

Love Coming from the Least Expected Chapter 501

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“Eve, I know you’re angry that I didn’t look for you throughout the years. I just... I just didn’t know how to face you, so I-”

Isabelle’s remark was tantamount to pouring fuel on the fire. I jerked my head up and glowered at her resentfully even as I roared, “Just because you didn’t know how to face me, so you decided to avoid me? For that reason, you simply pretended that you have no daughter? If it weren’t for this party today that had us bumping into each other, were you planning to avoid me for the rest of your life?”

“No, that’s not it. Let me explain, Eve. I-”

“Then, tell me this—was it you I saw on the street three days ago?” I snarled, all my sanity obliterated by rage. After so many years, the image of my mother has become increasingly faded. Sometimes, when I dreamed of her at night, I even doubted that I actually had no mother and all those wonderful memories were just fantasies my mind made up because I was missing my mother too much.

“You’ve grown up, Eve.” The look in Isabelle’s eyes as she gazed at me radiated an indecipherable sense of sorrow. She stared at me intently. “I’m really glad to see that you’ve grown up well and are even so outstanding now. It seems that your father took good care of you. It turns out that he has some conscience, after all. As such, I can finally rest easy.”

Haha! Sure enough, she has never paid any attention to me throughout the years. Otherwise, why would she say such a thing? Nathan is good to me and took good care of me? That’s the funniest joke I’ve ever heard! If it weren’t for my memories verifying the fact that I’m truly a Tanner, a daughter of the Tanner family, I’d suspect that I was merely adopted. Thus, they then had reason to be apathetic toward me, and my father could also treat me worse than a stranger!

“You only need to tell me this—was it you I saw on the street that day?” I demanded through gritted teeth. “I don’t want to listen to anything else.”

Isabelle went silent for a moment. At my obstinacy, she finally nodded before heaving a sigh and admitting, “Yes, it was me.”

“Haha!” I inexorably burst into laughter, cackling so hard that I doubled over. “You shouldn’t have attended this party. And even if you did, you

shouldn't have asked for a meeting with me. Since you didn't want to see me in the past, what's the point of doing so now?"

"Eve, I just... just... missed you too much, so I came to see you. I'm sorry." Isabelle sighed again. She seemed to be enveloped by great sorrow, making her entire person seem melancholic.

"Did you miss me so much that you didn't even have the time to give me a call?" Inhaling deeply, I lifted my head and tried my utmost best to hold back my tears that were on the verge of falling. I don't want to cry, nor am I willing to do so! If I'm the only one who'd been anticipating this reunion that had been a long time coming, why should I shed any tears?

"It's not that I didn't want to give you a call, but I couldn't do so," Isabelle murmured.

"Please stop putting up an act. The moment I reached eight years old, I no longer had a mother. When my father beat me, I didn't have a mother to protect me. When Yvette picked on me, I likewise had no mother to shield me. When Crystal pushed me in the water, causing me to almost drown... and when my reputation was ruined after my husband was snatched away, pushing me to the brink of ending everything, no one around me cared about me. Where were you then?"

That was exactly how human nature worked—one might not really care when it was something unattainable, but when one came to possess it, one couldn't accept the pain of losing it. I yearned to see her, but I didn't expect that I could actually bring myself to say something so outrageous after seeing her now!

"Nathan wasn't good to you?" Isabelle demanded furiously as she finally registered the meaning of my words.

I didn't want to continue talking to her anymore, so I spun on my heels to leave. However, she grabbed my wrist. "Eve!"

"I'm sorry, but I'm not all that close with you, Mrs. Goldstein. Please excuse me if there's nothing else. I still have to attend the art exhibition and compete tomorrow, so I don't have the time to tarry here." Shaking off her hand, I bolted out of the room.

This time, Isabelle didn't chase after me, and I couldn't really tell whether I was more disappointed or sad. After leaving the room, I couldn't help bursting into tears. I wailed at the top of my lungs.

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The reunion between a mother and daughter who hadn't seen each other for many years should have been exceedingly touching. However, even Isabelle herself could sense the distance between us. Not only did her feeble consolation and words that cut me to the quick fail to reduce the distance between us, but they had blood gushing from my wound instead.

After she had left, and the family had an addition of a stepmother and her daughter, how good would my life be as a child with no mother? Had she never considered all that? I just wanted a hug from her and for her to tell me how much she missed me and console me for having suffered in her absence while sobbing. But she didn't say that to me. She merely uttered vapid words of how Nathan took good care of me!

I didn't stay at the party. Christopher kept comforting me after returning to the hotel, but I remained despondent.

"Since you missed her so much, why didn't you talk to her nicely? You really should have kept a tight rein on your temper. Look, you only caused yourself to be so crestfallen and regretful instead. I've truly pampered you too much," Christopher lamented with a sigh as he hugged me.

"Perhaps I expected too much." I rubbed my red and swollen eyes before forcing a chuckle. "Chris, I really wanted to throw myself into her arms and exclaim for joy that I've finally found her and now have a mother at long last. But I truly couldn't bring myself to do so anymore at her feeble words of consolation. Do you think I went overboard?"

"You only did something many people will do, so it's human nature. When you see her next time, talk to her nicely."

Talk to her nicely? I inwardly heaved a sigh. I'm afraid that I might not know what to say to her.

"She might still put in an appearance at the party tomorrow, so communicate with her properly then."

"Okay," I answered wanly. Instead of anticipating meeting her again, I was instead filled with apprehension.

On the second day of the party, a charity auction was held at the Pelagic Museum. Ansley donated an old painting from his collection and declared

that he would be channeling the proceeds from the auction of the painting to impoverished areas. Likewise, the rest of us could also donate the proceeds from the auction of our paintings to the country on the spot.

Entering the banquet hall with Christopher, we sat in the seats arranged by the organizer. I immediately started searching the place, but I saw no signs of my mother. Instead, I only saw Mark sitting in the frontmost seat alone.

“That’s the patriarch of the Goldstein family, yes?” I asked Christopher.

Christopher cast a glance at the elegant man in front before nodding. “Yup, he’s Lucas’ uncle and has been recuperating in Anglandur all these years. Rumor has it that his health isn’t all that great.”

“Does he have any children?” I inquired in a whisper. Would I have other siblings? If Mom has other children, I think I’d be a good sister.

“There haven’t been any rumors about that matter,” Christopher explained.

Back then, there was a very fierce internal strife in the Goldstein family in a bid to vie for power. In the end, the position of the patriarch fell to Mark. His uncles, who fought him for the position, all ended up in bad shape. It was said that his poor health was due to someone else setting him up. For that reason, he entrusted Lucas’ father to manage the Goldstein family.”

Perhaps I was staring too hard that Mark abruptly turned and looked at me. Then, he even flashed me an amicable smile and beckoned at me, saying, “Why don’t you come over and sit here?”

Forcing a smile, I politely declined.

I was looking forward to my mother’s appearance the entire night, but she never turned up. Finally, I gave up.

The host of the auction was skilled at making the atmosphere lively. As such, painting after painting was auctioned off at high prices. Just then, the host on the stage suddenly cried out, “The next painting to be auctioned off is a painting known as Autumnal Panorama, the work of Hawen’s new school artist, Crystal Yates! She’s an apprentice of Oliver Horne, and Mr. Horne has had high praises for this painting! Now, let’s all enjoy the autumnal feeling of the painting...”

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I sprang to my feet and stared intently at the painting that the staff was unscrolling slowly. The painting was preserved very well. Subsequently, the blooms under the autumn moonlight and the back of someone missing her mother were then revealed right before my eyes. That was the painting I painted stroke by stroke as I wept during a rainy night when I missed my mother.

I cast my gaze into the crowd, and sure enough, I spotted Crystal sitting right in the middle. When she saw me looking at her, she flashed me a wide grin. Then, she gave me a thumbs-up which she then inverted provocatively.

Fury built within me bit by bit until my eyes were blinded by rage.

Well, well... She's really daring! She has already been sued by many painters in the country and would still be in prison right now if it weren't for Nathan spending tons of money and bustling about to get her out. Yet, she still has the temerity to auction off my painting! Back then, I didn't know that she stole my paintings, and when I did realize it, everything was too late. And now, she actually dares to auction off my painting ten years ago right in front of me? Does she really think that I'm easy prey?

"Ladies and gentlemen, please place your bids now! The starting bid is a million!"

No sooner had the host's voice fallen than Christopher spoke out of the blue. In a languid voice, he drawled, "One."

The host was stunned for a moment before he remarked with a chuckle, "You're really humorous, Sir."

"I'm not being humorous. Since this is the painting, my price is very apt. There's no amount higher than that," Christopher countered smilingly.

"Why must you pick trouble with me, Christopher? Are you telling me that this painting is not worth a million?" Crystal cried out and reproved him resentfully.

Grasping my hand lightly, Christopher casually chuckled. "This painting is naturally worth more than a million. However, if it's coming from you, then it's only worth that much. Do you need me to share the news about you here as well, Ms. Yates?"

"How dare you?" Crystal's countenance paled before it flushed bright red. But when Christopher swept a sharp gaze over her, fear showed on her face, and she bit her lip indignantly.

Upon seeing that the atmosphere had turned dreary, the host cracked a few jokes to ease the tension. Then, he resumed the auction. "Earlier, Mr. Lane made a joke, so please continue bidding now..."

"I, Christopher Lane, am declaring right here that this painting is only worth one. I personally hope to own this painting, so I hope all of you will do me a favor. As such, I don't think any of you will fight me on this, yes?" Christopher stood up and looked around arrogantly with a quirked brow and a wicked smile on his face.

Because of his words, some of his friends whispered among themselves and gave up bidding. Meanwhile, others felt that it wasn't necessary to offend him because of an unknown woman, so they zipped their mouths as well.

The host finally realized the problem. His expression turned extremely awkward, and he didn't quite know how to continue the auction. At that precise moment, the banquet hall doors were suddenly pushed open. Following that, a gentle and sweet voice drifted into the air. "I'll pay a million for this painting."

"Great! Congratulations on winning the bid for Autumnal Panorama! Now, let's proceed to the next item for auction." The host wiped the sweat off his forehead as though having been saved from a fate worse than death.

The familiar voice had me stiffening. I looked back over my shoulder and gaped incredulously at the woman who was walking in.

The woman slowly strolled over from the shadows, coming increasingly closer to me. Her red floral dress with gold embroidery rendered her graceful figure all the more slender and taller. As she slowly ambled in, her gaze swept over me and stilled for a brief moment. In the end, she stopped beside Mark and sat down next to him.

In a placid voice, she asserted, "I like this painting very much, and I think the painter must have painted it meticulously in the middle of the night. Therefore, it's worth a million."

I had no idea why my mother would help Crystal out, but her gaze was pinned on me as she spoke. Tugging at Christopher's sleeve, I quietly sat back down.

Perhaps she doesn't know that the painting is Crystal's. That was the only thought that occurred to me while my emotions were a tangled mess.

Soon, it was my painting's turn to be auctioned. Ansley once lauded Moonlight Heaven, so the starting bid was five million. I should have been waiting on pins and needles, but my thoughts weren't on my painting at all because I saw Crystal going over and saying something or other to my mother. My mother's smile was very gentle, causing jealousy to swamp me.

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"I offer ten million for this painting!" No sooner had the auctioneer's words fallen than Christopher doubled the price in the blink of an eye. I silently counted how many zeros were in ten million before nudging him lightly and whispered, "Why are you offering so much money when I drew this myself? We can't be buying it and hanging it at home, can we?"

"Your painting is priceless to me." Christopher flashed me an indulgent smile.

"Anyway, stop bidding on it, okay?" The moment my words fell, someone called out a bid of fifteen million, so Christopher again hollered, "Twenty million!"

At that, I shot him a glare. Argh! This man is truly spending frivolously! "If you really think that you've got too much money, you can give it to me. I'll help you deposit it in the bank. And if you like it so much, I'll paint you a replica of it back home."

"Nope. I want this one." Christopher winked at me, causing the mole at the corner of his eye to twitch, giving him a devilish and nonchalant air. "You told me there are two vague silhouettes in the shadows that represent us, so I naturally have to take it home and treasure it. I'm not going to allow anyone else to take it away."

"Thirty million!" As the familiar voice drifted into my ears, I couldn't help shifting my glance to Isabelle. She had her back to me and didn't look back either, sounding as though she was speaking of something unremarkable. At that turn of events, my brows furrowed.

"Forty million!" Christopher upped the bid without the slightest hesitation. When the people around saw that the price had gone so high, they all zipped their mouths. They were only attending the auction to join in the fun and donate some money to gain a good reputation in the first place, so if someone took things seriously, they wouldn't simply poke their noses into it.

“Fifty million!” Isabelle raised the bidding paddle in front of her.

“Sixty million!” Christopher murmured mildly.

When he had raised the price to eighty million, I tugged at his sleeve. “Forget it, Chris. Don’t increase the bid anymore since she wants to buy it. The Goldstein family doesn’t lack money anyway.”

“I sense that you don’t want her to get the painting.” Christopher handed me the bidding paddle. In other words, he was handing the decision to me.

Lifting my head, I glanced at Isabelle. She was also looking in my direction, and her smile turned affectionate when she saw me gazing at her. In the end, I put down the bidding paddle and said to Christopher, “You’re right. I shouldn’t be sulking since she’s my mother at the end of the day. I’ll go and look for her later after the auction has ended.”

Upon hearing that, Christopher flashed me a pleased smile. “I’ll go with you.”

In the dim banquet hall, only the lights on the huge platform flickered. All the other works that were auctioned after that were by renowned painters. The longest painting was three meters long and was auctioned off at a sky-high price of a hundred and fifty million. It was none other than Ansley’s painting.

“Congratulations on such tremendous success, Ms. Tanner!”

“Hear, hear! Hawen is truly blessed to have an outstanding young artist like you, Ms. Tanner. Please rest assured that we’ll be using the money appropriately. All the money will be donated to schools in the impoverished mountainous areas to build primary schools. For every payment, we’ll be sending you the accounts records for your perusal.”

“You flatter me. As a fellow citizen, I’m also very glad that I get to contribute to the country.” I then signed the donation form. When all the works were auctioned off and the lights in the banquet hall lit up, I suddenly noticed that Mark and Isabelle had already walked over to the entrance.

I hastily pushed the person in charge of Cross Organization who wanted to take a photo with me away and dashed out the banquet hall. Just then, a low-key Ferrari drove past me. I glimpsed Isabelle in the passenger seat and wanted to call out to her, but the car was already speeding toward the corner, giving me zero chance of speaking.

I stood rooted to the spot for some time as a bitter smile born of helplessness hovered over my lips. When Christopher caught up to me, I shrugged at him. "She has left, Chris. We should go back as well."

I had no idea why my mother didn't stay to meet me, but I had also lost the courage to chase after her once more. The distance between us was negligible, but it seemed as though we were no different from before. It's difficult for me to even see catch a glimpse of her.

The next day, I insisted on going back to Hawen. Seeing my resolution, Christopher asked his assistant to book flight tickets back. After boarding the flight, I suddenly saw a news report of a shooting with Isabelle's photo attached. All at once, my heart skipped a beat.

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"Mr. Lane, Mr. Goldstein and his wife live in a mansion on Hallowed Avenue where the wealthy resided. They usually keep a very low profile and seldom leave the house. In the past two years, they have a listed shipping company in Anglandur, and it's doing pretty well. However, rumor had it that they got into a spot of trouble and offended a local gang. But considering Mr. Goldstein's capabilities, he'll probably resolve such a trivial matter in no time."

"What's their address exactly?" Christopher inquired after listening to his assistant's report.

His assistant took out a business card and placed it before Christopher and me. "Here's the address and also their usual itinerary. They're mostly at home and rarely go out. If you want to see them, you can go straight to the mansion. Should I prepare a car?" the assistant asked.

Christopher then placed the address in front of me. "Here's the location. If we drive there, it'll take less than half an hour."

Having not talked to Isabelle at the auction yesterday, I had been in a despondent mood. And naturally, Christopher could tell, so he investigated Mark's residence early in the morning and presented it to me.

I picked up the business card and placed it in my hand. As the thin piece of paper came into contact with my palm, it was immediately soaked with sweat. Recalling her resolute departure last night, I shook my head with a smile. "Never mind. Let's go back to Hawen. There must be a pile of work

waiting for you in the office since you've been away for so many days. Also, Julia is probably going to reproach me when we return."

"Are you sure you don't want to go?" Christopher was a touch surprised since he knew full well that I longed to see Isabelle.

Flashing him a faint smile, I tried my best to make myself appear relaxed. "Yeah, it's okay. From the look of things, she must be living a good life now. Perhaps I shouldn't disrupt her life. Many years have passed, after all, so there's no point doing so."

"What a silly girl!"

At my insistence, Christopher didn't mention going to see Isabelle anymore. Instead, he asked his assistant to book two flight tickets for the premium economy class. When we were leaving, I looked back at the bustling streets of Norham while standing at the boarding gate before I finally headed toward the cabin resolutely.

Some things are just that unexpected. At the turning point in my life, I encountered a piece of beautiful scenery, but I didn't stay. Instead, all that was left were melancholy and loss.

Sitting on the comfortable couch, I suddenly caught sight of Isabelle's photo in the newspaper in the hands of the person right in front of me.

Truth be told, I never expected to see a news report about her in the newspaper. In the next second, I glimpsed the word "shooting" and instantly shuddered as fear struck me. I snatched the newspaper from the person's hands and clutched it tightly in my hands. The man cursed me out, but I ignored him. Noticing the situation, Christopher's assistant hurriedly went over and mollified the man.

The newspaper briefly reported about a shooting that took place after the auction last night. Someone wanted to kill the Chairman of Illuminati Shipping, Mark, and even attempted to kidnap his wife to blackmail him. Fortunately, he sensed something amiss and worked with the police, so the perpetrators had been apprehended. At present, both he and his wife were fine.

Only when I saw that they were fine did I breathe a sigh of relief. At that moment earlier, my heart had leaped to my throat, and a sheen of cold sweat broke out on my forehead. Exchanging a glance with Christopher, I let out a long sigh of relief.

With the newspaper in hand, I read it again and again. When we disembarked from the plane, my mood already improved significantly. The sky seemed bright, and the ground felt exceedingly solid. The scenery that

lay before my eyes was also incredibly stunning. Strolling around the garden in the airport, I pointed at the huge fountain and grinned idiotically. "Look, Chris, I never thought that the scenery at the airport could be so lovely."

Without warning, a group of journalists came out of nowhere and started snapping away at me, and some even tried to get close to me. Seeing that, Christopher promptly pulled me into his arms and shielded me while his assistants surrounded us and acted as a barrier.

"Ms. Tanner, can you please say something about your painting being exhibited at Mr. Ansley's art exhibition? How do you feel about that? You and Remington are the only two painters among the younger generation in Hawen who have their works exhibited at such a grand art exhibition. How did you accomplish that?"

"Ms. Tanner, your painting of Moonlight Heaven was auctioned off at a sky-high price of eighty million, and you even donated all the proceeds to the impoverished mountainous areas. This matter has caused a stir in Avenport. Besides, your technique of making flowers bloom when water was splashed on them had been widely circulated on the internet. Many people are curious about how you accomplished that. Do you mind explaining it?"