

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 456

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“Yes, I’m the one behind it. Didn’t I tell you that you shouldn’t have any regrets? You have to live your life without regrets. I’m getting old, and I don’t have many years to live. Ever since you were eighteen years old, I’ve told you that Crystal is no angel, but you never listened.”

As Sharon spoke, she stopped a few times to catch her breath. It was obvious that today’s event had taken a toll on her.

“Why do you think I took down Yvonne’s painting and gave it to Crystal to get her to leave? I knew she was up to no good and that her love for you was not real. I was happy when you married Yvonne, but your marriage was short-lived. You never even cherished her as your wife in those two short years. I wouldn’t have done this if you had not insisted on marrying that woman.”

Lyle was shocked. He let out a quiet laugh that sounded like a sob. “I thought I knew what kind of woman she was. I was wronged. Why didn’t you tell me, Grandma? You shouldn’t have kept it from me.”

“I knew from the start that she was messing around with the youngest son of the Miller family. She has played you out. What more can I say to you? Do you remember what I said to you when I tried to stop you from marrying Yvonne? You made me a promise, but then you divorced her not long after you married her. I always want what’s best for you. Too bad you didn’t listen to me.”

“Grandma...”

“Suck it up. Don’t cry. You’ve always had things easy, and it’s partly my fault for taking care of everything for you. Now you know how painful it is to fall...”

Their conversation began to fade away, and by the time I reached the entrance, I couldn’t hear them anymore. Tears welled in my eyes when I saw Nathan pull Crystal to his side before both of them bowed before Sharon.

That night, Christopher did not come home together with me. Instead, he spent the night at the Lane residence. I lay in bed alone, and for a long time, I had trouble falling asleep. When I woke up in the morning, I received a call from Christopher. He told me he missed me, and that brought a smile to my face.

When Sabrina came to see me, she tossed a newspaper in front of me as we sat at the table. She grabbed the toast from me and took a bite before saying, "It's unbelievable. Do you have any idea how hot the news is, Eve? All the newspapers are sold out, and I had to spend a small fortune to buy a copy of the newspaper from someone else. Take a look. You'll be so happy once you read it. Oh, how the tables have turned. Congratulations! You're finally free from all that toxicity. Come on, let's go out today. Let's treat ourselves to a nice meal to celebrate."

I quickly scanned through the newspaper. The main photo at the top of the news was a close-up of Crystal in a state of panic at the wedding. The news article on Crystal's disclosure was tactful, but it was enough to garner attention.

"Yes, I should be happy. I'm finally free from all the emotional baggage," I said as I forced out a smile.

Sabrina talked elatedly as she recounted how Crystal was surrounded by the reporters when she left the hotel, and that she was holed up in the Tanner residence. Word on the street was that her paintings had been removed from the art exhibition. When Sabrina realized that I had not spoken, she asked, "Why don't you look happy, Eve? Don't tell me you're sympathizing with Crystal."

I shook my head. "I don't sympathize with her. If she had not done those things, she wouldn't end up like this. She has what's coming. But I don't feel happy. Instead, I feel rather bothered by it."

"You put too much importance on your family. They treated you like dirt, and yet you worry about them at times like this. Don't worry. As Christopher said before, with the backings of the Lane family, the Tanners will be fine."

Sabrina patted me on the shoulder as she reassured me. When she saw that I was still in a daze, she rubbed her hands on my cheek. I slapped her hands away and asked, "What about the Smith family? Considering Sharon's old age, all this stress will be too much for her to handle."

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 457

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

"When such negative news was reported, business would definitely be affected, but it was not a big deal. You don't understand old Mrs. Smith's skills. Don't think that when she talks to you gently, she is treating you as her own family. She is very tactful and plays her game well. If it weren't for her getting older and lacking motivation, the Smith family would

definitely not be in its current position. Come, let's go shopping and have a breath of fresh air."

"No, thanks, I'm not going. You can get Zach to go with you." I turned Sabrina down and got a scolding from her for being a spoilsport but I did not take it to heart.

I was not being a spoilsport but I just could not cheer myself up. I was not sure why but it could be that my dad bowed to somebody. Men should be strong and not easily bowed to beg anyone but Dad did that for Crystal.

On TV, I saw a lot of news about Crystal, as expected. Stories about her were getting viral all over Avenport. Those newspapers and dailies were flooding the streets like snowflakes.

Of course, I was being overlooked. Crystal was being recognized by Avenport as the most well-known drama queen with a charming exterior, but no inner beauty to match.

Suddenly the doorbell rang. Thinking it was Christopher, I turned off the TV and walked over to the door. Christopher would always call me and tell me that he had to go somewhere to work. But, when I opened the door, I would find him standing right in front of me, smiling and handing me a bunch of roses saying that he wanted to give me a surprise. I was used to it.

This time the surprise was different. Standing outside the door was Benjamin, and his eyes were bloodshot. Obviously, he had not slept. There were bruises on his face which must have been the result of fighting with Benson.

Seeing him, I was surprised and wary. My hand reached for the door with the intention of closing it. The traps he set for me were still vivid in my mind. The most horrifying was when he ganged up with Crystal, spiked my drink and then put me in bed with a man while getting a crowd to witness and photograph me in the act of adultery.

"Wait, Yvonne, I have something to tell you." Benjamin stuck his foot in the door and said urgently.

Impatiently, I glared at him and asked in a low voice, "What is it?"

Carefully, Benjamin took out a pink object from a pocket of his close-fitting clothes and held it in his palm. It was my hairpin, the last thing given to me by my mother, which I had always cherished before. Even though I said I did not want to have anything to do with her anymore, I miss actually her very much.

A pink hairpin is, after all, a child's belonging. I thought Benjamin wanted to return it, so I stretched out my hand to him and said plainly, "Thank you for returning it to me."

Very quickly, Benjamin took out another hairpin. It was the one that I had lost for many years. It was well preserved and the color did not fade at all. On the contrary, the color of the one in my possession, which is often used, is faded. The look in his eyes was very complicated, his throat seemed taut, and he asked in a low voice, "So this is really your hairpin."

"Yes, it is mine. They are a pair. Why is it with you?" I have no idea why Benjamin wanted to see me. Strictly speaking, we have no relationship at all, it was more mutual dislike.

As Benjamin held the hairpin, a look of nostalgia flashed across his eyes. His expression became tender. "I got this hairpin when we were abducted by kidnappers. I was drifting in and out of consciousness. I felt that I was being rescued when I saw this pink object, I held on to it and have been keeping it all these years."

I blinked and laughed softly. I was quite silly at that time. Even though I was feeling so afraid, I had saved so many people. I took the hairpin from him. "This is the only thing I have to remember my mother by. I'm really glad you have brought it back for me. Thank you."

Seeing that I had taken the hairpin, Benjamin seemed agitated. Quickly, he took it from me. I was puzzled about what he was trying to do.

"Why didn't you tell me before that you were the one who saved me years ago. If you had told me, I would not... I would not have done those things to harm you so badly." Benjamin's voice became softer and softer as if realizing that what he had done to me was totally unacceptable.

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 458

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

I smiled wryly. "I guess, even if I had told you that I was the one who rescued you, you would not have believed me. Possibly, you would have joined forces with Crystal again and done something worse to humiliate me.

In the past, they had done too much harm to me and I had suffered so much. At that time, Crystal was so precious to Benjamin that he believed every word she said.

Benjamin laughed bitterly. "It's true. You're right. Even if you had told me, I would not have believed you." He gave me the hairpin again. "I'm returning it to you. At that time, I gave it to Crystal but she nonchalantly gifted it to me. Since they belong to you, I should give it back."

"Thank you!" Politely, I took the hairpin from him. After more than ten years, the other hairpin had finally returned to me.

"I'm sorry... for what happened in the past... I did not know that it was you. I'm sorry," Benjamin spoke hesitantly, sounding very emotional. His face was red as he had certainly never thought that one day, he would be apologizing to me.

"It doesn't matter. Those were not something important." I was telling the truth. I really did not want to think about them as it would be pointless. Now, I had Christopher who was such a good man, to look after me. Why should I wallow in those burdensome memories?

"You... Yvonne... I..." Benjamin started speaking but could not finish one sentence. He looked away and avoided my eyes. Then, he spoke slowly in a low tone.

"Those abductors beat me up because I tried to escape. My head was bleeding and I was barely conscious. I was so afraid and I felt hopeless. I was only fourteen and facing the threat of death, I had no hope. In the darkness, I waited for someone from home to save me. After waiting for so long, no one came. That type of hopelessness was like waiting for death. I was so terrified that I could not breathe."

"Then, someone said in my ear, 'Don't cry, I'll save you,' and the voice was so sweet. I swear, it's the most beautiful voice I've ever heard in my life. Truly, everything in front of me was blurry but I seemed to see some light and hope. At that time, I swore that I will look after the owner of this voice for the rest of my life. Yvonne, do you understand?"

I have wondered why Benjamin unconditionally indulged Crystal, but I was still shocked. It was only because I rescued him and Crystal took all the credit.

Suddenly, I felt that he was very foolish too. Just because he was saved by her once, he had unconditionally accepted someone. I laughed. "I understand what you mean. Let bygones be bygones. You've returned the hairpin to me. It's a very good way of repayment."

"Then... in the future, can we be friends?" Benjamin looked at me tentatively, with a glimmer of hope in his eyes; yet, fearing that I would reject him.

I do not know his thoughts, so after a moment, I nodded. "It happened a long time ago. You should not take it too hard."

Benjamin's expression was a mix of emotions as he stood rooted there for some time before he left. I rubbed my eyes as I had never expected such an outcome. It was simply unbelievable.

I picked up the paintbrush and put a few strokes on the blank paper. My feelings were complicated and my painting was strange, reflecting my emotions when inspiration came upon me. Before I realized it, the sun was already setting in the west. I rubbed my sore arms and gyrated my stiff neck. Then, I opened the refrigerator to think of what I should cook for Christopher today.

I discovered that I had nothing in the fridge, so I had to make a trip to the supermarket. After tidying up and putting away my paintbrushes and palette, I went downstairs. Suddenly, I heard a familiar voice calling my name.

"Yvonne, wait up!"

When I heard the voice, I felt rather bothered. After what had happened, it was rather strange that Lyle would still want to see me. Shouldn't he be back at the Smith family home to take care of the stuff that Crystal has used against them?

"Is there anything I can do for you?" I asked plainly.

"Where are you heading? I can give you a lift," Lyle said.

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 459

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

"There's no need. I'm just crossing the road to do some shopping at the supermarket on the other side. It's too near for a drive," I shook my head and replied to him simply.

Lyle was silent for a moment. Then, he said, "Yvonne, you know what I meant was I would like to talk with you."

I dropped my shoulders wearily and smiled. "Do you want to talk about starting anew? It's pointless. It will do no one any good if I piss you off with what I say. You should know that there's no way we can reconcile."

"I know I did not treat you well before. I can change. I really can. Yvonne, I..." Lyle said all that in a rush but seeing my cold expression, he stopped.

I looked at the time. It was already half-past four and Christopher would be home by five-thirty. I really had to hurry or I would not be able to get dinner ready. So, I told Lyle, "I need to go to the supermarket or I won't make it."

I walked off on my own. Lyle did not try to hold me back, but he followed me, instead. The supermarket was rather crowded. I stood in front of the counter, looked for a while, and picked some spare rib. I bought some crabs too. The crabs looked big, so they should be tender and taste great.

"I remember that you don't like crabs," Lyle stood nearby, trying to make conversation.

I smiled, answering softly, "Chris likes crabs, so I learned a few ways of cooking them. Though he doesn't like ribs, he enjoys eating them with me. So, I often cook these two dishes."

Lyle stopped talking and just followed me around patiently. I browsed around in the supermarket for a while and bought a lot of things. When I held them in my hands, Lyle offered to help me but I declined.

When we returned to the apartment, I did not rush to go up but lingered near the lift entrance. I turned around and told Lyle, "You should get going. If Chris sees us, he won't be pleased. Even though he will not suspect me, I don't like displeasing him."

"Yvonne!" Lyle gazed at me with eyes full of sorrow. Perhaps, I was mistaken but I thought I saw the glint of tears in them.

"Life is like a journey, there are many stretches of scenic beauty. If you missed a parking spot, there is another where one can park and enjoy the scenery. However, there are some spots where one cannot turn back as someone else has taken the spot and enjoying the beauty."

After saying this, I chided myself again for being overly melancholic. When I entered the elevator and pressed the 'door close' button, Lyle wanted to come in; but for some unknown reason, he changed his mind.

From outside the elevator, he yelled to me, "If I had chosen you during the kidnapping, you would not have left me, would you?"

"You would not have chosen me, would you?" I smiled. The elevator door closed and Lyle was shut out.

Christopher opened the door punctually at half-past five. I had just finished cooking dinner. "Good timing. The meal is just ready. Go and change your clothes, and we shall eat together."

Christopher came over and gave me a long passionate kiss before letting go of me. When he came to the dinner table and saw his favorite dishes, he laughed happily. "Such a lavish meal. Did you win the lottery?"

"Yes, and the grand prize is sitting right in front of me. Let's dig in." I held the crab right next to his lips. For me, Christopher was the grand prize. If not for those turbulent times, I really did not know if we would have met.

I did not think it was necessary to tell Christopher about Lyle, but I did tell him about Benjamin visiting me and what happened between us. "This is so extraordinary. Benjamin treasured Crystal and indulged her just because of that incident. When he told me that, I really could not understand why. Don't you think it's strange?"

"What's so strange about that? When someone finds hope and life at the time when they are most desperate, that moment is unforgettable." Christopher smiled very mysteriously as if he was hiding some secret.

"That's totally logical. Like when I met you. Don't I treasure you and indulge you? I winked and praised myself."

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 460

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"Hmmm, you are my precious." Christopher put me on his lap and tried to feed me. We did this often and I had never refused him. He fed me caramelized pork ribs and I took care of his crabs.

As we went on eating, a thought came to me. Christopher had told me before that he had known me a long time ago and he never forgot me. He was also involved in the abduction case at that time. I wonder if he knew that I was the one who played a part in the escape.

I avoided the food he gave to me and asked, "Have you known all along that Crystal pretended to be me? If not, why have you never gotten along with her? I remember that she had helped you before."

"What is your guess? If you guess correctly, there's a prize." Christopher wiped my mouth and then continued to feed me.

After turning it in my mind a few times, I began to remember what he had said about those incidents. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that was the case. I slapped my head and said seriously, "That must be the case. Otherwise, you will never say that you've known me a long time ago and still paying attention to me, right?"

Christopher smiled and pinched the tip of my nose. "That's right. I knew about it a long time ago. When it happened, I was conscious. I just inhaled too much ether and felt very weak. I pretended to be knocked out so I would not be beaten up like that idiot Benjamin. I saw everything that you did."

"After that, you took notice of me?" I asked.

"Yes, I started to pay attention to you after that. I was curious. Every time at banquets and various public places, you would make a fool of yourself and be looked down upon by others and bully others as well. Where did you get this kind of courage? Then, I discovered your secret." Christopher dipped the peeled shrimp into the sauce and fed it to me.

"You discovered that I could paint and you used the nickname Key to contact me." It was getting more and more mysterious. I winked and said, "Were you interested in me back then? You say you've liked me for a long time."

I was pleased with this conclusion which made me proud. "So, the damsel saved the knight in shining armor who gave himself to her and served her for the rest of his life."

"I will serve you for the rest of your life. Is this payment sufficient?" Christopher pressed himself close to my ear and blew a gust of air.

I was rather startled as I did not expect him to admit to this so honestly. Suddenly I held his face and kissed him hard as that seemed the only right thing to do.

He responded by holding my head and kissing me passionately until we both gasped for breath.

"Have you eaten your fill?" he asked me.

"Yes, I'm full. How about you?"

"I'm not. So you must satisfy me. I want a full meal, the whole course."

"What whole course... Oh..." I was wondering what he meant by the whole course when he suddenly bent over and carried me around the room a few

times and then, laughing, brought me right into the bedroom and put me on the bed.

He skillfully opened the cabinet and searched for the special items I had bought in the adult store and kept them hidden. I hugged the quilt and mumbled, "You haven't finished dinner."

"I'm getting ready." Christopher opened the bag, looking for what he needed, and stroked my face. "Be good. I'll come right back, so don't hurry. Hot meals must not be eaten in a hurry."

This guy was deliberately misinterpreting my words. I glared at him and wondered if I should be more reserved and wait for him or start preparing myself.

After a short while, I made a bold decision. I crept under the quilt, and started looking for the zipper on my skirt. When Christopher got into bed, he found that I was nude. There was a look of surprise in his eyes. Then, a broad smile appeared on his face.

When he entered me, I hugged him high and synchronized with his movements. This man had loved me for many years. How lucky I was to have such a man, silently giving his all for me.

The so-called big meal, of course, was Christopher's favorite. So, I was treated to the utmost, ending up begging for mercy. I wondered why the physical strength of everyone from the special forces was so unusual.