

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 431

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I read it three times in a row, but it still wasn't enough. I felt happy and pointed to that post and asked Christopher, "Did you hire him to write this? How could someone else know this much detail?"

"I will not use my trump card at such a meaningless place." Christopher blinked and said, "This is someone smart. Not everyone is an idiot. The truth will always be in the hands of the wise."

Christopher teased me so much that I couldn't stop laughing. If he was trying to cheer me up, he certainly did it.

"You finally laughed!" Christopher breathed a sigh of relief and patted my cheek. "You haven't even smiled lately, so I didn't dare to smile in front of you. Come on, smile again. Let your darling have a good look at you smiling."

I was dumbfounded. I touched my cheek and realized that I had not been smiling a lot lately. I didn't know why, but I just didn't feel like smiling. I bumped my head on Christopher's chest and showed him a bright smile.

The mansion Sharon stayed in was dedicated to the elderly. The mansion was located on the mountainside because they liked to live in a quiet place. I gently sighed as I stood in front of the familiar entrance of the mansion and smelled the faint floral fragrance lingering in the air.

I never thought that I would be back here again in my life.

As the morning breeze blew, the flowers in the garden were swaying in the wind. I remembered that I planted those flowers when Sharon first moved into the mansion and lamented the dull scenery. After two years, the garden became a cluster of flowers, and they bloomed all year round.

When I walked in, Sharon was watering the cactus lilies in the garden. When she saw me, she waved her hand at me and said, "You're here, Yvonne. Quickly, help me water them. These cactus lilies seem to be able to recognize people. They didn't be blooming well until you came. Look."

"Cactus lilies are very fragile, and it always takes more effort to grow them." I took the sprinkler and meticulously hydrated the cactus lilies, then loosened the soil with a shovel.

"I really loved to look at these flowers. When it blooms, no peonies in this world could compare to its beauty. It is so pure, like the desire in the human heart that will never stop."

After taking care of the flowers and seeing Sharon trimming the branches of the jasmine; I picked the prettiest flower and held it in my hand.

"I prefer jasmine. They have an elegant fragrance, and they are easier to manage. Just put one in the soil, and it will bloom beautifully. Because of their tenacity, they will survive any storms that come in their way, just like me."

Sharon's hand spasmed and accidentally snipped off the best-looking flower. She sighed and picked up the flower. "What a pity, it's such a beautiful flower. Molly, take the flower in the house and put it in a vase."

"There's no need for the trouble!" I took the flower and arranged it under the jasmine. "The fallen leaves return to their roots. It must like it better here."

Sharon didn't persist, but she kept staring at me with her cloudy eyes. "Yvonne, are you mad at Grandma?"

"Not at all. I'm the careless one. So I can't blame anyone else. I will be more careful next time. I have learned my lesson." I smiled faintly and looked back at Christopher, who was waiting for me. We learn from our mistakes. Even if I don't, I will still know who treats me well. Isn't that right?

Sharon's expression changed. She was at a loss for words. "I'm the one who should say sorry. Yvonne, please forgive grandma. My hands are tied as well."

I picked a rose and placed it in a vase in the living room in the most visible position. Then, I said indifferently, "It doesn't matter even if I forgive you as it makes no difference. You don't have to be obsessed with my answer. You have Lyle as your grandson. It would be best if you put his interest first. After all, he is your grandson."

As for me, I am just an outsider. No matter how close our relationship is, I would still be an outsider. I could see it clearly now. There is nothing more inseparable than the bond of blood.

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 432

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

In the end, Sharon didn't mention anything about forgiveness and had us stay for lunch. She brought me to the garden to avoid Christopher from listening. "I know that Lyle went to see you. He had always been uncertain, but I could feel that he really wanted to start over with you this time. Are you really not going to consider it?"

My suppressed anger finally broke out. I stomped on the flowers on the ground until their petals fell off and their rhizomes detached. Then, I pointed at the damaged flowers and asked, "Tell me, is it possible for these flowers to recover to their original state? If you could change them back to their original form, I will promise you anything."

Even at this point, Sharon still wanted to use me to stop Lyle from marrying Crystal. Did she really think that she could manipulate me just because I wasn't angry?

"Yvonne..." Sharon's lips trembled and finally showed a look of guilt on her face. "You're still angry with me. I never wanted to put you in this position. I just wanted things to go back to the way it was before. Back to when the three of us lived happily together."

I pointed at my face and smirked, "I'm not the kind of person to be easily deceived. Do you think you can get me head over heels and obey you with the small favor and benefits you throw at me? Do I look like a fool to you?"

My heart sank. If Sharon didn't mention anything about this and just left it at the apology, I would at least retain a little bit of respect for her. However, she had the audacity to mention the episode where Lyle went looking for me.

I could almost immediately figure out that Sharon was behind everything. First, she made me fall into desperation and then made Lyle appear as my savior, forcing me to go back to him. How terrifying could she be?

I realized how stupid and naive I must have been. Everyone around me could manipulate me over and over again. I was the only one who never thought of using or framing anyone.

"You have loved Lyle for ten years. I always thought that you would still want to be with him." Sharon was at a loss. Her eyes were flickering, and she didn't dare to look straight at my face.

"But I'm not steel-hearted. Why should I keep loving a scumbag who doesn't treat me like a human." I yelled and interrupted Sharon. "You have always been an elder who I respect because you're the only person who gave me the warmth. I have always regarded you as someone dear to me. I

have always wanted to just respect you, love you, and treat you better, but I will no longer do any of that.”

I shook my head vigorously as tears rolled in my eyes. It was painful to be hurt by someone who I cared for so much. Why did people who I cared about always end up hurting me?

“Yvonne, I apologize. Please calm down.” Sharon tried to hold my hand, but I shook her away.

“Don’t touch me!” I shouted. “Your actions are no different from Crystal and Monica. Have you ever thought about my feelings? I’m only mad at them for manipulating me because I don’t care about them. But you, you broke my heart.”

I have been suppressing myself, telling myself not to care or feel sad for the people who have hurt and manipulated me. However, how could a person retract their feelings so easily after giving them to someone? Just like when I finally let go of Lyle after he has hurt me for such a long time. It was just the same when I had expectations for Nathan for such a long time, only to be disappointed again and again.

“Mrs. Smith, Yvonne no longer wants to talk about the incidents that happened that day. How about we change the topic, or I could take Eve home, and I’ll take my time to talk with you about the rest? I will slowly settle the score with you.” Christopher strode toward us and stood right next to me.

Seeing that Christopher was here, Sharon didn’t continue to press on the topic. Instead, she said to me, “Yvonne, it was all my fault, but it was never my intention to hurt you. I’m sorry.”

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 433

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

I strolled in the garden causally. Meanwhile, Christopher was still chatting with Sharon in the living room. Although I did not know what they were talking about, Sharon seemed quite sad. Occasionally, she would look furious, as if she had been angered by Christopher.

Christopher had the strange ability to provoke others, but make them helpless to do anything to him. Even Sharon would lose the upper hand when up against him.

After standing under the tree for a while, Molly passed a glass of water to me. When she noticed my grim and furious expression, she could not help but say, "Mrs. Smith... Sorry, Ms. Tanner, please don't blame Old Mrs. Smith. It's tough for her too. If not for the fact that she's out of solutions, she wouldn't have thought of you. Crystal's simply too despicable. She joined forces with the Miller family and got dirt on the Smith family about them evading taxes. She even threatened Old Mrs. Smith, who has been staying in the hospital for the past few days and was only discharged yesterday. Old Mrs. Smith is stuck in a situation too."

Crystal and Benson had joined forces and gotten dirt on the Smith family. However, I did not understand what Crystal was planning to do. "Crystal is going to be married into the Smith family in the future. In that case, she's going to be part of the family. Why is she doing this? Isn't she helping the outsiders instead?"

Molly wiped the tears from her eyes and explained, "I don't know about the specifics either. After you left, Crystal's been acting extremely arrogant, especially with Mr. Smith backing her up. She has humiliated Old Mrs. Smith multiple times, even demanding that she transfers the stocks to her. If it weren't for Old Mrs. Smith's capabilities, the head of the Smith family might've already replaced."

"What about Lyle? Isn't he going to do anything about Crystal?" I remember that no matter how despicable Lyle was, he still cared about the Smith family. After all, the family was his backup. Without the family, Lyle would be nothing but a useless Casanova.

"Mr. Smith..." Wiping her tears again, Molly sobbed and elaborated, "He's been completely hoodwinked by Crystal and listens to her every word. Initially, Old Mrs. Smith wanted to tell him the truth and expose Crystal's true colors to him. However, Crystal threatened that if Old Mrs. Smith dared to criticize her in front of Lyle, she would reveal the evidence that would land the Smith family in trouble and get investigated by the authorities."

Every company had its own shady activities. Although I was not part of it, I knew that Crystal must have gotten her hands on critical evidence that would greatly impact the Smith family.

I was struggling to understand Crystal. As a woman who is going to be married into the Smith family, why is she trying to create such a huge ruckus? Is she not scared that Lyle would stop listening to her after everything was exposed? In that case, her life will be miserable.

Unless... she never cared about the Smith family!

That thought flashed across my mind and my eyes widened. The more I contemplated it, the more likely it seemed. Crystal did not love Lyle at all but merely enjoyed competing with me for him just to crush me. Everything she did was just to defeat me.

Sharon disliked Crystal, which meant that she must have discovered her true colors. Otherwise, she would not go to such lengths to separate Lyle and Crystal.

Is Crystal trying to ruin the Smith family and win Lyle over just because I used to love him?

This was a ridiculous and unrealistic possibility. It was impossible that I was significant enough to motivate Crystal to keep targeting me because of the man I used to love.

However, I had never understood Crystal's mind. After a passionate night with Christopher, I lay in his arms and panted for a long time before regaining my strength.

With my eyes half-closed, I drew circles on Christopher's sturdy chest. After a while, he grabbed my hands and said, "Stop fidgeting. If you can't get up tomorrow, you'll be angry at me again."

"I can't sleep!" I sat up and said, "Chris, I don't want Crystal to marry Lyle. She's too terrifying. I have a feeling that she'll ruin the Smith family. Although Sharon set me up and Lyle bullied me, I don't want Crystal's plans to succeed, nor do I want her to keep up with her arrogant act!"

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 434

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

Christopher got up, leaned against the headboard and took out a cigarette. When he nodded at me, I passed him a lighter to light his cigarette. Smelling the faint scent of tobacco, I smiled. Although I hated it when Lyle smoked, I loved it when Christopher did it.

Perhaps it was because he looked exceptionally charming when he smoked. His fingers were long and well-defined, even more so than that of hand models. With the cigarette hanging between his lips, he took a small puff. Smoke lingered in the air while the cigarette glowed faintly, making him look extremely alluring.

"Why would you suddenly think of that?" Christopher took a few more puffs of the cigarette before kissing me.

Leaning against his shoulder, I said softly, "Molly told me some weird things. I have a feeling that Crystal will do something horrible. She can't marry Lyle. No matter what, I still care about Sharon. She's a lonely old woman stuck in a tough situation. Shouldn't we do something about it?"

"Don't worry, Lyle won't marry Crystal. You're underestimating Sharon. She's been the head of the Smith family for so many years. Even though Wendy kept kicking up fusses, she still failed to gain any power. Do you think that she'll be bullied by Crystal? Let's just wait and see," reassured Christopher with a smile as he poked my forehead gently.

"Fine. I'm the only one who can get bullied." I shrugged helplessly. "I'm a dumb girl, while all of you are such cunning manipulators."

Christopher lifted my chin and scrutinized me before pinching my chest. Despite the amused look in his eyes, he still feigned a serious look and said, "Yeah, when you were growing, everything went to your chests. I like it."

I slapped his hands away and yelled, "Stop being a shameless rascal!"

"I'm doing this to my wife, so it's fine," Christopher smirked wickedly and buried his face in my chest. After a while, he raised his head and said, "I'm responsible for earning money, while you're responsible for looking pretty. Isn't that good?"

I kicked him, turned around and snorted unhappily. "I'm going to sleep now!"

"Fine! You can sleep while I continue," said Christopher.

Continue with what? I was still thinking about his comment when he moved closer to me. Even though we had just done it earlier, he was still unsatisfied.

"Didn't we just do it? You haven't even rested for three minutes. Get off me!" Feigning anger, I turned around and chided him.

Grabbing that opportunity, he held my head and kissed me. He loved hugging me from behind. Every time we did this, he would be exceptionally excited.

While he panted, he said, "We only did it once that night when we met. A normal man has to do it twice after a break."

Fine, he's right. I had no choice but to stay in that awkward position while he thrust himself into me. While I kissed him, my mind wandered to other irrelevant thoughts. However, when Christopher discovered that I was daydreaming, he taught me a good lesson.

Unable to think about anything else, I could only accept his familiar advances.

It was already deep into the night. With our limbs entangled on the bed, a passionate night ensued.

In the middle of the night, I was jolted awake from my dream again. The nightmares kept plaguing my sleep, even though Christopher was right beside me.

I must be too stressed recently. Rubbing my eyes, I sat up and saw Christopher sleeping soundly. Stepping on the floor with my bare feet, I walked to the closet, opened it and took out the paintings.

When I had nothing to do, I would put the scraps together. After a while, the final painting was starting to take shape. I tidied the remaining scraps and started to piece them together.

Luckily, those people only tore the painting apart and did not dye them into a different color. Unknown to me, Christopher suddenly opened his eyes and glanced at me.

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 435

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

When I woke up in the morning, I thought that Christopher had already left. Walking into the living room in a daze, I realized that Christopher was standing in front of the easel and staring at my painting. There was an ashtray beside him that contained a few cigarettes. It was obvious that he had been standing there for a long while already.

Walking over, I glanced at the almost completed painting and asked, "Why are you looking at this for so long? Didn't you see it yesterday already?"

"Of course I have to admire your painting properly. Didn't you love to take pictures of your paintings and email them to me in the past? You'd even ask for my opinion. Now that I'm by your side, why have you stopped doing that?" asked Christopher calmly as he crossed his arms over his chest.

I raised my hand and touched the dried oil painting. Back then, Key was my confidante. Now that Key had become Christopher, my past habits were starting to disappear. It was probably because our minds were connected.

I spent more than a month on the painting. Unfortunately, no one but Christopher could admire it now.

I asked, "Do you have anything to say about it?"

Christopher cleared his throat. Stroking his chin, he contemplated for a while before pointing at the painting. "It's not bad. While the blending and layering of your previous two paintings seemed quite lacking, this painting was much better. It has the beautiful strokes of your Autumnal Panorama. Congratulations! You've found your skills from six years ago."

Unfortunately, even though I had regained my skills, I was once again confronted by a difficult situation. The previous time, I had no choice but to give up. This time, despite being unwilling to give up, I had no choice but to accept my fate.

Sometimes, I felt that I was quite pathetic. No matter how much I tried, I would still lose what I wanted. What I wished for was always very different from what I got in reality. Good things only went to others, while I could only watch on helplessly.

"This is great news! Why don't I draw a portrait for you?" I smiled and asked.

"Okay, I want you to draw us both together." Christopher immediately agreed and said solemnly, "Make me look better. In your previous painting, I looked so ugly. I'm not happy."

"Sure, I definitely portray all of your handsomeness," I said exasperatedly. No matter how skilled one was, no one could capture Christopher's charisma. He was just so perfect and charming.

"Can you give me this painting? I like it a lot," asked Christopher as he pointed at it.

"Give it to you?" I blinked and said, "Sure, since you're my only audience. Remember to frame it and hang it at a spot you deem most appropriate. Bring me there to see it too!"

"I won't disappoint you!"

Time passed without a trace. Soon, it was the end of the month. On the day of Lyle and Crystal's wedding, Lyle called me early in the morning and

bragged, "Eve, I'm going to marry Crystal today. Remember to attend our wedding on time!"

My resentment for him intensified. How did I fall in love with such a petty man like Lyle back then? No wonder he likes Crystal. Indeed, birds of a feather flock together.

"If I don't come, are you going to throw shade on me during your wedding? In that case, you can make her even more famous. That'll be the cherry on top, huh?" I said coldly.

"You're smart, so you'll definitely know what I'm trying to say. After today, you don't even have the right to regret it. Are you sure that you won't change your mind? This is your last chance," said Lyle arrogantly.

"I'm sorry, but I don't need such a chance. If you're free, you should show more care to your future wife. Don't worry, I'll show up at your wedding punctually."

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 436

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

I hung the call, feeling pity for Sharon. Lyle was a reckless man who did not care about others' opinions. All he cared about was his own happiness. He only married Crystal to anger me.

Is marriage nothing but child's play to them?

If possible, I only wanted to marry once and love one man until the end of my life.

As Christopher had an important meeting in the morning, he did not have time to choose a gown with me. He ordered Sabrina and Zachary to accompany me instead. I was amused by how seriously he was treating this.

After laying out a bunch of luxurious gowns in front of me, Sabrina told me to pick the most beautiful one that suited me best. Exasperated, I said, "There's no need to be so dramatic, right? I'm attending someone else's wedding, not mine."

She slammed the table and pointed at the gowns. "Listen to me, Yvonne. Pick a gown that suits you. You must try everything without leaving a single one out. I've hired a designer to choose your outfit and a make-up

artist for you. You must make a grand entrance at the wedding and stun everyone with your beauty!"

Scratching my head, I replied helplessly, "I'm there to attend the wedding, not to ruin it." I already have a notorious name. There would definitely be journalists present at Crystal's wedding, so if I dressed up too extravagantly, they might write something out of context.

"Shouldn't I keep a low profile now? Everyone already hates me so much, yet you're trying to make me stand out even more. The entire nation will know me and I'll be even more famous than the top celebrities."

"Keep a low profile? No way! You already said that everyone hates you, so people will still notice you even if you keep a low profile. Change your clothes now! Don't forget who the bride is. Since it's Crystal's wedding, you better outdo her and let everyone see how beautiful you are. That way, you can avenge me too."

Sabrina stroked her flat stomach and spat furiously, "When I see Crystal's annoying face, I wish for nothing more than to slap her. Only then will my anger dissipate."

"Should I just ruin their wedding and stop Crystal from marrying Lyle? I think that'll be better. After all, none of us like her," I asked in a sarcastic tone.

Sabrina clapped her hands and agreed, "That's amazing, Eve. Do you have any plans? Tell me secretly! I'll definitely agree wholeheartedly and help you at the crucial moment. I'll do just what you ask me to."

Looking at Sabrina's excitement, I shot a pleading gaze at Zachary, hoping that he would drag her away and allow me to pick a less flashy gown. However, he was unwilling to cooperate at all. In fact, he said seriously, "Sir instructed me to ensure that you pick the most beautiful gown. Since this is my task, I have to complete it."

I was so mad that I wanted to faint. Can't they be less uptight?

"Sabby!" I tried to convince Sabrina to give up.

"Someone help me take off her clothes!" She lifted her hand and snapped her fingers. Immediately, two servants came and dragged me to the changing room.

"Hey, don't touch me! These are my clothes! Zachary, aren't you going to restrain your wife?" I exclaimed as I tried to evade the rest.

"I'll follow everything Sabby says," replied Zachary calmly. He even added, "Since this is what Sabby and Sir instructed me to do, I'll have to do it. If you refuse to cooperate, I'll summon some of my female colleagues over. They would definitely be willing to help Sir out."

A female soldier from the special forces changing clothes for me? That's too intense!

While everyone fussed over me, I was so hungry that my stomach grumbled. Finally, I was allowed to leave the room and I walked out embarrassedly. The gown was so revealing that it was as if I was not wearing anything. It was almost against my principles to wear it.

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 437

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

I stood in front of the mirror, completely stunned by the work the stylist had done on me. This was not the first time I got a makeover from a stylist, but my hairstyle today was completely different from anything I had done before, yet it fully complimented my makeup. The makeup artist had done an excellent job bringing out my best features.

I instantly fell in love with my new look— refreshingly sweet with just enough hint of sexiness in this attire. I didn't remember looking this beautiful in my life, not even on the day Lyle and I got married.

"Come on, let's take a walk outside and have some afternoon tea while waiting for my idol to come and pick you up for that party. You'll definitely be able to show off to that so-called new school artist with your nice set of knockers," Sabrina said while giving my chest a little squeeze, and then did the same on hers. "Maybe with some luck, mine will start growing again."

Rolling my eyes, I smacked Sabrina's hand off my chest. It was ridiculous to think that I would use the advantage of my body to show Crystal up. All I wanted to do was to wear something appropriate while keeping a low profile when attending the wedding ceremony. Besides, I was curious about Christopher's cryptic prophecy that the wedding was doomed to fail.

The man is so sure that the wedding ceremony is going to fall apart. I wonder how things are going to unfold at the wedding.

Feeling people's gazes on me, I bent forward slightly in an attempt to mask my bosom. It wasn't my fault that I was gifted in such a way that pleased Christopher to no end. Whenever we were in bed together, he

would comment that God was wise to have blessed my chest instead of my brain.

“Yvonne Tanner?” Monica’s voice rang from behind.

I turned around and met with Monica, who was standing next to Crystal. Didn’t Crystal just leave this place not long ago? And now she’s teamed up with Monica? That’s strange. I suppose my enemy’s enemy is my friend. Now that they have befriended each other, there will be plenty for them to talk about, such as devising plans to set me up.

I narrowed my eyes and forced a smile. “Ms. Martin, I didn’t know you and Crystal are friends. But I guess it’s no surprise. Birds of the same feathers flock together, after all.”

“You’re not entirely wrong, Ms. Tanner. Crystal and I are friends because we are both winners. On the other hand, a loser will always be losers,” Monica spoke softly, yet it was apparent she was taking a stab at me.

“Loser?” I smiled sarcastically. Perhaps I really am a loser, or my life wouldn’t have been turned upside down by these people.

“You’re right, Ms. Martin. For someone who had carefully calculated her every move to scheme against others and ended up exposing herself and hurting those who care about her, you would know that better than anyone else, wouldn’t you? So, tell me, how does it feel being dethroned like that all of a sudden?”

I was in no mood and had no need to be on friendly terms with someone who had conceived such an elaborated and evil plan to take Christopher away from me. It still frightened me to think that the woman had nearly succeeded in doing that.

I was fortunate enough to be with someone who was so stubbornly in love with me. If it wasn’t for Christopher, I would probably be only finding my way back from a rural town right now, only to find out Christopher had already married Monica.

Monica’s expression darkened in the next instance. She gritted her teeth while giving me the death stare. “It’s still too soon to judge, Ms. Tanner. You think just because my plan has failed, you have nothing else to worry about being with Chris? Don’t be so naive. You’re in such a dumpster that even Julia doesn’t think you’re worth her while. But I know her best. I can bet you anything there’s no way she will accept you as her daughter-in-law.”

“No matter what, Chris still belongs to me, doesn’t he?” It wasn’t my usual style to talk in such a boastful manner. But since the subject was Monica, I found it unusually fulfilling to publicly ridicule her.

“You can declare victory all you want, but don’t forget that your public image is as good as in the gutter right now. Everyone in Avenport knows you to be a vicious and manipulative woman. I’ve destroyed not only your reputation but also your career prospect. At any rate, I think my plan has worked out nicely.”

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 438

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

“Your plan did work out well. You and Crystal had indeed put up a good show,” I replied with a polite smile. Frankly, I didn’t think anyone else in my position could still laugh. But knowing that Christopher would always be by my side, everything else just seemed pale in comparison.

“You were going to have a loving and caring motherly figure in your life. Let me ask you, is it worth it to have thrown it all away?” I had always cherished everyone who cared about me; hence, I could never understand people like Monica who was extremely manipulative and would take people’s love for granted.

“Well, I don’t need to answer to you. I’ll just wait and see how you’re going to handle this,” Monica retorted. She then pointed at the television and added, “I suppose you have been avoiding the news. Oh well, even if you haven’t, there’s nothing you can do about it, is there?”

“My goodness! What a vicious woman! I can’t believe I used to sing praises about you being the goddess in our circle. At the end of the day, you’re just another two-faced vixen. Such a waste for the good look you’ve been blessed with,” Sabrina’s voice rang as she stormed in from the door and stopped next to me.

Crossing her arms, she continued to glare at Monica. “Do your family members know that you’re such a pretentious hypocrite? You told everyone you attempted suicide for love. I think it’s fitting that you should end up being alone. My idol is a clever man, that’s why he can easily see through your pretense. Get the hell out of here before things get ugly.”

“Ms. Zimmer, my advice for you is to carefully select your friends. I’m sure you’ve noticed your family business has taken a beating recently because of your close association with Ms. Tanner. Make the wise decision and distance yourself from her if you don’t wish to be ostracized by your circle

of friends and for the sake of your family business.” Monica leaned on the sofa. Her upper lip curled in disdain.

At that moment, Monica and Crystal shared the exact same look on their faces as they glared at me, their common object of scorn.

I, on the other hand, was still trying to digest the information that was dumped on me by Monica. I didn’t know that the Zimmers’ family business was affected because of Sabrina’s close relationship with me. Someone must have been pulling the strings behind the scenes.

I thought about what happened to the Smiths’ family business and suddenly everything became clear as day. “It’s you and Crystal. What have you guys done?”

“What do you think? Of course to take back everything that belongs to us.” Monica wiped her hands clean with a napkin. Elegant and composed, the woman slowly got up from her seat and let out a charming smile. “Yvonne Tanner, let me ask you something. What do you think Christopher would do if he were to choose between you and profit gains?”

What kind of options are these? I’m certain that Christopher would not participate in such a demeaning game. But if he were to choose, I’m positive that I am his only option, without question. Not because I’m overly confident of myself, but I have total faith in him.

“You know what, now I get why you two get along so well. Crystal, too, used to ask me the same question about Lyle in the past. Want to guess what my answer to her was?”

I found Monica to be fascinating. She would easily lose her cool and get worked up when there were just the two of us. But as the parties to a conversation increased, so was her patience. Monica turned to me and slowly spoke, “I know what you’re thinking. You are so confident that Christopher would choose you over profits. Truth be told, I think so too. But, what if the circumstances change, and he is now having to choose between you and his family?”

I wasn’t prepared to answer such a loaded and meaningless question. Not long ago, there was a popular hypothetical question circulated on the internet—If your mother and wife fell into the river at the same time, who would you save first? Monica’s question was not unlike this one. I shuddered to think what would happen if things did come to that.

Instead of answering her question, I gathered myself and replied to her with another question, “Are you suggesting that you would use some benefits as bait to keep your loved one by your side? Can’t you see how ridiculous that is?”

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 439

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Love Coming from the Least Expected](#)

“Compared to seeing you in despair, it doesn’t really matter if my way looks ridiculous.” After finishing her tea, Monica was now straightening her dress. She looked as beautiful as a painting coming to life. Only if the beautiful woman would stop attacking people with her words.

“Hey, you! Can you hear all the nonsense that you’re talking about? Do you not see how insanely arrogant you are?” Sabrina couldn’t contain herself and blurted.

I gave the woman a little nudge and was about to say something when we were all disrupted by a familiar sound of car engine. Together, we turned toward the source of the sound and saw a red Maserati pulling up at the entrance.

Before long, a pair of long legs stepped out of the car, followed by Christopher’s handsome and perfectly symmetrical face. He was wearing a set of white suit, which gave out a different air than the usual black ones.

The white suit evened out his sharp but charming facial features. His slightly curled-up lips made him look more warm and approachable than usual.

With his hands tucked in his pockets, the man strode toward my direction and stopped at about a yard away from me. A glint of delight flashed across Christopher’s eyes as his laser vision lingered on me.

Embarrassed, I squirmed slightly and said softly, “What are you looking at? Do you not recognize me?”

The man suddenly took a big step forward, picked me up, and then swirled one round on the spot before he happily replied, “You’re exactly right! Who is this beautiful woman? I must make you my wife!”

“Oh, dear. Put me down, Chris. We’re in a public place. People are watching.” I pounded lightly on his back while carefully holding onto his neck and shoulder.

Christopher carefully put me back onto my chair, but his eyes were still glued to me. He raised an eyebrow and feigned a sigh. “Gosh, now I feel very conflicted.”

“What’s wrong?” His comment made me feel self-conscious and started checking if something was wrong with my dress.

The next thing I knew, Christopher took off his coat and covered me up. “You look so beautiful I’m not sure if I want others to see you this evening. I’m getting jealous. I should be the only one who gets to see this side of you. Should I let you go to the wedding looking so smoking hot?” the man pondered out loud.

Urgh! So this was his so-called worry. I rolled my eyes at him in response.

“Chris!” Monica finally interrupted. She had been watching my interactions with Christopher with her vengeful eyes.

As though just realizing her presence, Christopher turned around and replied flatly, “Oh it’s you, Monica. Is everything okay?”

“Chris, I er... I mean, will you be my date to the wedding ceremony this evening?” Monica stammered.

“Of course not. I’m with Eve. If you’re in need of a date, I’m sure Spencer will be thrilled to fill in that role.” Christopher held my hand and let out a polite smile.

Monica was taken aback by the man’s indifferent response. “Chris, I know I had rejected you all those years back. But I was too young and stupid then. It’s been twelve years now. You’re not still mad at me, are you?” she desperately pleaded.

“Ms. Martin, enough is enough. I think you’d better stop here before you cross the line.” Christopher’s expression darkened instantly. A chilling glint flashed across the man’s eyes.

Monica felt a shiver down her spine and immediately stopped talking. She appeared to be stung by Christopher addressing her as Ms. Martin. Instead, the woman gave Christopher the wounded look.

“If there’s nothing else, we’ll be leaving now. See you!”

On our way to the wedding reception, I couldn’t help but feel troubled by my conversation with Monica earlier. I had a constant feeling that she was hatching some sort of malicious plan. Therefore I recounted our conversation to Christopher. “Chris, do you think the Martins are planning something against your family?”

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 440

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Christopher was amused when he looked at my glum expression as though the world was falling apart. To lighten the mood, he made a face and poked softly at my cheek. I smacked his hand and said anxiously, "Stop being silly! Can't you tell I'm worried?"

The man smiled slyly. "Don't you worry. I have everything under control. You've overestimated Monica's capability. She can't even get to Darius, let alone me. For now, you just need to sit back, relax, and follow your dear husband's lead for the evening."

Lyle and I had our wedding ceremony at the Smith household. Maybe that was why Crystal insisted to have the wedding held at a big hotel. Perhaps she had considered having the ceremony at the Tanner residence. However, she was not a Tanner, after all. People might mistake Yvette as the bride instead.

As we walked toward the hotel entrance, I saw an emotionless Lyle standing stiffly to greet his guests. There was not a trace of joy on his face. I couldn't help but wonder why he had insisted on marrying Crystal when there was not an ounce of love left between them.

Is this all because he wants to get back at me?

"Congratulations, Mr. Smith. You finally got your wish granted."

"That's right. Hats off to you, Mr. Smith, for marrying the much-adulated new school artist. Although the way Crystal has treated her cousin as a stepping stone was questionable, I'm sure you don't mind that, as your family has benefited immensely out of it too."

"I agree. Crystal is such a beautiful bride. But unfortunately, this is someone who is prone to backstabbing. If it wasn't for Sabrina, I would have given her a piece of my mind on the wedding."

These greetings sounded strange to me. On closer look, I recognized them to be Sabrina and Zachary's fathers. No wonder they had wrapped their greetings in a form of sarcastic comments. Lyle, being the host, had no choice but to play along despite being infuriated.

I looked to another side and saw Sabrina and Zachary getting out of their car. What a matching couple—one is calm and reserved, the other bubbly

and sociable. Zachary walked up to Lyle and uttered coldly, "Congratulations. Just so you know, we have not forgotten the special gift that Ms. Yates had given to us on our wedding day."

Sabrina, on the other hand, was a lot more combative. "Given how Crystal had crashed our wedding, the woman has the audacity to invite us to her own wedding. How do you think we should repay her? Maybe I should just announce that you're not the groom. What do you think of that?"

Lyle's expression darkened. He only learned of what happened at that wedding the next day. Frankly, he found it shocking that Crystal and Benjamin were capable of carrying out such a thing. Even though he was not part of the wedding-crashing party, he had to share the blame.

"That's funny. If I'm not the groom, then who is? Zachary?" Lyle scoffed. "Sabrina, may I remind you that you're a pregnant woman now? I suggest you spend more time looking after yourself than planning any funny business on my wedding day."

Lyle is still the same vicious man who always knows where his opponent's soft spot is. I finally got out of the car with Christopher and walked toward him. We stopped in front of Lyle and I handed him an exquisite gift box. "Congratulations," I said flatly.

"Yvonne." Lyle shot me a glare as he took over the gift box, denting the corner of it as he was holding it with excessive force.

Wendy, who was greeting other guests on the other side, took notice of my appearance and let out a penetrating wail of woe. "Yvonne Tanner! How dare of you to show your face here?"