn't wait to get out of the ward.

"How are you feeling? Has the doctor mentioned anything else?" Darius did a great job keeping his emotions to himself. Instead of chasing the married woman next to his brother, he expressed concerns over my condition.

It turned into a question-and-answer session since I had run out of ideas to get myself out of the ward.

Shortly after he expressed concerns over my condition, Darius started reprimanding Christopher. Although he made it sound as though it was an ordinary conversation, it was evident he was irked.

"Chris, don't you think you're too reckless? I can't believe you have initiated the mission to exterminate John and his party when not even the special force can take them out!

Have you thought things through? What are we supposed to do if anything happens to you?"

Christopher glanced at me and answered in a serious tone, "I could've taken them out two years ago if I hadn't been dispatched elsewhere prior to the commencement of the mission! Aren't you aware of the number of lives that were involved back then? If I don't take John and his party out prior to my retirement, who knows what's going to happen to Zachary and my comrades?"

Darius yelled, "Oh! It turns out you're still aware you're going to retire soon, huh? Dad has always regretted his decision to send you to the army. Mom has picked on him for the precise reason more than once. You need to stop exposing yourself to unnecessary risk in the future."

"Alright, I'm going to retire very soon. In fact, the memo has been delivered. In other words, I won't get to interfere with their decision in the future. Is that enough to please my dearest brother? It's time for me to take a nap. Why don't you return to your office and tend to the things on your plate?"

Christopher sat upright and yawned over and over again. It was evident he couldn't wait to chase his brother away.

Darius raised his hand and flicked Christopher's forehead. When he was about to leave, Christopher stopped him and said, "Darius, please keep Dad and Mom in the dark about my condition. Otherwise, they're going to pick on one another again."

"If you're conscious they're going to be worried about you, why don't you mind your behavior in the future? If it weren't because I had sent Monica to Coldbridge to deceive them, they would have long made their ways over."

Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 180

Throughout their conversation, I recalled Zachary once said Christopher was his supervisor in the army. It was safe to assume Christopher had returned to Coldbridge for something else other than a business trip.

Was that the reason I couldn't reach him when he was in Coldbridge? Ugh! I shouldn't have gotten jealous when Monica picked up the call on Christopher's behalf!

It was very silly of me to misperceive he had something with Monica! Christopher must have been occupied with different things and gone to great lengths just to call me! I shouldn't have dismissed his calls!

Wait! Did Darius just mention he had sent Monica to keep their parents in the dark? If that was the case—

Snuggling in between Christopher's arms, I stared at him and denoted in a hushed voice, "I'm sorry."

He caressed my head and asked with his brows arched in confusion, "Why are you apologizing out of the blue?"

I would never tell him I was jealous of Monica. Thus, I caressed his bandaged wounds to divert his attention.

"Well, I just feel like it. Christopher, I had the shock of my life when your brother showed up out of nowhere. I thought he would drag me out of bed and chase me out of the word. To my surprise, he was perfectly calm and expressed concerns over my conditions."

"Darius is the most understanding man I know. He has gotten married to his wife out of his own consciousness as well. He's the one I'm the least worried about in the family."

A glimpse was all it took for him to figure out my concerns. Pinching my nose, he teased, "Don't you think you're too much of a coward? Anyway, even if Darius is infuriated for real, you won't be able to tell it."

"What do you mean I won't be able to tell it? You're not indicating I'm an idiot, are you?" I scratched my head in confusion, wondering if it had something to do with getting others to acknowledge our relationship.

To be fair, not even those from an ordinary family could accept their son getting into a relationship with a divorcee, let alone the heir of a renowned family.

As I lost myself in the process of thoughts, Christopher added, "Darius has always been a calm and collected person. With that being said, things will get pretty messy if he's irked for real. He once brought his favorite pet puppy to school, but someone strangled it to death."

After pausing for a few seconds, he said, "Darius was able to pretend it wasn't a big deal and buried his dog as if he couldn't be bothered at all. When we thought he had moved on, he brought upon the misery of those who killed the dog a few days later."

"What happened to them?" Out of curiosity, I asked because Darius had always been pretty kind when he was around me. Nonetheless, I wouldn't be so naïve to perceive the mayor as an easy target.

Christopher shuddered when he heard my question. He pinched my cheek and said, "It's better to forget about it."

I decided to play along with him, but I was certain something bad must have happened to those who killed Darius' dog. Otherwise, Christopher wouldn't respond as such.

After spending another few carefree days in the hospital with Christopher, my condition had drastically improved. The doctor was impressed by my recovery progress.

I was discharged ahead of Christopher. Hence, I thought of making him something nutritious. After all, he had sustained excessive bleeding on top of his serious wounds.

The moment I returned from the supermarket, I caught a glimpse of a familiar figure standing at the entrance. Judging by the fact Lyle was completely drenched when it was merely drizzling outside, he must have been there ever since a long time ago.

After another peek, I decided to pretend as though I wasn't aware he had shown up. I carried on preparing the dishes I had in mind.

I wasn't surprised by the choice he made at all. However, he would never figure out the things I had to go through because of his decision. He couldn't be bothered as well.