

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 496

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My feelings of admiration for him grew deeper. After bidding goodbye to Ansley, I went to look for Christopher with a joyful heart. I had barely taken a couple of steps when I heard Remington asking him, "Master, can you really tell a person's character through a painting? When will I be able to do that?"

"Nonsense!" Ansley stroked his beard like a mischievous old man, then he winked and said, "I'm not a deity of wisdom. How can I tell an artist's character by looking at her art? That Crystal was obviously up to no good as she was giving an elderly man like me seductive looks. I certainly won't help her. As for this lady, she is a friend of yours and you are my buddy. Of course, I stand by you. Come on, I've kept a bottle of good wine. Let's go and enjoy it."

When I heard this, I nearly stumbled and fell. I had thought that he had the wisdom of the gods! It turned out that he was just down to earth.

After a while, Christopher and I went on to admire the paintings of other artists. I noticed him standing in front of one piece for a long time. It was a painting of a beautiful girl, whose genitals were obscured by a fig leaf. So, I asked, "Are you standing there, waiting for the leaf to fall?"

"I believe many have stood right here waiting. I'm not the first to do so," Christopher replied solemnly as if what I said was true.

Suddenly, a journalist came toward us holding a microphone. "Excuse me, dear lady from afar, are you the author of 'Moonlight Heaven'?"

"Yes, I am!" I cleared my throat as I changed my facial expression from being playful with Christopher just now to something more serious.

"It has been said that you are able to take part in this exhibition and gain praise from Ansley because of your connections with Remington. Is this true?"

I was speechless for a moment. He had come to find fault. I narrowed my eyes and glanced at the reporting, replying to him in an icy tone. "I heard that your country is governed by strict laws. Defamation is considered a serious crime. Do you think the courts would take action if I sue you for defamation?"

“Certainly not. There is much emphasis on freedom of speech in our country. Ms. Tanner, since you have risen in the ranks in the field of art because of personal relations, why are you afraid of being talked about?”

The journalist was undaunted by my cold tone and icy demeanor. On the contrary, he used my words against me. “The place where your painting now hangs was originally occupied by Jonah Deere’s work. However, after his work was replaced by yours, he was out of the art exhibition. Consequently, he was so upset, he attempted suicide. Fortunately, he was discovered on time and his life was saved. What is your comment on this?”

After being framed by Monica and Crystal, I was really numb to this kind of accusation. I kept calm and said quietly, “Are you saying that you question Ansley’s authority? Do you think that a brilliant wise man like him can easily be bought by others? Or do you think that a great artist like him can still succumb to bribery?”

I pointed at the wall at will. It was Mr. Ansley’s painting. “This piece titled, ‘Hope’ is one of Mr. Ainsley’s collection. Someone once wanted to pay more than 300 million to purchase the painting but he was not willing to part with it. Do you think Ansley is short of money?”

“Of course Ansley, the great master, is not short of money, but he values his friends very much. Since Remington is the only friend he has made in recent years, you, as his girlfriend, can be helped along by means of special favors. According to the words of your country, it is basically a matter of course.” The reporter was a little speechless when questioned by me, so he began to make wild accusations.

Pfft! I almost choked on my own saliva, so I patted my chest and looked at Christopher who was smiling at me. He hugged me in front of the reporter and asked with a smile: “Dear, when did you become Remington’s girlfriend? How come I don’t know? As your husband, I am rather amused.”

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Flabbergasted with the journalist, I pointed at Christopher. “Mister, if you are in our country, you would make an awesome novelist since you are excellent at making up stories. Nevertheless, my husband is right here. If you wish to know about Remington, you can ask him.”

The journalist was so embarrassed that he quickly left us. Looking at his retreating figure, I couldn’t stop laughing. “Chris, is this considered bullying? His face turned red before he left.”

"No, this is attacking the enemy without mercy. If he had not come to create trouble for us, we would not have done that." Christopher was always supportive of me. "My wife is always right."

"What if I really did something wrong?" I asked.

"If so, then there must be something wrong with my judgment," Christopher said solemnly, nodding his head.

"What if I really had done something really wrong?" I winked and asked mischievously.

"Hmm, then you have to refer back to what I said previously." Christopher really pampered me even when I behaved foolishly and asked silly questions.

Other than Remington, the few people I know at the art exhibition were those from our country. When the exhibition was at its busiest, some artists were competing at the stage right in the center. Christopher went there with me and we really enjoyed watching that. Suddenly, I noticed that Crystal and her bodyguard were also there.

Crystal saw me too and she made all sorts of angry and hateful expressions at me. She was probably still sore from what happened earlier and was afraid of getting into more trouble, so she kept her distance.

Finally, she seemed to have learned a little lesson. Someone had to keep her in line, or Crystal would think that the whole world had to behave like she was their master, by obeying her commands and pampering to her every whim.

The trend of competition during art exhibitions spread from abroad to Hawen. Later on, it became a tradition and it evolved into four main topics, "Blossoms And Full Moon," "Phoenix," "Winter Scenery" and "Mountainous Landscapes."

On the stage, Remington was having a friendly competition with a foreign painter. He obviously had a unique skill and the pictures of flowers, birds and ladies he painted won praises from everyone around him.

"Chris, Remington is really amazing. In the past, my idol had been Spencer. I should have been more respectful of Remington instead."

"Why not be your own idol? One day, you'll be on the same level as him. To challenge yourself and do better is the most important of all," Christopher said, looking at me sincerely.

“Yes, there is a lot of logic in what you say.” I looked at Chris solemnly like never before. “Chris, I really love painting. Even standing here, I can feel that the pores of my skin are all open and I feel alive. Thank you, Chris.”

The competition on the stage reached the third round which was the personal talent show. This was more difficult as everyone showed what they did best for everyone else to see. I was thinking about what to do if I went up. Suddenly someone pushed me from behind. I was holding a glass of red wine and I had released Christopher’s hand. When I was pushed, I staggered and went forward. The glass in my hand fell to the ground, breaking into pieces and the red wine was spilled onto the floor.

I turned around and saw Crystal running through the crowd with her brows knitted. Then, she stood at the back of the crowd and smiled triumphantly at me. She raised her hand and gave me a thumbs up. Then, she slowly turned her thumb down and silently mouthed a message to me.

I could read from her lips that she was saying, “I’ll see how you fall.”

“This is the author of “Moonlight Heaven,” Ms. Yvonne. It seems that Yvonne wants to show her special skill. Is there anyone who would like to accept her challenge?” the assistant host on the stage asked, smiling.

I was totally unprepared as I looked at the assistant who had met us at the airport. I was pushed forward. What skill was I supposed to show? I am certainly not Ansley who could paint with both hands and sell his works for hundreds of millions.

“I will!” A handsome white male walked on to the stage. He looked at me with eyes full of enmity as he introduced himself. “I’m Jonah Deere the one whose painting was replaced by yours.”

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He was here for revenge. I bit the corner of my lips, not knowing what to do. If I backed off and did not compete, I would be seen as despising Jonah. Yet, I was at a loss what to paint. The six years of emptiness in my life had resulted in a lack of knowledge.

“I was not prepared to go onstage.” I rubbed my temples to ease my headache.

"Are you afraid?" Jonah laughed contemptuously. "Remington is a great artist but his friend might not be. Shall we make a bet?"

"I never bet with anyone!" Immediately, I refused. I always lose when I bet on this kind of thing, so I do not bet.

"So, do you admit that you are here by means of the back door?" Jonah shouted.

The environment was noisy but his voice was heard above the din by everyone around us. I frowned. It seemed that he had arranged for the reporter who confronted us just now. He was local and it was easy enough for him to create trouble for me. If I backed off, not only would Remington's reputation be tarnished, but I would also be looked down upon.

"What are you betting on?" I asked him coldly.

"It's simple. If you lose, have your painting taken down from the wall and thrown onto the floor and let me stomp on it a few times. That is all I want. This is not too much to demand, is it?" Jonah asked.

I was shocked and it must have shown on my face. This was way beyond too much. It was akin to the assassination of my character and stomping on my dignity. I sneered. "What if you lost?"

"I will leave this circle for good and never return to this field of arts. How about that?" Jonah declared.

As I gazed at this handsome boy, I could see his determination and unwillingness to admit defeat. In a low voice, I replied, "I agree to your challenge."

Frankly, I did not know what unique skill I could display for the crowd. If it were topics like "Phoenix" and so on, I did have some idea but I really had nothing to show for any other topics.

Standing before the huge canvas, holding a brush, I did not know where to start. This type of live exhibition had no time limit. I only had to show what I thought I was best at. I panicked as I watched Jonah beginning to paint on his canvas, and I began to walk to and fro in front of mine.

After a while, I heard the sudden exclamation of the crowd. I looked up and realized that Jonah was painting "Jeremiah's Tears." This painting was by far the most difficult portrait to imitate, not because of how complicated the painting was. On the contrary, this painting was very simple. There was only one crying old man in the whole painting.

As a world-famous painting, it was now displayed in the National Museum in E Kingdom. Basically, everyone who learned to paint had copied this world-famous painting. Sometimes, the simplest paintings are the most difficult to imitate. I imitated it back then. After one attempt, I was shocked because mine was too ugly.

Jonah had finished painting the old man at one go. He quickly sketched the outline very confidently. Occasionally, he cast a sidelong glance at me. Noting that I had not started painting yet, he mocked, "Are you going to contemplate for three days and three nights and only start working on it when the art exhibition is over?"

I shrugged in silence. It was indeed pleasing to watch a master painter paint. When the last tear slipped down the old man's cheek, Jonah had finished painting Jeremiah weeping. The old man looked plain and simple. His face showed the tracks of hardship through his life and every line on his face was full of sadness as years went by.

It was indeed, a perfect imitation. I looked at the white canvas in front of me, feeling a little sad as I started to paint. Jonah had already started on his second painting. From the initial sketches, it looked like the Mona Lisa.

It seemed that what Jonah was displaying to the crowd was his superb copying technique, and he chose the most difficult paintings. I took a deep breath and looked back at the crowd, just to see Christopher returning after having gone out.

He was standing with Remington. When he saw me looking at him, he put his thumb next to his lips and made a cheering gesture. I smiled and started painting slowly on the canvas, unlike Jonah. I had chosen the simplest color—black.

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Jonah had completed the entire art when I started on a curved flower petal. He laughed as though he'd won when he saw my canvas only had two petals.

I ignored his sneer and the whispers from the audience, merely focusing all my attention on my art.

"I'm done!" Jonah threw his paintbrush onto the table as he proclaimed triumphantly after completing four of his artworks.

At the same time, I drew the last stroke and put down my brush. "I'm done too."

"This is the artwork you wanted to use to compete against me?" Jonah taunted as he looked at the flower buds. Suddenly, his face turned red in anger. "Hey, are you looking down on me? Why else would you compete with this artwork? Is the painting on the wall done by another artist?"

"Sorry, there's a final step I missed." I walked toward Christopher and asked for his glass of water, then headed back to the stage. As I stared at the about-to-bloom peony, I dipped my paintbrush into the water and splashed it onto the painting. All the peonies had blossomed as though they had come alive.

"Woah!" Someone from the audience exclaimed as he rubbed his eyes. "Am I hallucinating? I thought I saw the flowers in the painting bloom?"

"You're not because I saw it too," another audience added.

Jonah was stunned by my skills. He rubbed his eyes and asked, "What happened? How is this possible?"

A smile formed on my lips as I pulled the canvas and swiftly drew a rose on it. I repeated the same method by splashing some water on it. The rosebud bloomed splendidly.

"In Hawen, we have a large land, abundant resources, and plenty of talented individuals. This skill was merely a small trick I've learned."

A member of the audience requested another painting because they didn't get a clear look at my previous ones. I didn't mind, so I drew another species of rose. As I made it bloom again, the audience started cheering. Jonah was snapped back from his thoughts and muttered, "So you truly have the skills. I shouldn't have listened to the rumors and challenged you recklessly."

Standing close, I heard every word he said. I realized he was instigated to challenge me.

"I lost." Jonah said with a bitter expression, "I've lost to you, and I accepted that. As I have promised, I'll never draw again."

Jonah set his paintbrush on the table and was about to leave. I quickly stopped him. "There is no win or lose. We merely had a friendly exchange. Have I said anything?"

"What are you saying?" Jonah asked puzzledly, surprised by my words.

“I’m glad to stand here and paint with you. If there’s a chance in the future, let’s do it again.” I extended my hand out. “I’m Yvonne Tanner.”

Jonah merely stared at my hand and finally understood that I was asking him to forget about his bet. He shook my hand and said, “I’m Jonah Deere. My biggest gain from today is meeting a beautiful lady like you.”

The art exhibition ended smoothly. That night, Ansley hosted an after-party at the hotel. With the clinking of glasses, guests came and go, the sweet scent of champagne wafting through the air. I was in the spotlight that night. Maybe it was because of the competition with Jonah earlier, many approached me for a chat. And there were even some Anglander girls who came up to me for a selfie.

Furthermore, I saw a Hawenian journalist come over, requesting a photo of me with Christopher. With that his interest was piqued, despite my aversion to having my photo taken, he pulled me to the camera and posed cutely. “This is an excellent opportunity for us to show what a sweet couple we are. I’m not letting this slip. Put your arm on my waist and smile sweetly.”

“What a childish man!” I uttered under my breath. How can this guy be so cute?”

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Many businessmen had also attended the after-party. As Christopher and I did a few rounds around the hall, some greeted him as if they were close friends. It was then I realized Christopher had worked in Anglandur before. He had even helped the Lane family closed a few business deals.

No wonder Julia was eager to hand over all the businesses under the Lane family to Christopher. I saw him negotiating casually within the group as though he’s the one in charge. He was really good with words and without giving his audience a chance to interrupt, he managed to bag a business deal within a short period. He was made to thrive in the business world.

Suddenly, my smile froze on my face. My gaze had landed on a woman in a fiery red dress. I was baffled and stood rooted in place.

The lady in red was poised. She had an elegant smile on her face. Accompanied by a gentleman, they slowly approached the hall. They were laughing and talking as though they were a perfect couple.

The lady was Isabelle Anderson, my mother. I was convinced the lady I saw three days ago was her.

After a few words with Remington, Christopher turned and noticed my expression. As he followed my line of sight and saw Isabelle, he asked, "She is the one?"

I closed my eyes, unable to explain my feelings at that moment. She's my mother, yet I don't even know the man by her side. She's just right there, but I don't have the courage to walk over there and greet her. How sad is this...

"Chris, let's go."

"Sure." Without asking me anything, he tugged me toward the exit. Maybe Isabelle didn't see me. She and her date was talking to a group of businessmen. There was only an independent woman's astute and confidence on her face. It was completely different from the very gentle woman with a soft smile in my memory.

Maybe we were fated to meet. As we reached the exit, suddenly someone called out for Christopher. "Christopher, this couple here is also from Hawen. Maybe all of you know each other since they are also from Avenport."

Isabelle and her date were trailing after the man. My gaze was bouncing everywhere other than Isabelle. When I didn't get to see her, I dreamed of the day I could meet her. But I lost my voice and my steps were hesitant as I remembered the incident three days ago.

"It has been a while, Mr. Goldstein." Christopher tightened his grip on my waist and patted my back comfortingly when he felt my body weakening.

"Ah, you are Christopher. Indeed, it has been quite some time. The last time I saw you was when I was still in Hawen. You were merely a small boy. I can't believe you have grown up to be so big now." Mark chuckled.

I raised my head immediately and stared at the man. He's a Goldstein. He was the guy Dad had mentioned. The one who ran away with Mom. Mark Goldstein is the one who called all the shots within the Goldstein family.

So Dad didn't lie to me. He was telling me the truth. Mom left with Mark. Did she ever think of me when she left?

My mind was blank yet going a million miles an hour. I couldn't comprehend their words. When I snapped back from my thoughts, I was in the garden with Isabelle standing in front of me. Christopher had brought Mark away.

"How are you, Eve?" asked Isabelle after a long while. Her voice was the same as the one in my memory. It was still so gentle and soothing.

But it sounded sarcastic to my ears. "I don't know you. I'm not comfortable with you calling my nickname."

I didn't look at her as I spoke. Instead, my gaze was on the flower bed. There were only roses in the garden during the winter season. Roses were cultivated massively in the Anglandur, especially the Blue Enchantress. There was blue in every corner of the garden. It was a beautiful sight under the moonlight. However, my words were full of spikes.

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