

## Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 491-500

Posted by **chapter novel**, 50 Views, Released on July 13, 2022

“Come on, Eve! It’s dangerous here!” Christopher shouted while dragging me toward the sidewalk.

“Let go of me!” I brushed his arm off violently and crossed the road, only to see that the car was slowly starting to move again.

“Stop right there, Isabelle! It’s me, Yvonne! What, are you that much of a coward that you don’t even have the guts to see your own daughter? Get out of the car right now!” I yelled at the top of my lungs.

There’s no way a gentle and kind woman like Mom would be so heartless and leave me like that! I’m sure she must’ve had some unspeakable reason for running away! I just want to see her and find out how she’s been! It’s not like I want to go live with her or anything!

For a brief moment, I was reminded of how we used to play hide and seek in the garden when I was five.

Isabelle used to hide really well behind the trees, and I couldn’t find her at all. Thinking she had disappeared, I began crying out loud where I stood. She would then come out of hiding and hug me tightly, kissing me on the cheek as she promised to never leave me.

We went to an amusement park when I was eight, and we were having a great time on the merry-go-round when tears rolled down her cheeks all of a sudden. I asked her why she was crying, but she kept quiet and refused to tell me anything.

Scarlett and Yvette showed up in the living room of the Tanner residence later that afternoon, and Nathan told Mom they were here because they were part of our family. There wasn’t a trace of guilt on his face when he said that, and Isabelle objected to his decision on the spot.

However, Nathan simply slapped her hard across the face in response, scaring me so much that I broke out crying. Isabelle then carried me into the bedroom, and we both stayed up all night. She sang me songs and read me stories before crying silently with me in her arms. I eventually fell asleep in her embrace, and she was gone by the time I woke up the next day.

Thinking she had probably gone out for a bit, I waited all day for her to return, but she never came back. Instead, Nathan then brought me to Scarlett and asked me to call her “Mom” instead.

With tears in my eyes, I ran straight toward the car that had stopped at the traffic light while shouting, “Wait for me, Mom! It’s me, Yvonne! Don’t you recognize me?”

I hammered hard on the car window until it was slowly rolled down, revealing the familiar face that I had been missing for over ten years.

“Is there something I can help you with, miss?” The woman in the car asked in Angladurn and looked at me in confusion.

I kept quiet and simply stared at her as a look of disappointment filled my eyes. The woman was wearing the same dress and looked just like Isabelle from the side, but she was definitely not my mom.

“Are you all right, miss?” she asked while handing me a paper towel.

“Sorry, I mistook you for someone else.” I shook my head and walked away. After making my way back to the sidewalk, my knees gave out beneath me, and I burst out crying outside a store.

“Why won’t you come and see me, Mom? Have you forgotten me completely? Where are you? I’m all grown up now, Mom! Why won’t you see me? Have you never missed me at all?”

Christopher then knelt down beside me and pulled me into his arms as he whispered, “Don’t cry, Eve. You just mistook her for your mom. Who knows, your mom is probably missing you like crazy somewhere else!”

“No... No...” I shook my head and grabbed his arm tightly as I said, “I saw her, Chris! I saw her, I really did! I definitely saw my mom!”

“Come on, Eve! It’s dangerous here!” Christopher shouted while dragging me toward the sidewalk. “Let go of me!” I brushed his arm off violently and crossed the road, only to see that the car was slowly starting to move again. “Stop right there, Isabelle! It’s me, Yvonne! What, are you that much of a coward that you don’t even have the guts to see your own daughter? Get out of the car right now!” I yelled at the top of my lungs. There’s no way a gentle and kind woman like Mom would be so heartless and leave me like that! I’m

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“Okay, Eve, I believe you. We’ll go look for her together after the art exhibition is over, all right?”

I buried my face in his chest and wept. “Why didn’t she come and see me, Chris? Why is she so heartless? How could a mom be so heartless? All I want is to see her once... Why won’t she just let me see her?”

Christopher patted me gently on the back. “It hurts me to see you cry, Eve. No matter what happens, I’ll be right by your side, in this lifetime and the ones to come.”

“Chris... Chris...” I cried out his name while my tears flowed onto his chest. I was certain that I had seen Isabelle, and that she simply chose not to see me.

Little did I know that that was really my mother who had abandoned me and the driver was her toxic boyfriend.

After what seemed like forever, I was able to finally regain my composure and stop crying. I hadn’t seen my mom in ages, so running into her on the streets so suddenly caught me off guard and got me all emotional. That was especially the case since I knew she had never intended to see me at all.

I sat down on the bed and stared blankly at the carpet beneath my feet upon arriving at the hotel room that the event host had prepared for us. Christopher sat down beside me when he noticed how miserable I looked.

I looked at him after a while and asked softly, “Have you ever gotten into a fight with your mom when you were little, Chris?”

Christopher stroked his chin and replied after giving it some thought, “No. My mom was very busy when I was a kid, and my dad was even busier. I spent most of my time playing with a huge group of kids in the yard. My mom would let me do whatever I want as long as it wasn’t overboard.”

“Okay, Eve, I believe you. We’ll go look for her together after the art exhibition is over, all right?” I buried my face in his chest and wept. “Why didn’t she come and see me, Chris? Why is she so heartless? How could a mom be so heartless? All I want is to see her once... Why won’t she just let me see her?” Christopher patted me gently on the back. “It hurts me to see you cry, Eve. No matter what happens, I’ll be right by your side, in this lifetime and the ones to come.” “Chris... Chris...” I cried out his name while my tears flowed onto his chest. I was certain that I had seen Isabelle, and that she simply chose not to

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"Even if I were to poke a hole in the sky, she would try her best to patch it up for me. Hence, we've never gotten into any fights at all."

"Well, I have." I smiled faintly and pointed at my face as I continued, "Mom hit me really hard once when she saw me fighting with Yvette over something. I was so stupid back then. With a scary look on her face, she told me to not treat an irresponsible b\*stard like Nathan as my dad. I was too young to understand what a homewrecker was at the time, so I didn't know why she was so upset. Now that I think about it, Mom probably wanted to leave the moment she saw Scarlett show up at the Tanner residence. Do you think that's why she left?"

Christopher didn't answer my question and simply hugged me tighter in response. "Nothing I say would be of any good now, but maybe things aren't as bad as you think. I believe that things have a way of working themselves out, so you'll probably find your answers when you see her."

"Perhaps." I let out a helpless chuckle. "Given how smart Mom is, I bet she must've known about Scarlett long before she left. She probably didn't mind it as long as Dad kept that woman out of the house, and she finally chose to completely give up on their relationship the day he brought her home."

As Ansley's art exhibition was only three days away, I didn't have time to waste moping about. With Ansley being a world-renowned artist, the guests attending the art exhibition were all famous people from all over the world.

I was instantly surrounded by journalists the moment I got out of Christopher's car and entered the venue. With the blinding camera flashes in my face, I tried my best to straighten my back and stay calm so as to not embarrass myself in an international event.

"Don't panic. Just ignore their presence and act like they're not here. We're on a date and just casually strolling about." Christopher held my hand and slowly walked toward the crowd.

He looked really handsome in his black suit and shiny dress shoes which complemented his huge figure, broad shoulders, and slender legs. He had a graceful air about him as he walked with a steady pace, and his charming smile quickly removed whatever nervousness I had in me.

"You two sure are late. With the number of celebrities attending this art exhibition, I'm surprised you guys had it in you to arrive on the dot!" Remington said as he popped up in front of us.

"What are you doing here?" I looked at him in surprise.

"Have you forgotten that I'm a highly respected artist among the youth of our country? How could I possibly miss out on an event that you're attending?" Remington cleared his throat as he continued, "It's a shame that Ansley didn't display my work in the main studio, but I am fortunate enough to get it displayed during the event's finale for all to enjoy."

He's complaining about Ansley not appreciating his work when it's only chosen for the finale? He's obviously just trying to brag about it! Everyone knows how Ansley loves supporting the newer generation of artists, and this guy is anything but new! I rolled my eyes at the thought of that.

"Congratulations!" I said with a smile before whispering in Christopher's ear, "This guy is clearly here to show off, isn't he?"

"He's here to brag about it to me. We were both interested in drawing when we were kids, but I gave up after doing it for three days. Being the one who got me into art, Remington swore to make a name for himself in the world and leave me envious of his success," Christopher said with a chuckle.

"Pfft!" I snickered. Who would've thought a grown man like Remington would have such a childish side to him? It's obvious that Christopher wouldn't care about such things! He'll just feel happy for his friend's success!

Recalling how Christopher would comment on my art online, I gave him a light nudge and asked, "Do you know so much about art because you have a lot of friends who are into it?"

Christopher nodded. "You really think I sent Harvey so he could go easy on you? That guy thinks he's so great just because he can draw the Phoenix better than his peers, but I've seen how fast you drew the Phoenix back then. That's why I had Harvey attend that party."

Okay, Christopher has me beat...

"Even if I were to poke a hole in the sky, she would try her best to patch it up for me. Hence, we've never gotten into any fights at all." "Well, I have." I smiled faintly and pointed at my face as I continued, "Mom hit me really hard once when she saw me fighting with Yvette over something. I was so stupid back then. With a scary look on her face, she told me to not treat an irresponsible b\*stard like Nathan as my dad. I was too young to understand what a homewrecker was at the time, so I didn't know why she was so upset. Now that I think about it, Mom probably wanted to leave the moment she saw Scarlett show up at the Tanner residence. Do you think that's why she left?" Christopher didn't answer my question and simply hugged me tighter in response. "Nothing I say would be of any good now, but maybe things aren't as bad as you think. I believe that things have a way of working themselves out, so you'll probably find your answers when you see her." "Perhaps." I let out a helpless chuckle. "Given how smart Mom is, I bet she must've known about Scarlett long before she left. She probably didn't mind it as long as Dad kept that woman out of the house, and she finally chose to completely give up on their relationship the day he brought her home." As Ansley's art exhibition was only three days away, I didn't have time to waste moping about. With Ansley being a world-renowned artist, the guests attending the art exhibition were all famous people from all over the world. I was instantly surrounded by journalists the moment I got out of Christopher's car and entered the venue. With the blinding camera flashes in my face, I tried my best to straighten my back and stay calm so as to not embarrass myself in an international event. "Don't panic. Just ignore their presence and act like they're not here. We're on a date and just casually strolling about." Christopher held my hand and slowly walked toward the crowd. He looked really handsome in his black suit and shiny dress shoes which complemented his huge figure, broad shoulders, and slender legs. He had a graceful air about him as he walked with a steady pace, and his charming smile quickly removed whatever nervousness I had in me. "You two sure are late. With the number of celebrities attending this art exhibition, I'm surprised you guys had it in you to arrive on the dot!"

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"All right, quit acting all lovey-dovey in public already! Come on, I'll take you to Ansley! He was just telling me how much potential you have a while ago."

Being able to see Ansley was the main reason I had come all the way here, so I followed behind Remington with a hop in my step as he led me to Ansley. However, that excitement soon disappeared when I saw Crystal coming toward me.

"What are you doing here?" I asked with my eyes wide from shock.

Crystal simply snorted in response and said coldly, "I don't see why I can't be here if you are! What, do you think this art exhibition belongs to you alone or something?"

“Do you have an invitation?” With Crystal’s horrible reputation, it was indeed surprising that someone would even send her an invitation to such a grand art exhibition. Surely the great Ansley couldn’t be that supportive toward every single artist in existence!

“Don’t think it’s all over for me just because you and Christopher sabotaged me! I have a powerful benefactor on my side to help get me invited to this art exhibition and continue my career as an artist! Just you wait, Yvonne! I got you once, and I’ll get you again!” Crystal shouted angrily.

“You never learn, do you? Was Dad kneeling before Grandma not enough of a lesson for you? Do you not feel guilty having a man of his age apologize for your wrongdoings?” I asked with a frown.

“Are you lecturing me?” Crystal snorted as she continued, “You think you’re that great just because you’ve cleared your name and earned Ansley’s respect? Well, think again! I’m not down for the count yet, and you’re in no position to lecture me either! I suggest you mind your own business and pray that I don’t find another opportunity to get back at you!”

Not wanting to back down, I forced a smile and snapped back at her, “Heh, bring it on! I’ll be right here waiting for you!” Da\*n it, why is Crystal always around? I can’t believe I’m running into her here in Anglandur! Good thing Lyle isn’t here, or I might really check the almanac before leaving the house next time!

Crystal snorted in disdain and walked away arrogantly with her arms folded. I saw her approach a man who was waiting for her next to an easel, who then politely pointed her in Ansley’s direction.

“Benefactor, huh?” I mumbled and pouted as I watched her make her way toward Ansley.

Remington frowned too when he saw Crystal and said, “Ansley is waiting over there. Come on, let’s go.”

I glanced at Crystal who was standing next to Ansley and hesitated for a bit before nodding my head. I don’t owe Crystal anything, so I shouldn’t have to back off just because she’s standing there with him! Besides, she couldn’t possibly do anything to me in a public place like this!

Ansley was an old man in his sixties and was having a chat with Crystal, but he quickly waved at us with a smile when he saw us approaching.

“Mr. Fowler, is this the new school artist you said you’d introduce me to? Does she really have more potential than the artist of Moonlight Heaven? You’re not pulling my leg, are you?”

Being praised by Ansley got me really excited, and I quickly greeted him, “Greetings, sir! My name is Yvonne Tanner, and I’m the artist behind Moonlight Heaven. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance!”

“The new school artist with the most potential? Did you give yourself that title? Have you no sense of modesty at all, Yvonne? You don’t just call yourself an artist! You need to earn that title from others! Don’t get too carried away and end up falling back down later on!”

Unhappy that Ansley had ignored her, Crystal lashed out at me in Chanaean as she knew Ansley didn’t speak the language. She then turned toward him and said in Angladurn, “Don’t let her fool you, sir. She’s just a university graduate who studied economics who hasn’t even made it into the third round of Hawen’s art competition! There’s no way a person like her is an artist! She’s definitely lying to you!”

“All right, quit acting all lovey-dovey in public already! Come on, I’ll take you to Ansley! He was just telling me how much potential you have a while ago.” Being able to see Ansley was the main reason I had come all the way here, so I followed behind Remington with a hop in my step as he led me to Ansley. However, that excitement soon disappeared when I saw Crystal coming toward me. “What are you doing here?” I asked with my eyes wide from shock. Crystal simply snorted in response and said coldly, “I don’t see why I can’t be here if you are! What, do you think this art exhibition belongs to you alone or something?” “Do you have an invitation?” With Crystal’s horrible reputation, it was indeed surprising that someone would even send her an invitation to such a grand art exhibition. Surely the great Ansley couldn’t be that supportive toward every single artist in existence! “Don’t think it’s all over for me just because you and Christopher sabotaged me! I have a powerful benefactor on my side to help get me invited to this art exhibition and continue my career as an artist! Just you wait, Yvonne! I got you once, and I’ll get you again!” Crystal shouted angrily. “You never learn, do you? Was Dad kneeling before Grandma not enough of a lesson for you? Do you not feel guilty having a man of his age apologize for your wrongdoings?” I asked with a frown. “Are you lecturing me?” Crystal snorted as she continued, “You think you’re that

great just because you've cleared your name and earned Ansley's respect? Well, think again! I'm not down for the count yet, and you're in no position to lecture me either! I suggest you mind your own business and pray that I don't find another opportunity to get back at you!" Not wanting to back down, I forced a smile and snapped back at her, "Heh, bring it on! I'll be right here waiting for you!" Da\*n it, why is Crystal always around? I can't believe I'm running into her here in Anglandur! Good thing Lyle isn't here, or I might really check the almanac before leaving the house next time! Crystal snorted in disdain and walked away arrogantly with her arms folded. I saw her approach a man who was waiting for her next to an easel, who then politely pointed her in Ansley's direction. "Benefactor, huh?" I mumbled and pouted as I watched her make her way toward Ansley. Remington frowned too when he saw Crystal and said, "Ansley is waiting over there. Come on, let's go." I glanced at Crystal who was standing next to Ansley and hesitated for a bit before nodding my head. I don't owe Crystal anything, so I shouldn't have to back off just because she's standing there with him! Besides, she couldn't possibly do anything to me in a public place like this! Ansley was an old man in his sixties and was having a chat with Crystal, but he quickly waved at us with a smile when he saw us approaching. "Mr. Fowler, is this the new school artist you said you'd introduce me to? Does she really have more potential than the artist of Moonlight Heaven? You're not pulling my leg, are you?" Being praised by Ansley got me really excited, and I quickly greeted him, "Greetings, sir! My name is Yvonne Tanner, and I'm the artist behind Moonlight Heaven. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance!" "The new school artist with the most potential? Did you give yourself that title? Have you no sense of modesty at all, Yvonne? You don't just call yourself an artist! You need to earn that title from others! Don't get too carried away and end up falling back down later on!" Unhappy that Ansley had ignored her, Crystal lashed out at me in Chanaean as she knew Ansley didn't speak the language. She then turned toward him and said in Angladurn, "Don't let her fool you, sir. She's just a university graduate who studied economics who hasn't even made it into the third round of Hawen's art competition! There's no way a person like her is an artist! She's definitely lying to you!"

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Ansley frowned upon hearing that and turned around to look at me. The fact that Crystal had the audacity to slander me in front of the great Ansley sent a shiver down my spine.

"Sir, I..." I was about to explain myself, but Crystal was quicker and cut me off, "I know Yvonne. She's my cousin, but her character is questionable at best.

She was rude to Spencer at the art exhibition and shows no respect for Julian whatsoever. Be careful not to let her sweet words fool you, sir!”

I bit down on my lip and made no further attempts to clear my name as I believed a wise man like Ansley wasn't the type to blindly believe in rumors.

He may be a great artist, but he is still a human being like everyone else. If he really believed Crystal's words, then I would have nothing further to say.

Ansley eyed me from head to toe before shifting his gaze toward Crystal as he asked, “Sorry, what did you say your name was?”

“Crystal Yates, sir. I've told you my name three times now.” Crystal was so angry that she made no attempt to hide it at all. She then pointed at me and said, “You should get rid of this liar or she'll mess up your art exhibition!”

The look in Ansley's eyes grew cold all of a sudden as he said sternly, “Ms. Yates, my art exhibition welcomes any and all young artists with a passion for art as well as those who would love to paint with me. However, people like you who make up stories and slander others are not welcome here. Is there anything else you would like to talk about? If not, please get your assistant and leave at once.”

“Yeah! We need to get rid of Yvonne so we can...” Crystal paused halfway through her sentence when she realized what Ansley had said, and the look on her face was twisted in disbelief. “Sir, she's the one you should be kicking out of here!”

“I know what I should do at my own art exhibition, and you'd better not make me repeat myself. Go now, or I will have security escort you out.” Ansley pointed at the entrance to the art exhibition with a firm expression.

Crystal let out a scream in anger and frustration. She looked like she was about to say something, but the man behind her noticed and quickly clamped his hand over her mouth. He then apologized to Ansley before dragging Crystal outside.

As expected of the wise and brilliant Ansley! I let out a sigh of relief before turning toward Ansley with a look of admiration and respect in my eyes. The two of us then had a brief chat about my painting which benefited me greatly.

“Thank you so much for this conversation, sir! I was feeling uneasy when I first came here as I haven’t painted for six years. It wasn’t until I recently found my goal in life that I had the courage to pick it up again.”

“If you’re able to pick up painting again, then I’m sure you will be able to pick yourself up in life as well. Make sure you don’t give up on it ever again, because you’ll be giving up both your dreams and your youth along with art itself.”

Ansley then pointed at the painting and said wisely, “You see, your paintings reflect your yearning for art, your passion for your career, your ambitions, and your eagerness to prove yourself. I have witnessed your brushwork and painting skills, so the rest boils down to your continuous hard work and discipline.”

I nodded and said solemnly, “Understood. You might not know this, but your painting, Dream, has always been a huge inspiration for me to keep pushing forward in art. In fact, I used to base most of my paintings on Dream when I was little. I’ll be sure to continue carving out my own path from here on!”

As I was about to leave, I couldn’t help but ask Ansley out of curiosity, “By the way, why did you choose to believe in me instead of Crystal?”

Ansley stroked his beard and pointed at my painting on the wall as he said with a smile, “A picture is worth a thousand words, and this painting speaks for itself. I have faith in my judgment.”

Ansley frowned upon hearing that and turned around to look at me. The fact that Crystal had the audacity to slander me in front of the great Ansley sent a shiver down my spine. “Sir, I...” I was about to explain myself, but Crystal was quicker and cut me off, “I know Yvonne. She’s my cousin, but her character is questionable at best. She was rude to Spencer at the art exhibition and shows no respect for Julian whatsoever. Be careful not to let her sweet words fool you, sir!” I bit down on my lip and made no further attempts to clear my name as I believed a wise man like Ansley wasn’t the type to blindly believe in rumors. He may be a great artist, but he is still a human being like everyone else. If he really believed Crystal’s words, then I would have nothing further to say. Ansley eyed me from head to toe before shifting his gaze toward Crystal as he asked, “Sorry, what did you say your name was?” “Crystal Yates, sir. I’ve told you my name three times now.” Crystal was so angry that she made no attempt to hide it at all. She then pointed at me and said, “You should get rid of this liar or she’ll mess up your art exhibition!” The look in Ansley’s eyes

grew cold all of a sudden as he said sternly, "Ms. Yates, my art exhibition welcomes any and all young artists with a passion for art as well as those who would love to paint with me. However, people like you who make up stories and slander others are not welcome here. Is there anything else you would like to talk about? If not, please get your assistant and leave at once." "Yeah! We need to get rid of Yvonne so we can..." Crystal paused halfway through her sentence when she realized what Ansley had said, and the look on her face was twisted in disbelief. "Sir, she's the one you should be kicking out of here!" "I know what I should do at my own art exhibition, and you'd better not make me repeat myself. Go now, or I will have security escort you out." Ansley pointed at the entrance to the art exhibition with a firm expression. Crystal let out a scream in anger and frustration. She looked like she was about to say something, but the man behind her noticed and quickly clamped his hand over her mouth. He then apologized to Ansley before dragging Crystal outside. As expected of the wise and brilliant Ansley! I let out a sigh of relief before turning toward Ansley with a look of admiration and respect in my eyes. The two of us then had a brief chat about my painting which benefited me greatly. "Thank you so much for this conversation, sir! I was feeling uneasy when I first came here as I haven't painted for six years. It wasn't until I recently found my goal in life that I had the courage to pick it up again." "If you're able to pick up painting again, then I'm sure you will be able to pick yourself up in life as well. Make sure you don't give up on it ever again, because you'll be giving up both your dreams and your youth along with art itself." Ansley then pointed at the painting and said wisely, "You see, your paintings reflect your yearning for art, your passion for your career, your ambitions, and your eagerness to prove yourself. I have witnessed your brushwork and painting skills, so the rest boils down to your continuous hard work and discipline." I nodded and said solemnly, "Understood. You might not know this, but your painting, Dream, has always been a huge inspiration for me to keep pushing forward in art. In fact, I used to base most of my paintings on Dream when I was little. I'll be sure to continue carving out my own path from here on!" As I was about to leave, I couldn't help but ask Ansley out of curiosity, "By the way, why did you choose to believe in me instead of Crystal?" Ansley stroked his beard and pointed at my painting on the wall as he said with a smile, "A picture is worth a thousand words, and this painting speaks for itself. I have faith in my judgment."

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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.”

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

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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.”

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

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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.

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,

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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?"

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?"

Chapter 500

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

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 tighten 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.

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

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