

## Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 481-490

Posted by **chapter novel**, 59 Views, Released on July 13, 2022

"You're wearing leather shoes, right? It's kind of amazing that the mosquito could still pierce right through it."

"Of course. They don't come at me if I don't have delicious blood," Christopher chuckled.

That brat is so full of himself.

It was good weather for golf. The sun was not too bright, and there was some light breeze as well.

I sat on the chair with my eyes half-closed. I had made an appointment to go to the art studio with Remington and Spencer the day after tomorrow. I supposed I could have a lot to gain from the two and was quite looking forward to it. Even though Spencer was still giving me the half-pleasant face, I knew that he was not so hostile to me as before.

First impressions played a pivotal role in that, I presumed. After sipping on the tea that the waiter brought me, I decided to take a stroll under the shade. This rather high-class golf club had a swimming pool built among the forest, and also a dedicated live band, among other facilities.

I walked along the pathway when suddenly a drunk man staggered his way toward me. He bumped right into me. I was so shocked that I retracted a few steps back. However, the man reached out and dragged me right back into his embrace as he called out my name, "Eve, did you come looking for me? I miss you so much. I know that you still love me."

"Lyle!" I cried out loud upon a closer look. "What are you doing? Let me go! You're hurting me!"

"I'm never let you go again, Eve! We're man and wife! Why do I have to let you go? You love me, right?" Not only did he not let me go, but he tightened his grip around me.

"Eve, I regret it so much... That time on the deserted island, if it were you, you wouldn't have dumped me, right? I know you won't... You love me so much, and you're so kind... Let's go back and tell Grandma that we're going to

organize another wedding. Both of us are going to be at the wedding. We still have our wedding photos. Let's go back."

Lyle was about to drag me and leave. Stumped by his attitude, I shrugged off his hands forcefully, and chided him, "What wedding? Lyle, don't kick up a fuss in front of me. We're already divorced."

"Shh, please don't say so. You imagined those things. We've been in a dream all along. As soon as we're awake, things will go back to what it was before, and we're still going to be together." Lyle looked into my eyes tenderly. The way he looked at me was like the way he used to look at Crystal.

"Eve, I won't be the jerk like I was in the dream. Don't worry, I will treasure you and love you so much."

He edged close and was about to kiss me. My patience wore thin, and I opened the bottle of drink in my hand and hurled it at his face as I bellowed, "Lyle, enough of this nonsense! Get the hell back to where you came from."

"No, Eve, you're mine... Why are you together with another man? Follow me back home now." Lyle acted like a child and dragged me along for some distance.

"Go back where? Why do I have to follow you? Lyle Smith, do you think I will come back running to you as soon as you realize you're wrong? You're just feeling indignant because you're never going to be able to find another girl who's as stupid as me who would treat you well unconditionally. As soon as you find another one who's more gentle or in any way better than me, you're going to dump me in a heartbeat and be together with her," I snapped.

Lyle was stumped and froze on the spot. Just when I thought he was going to come to his senses, he kept dragging me along and muttered, "No, I want only you. I don't want anyone else, Yvonne Tanner. I love you."

"You're wearing leather shoes, right? It's kind of amazing that the mosquito could still pierce right through it." "Of course. They don't come at me if I don't have delicious blood," Christopher chuckled. That brat is so full of himself. It was good weather for golf. The sun was not too bright, and there was some light breeze as well. I sat on the chair with my eyes half-closed. I had made an appointment to go to the art studio with Remington and Spencer the day after tomorrow. I supposed I could have a lot to gain from the two and was quite looking forward to it. Even though Spencer was still giving me the half-

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I was starting to feel really dumb for my attempt of talking some sense into a drunken man. No matter what I said, Lyle was adamant about taking me away. There was no shaking that man off.

All of a sudden, another strong arm reached over and gripped Lyle's wrist forcefully. He felt the pain and finally eased on gripping mine.

"Mr. Smith, it's better for a drunk man like you to stay put. If someone mistakenly thinks that you're a pervert and beats you up, I bet the headlines are going to look very interesting tomorrow." Christopher hugged me around my shoulders and jeered at Lyle as he furrowed his brows. There was a clear hint of derision in his eyes.

"Christopher Lane!" Lyle gritted his name through his teeth. It was as if he was ready to devour Christopher. "You are a despicable scoundrel! You only got close to me so that you could get your hands on my wife. The Lane family is really a bully. I won't let you have your way!"

"Lyle Smith, you only have yourself to blame in the matter as I've given you a chance. If you had treated Eve well, why would I have any chance to come in between the two of you? Half a year was more than enough for me to realize how miserable her life was when she was with you. Since you didn't seem to appreciate her, why couldn't I let her be happy staying by my side instead?" Christopher crossed his arms in front of his chest and said coldly.

"How dare you say such a thing when you're the one coveting your friend's wife? Let go of Eve. She's my wife." Lyle was already drunk out of his wits as he kept slurring.

"You think that teaming up with Grandma and exposing those scandals would make me give Eve up. Dream on! Don't even think for a second that I have no idea about the filthy things you've got going on with Monica." Then, Lyle looked at me and said with a straight face. "Yvonne, don't believe a word he says. He's up to no good."

Vexed, I could not bear to listen to another word he said and interrupted, "So what if he's up to no good? At least, he wouldn't dump me in the hotel with another man right after marrying me. At least, he wouldn't leave me in the hands of kidnappers when I was in danger. Do you think there could be anything worse than what you've done to me?"

Lyle grimaced. It was apparent that these memories were not only an unbecoming past of mine, but also his, as they served to remind him how stupid he used to be. He looked intently at me for a few seconds before turning gentle once again, and he was almost begging me when he said, "Yvonne, I will change. Please follow me home and let's get married again."

"Let her go!" With a wave of his hands, Christopher somehow managed to crack the bones of Lyle's arms. Lyle let out a sharp wail and retracted two steps back as he hugged his arms and let out an appalling cry.

"Eve, are you alright?" Christopher then looked at me and asked apprehensively.

"I'm okay." I shook my wrist which was in pain from being gripped forcefully. In some distance away, Lyle was still clutching onto his arms with a pale face. I could clearly discern the cold sweat on his forehead even from some distance away. It must have been really painful for him. I could not bear to watch him writhing in pain and said to Christopher, "Do you know how to fix his arms? Please fix it for him. There's no need to pick on a drunk man."

"Do I look so petty to you?" Christopher chuckled and touched the tip of my nose lightly. "Don't worry, I didn't go all out on him. I just want him to learn his lesson so that he won't come looking for you again in the future."

Christopher walked over to Lyle's side and gripped his hands once again. There were not many movements on Christopher's end, but sounds of bones cracking could be heard once again. Lyle's sharp shriek ensued moments after as he bellowed, "Lane, you b\*st\*rd! Just you wait... Ah..."

Christopher let Lyle go and did not pay heed to what the man said. He walked over and circled me in his embrace and said, "Let's go. Remington and Spencer are still waiting for us."

I nodded and trailed behind him. After a few steps, I turned back to look at Lyle. However, I was greeted by a horrifying sight.

I was starting to feel really dumb for my attempt of talking some sense into a drunken man. No matter what I said, Lyle was adamant about taking me away. There was no shaking that man off. All of a sudden, another strong arm reached over and gripped Lyle's wrist forcefully. He felt the pain and finally eased on gripping mine. "Mr. Smith, it's better for a drunk man like you to stay put. If someone mistakenly thinks that you're a pervert and beats you up, I bet

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Feeling sympathy for Lyle, I turned around to look at him when I was leaving. I could feel my body drained of blood as I saw Lyle clutching a gold club in his hand with a vicious look on his face as he was about to strike Christopher.

In face of the grave danger, I hurled myself at Christopher without hesitation to defend him. I felt the full force of the golf club's hit on my head. A paralyzing numb sensation spread from the top of my head to my whole body as I felt warm liquid gushing from the top of my head at the same time. The viscous liquid streamed into my eyes, making me unable to open them. I staggered a few steps and was about to fall.

“Eve!” Christopher reacted in the nick of time and quickly steadied me. Fury flashed in his eyes as he noticed the blood trickling down from my head. He turned around and kicked at Lyle. Then, he walked over and was about to punch Lyle in the face.

I held on to my head and called out to him, “Chris!”

He was blowing punches on Lyle right then. Upon hearing my call, he rushed back to my side and steadied my staggering body. “I'll send you to the hospital.”

Lyle seemed to have finally snapped out of his drunken state. At the sight of blood trickling down my body and my bloodstained dress, he froze on the spot and finally mumbled, “Sorry, I didn't want to hurt you. I was j-just... I...”

Lyle was slurring his words yet again, and could not even form a coherent sentence. I paid no heed to his cries and merely said coldly, “Lyle, are you going to trample all over me no matter how good or bad you're doing? If you're doing badly, are you going to drag me to hell along with you?”

I had hated Lyle before but never had I felt such overwhelming abhorrence for this man before. How dare he try to hurt Christopher? How could he be so shameless?

“No, I didn’t mean it, Yvonne...” he repeated the same sentence over and over again as he looked at me helplessly.

“Lyle, I’ve never owed you anything. If you think only my death is able to stop you from ever bothering me again, then you’re probably going to be very disappointed. Not only will I not go to hell along with you, but I will live my life to the fullest. Everything you’ve done is out of your own choice. There’s no use crying over spilled milk, especially when you’re the one who’s made that choice. Don’t blame others for not keeping up with you when you’re the one who to push them away.”

I knew I should not have said such harsh words to Lyle when he was already down in the dumps, but I was really fed up with him continuously pestering me. I wanted to cut ties with him once and for all.

Lyle listened to everything I said quietly, and he finally calmed down. After I was done, he apologized to me once again solemnly and said nothing further.

“Lyle, our past is the past. Don’t come looking for me again. Please leave some space for grace and dignity between us.”

Spencer and Remington were shocked to see that my head was injured just after taking a stroll. My head was spinning the whole time when I was on the way to the hospital. Christopher looked utterly troubled. I poked him lightly and said in a small voice, “I’m okay. Don’t worry.”

“Quit talking.” Christopher’s face darkened as he stepped hard on the pedal. After getting off the car, he swooped me up and rushed toward the emergency department. My bloodstained dress gave the nurses and doctors quite a shock.

“I’m hurt in the head. My legs are perfectly fine, though. Let me down. So many people are watching us,” I said sheepishly as I burrowed my head in Christopher’s chest.

“You’re already not that smart, to begin with. Now that you have a big hole in your head, how are you going to be able to think straight from now on?” Christopher said angrily as he glared at me. Nevertheless, he placed me



carefully on the stretcher and nagged, "It was just a golf club. I could have handled it perfectly. If he had managed to hurt me in any way with that stick, I would go look for Zachary tomorrow and ask him to give me a good beating for being such a weenie. What were you thinking? You shouldn't have tried to defend me."

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The doctor bandaged my wound for me. When he was disinfecting me, the alcohol caused my wound to hurt. I could have endured that pain, but when Christopher yelled so loudly, I felt indignant. With tears welling up in my eyes, I protested, "I'm worried about you, so I couldn't help but pounce over. It really hurts, but you're still lashing out at me!"

Christopher's anger dissipated in an instant. Sighing helplessly, he told the doctor to be gentler before saying to me softly, "I've told you multiple times to stop jumping into dangerous situations. Why don't you just listen to me? If you dare to keep getting yourself into danger, I'll have to teach you a good lesson."

I remained silent and looked pitiful. Christopher sat beside me, blew at the wounds on my forehead gently and said, "It's good that you know it hurts. In the future, just hide in my arms whenever danger arises. My hug will be warm and strong—it can be a safe harbor for you from any danger."

"You aren't superman!" I protested. Even the most powerful people could get injured, which was something I had realized most acutely on the abandoned island. Even a strong man like Christopher, who seemed so invincible to me, had times of vulnerability too.

Naturally, I would not tell him my thoughts.

Even though my head was bandaged, I wanted to talk to Remington and the rest about art. Unfortunately, Christopher did not give me such an opportunity and chased them away, thinking that they were nuisances. I was speechless. He was the only person capable enough to do that after receiving their help.

“I know that you’re classmates with Spencer, but what’s your relationship with Remington? The age gap is quite big. Is he Darius’ classmate?” I was curious about Christopher’s relationship with Remington.

Christopher placed me on the bed, acting so meticulously that it was as if I could not take care of myself. When I noticed his worried expression, I understood his feelings well too. After experiencing near-death situations, we were terrified that the other party would get hurt. To calm him down, I ordered him around. When I was hungry or thirsty, I would instruct Christopher to bring food to me.

“Remington is the child of my father’s comrade. His family had always been involved in politics and the military. However, in the previous generation, everything changed and they started taking a liking to the arts. In this generation, Remington became an artist. When we were still neighbors, we fought before.”

Christopher explained to me about Remington. Then, he shoved a piece of apple in my mouth and instructed me to eat it. I chewed leisurely on the apple, feeling like a queen.

I thought things would just end like this, but Sharon suddenly looked for me. Ever since she pushed me and caused Crystal to have a miscarriage by falling down the stairs, we had stopped being as intimate as before. After what happened at Crystal’s wedding got exposed, I did not contact her anymore. All I did was bid her farewell before I left.

Hence, I was surprised to see her appear at the entrance.

“Can I go in and have a seat?” With her back bent, Sharon asked. She started coughing afterward, looking much weaker than before.

Watching her, I felt extremely conflicted. After inviting her in, I placed a cushion against the couch and told her to lean against it. “Why didn’t you bring Josephine with you? It’s rather inconvenient for you to come out alone.”

"It's fine. I'm so old that no one dares to bump into me on the streets. Some kind ladies even offered to send me here when they found out that I was heading here." Sharon smiled. There was a hint of amusement in her frail voice.

"It's better to be careful. I'll call Wendy later and tell her to come here and fetch you home," I insisted worriedly.

The smile on Sharon's face faded as she sighed slowly. "I haven't eaten yet. Why don't you cook something for me? It's been ages since I've tasted your food and I miss it dearly."

"Okay, I'll do it right away!" I walked toward the kitchen. After a while, I realized that Sharon was wandering in the room, even picking up my couple bracelet with Christopher and scrutinizing it. Then, I returned to the kitchen again.

The doctor bandaged my wound for me. When he was disinfecting me, the alcohol caused my wound to hurt. I could have endured that pain, but when Christopher yelled so loudly, I felt indignant. With tears welling up in my eyes, I protested, "I'm worried about you, so I couldn't help but pounce over. It really hurts, but you're still lashing out at me!" Christopher's anger dissipated in an instant. Sighing helplessly, he told the doctor to be gentler before saying to me softly, "I've told you multiple times to stop jumping into dangerous situations. Why don't you just listen to me? If you dare to keep getting yourself into danger, I'll have to teach you a good lesson." I remained silent and looked pitiful. Christopher sat beside me, blew at the wounds on my forehead gently and said, "It's good that you know it hurts. In the future, just hide in my arms whenever danger arises. My hug will be warm and strong—it can be a safe harbor for you from any danger." "You aren't superman!" I protested. Even the most powerful people could get injured, which was something I had realized most acutely on the abandoned island. Even a strong man like Christopher, who seemed so invincible to me, had times of vulnerability too. Naturally, I would not tell him my thoughts. Even though my head was bandaged, I wanted to talk to Remington and the rest about art. Unfortunately, Christopher did not give me such an opportunity and chased them away, thinking that they were nuisances. I was speechless. He was the only person capable enough to do that after receiving their help. "I know that you're classmates with Spencer, but what's your relationship with Remington? The age gap is quite big. Is he Darius' classmate?" I was curious about Christopher's relationship with Remington. Christopher placed me on the bed, acting so meticulously that it was as if I could not take care of myself. When I noticed his worried

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When Sharon glanced around in the house, she noticed the couple items in the bathroom and the razors. A look of revelation crossed her face.

I prepared some simple chicken stew and some salad and placed them in front of Sharon. Perhaps because she was hungry, she quickly finished the food and praised my cooking skills.

"Chris loves chicken stew, so I learned a few ways of cooking it to make it delicious." At the mention of Christopher, a happy smile spread across my lips.

Sharon opened her mouth, wanting to say something. However, she suddenly stayed silent and insisted on leaving. When she was at the door, she glanced back at me and a desolate expression appeared on her face. Tears glistened in her eyes as she said, "I'm afraid that I won't get a chance to eat your food anymore. What a pity..."

"If you want to eat my food, just give me a call! I'll send it over," I quickly replied.

"There's no need for that!" Sharon kept shaking her head.

After sending her off, I returned to my bedroom, still completely puzzled. I could not understand why Sharon suddenly came to look for me. Does she simply want to visit me?

Later, I told Christopher about this incident over dinner. He burst out laughing and said that I was foolish. In the end, he even praised Sharon for being an understanding person.

Puzzled, I kept hounding him to tell me what exactly had happened.

"Did Sharon roam around the house and deliberately look at our shared items?" asked Christopher.

I nodded. How does he know that?

Christopher pointed at his cheek and I gave him a kiss. Only then did he continue, "Sharon must've been here to convince you to go back to Lyle. If her grandson keeps pleading with her to do that, she can't possibly refuse him. Furthermore, she likes you a lot. However, after seeing our shared items, she gave up on her plan to ask you to patch up with Lyle."

"Patch up?" I scratched my head. Back then, I did not realize that Sharon had such an intention.

"Old Mrs. Smith is quite sincere toward you. After all, you've been putting up with her."

Although Sharon had harmed me before, I could never forget the instances when she was nice to me. If she was genuinely nice to me, I would definitely be able to sense it.

The wound on my forehead started to heal after three days, so I could just go out with a hat. Remington and Spencer had mentioned that they wanted to discuss art with me, so they certainly would not go back on their word. After knowing that my injuries were healed, they hosted a small party and invited the artists that they were familiar with. Then, informed me about it right away.

I just want to paint with them. Why did they invite so many people? I felt a bit uneasy. Troubles always occur when there were many people, so I was afraid that something bad might happen.

“Let’s go. If you want to stay in the art circle, the first thing you have to do is to enter it. It is rare for geniuses to isolate themselves. As for those who still became famous living in isolation, their talent was usually discovered only after their deaths. Do you want to be a famous artist only after you die?”

What Christopher said was logical, so I could not refute him. When I attended the party in the afternoon, I brought a set of painting tools which he had bought for me. I did not bring anything else, not even Christopher.

I thought that I might become useless after being taken care of by Christopher. In fact, I would depend on him for almost everything that I did. This was not a good sign—I should be more independent.

The party was held in Remington’s house. Confident and excited, I strode into the mansion.

“If you still haven’t come, Spencer would call Mr. Lane and throw a tantrum. He arrived the earliest and claimed that he would definitely defeat you in art, so you’ll know that there are people more talented than you. However, you arrived punctually.” Remington invited me into the mansion and pointed at Spencer, who was standing in front of an easel.

Confused, I pointed at myself and asked, “Is there a sign on me saying that I’m invincible and arrogant? Did I make a public announcement for people to challenge me openly? Otherwise, why would he have such a thought? Do I seem very proud?”

When Sharon glanced around in the house, she noticed the couple items in the bathroom and the razors. A look of revelation crossed her face. I prepared some simple chicken stew and some salad and placed them in front of Sharon. Perhaps because she was hungry, she quickly finished the food and praised my cooking skills. “Chris loves chicken stew, so I learned a few ways

of cooking it to make it delicious.” At the mention of Christopher, a happy smile spread across my lips. Sharon opened her mouth, wanting to say something. However, she suddenly stayed silent and insisted on leaving. When she was at the door, she glanced back at me and a desolate expression appeared on her face. Tears glistened in her eyes as she said, “I’m afraid that I won’t get a chance to eat your food anymore. What a pity...” “If you want to eat my food, just give me a call! I’ll send it over,” I quickly replied. “There’s no need for that!” Sharon kept shaking her head. After sending her off, I returned to my bedroom, still completely puzzled. I could not understand why Sharon suddenly came to look for me. Does she simply want to visit me? Later, I told Christopher about this incident over dinner. He burst out laughing and said that I was foolish. In the end, he even praised Sharon for being an understanding person. Puzzled, I kept hounding him to tell me what exactly had happened. “Did Sharon roam around the house and deliberately look at our shared items?” asked Christopher. I nodded. How does he know that? Christopher pointed at his cheek and I gave him a kiss. Only then did he continue, “Sharon must’ve been here to convince you to go back to Lyle. If her grandson keeps pleading with her to do that, she can’t possibly refuse him. Furthermore, she likes you a lot. However, after seeing our shared items, she gave up on her plan to ask you to patch up with Lyle.” “Patch up?” I scratched my head. Back then, I did not realize that Sharon had such an intention. “Old Mrs. Smith is quite sincere toward you. After all, you’ve been putting up with her.” Although Sharon had harmed me before, I could never forget the instances when she was nice to me. If she was genuinely nice to me, I would definitely be able to sense it. The wound on my forehead started to heal after three days, so I could just go out with a hat. Remington and Spencer had mentioned that they wanted to discuss art with me, so they certainly would not go back on their word. After knowing that my injuries were healed, they hosted a small party and invited the artists that they were familiar with. Then, informed me about it right away. I just want to paint with them. Why did they invite so many people? I felt a bit uneasy. Troubles always occur when there were many people, so I was afraid that something bad might happen. “Let’s go. If you want to stay in the art circle, the first thing you have to do is to enter it. It is rare for geniuses to isolate themselves. As for those who still became famous living in isolation, their talent was usually discovered only after their deaths. Do you want to be a famous artist only after you die?” What Christopher said was logical, so I could not refute him. When I attended the party in the afternoon, I brought a set of painting tools which he had bought for me. I did not bring anything else, not even Christopher. I thought that I might become useless after being taken care of by Christopher. In fact, I would depend on him for almost everything that I did. This was not a good



sign—I should be more independent. The party was held in Remington's house. Confident and excited, I strode into the mansion. “If you still haven't come, Spencer would call Mr. Lane and throw a tantrum. He arrived the earliest and claimed that he would definitely defeat you in art, so you'll know that there are people more talented than you. However, you arrived punctually.” Remington invited me into the mansion and pointed at Spencer, who was standing in front of an easel. Confused, I pointed at myself and asked, “Is there a sign on me saying that I'm invincible and arrogant? Did I make a public announcement for people to challenge me openly? Otherwise, why would he have such a thought? Do I seem very proud?”

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Amused by my words, Remington laughed and shrugged. “Well, his fantasy about his first love has been shattered, and the culprit is just right in front of him. His pride can't take it if he doesn't do anything about it.”

“Hah!” Other than rolling my eyes, I could not think of any other way to express my current feelings.

“Oh, right. There will be a few pretty girls at this party whom I had invited. Don't flirt around, okay? Something bad might happen,” warned Remington seriously.

I pursed my lips, not knowing how to respond to that. Remington's thoughts were even more ridiculous than Spencer's.

“How did you come up with such a conclusion? Am I a frivolous woman? Or do I have some ambiguous relationship with a girl?”

“My friend said that your relationship with Crystal is the classic example of a love-hate relationship. It is only because both of you can never get together that your love is so tragically beautiful. After listening to her analysis, I thought that she made sense. So, you shouldn't flirt around randomly. It's terrifying when a woman turns evil.”

I had nothing else to say.

After I greeted Spencer, he chatted with me politely with a grim look on his face. Then, he insisted on challenging me to a painting competition. This time, he wanted to compete on speed. As I had no objections to it, I told him to wait for a minute while I head to the restroom.

“It doesn’t matter how much you try to delay it. If you don’t compete with me today, I won’t let you leave. Don’t even think of escaping!” challenged Spencer at my back. I was rendered speechless. Who’s escaping?

After I washed my hands, I left the living room and picked up my brush. Suddenly, I heard people discussing loudly behind my back, “What’s going on? Isn’t this a party for the prominent figures in the art industry? How can someone like her infiltrate this place? Look at how she’s holding the brush! This is a blatant insult to the brush.”

“Harvey, be more polite! I invited Ms. Tanner as my guest.” When Remington heard someone criticizing me, he frowned and spoke up on my behalf.

“A guest? Remington, your taste is becoming worse. Back in school, at least you invited pretty girls. Why are your preferences so absurd now?” Harvey sauntered into the crowd and noticed that most of them were familiar faces. He pursed his lips and continued, “All of you are willing to act as the side characters out of courtesy for Remington. However, the main character is downgrading the entire party.”

“Harvey, stop messing around. We’re about to compete. Let’s talk after our competition. You can say whatever you want and it’ll be none of my business!” bellowed Spencer. It was obvious that he felt extremely anxious. After his competition had been interrupted multiple times, he was starting to lose his temper.

“What’s there to compete about?” Harvey walked toward the canvas. Seeing how I was still standing there, he mocked, “Right, Ms. Tanner? Only elites are present in this party. Don’t you think that it’s inappropriate for you to be here?”

“We can only find out after the competition. Since you think that I shouldn’t be here, why don’t we have a competition too?” I raised my head, feeling all pumped up because of this man.

Perhaps it was because I was holding a brush, I declared arrogantly, “We’ll know who the real deal is after testing it out! Why don’t we have a painting competition? You can decide on the topic.”

“Don’t be rash, Yvonne,” shouted Spencer and Remington simultaneously as a worried expression crossed their faces. I shook my head at them and smiled reassuringly.

“Don’t be a sore loser, then. I won’t go easy on you just because you’re a woman,” mocked Harvey.

While I went to choose my brushes and paints, I asked Remington, “What’s wrong with Harvey? Why is he targeting me? We’ve never even met before! Have I offended him?”

He glanced at Spencer standing at the side. When I saw her awkward expression, I got a sudden revelation and asked, “Is he a very good friend of Crystal’s?”

“No, he’s Crystal’s ex-boyfriend.” Remington added, “You shouldn’t have accepted his challenge. Although he isn’t as famous as us, he’s the strongest amongst us all. Even our teacher has said that we’re not as talented as him. If you lose to him, it might be hard for you to make a name for yourself in this industry in the future.”

Amused by my words, Remington laughed and shrugged. “Well, his fantasy about his first love has been shattered, and the culprit is just right in front of him. His pride can't take it if he doesn't do anything about it.” “Hah!” Other than rolling my eyes, I could not think of any other way to express my current feelings. “Oh, right. There will be a few pretty girls at this party whom I had invited. Don't flirt around, okay? Something bad might happen,” warned Remington seriously. I pursed my lips, not knowing how to respond to that. Remington's thoughts were even more ridiculous than Spencer's. “How did you come up with such a conclusion? Am I a frivolous woman? Or do I have some ambiguous relationship with a girl?” “My friend said that your relationship with Crystal is the classic example of a love-hate relationship. It is only because both of you can never get together that your love is so tragically beautiful. After listening to her analysis, I thought that she made sense. So, you shouldn't flirt around randomly. It's terrifying when a woman turns evil.” I had nothing else to say. After I greeted Spencer, he chatted with me politely with a grim look on his face. Then, he insisted on challenging me to a painting competition. This time, he wanted to compete on speed. As I had no objections to it, I told him to wait for a minute while I head to the restroom. “It doesn't matter how much you try to delay it. If you don't compete with me today, I won't let you leave. Don't even think of escaping!” challenged Spencer at my back. I was rendered speechless. Who's escaping? After I washed my hands, I left the living room and picked up my brush. Suddenly, I heard people discussing loudly behind my back, “What's going on? Isn't this a party for the prominent figures in the art industry? How can someone like her infiltrate this place? Look at how she's holding the brush! This is a blatant insult to the

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I was confused. “Why isn't such a talented painter like him famous?”

Spencer adjusted his glasses and explained in a melancholic tone, “He gave his painting to Crystal because she wanted to be the champion for a particular art exhibition. Only I knew about this incident.”

If Crystal was right in front of me, I would wish for nothing more than to show her a thumbs-up. I had to give it up to her—she might not be capable in other domains, but she was extremely skilled in charming men. It was a type of talent to hoodwink so many men and make them do bad things for her willingly.

“Will I suffer a terrible defeat, then?” I started to feel anxious.

“It all depends on fate,” gloated Spencer.

Remington frowned, showing that he did not think that I had a high chance of winning. My palm started to sweat while I gripped my brush. Then, I glanced at Harvey, who was twirling his brush casually and staring at me in disdain. Immediately, my anxiety disappeared.

Although I had stopped painting for years and did not produce any artwork for six years, my skills back then were top-notch. Before Christopher left, he even cupped my face and said that I was the best.

Since I was the best, there was no reason for me to fear a challenge. I walked to the canvas briskly and twirled my brush skillfully.

“What do you want the challenge to be about? Flowers or phoenixes?”

“Phoenixes! I hope that you can manage to draw more.” Harvey laughed in contempt.

“What? Phoenixes?” The crowd went into an uproar. Someone even exclaimed, “When we were competing to draw phoenixes, Harvey was the fastest amongst us all. Not even Remington could compare to him! Yet, he’s challenging someone to this! Isn’t that bullying?”

“Yeah, this is his signature skill. Looks like Ms. Tanner will definitely lose.”

Although I heard what they were saying, I felt extremely calm and was not affected at all. There were many types of art challenges. Amongst them, drawing flowers and phoenixes were the most common. Drawing flowers put one’s artistic skills to the test, while drawing phoenixes not only depended on one’s skills but also on speed.

The painter who could draw the most diverse phoenixes within half an hour, and produce the most aesthetic masterpiece would win.

When I was learning art, I had spent half a year just drawing phoenixes. I did not know how quick I was, but I would definitely not fear any challenges.

After the timer was set and the challenge began, I calmed down. All that was left were the blank canvas and paints right in front of me. My brush flowed against the canvas, painting it in different colors. The strokes did not seem to follow any pattern, but in reality, they all fell in place in perfect synchrony.

A huge fiery phoenix was soaring in the sky, its blazing tail floating behind it. A flock of birds followed it—some were flapping their wings eagerly, some had their beaks open mid-chirp, and some were gazing wistfully at the majestic phoenix.

I could hear people speaking beside me, with a few exclaiming in shock. However, I ignored them. The way I held the brush was not a mistake. There existed a famous painter in Hawen a hundred years ago who held the brush in the exact same manner. I was not deliberately trying to copy him, but I had realized that this grip suited me a lot.

When I finished sketching the last two birds, I heard Remington yell, “Take note that there are only ten minutes left!”

As I had not finished coloring the two birds, I started to panic and accidentally knocked over the black paint beside me. When the paint spilt across the canvas, the entire venue fell silent. Everyone was shocked by what I had done—irregular black patches had appeared on the canvas.

“Oh no!” I yelled out in shock. If there were irregular patches of paint on the canvas, my artwork would be disqualified.

I was confused. “Why isn't such a talented painter like him famous?” Spencer adjusted his glasses and explained in a melancholic tone, “He gave his painting to Crystal because she wanted to be the champion for a particular art exhibition. Only I knew about this incident.” If Crystal was right in front of me, I would wish for nothing more than to show her a thumbs-up. I had to give it up to her—she might not be capable in other domains, but she was extremely skilled in charming men. It was a type of talent to hoodwink so many men and make them do bad things for her willingly. “Will I suffer a terrible defeat, then?” I started to feel anxious. “It all depends on fate,” gloated Spencer. Remington frowned, showing that he did not think that I had a high chance of winning. My palm started to sweat while I gripped my brush. Then, I glanced at Harvey, who was twirling his brush casually and staring at me in disdain. Immediately,

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“Hmph! You have overestimated yourself!” I heard Harvey mocking me. Glancing back at the canvas, I gritted my teeth, grabbed my brush, and started sketching rapidly. The splatter of black paint could become a black cloud after some edits.

I was so anxious that sweat dotted my forehead. Within those brief ten minutes, my mind had never been so clear. When Remington announced that the time was up, my brush fell on the ground. As I was drawing too fast, my fingers became stiff and I could not even maintain a firm grip on the brush.

After those six years, not only had my painting skills deteriorated, but my fingers were also unwilling to cooperate with me. I felt sad when I looked at the fallen brush on the ground. Why did I waste six years of my life?

“There’s no need to judge, right? I’ve won!” Standing in front of his artwork, Harvey crossed his hands over his chest and laughed mockingly.

I remained silent and merely stared at my canvas. On the night I left the Tanner family six years ago, I had drawn the exact same painting in my silent bedroom. Then, I tore it into shreds and threw them into the dustbin. That was my farewell to my art career. Yet, this time, I knew that I had truly returned.

“Let’s just leave. There’s no need to gather here anymore! Since the National Youth Art Exhibition and Contest is being held now, why don’t you spend more time drawing and exhibiting your paintings? You can even participate in a charity auction and do something good. Anything’s better than mingling around with undeserving people!”

With that, he tossed his brush aside and turned to leave.

“Wait!” Spencer and Remington stopped him at the same time and pointed at my painting. “Before you leave, aren’t you going to see what your opponent has painted?”

“What’s there to see? She’s so careless that she spilled paint during the competition! Such a stupid mistake is enough to make her disappear from this circle. How can a stained artwork still be exhibited? This is ridiculous!” Although that was what Harvey said, he still turned around and glanced at my painting.



“Huh?” He mumbled softly before running toward it quickly. Shoving me aside, he stared at my painting intently for a long while before asking, “How is this possible?”

“There are always people better than you, Harvey. Looks like you’ve lost to Ms. Tanner on your most confident skill. You should apologize to her for what you’ve said earlier,” reminded Remington after heaving a sigh of relief.

“How is this possible?” Harvey was still staring at my painting without even turning around. He kept repeating the same few words.

“Ms. Tanner’s painting depicts the phoenix being reborn from the ashes, while the flock of birds following it highlights this auspicious occasion. At the end of the canvas, you can even see a black dragon soaring in the sky. With black smoke puffing out of its mouth, it stares intently at the phoenix. This is a painting filled with so much meaning!” exclaimed Spencer.

“She actually transformed the black splatter of paint into such a realistic black dragon! Such skills and imagination...” remarked Harvey after staring at the black dragon for a long time. Then, he turned around and bowed toward me. With a serious expression, he apologized, “Ms. Tanner, I’m sorry for making such rude comments. Your skills and speed have surpassed mine significantly.”

“No, Harvey. I should be the one thanking you.” I stroked the canvas. The ink on it has not dried yet. Looking at the large painting, I suddenly felt an urge to cry.

Then, tears actually streamed down my face. “It’s been years since I’ve drawn phoenixes. You’re the one who reignited my passion and motivation!”

The party proceeded smoothly afterward. As I had displayed my superior skills, the others did not harbor any prejudices against me anymore and started to discuss art with me. I stayed on until the party ended at midnight. Only then did I leave Remington’s house reluctantly.

Although he wanted to send me home, I refused because I had already spotted Christopher’s car outside. Smiling, I walked toward it. However, when I opened the door and discovered Harvey inside the car, my expression froze.

“Hmph! You have overestimated yourself!” I heard Harvey mocking me. Glancing back at the canvas, I gritted my teeth, grabbed my brush, and

started sketching rapidly. The splatter of black paint could become a black cloud after some edits. I was so anxious that sweat dotted my forehead. Within those brief ten minutes, my mind had never been so clear. When Remington announced that the time was up, my brush fell on the ground. As I was drawing too fast, my fingers became stiff and I could not even maintain a firm grip on the brush. After those six years, not only had my painting skills deteriorated, but my fingers were also unwilling to cooperate with me. I felt sad when I looked at the fallen brush on the ground. Why did I waste six years of my life? "There's no need to judge, right? I've won!" Standing in front of his artwork, Harvey crossed his hands over his chest and laughed mockingly. I remained silent and merely stared at my canvas. On the night I left the Tanner family six years ago, I had drawn the exact same painting in my silent bedroom. Then, I tore it into shreds and threw them into the dustbin. That was my farewell to my art career. Yet, this time, I knew that I had truly returned. "Let's just leave. There's no need to gather here anymore! Since the National Youth Art Exhibition and Contest is being held now, why don't you spend more time drawing and exhibiting your paintings? You can even participate in a charity auction and do something good. Anything's better than mingling around with undeserving people!" With that, he tossed his brush aside and turned to leave. "Wait!" Spencer and Remington stopped him at the same time and pointed at my painting. "Before you leave, aren't you going to see what your opponent has painted?" "What's there to see? She's so careless that she spilled paint during the competition! Such a stupid mistake is enough to make her disappear from this circle. How can a stained artwork still be exhibited? This is ridiculous!" Although that was what Harvey said, he still turned around and glanced at my painting. "Huh?" He mumbled softly before running toward it quickly. Shoving me aside, he stared at my painting intently for a long while before asking, "How is this possible?" "There are always people better than you, Harvey. Looks like you've lost to Ms. Tanner on your most confident skill. You should apologize to her for what you've said earlier," reminded Remington after heaving a sigh of relief. "How is this possible?" Harvey was still staring at my painting without even turning around. He kept repeating the same few words. "Ms. Tanner's painting depicts the phoenix being reborn from the ashes, while the flock of birds following it highlights this auspicious occasion. At the end of the canvas, you can even see a black dragon soaring in the sky. With black smoke puffing out of its mouth, it stares intently at the phoenix. This is a painting filled with so much meaning!" exclaimed Spencer. "She actually transformed the black splatter of paint into such a realistic black dragon! Such skills and imagination..." remarked Harvey after staring at the black dragon for a long time. Then, he turned around and bowed toward me. With a serious expression, he apologized, "Ms. Tanner, I'm sorry for making

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“Hi, Yvonne!” the arrogance on Harvey was gone and he sat while kicking his leg up, shaking it. He smiled and greeted me, then casually started to eat the snacks I had previously left in the car.

“Yvonne?” I blinked. I had the impression that I got into the wrong car until I looked at Christopher and saw him smiling gleefully. “You two know each other?”

Christopher helped me with my seat belts and handed me a glass of water as he said with a smile, “Of course. Harvey is Zachary's cousin!”

“Oh!” I stuck my tongue out and made a face at Harvey. This guy ridiculed me at the party even though he knew Christopher? How despicable!

“Don't look at me like that or Christopher will get jealous and hit me! I'm sorry for the mean things I said to you at the party. Please don't take it to heart, okay?”

As Harvey had taken the initiative to apologize for his actions at the party, I decided to let him off the hook. After all, he was Christopher's friend, and I believed in his judgment of people.

“I won't. In fact, I should be thanking you instead! Everyone was able to accept me into that circle because of your help,” I replied with a gentle smile. Honestly, that was the fastest way to get into the circle.

“You really are an understanding person. Unlike some people who beat me up even after I helped!” Harvey waved his fist at Christopher as he continued,

“Hey, Christopher! I’ve taken care of the job you told me about, so you better keep your promise and introduce me to some good woman! It’s best if you can find me someone as understanding as Yvonne!”

“Okay, I’ll introduce you to the hot girls on my team when I get back. I know you’ve been drooling over them for a long time now, but don’t get your hopes up! They might just reject you before you even make a move on them!” Christopher teased him.

“Job?” Thanks to the recent improvement of my intelligence, I quickly caught on to their words and pointed at Harvey as I asked, “Chris, Harvey, was what happened at the party your doing?”

“Why don’t you take a guess?” Christopher refused to tell me and flashed me a mysterious smile.

He didn’t have to say anything since the look on his face suggested that I was probably right. That left me feeling a little discouraged. Whatever pride I had up to that point in time seemed to have disappeared without a trace, and I asked in displeasure, “And here I thought I won because of my hard work... Turns out it was just you going easy on me and losing on purpose...”

Harvey’s expression became serious instantly, and he said with a stern voice, “Yvonne, you’re underestimating yourself. I never went easy on you.”

Seeing the look of disbelief on my face, Harvey rubbed his nose and continued reluctantly, “I was planning to go easy on you at first. However, I knew I shouldn’t underestimate you the moment I saw how you were holding the brush. Christopher sure is mean, putting me against a skillful opponent like you. I can’t believe I was stupid enough to taunt you, only to lose both my pride and the match in the end. Yvonne, you’d better get me a decent wife in return!”

Looking at Harvey’s gloomy expression and droopy head, I chuckled and patted my chest confidently as I said, “Don’t worry! Just leave that to me! I promise that I’ll make your dream come true!”

A few days later, Christopher and I boarded the plane to Anglandur. As the Ansley Art Exhibition was being held in a bustling area of Norham, there was someone to receive us the moment we stepped out of the car.

I couldn't restrain the excitement in my heart and felt like I was dreaming. Noticing how nervous I looked, Christopher gave me a gentle pinch on the nose and said with a smile, "Why do you look so worried? You should go in there looking all proud and arrogant as you mop them all up!"

"Hi, Yvonne!" the arrogance on Harvey was gone and he sat while kicking his leg up, shaking it. He smiled and greeted me, then casually started to eat the snacks I had previously left in the car. "Yvonne?" I blinked. I had the impression that I got into the wrong car until I looked at Christopher and saw him smiling gleefully. "You two know each other?" Christopher helped me with my seat belts and handed me a glass of water as he said with a smile, "Of course. Harvey is Zachary's cousin!" "Oh!" I stuck my tongue out and made a face at Harvey. This guy ridiculed me at the party even though he knew Christopher? How despicable! "Don't look at me like that or Christopher will get jealous and hit me! I'm sorry for the mean things I said to you at the party. Please don't take it to heart, okay?" As Harvey had taken the initiative to apologize for his actions at the party, I decided to let him off the hook. After all, he was Christopher's friend, and I believed in his judgment of people. "I won't. In fact, I should be thanking you instead! Everyone was able to accept me into that circle because of your help," I replied with a gentle smile. Honestly, that was the fastest way to get into the circle. "You really are an understanding person. Unlike some people who beat me up even after I helped!" Harvey waved his fist at Christopher as he continued, "Hey, Christopher! I've taken care of the job you told me about, so you better keep your promise and introduce me to some good woman! It's best if you can find me someone as understanding as Yvonne!" "Okay, I'll introduce you to the hot girls on my team when I get back. I know you've been drooling over them for a long time now, but don't get your hopes up! They might just reject you before you even make a move on them!" Christopher teased him. "Job?" Thanks to the recent improvement of my intelligence, I quickly caught on to their words and pointed at Harvey as I asked, "Chris, Harvey, was what happened at the party your doing?" "Why don't you take a guess?" Christopher refused to tell me and flashed me a mysterious smile. He didn't have to say anything since the look on his face suggested that I was probably right. That left me feeling a little discouraged. Whatever pride I had up to that point in time seemed to have disappeared without a trace, and I asked in displeasure, "And here I thought I won because of my hard work... Turns out it was just you going easy on me and losing on purpose..." Harvey's expression became serious instantly, and he said with a stern voice, "Yvonne, you're underestimating yourself. I never went easy on you." Seeing the look of disbelief on my face, Harvey rubbed his nose and continued reluctantly, "I was planning to go easy

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I rolled my eyes at him. "What are you saying? I'm just here to attend an art exhibition, remember? If anything, I'll just mop up the local delicacies!"

I then reached my hand out toward him and said coquettishly, "Won't you get me some flowers, Darling?"

"What flowers would you like? Are there flowers unique to Norham?" Christopher asked his assistant standing next to him.

I let out a huge sigh when I saw the group of assistants standing behind him like bodyguards and staring at us respectfully. Julia had insisted that Christopher bring his assistants along so he could make a deal with a major client in Anglandur. With that, our sweet little vacation was ruined.

"I want a bouquet of roses made out of money so I can shop till I drop!" I said with my head tilted to one side and tried to look as cute as possible.

Christopher arched an eyebrow and burst into a chuckle when he heard that. He then held my hand and gave it a gentle kiss as he said, "Yes, my queen."

I stood on tiptoe and was about to kiss him as a reward, only to have a familiar figure walk past us. She was dressed in Norham's most fashionable dress and had a shiny pendant around her neck.

She still had that gentle yet strong smile on her face from fifteen years ago as she made her way forward.

Although I had only caught a glimpse of her face for a split second, I was able to recognize it instantly. I saw it a lot in my dreams, and I would end up crying from how much I missed my mom as well as the happy life I once had.

“Stop that person! Hurry!” I shouted while shoving Christopher aside and pointing in front of us.

“What’s wrong?” Christopher looked in the direction I was pointing at.

“That person... She...” I was stuttering and stammering so badly from shock as I didn’t expect to see my mom upon arrival in Norham.

Seeing as the woman in the dress was about to disappear from sight, I brushed Christopher off and ran toward her as quickly as possible. I could hear the wind whooshing beside my ears, but I wasn’t fast enough to catch up to her.

So, this is how much I miss her and love her... Despite what I usually say about hating her, I still love her deep down inside. God knows how many nights I’ve spent wondering why she left me back then. Now that I’ve seen her in person, all I can think of is how much I miss her. I want to know if life has been treating her well, because that’s all that matters.

The street was bustling with people, and I soon found myself losing sight of her as I desperately pushed my way through the crowd. “Mom, stop! Please! Isabelle Anderson! Hold it right there!” I shouted as I kept on running, but the woman didn’t seem to hear me at all.

She then got into a car that was parked on the side of the road, and I could hear the engine starting up. Realizing I was about to lose my only chance at catching her, I ran toward the middle of the road.

“Watch out, Eve!” Christopher who had been following behind threw himself at me and sent us both tumbling to the ground. I heard an ear-piercing screech from the car’s brakes as it came to a halt in front of us, followed by a string of profanities from the driver as he stuck his head out the window.

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