

## Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 541-550

Posted by **chapter novel**, 43 Views, Released on July 13, 2022

“Thank you, Mom.” I opened the box and looked inside absentmindedly. It was a pink-colored dress, and the design was beautiful. However, it was too girlish. I remembered that I liked pink the most when I was a child, but I was an adult now.

“Do you like it?” Isabelle asked.

“Yes.” I changed into the dress, then surveyed myself in front of the mirror. Nothing felt right to see myself in pink as cute was not my style. It was really not suitable.

Isabelle had probably noticed it. When I changed back into my clothes, she sighed and said, “I’ll exchange this for a new one tomorrow. I was absent from your childhood, so I keep forgetting that you are a grown-up now.”

“I like light blue now,” I said plainly.

At this moment, my phone on the table rang. I walked closer and saw that Christopher was calling me. Isabelle saw the caller’s name when I picked up my phone and her expression turned cold. I hesitated momentarily but did not answer the call in front of her. Instead, I walked out with my phone. When I went back in, Isabelle got me to sit beside her.

“Eve, do you think I’m cruel for not coming back to visit you for such a long time, and now that I’m back, I want to split up you lovebirds?”

I remained silent as what Isabelle said struck a chord with me. Even though I did not say it, that was what I thought. It was until I saw Sharon that this thought faded a little.

Isabelle understood my silence. She placed her hand on my shoulder and her gaze dimmed. “I’m not a responsible mother. I know I’m not considerate for not considering your feelings. But, I—” Suddenly, Isabelle sobbed, and her voice trembled. “Your Uncle Robert was my closest family member. Your grandparents were busy working when we were younger. He was the one who took care of me. They died in a car crash before I had the chance to spend more time with them. After they passed away, your Uncle Robert and I depended on each other and I grew up healthily under his protection. He was still thinking about me on his deathbed. Isabelle, I really can’t accept the fact

that your husband is Julia's son. Seeing her each time reminds me of your Uncle Robert's tragic death. However, I'm alone and I couldn't find any proof. Otherwise, things wouldn't drag until now. Your Uncle Robert is someone I cherish more than my parents. Do you understand?"

"Mom... I'm sorry." Besides saying sorry, I did not know what to say. It was supposed to be a happy mother and daughter reunion, and a wedding would be the cherry on the cake. However, everything seemed out of reach now.

Seeing Mom cry, I could tell what a struggle it was for her. How I wished there was a way to have the best of both worlds.

"You don't have to be sorry. I'm the one at fault. If I stayed with you and allowed you to grow up by my side, things would be different. Promise me to forget about Christopher. You can take all the time to forget about him and I will promise you anything, okay?"

Gazing at Isabelle's look of anticipation, I tried to open my mouth to answer. Saying the word was easy, but I couldn't bring myself to say it.

"Mom, I would have died if it weren't for Christopher. Mom, I owe him a lot. I..." I couldn't bring myself to continue. Mom was already so upset. We were all in a dilemma and struggling. If I continued to talk about that, the atmosphere would only become heavier.

I was sleepless during the night at the Goldstein residence. My mind was occupied with my mom's words, so much so that I dreamed about Uncle Robert. I could not see his face clearly, but his body was bloody as he questioned me for not avenging him and wanting to marry his enemy's son. I jolted awake and wasn't sleepy anymore.

In the morning, there were dark circles around my eyes that I couldn't conceal with concealer. My face was pale. After breakfast, Isabelle talked to me again about me moving over. I told her to give me some time and left the Goldstein residence in a hurry, feeling suffocated to face her in that house.

"Thank you, Mom." I opened the box and looked inside absentmindedly. It was a pink-colored dress, and the design was beautiful. However, it was too girlish. I remembered that I liked pink the most when I was a child, but I was an adult now. "Do you like it?" Isabelle asked. "Yes." I changed into the dress, then surveyed myself in front of the mirror. Nothing felt right to see myself in pink as cute was not my style. It was really not suitable. Isabelle had probably

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Just then, Sabrina called me. "What's up, Sabby?"

"Yvonne, what the hell are you doing? Christopher called you a few times last night. Not only did you not pick up, but you also didn't call back!" Sabrina remarked.

Only then did I remember that Christopher had called while Mom was telling me about Uncle Robert's matters. That was why I did not get to pick up the call. And as I was worried about Mom, I stayed by her side the whole night listening to her reminisce about the fun times she had with my uncle before he passed away.

I ended up forgetting about Christopher. Astounded, I asked, "How did you know?"

"You dare ask? Last night we were at a gathering when my idol called you in my presence. You'd never know how grim he looked when he couldn't reach you. I'll give you thirty minutes. He's at the airport with Zach, waiting for his flight to Venria. If you don't go now, you'll have to wait for a month before you can see him again," Sabrina said.

"What's going on?" I anxiously asked.

"Don't tell me you don't know why my idol kept calling you? Did you forget about his other identity? He leads reservists of the special forces. He has to carry out his duties when there are special missions," Sabrina petulantly replied.

I was briefly stunned as I did not have any knowledge of that. All I could remember was Christopher had retired from the military. As for the matters he had mentioned to me regarding the reservists, I could barely be bothered about it.

A wave of guilt overwhelmed my mind, and I hurriedly said, “Hold on. I’ll head over now.”

Immediately, I ordered a taxi and rushed toward the airport. However, I somehow felt that God was trying to play tricks on me. I was trapped in traffic shortly after I got in the taxi. Rows of cars filled the road as frustrated honks filled the air.

“Sorry, but is it possible to speed up? I’ve got an important matter to deal with and I need to rush to the airport as soon as possible.” I was on the verge of breaking down at the thought of not being able to wave him goodbye. I knew it would be a risky mission; otherwise, he would not have been tasked to handle it.

I had to blame myself for having been too engrossed in Mom’s matters that I had forgotten about Christopher.

“Miss, I’d like to speed up, too. But look at the traffic in front; how am I supposed to drive past?” The driver sounded exasperated.

I looked at my watch and shifted my gaze back to the traffic outside. There were only ten minutes left before the flight was to depart, and I knew I would not be able to make it on time. Without hesitation, I pushed open the car door and ran toward the direction of the airport. Christopher, you must wait for me. You have to wait for me to send you off!

By the time I reached the airport, Sabrina shrugged her shoulders and shook her head at me. “You’re too late; he’s just left.”

“Christopher Lane!” I pushed aside the guards and barged into the restricted area of the terminal, only to see an airplane slowly heading toward the sky. It glided through the fluffy clouds and soon disappeared within them.

I stood frozen till the guards came to throw me out. I turned to Sabrina and asked, “If Chris is heading to Venria, does that mean the mission is a risky one?”

Seeing me at a loss, Sabrina sighed. “Though I always say nothing will happen, I knew long ago that Zachary’s missions are all rather dangerous ones. But of course, I do believe nothing will happen to them because we’re waiting for them at home.”

“Sabby, why does life never go as planned? I’ve tried so hard to make myself happy, but at the end of the day, I realize happiness is still so far away.”

I lifted my head and looked at the sky. It was of a baby blue hue, juxtaposed with fluffy, white clouds that seemed incredibly comfortable to lie on. That would have been a wonderful experience if the sun were not shining so brightly that it blinded my eyes.

It was the first time Christopher and I separated after getting together. Yet, not only did I miss his calls, but I also missed the chance to send him off.

“Didn’t you say before that the reason God puts us through so many hardships is to let us understand the essence of bliss?”

Just then, Sabrina called me. “What’s up, Sabby?” “Yvonne, what the hell are you doing? Christopher called you a few times last night. Not only did you not pick up, but you also didn’t call back!” Sabrina remarked. Only then did I remember that Christopher had called while Mom was telling me about Uncle Robert’s matters. That was why I did not get to pick up the call. And as I was worried about Mom, I stayed by her side the whole night listening to her reminisce about the fun times she had with my uncle before he passed away. I ended up forgetting about Christopher. Astounded, I asked, “How did you know?” “You dare ask? Last night we were at a gathering when my idol called you in my presence. You’d never know how grim he looked when he couldn’t reach you. I’ll give you thirty minutes. He’s at the airport with Zach, waiting for his flight to Venria. If you don’t go now, you’ll have to wait for a month before you can see him again,” Sabrina said. “What’s going on?” I anxiously asked. “Don’t tell me you don’t know why my idol kept calling you? Did you forget about his other identity? He leads reservists of the special forces. He has to carry out his duties when there are special missions,” Sabrina petulantly replied. I was briefly stunned as I did not have any knowledge of that. All I could remember was Christopher had retired from the military. As for the matters he had mentioned to me regarding the reservists, I could barely be bothered about it. A wave of guilt overwhelmed my mind, and I hurriedly said, “Hold on. I’ll head over now.” Immediately, I ordered a taxi and rushed toward the airport. However, I somehow felt that God was trying to play tricks on me. I was trapped in traffic shortly after I got in the taxi. Rows of cars filled the road as frustrated honks filled the air. “Sorry, but is it possible to speed up? I’ve got an important matter to deal with and I need to rush to the airport as soon as possible.” I was on the verge of breaking down at the thought of not being able to wave him goodbye. I knew it would be a risky mission; otherwise, he would not have been tasked to handle it. I had to blame myself for having

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I remained glued to the ground at the airport for a long while, until a baby's wails brought me back to my senses. Turning around, I saw Sabrina struggling to coax the baby in her arms. Instantly, it warmed my heart to realize that I had a good friend accompanying me whenever I felt down. Without any hesitation, I hurried over to help her coax the little one.

Yet, the baby could not stop wailing no matter what we did. "What's wrong with him?"

"He's probably hungry. I'll find a place to feed him." Sabrina ushered me to follow her to a cafe and requested a private room.

Inside the room, I sat down, sighing.

“Don’t worry. I’m sure there’s always a solution to every problem. Cheer up,” comforted Sabrina.

“I guess so,” I muttered with my face covered. “But somehow, I feel like trouble is always looking for me. No matter how I try to live my life, I can never live in peace. Mrs. Lane has finally accepted the fact that Christopher and I are together, but now...”

Sabrina calmly muttered, “Christopher understands you a lot, so I’m sure he won’t be angry with you. You guys can have a good discussion when he’s back and see if there’s any way to convince Mrs. Goldstein.”

I shook my head bitterly after a slight ponder as I could not think of any good idea. “My mom cries every time she talks about my uncle. I know they have a close-knit relationship though I’ve never seen my uncle before. And I could tell that Mom is against me being with Chris unless Mrs. Lane has nothing to do with that matter. But Mrs. Lane has admitted it herself...”

“Console Mrs. Goldstein first. Look at Mrs. Lane; she used to be persistent and forbade you from getting together with Chris. But you’ve managed to win her heart. So I’m sure there’s a solution when it comes to your mom, too.” Sabrina hesitated for a second before continuing, “Why don’t you listen to her wants first? Follow whatever she asks you to do. When she’s feeling better, things will naturally take a positive turn.”

“I guess so.”

That night, I stayed with Sabrina since she was alone at home. By the time she put her baby to sleep, she already looked utterly exhausted. Despite so, she did not want to hire a nanny as she enjoyed the process of taking care of her child by herself.

There was a lot that I wanted to tell Sabrina, but I refrained from doing so after seeing her so lethargic that she could not keep her eyes open. Later, I reached for my phone and tried calling Christopher twice, yet I could not get through.

Lying on the bed, I threw my phone aside and switched off the lights, sighing away. After some time, when Sabrina realized I was still not asleep, she muttered, “There’s no way the call could get through. When Zach’s on missions, he doesn’t turn on his phone. I’ve already gotten used to that, and



so should you. Christopher is an elite soldier; whatever mission he's on must be a tricky one."

My fear and anxiety at the thought of Christopher being angry with me were instantly replaced by my worries about his safety instead. As such, in the next two days, I could not perk myself up to get things done.

Two days later, I received a text message from an unknown number. It contained only five words – I'm safe; don't miss me.

Seeing the text message, I immediately figured that it was from Christopher. I pulled myself together and began visiting Isabelle frequently. Sabrina's right; I need to satisfy Mom so that I can have her acknowledgment.

Right then, I received a call from Yvette. Surprisingly, she brought me a piece of news – that Dad was admitted to the hospital. He was critically ill and wanted to meet me.

"What did you say? Dad's sick? How is it possible that he's suddenly sick?" I asked, surprised. The Tanners had been met with a series of problems recently and the family business had suffered from drastic stock price fluctuations. Dad just released an official statement yesterday; he looked pretty rejuvenated then. Could it be because of Mom?

"Stop pretending. Don't you know perfectly well why Dad is sick? Everyone knows you and I aren't on good terms. If Dad didn't ask to see you before he fell unconscious, do you think I'd call you?" Yvette questioned in dismay.

"If you still take Dad as your family, then make a trip down."

I remained glued to the ground at the airport for a long while, until a baby's wails brought me back to my senses. Turning around, I saw Sabrina struggling to coax the baby in her arms. Instantly, it warmed my heart to realize that I had a good friend accompanying me whenever I felt down. Without any hesitation, I hurried over to help her coax the little one. Yet, the baby could not stop wailing no matter what we did. "What's wrong with him?" "He's probably hungry. I'll find a place to feed him." Sabrina ushered me to follow her to a cafe and requested a private room. Inside the room, I sat down, sighing. "Don't worry. I'm sure there's always a solution to every problem. Cheer up," comforted Sabrina. "I guess so," I muttered with my face covered. "But somehow, I feel like trouble is always looking for me. No matter how I try to live my life, I can never live in peace. Mrs. Lane has finally accepted the

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you before he fell unconscious, do you think I'd call you?" Yvette questioned in dismay. "If you still take Dad as your family, then make a trip down."

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Yvette's reverse psychology would never work on me, given my character. However, I could not ignore her this time, since Dad was gravely sick. I knew I would feel uneasy if I did not go, especially since Dad had asked to see me.

What I could not figure out all these years was how the relationship of my loving parents suddenly changed for the worse. Everything that happened back then felt strange to me.

Now that Mom is back, could Dad possibly be reminiscing about our once sweet and loving family?

At the hospital, I made an inquiry at the front desk about the location of Dad's ward before making my way to the stairs. That was when I ran into Scarlett and Yvette. Both of them furrowed their brows as they cast their hostile gazes at me. Unable to suppress their displeasure any further, one of them finally uttered, "Stop dilly-dallying. Your dad has been waiting long enough for you."

Instantly, I was on alert. It was more than reasonable that Dad wanted to see me. However, Scarlett would not have allowed that to happen. I knew her too well. She had always wanted to chase me out of the Tanner family and would definitely stop me from meeting Dad if he was indeed in critical condition. After all, as a Tanner, I was eligible for a share of the family's fortune.

Nevertheless, I suppressed my suspicions and headed to the second floor. I figured I should meet Dad since I was already there. Besides, there was no way they could do anything to me in broad daylight.

I made a turn at the corner and saw Natalie and Crystal standing outside the ward. As usual, the two of them looked as arrogant as ever. Crystal even sarcastically said, "Oh, what a rare guest we have here! She even dares to harm her family member. Yvonne, you've always said you're so kind-hearted but it doesn't seem to be the case."

"Exactly. You grew up with the Tanners, yet you're now going against them. How heartless you are! If not for the Tanners, do you think you could survive to this age?" Natalie's expression was grim. In fact, ever since the wedding, they had always looked like they wanted to kill me every time they saw me.

“I’m not here for a fight. Yvette called to say that Dad wanted to see me. If nothing good could come out of your mouth, I’ll leave now and come back when you guys can speak nicely.” I pretended to take my leave.

“All of you, shut up! Yvonne, come in,” Suddenly, Dad snarled from inside the ward. I could tell he was indeed not in a good state as his command sounded weak and powerless.

A surge of emotions overwhelmed me. As I hurried inside, I swept my gaze at Crystal, only to notice that she was casting a death glare at me. Natalie had to drag her aside with some force to make way for me to pass.

Pushing open the door, I saw Dad lying on the hospital bed with a drip attached to his hand. Though he did not look too sickly, I could tell he was not energetic. His hair seemed to have turned a lot grayer than before.

Since young, Dad had always had a few strands of gray hair mixed within his black hair. This was hereditary. Perhaps because there were too many problems stressing him out recently, especially relating to the family business, it felt to me that his hair had gotten a lot grayer within a short span of time.

“Dad, are you all right?” I walked over, my eyes filled with worry and concern.

“I’m fine. It’s nothing but some old ailments.” He muttered after letting out a few coughs.

I recalled Dad had a weak kidney and even had to undergo surgery a couple of years back due to his kidney stones. Moreover, he would often suffer headaches whenever he pulled all-nighters. I grabbed the diagnostic report on the desk for a read-through, only to realize Dad was running a high fever due to his kidney stones.

“You should take better care of your body. The doctor has mentioned that you should do more exercise during your free time instead of leading a sedentary lifestyle. Dad, you need to listen to the doctor’s advice.” I placed on the table some carnations I had bought on the way to the hospital. I then picked up an apple to peel it.

“I did pay attention to my health.” Nathan seemed hesitant to speak.

“If not for Isabelle making use of the Goldsteins to cause all sorts of devastating blows to our family business, would your dad need to stay up

through the night and become hospitalized for overworking himself?” With hands on her hips, Natalie stood by the doorway and spoke with an interrogative tone. “If you still treat your dad as family, you should ask your mom to stop whatever she’s doing.”

“Is this why... you asked to see me?” I looked at him earnestly.

“Yes, I hope you can help me persuade your mom to stop targeting the Tanner family. Otherwise, we could go bankrupt.”

Yvette's reverse psychology would never work on me, given my character. However, I could not ignore her this time, since Dad was gravely sick. I knew I would feel uneasy if I did not go, especially since Dad had asked to see me. What I could not figure out all these years was how the relationship of my loving parents suddenly changed for the worse. Everything that happened back then felt strange to me. Now that Mom is back, could Dad possibly be reminiscing about our once sweet and loving family? At the hospital, I made an inquiry at the front desk about the location of Dad's ward before making my way to the stairs. That was when I ran into Scarlett and Yvette. Both of them furrowed their brows as they cast their hostile gazes at me. Unable to suppress their displeasure any further, one of them finally uttered, “Stop dilly-dallying. Your dad has been waiting long enough for you.” Instantly, I was on alert. It was more than reasonable that Dad wanted to see me. However, Scarlett would not have allowed that to happen. I knew her too well. She had always wanted to chase me out of the Tanner family and would definitely stop me from meeting Dad if he was indeed in critical condition. After all, as a Tanner, I was eligible for a share of the family's fortune. Nevertheless, I suppressed my suspicions and headed to the second floor. I figured I should meet Dad since I was already there. Besides, there was no way they could do anything to me in broad daylight. I made a turn at the corner and saw Natalie and Crystal standing outside the ward. As usual, the two of them looked as arrogant as ever. Crystal even sarcastically said, “Oh, what a rare guest we have here! She even dares to harm her family member. Yvonne, you've always said you're so kind-hearted but it doesn't seem to be the case.”

“Exactly. You grew up with the Tanners, yet you're now going against them. How heartless you are! If not for the Tanners, do you think you could survive to this age?” Natalie's expression was grim. In fact, ever since the wedding, they had always looked like they wanted to kill me every time they saw me. “I'm not here for a fight. Yvette called to say that Dad wanted to see me. If nothing good could come out of your mouth, I'll leave now and come back when you guys can speak nicely.” I pretended to take my leave. “All of you, shut up! Yvonne, come in,” Suddenly, Dad snarled from inside the ward. I

could tell he was indeed not in a good state as his command sounded weak and powerless. A surge of emotions overwhelmed me. As I hurried inside, I swept my gaze at Crystal, only to notice that she was casting a death glare at me. Natalie had to drag her aside with some force to make way for me to pass. Pushing open the door, I saw Dad lying on the hospital bed with a drip attached to his hand. Though he did not look too sickly, I could tell he was not energetic. His hair seemed to have turned a lot grayer than before. Since young, Dad had always had a few strands of gray hair mixed within his black hair. This was hereditary. Perhaps because there were too many problems stressing him out recently, especially relating to the family business, it felt to me that his hair had gotten a lot grayer within a short span of time. "Dad, are you all right?" I walked over, my eyes filled with worry and concern. "I'm fine. It's nothing but some old ailments." He muttered after letting out a few coughs. I recalled Dad had a weak kidney and even had to undergo surgery a couple of years back due to his kidney stones. Moreover, he would often suffer headaches whenever he pulled all-nighters. I grabbed the diagnostic report on the desk for a read-through, only to realize Dad was running a high fever due to his kidney stones. "You should take better care of your body. The doctor has mentioned that you should do more exercise during your free time instead of leading a sedentary lifestyle. Dad, you need to listen to the doctor's advice." I placed on the table some carnations I had bought on the way to the hospital. I then picked up an apple to peel it. "I did pay attention to my health." Nathan seemed hesitant to speak. "If not for Isabelle making use of the Goldsteins to cause all sorts of devastating blows to our family business, would your dad need to stay up through the night and become hospitalized for overworking himself?" With hands on her hips, Natalie stood by the doorway and spoke with an interrogative tone. "If you still treat your dad as family, you should ask your mom to stop whatever she's doing." "Is this why... you asked to see me?" I looked at him earnestly. "Yes, I hope you can help me persuade your mom to stop targeting the Tanner family. Otherwise, we could go bankrupt."

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I knew about Mom going after the Tanner family. I had thought that she was just snatching away some of the family's businesses out of spite, but she actually managed to overwhelm the Tanners in just half a month.

Grandma told me how Dad had married Mom and built his company using the money from Mom's family, only to betray her love for him later on. I could understand why Mom would do what she did, but... Is her ultimate goal to destroy the Tanners completely? Honestly, the thought of a beautiful and gentle woman like Mom turning into a merciless avenger scares me. Just how

much pain and despair did she suffer to end up like that? Also, if this is the way she now behaves, how could she possibly approve of my relationship with Christopher?

Nathan thought I was reluctant when he saw no response from me; he got a little anxious. "I hate having to ask you for help, Yvonne, but I really have no other choice now. Besides, you grew up in this family! We may not be as rich as those wealthy families out there, but we never had to worry about putting food on the table, either. As your father, all I ask is for you to help me out this one time!"

Theoretically, I was indeed supposed to help my dad this one time. "Have you seen Mom?" I asked while glancing at Scarlett who was standing by the door.

"I have. She's still as gentle and capable as ever." The look of nostalgia on Nathan's face suggested that he was recalling some pleasant memories of their relationship.

"Yeah, Mom looks just as pretty as before. I'm sure she has already made her intentions clear to you, right?" I asked.

With the support from the Goldstein family, crushing the Tanners was definitely a piece of cake for her. Given the number of people who wanted to collaborate with Goldstein Corporation, the Goldsteins could easily have these interested parties destroy the Tanners along the way. As such, Mom must have made some kind of request in order to give Nathan a chance to approach me.

Nathan seemed hesitant to bring up that incident and said with a frown, "There are certain things that cannot be undone after so much time has passed. But she's your mother, so I'm sure she'll agree if you ask her. Please help me out this time! I promise – it's the last time I'll ask for your help!"

The anxious look in his eyes and the fact that he used such a humble tone with me was evident that the Tanner family was faced with a huge crisis.

As my dad, he could've just shamelessly asked me to deal with his conflict, but something seemed to have changed in our relationship without us realizing it.

"I'll try my best, but I can't promise you anything. Mom and I aren't as close anymore after our prolonged separation, so she might not listen to me," I said with a helpless sigh.

"She will! She has always cared about you and feels guilty for leaving you with us over the years. I'm sure she'll gladly oblige to anything you ask of her!" Nathan exclaimed anxiously.

Unfortunately, he was wrong about that. Mom had not even approved of my marriage with Christopher.

"It is better for the doer to undo what he has done, Dad. If you can get Mom to let go of her desire for revenge, it would be a lot more effective than anything I say to her. I'll try my best to talk her out of it, but I don't know if it'll work." I was so caught up with my thoughts that I didn't even notice how inappropriate Dad's statement was. I was a part of the Tanner family, to begin with, so him saying my mother left me with them made it sound like I was an outsider they had taken in.

"Do you know what happened to my Uncle Robert?" Mom and Dad had known each other for so long, so Dad would surely know something about her brother. I was really curious as to what happened between Robert and Julia back then that turned her into a murderer.

"Robert? Why would you bring up that guy?" Nathan's expression changed the moment he heard me mention Robert's name. Judging by his look of fear and anxiety, I figured he must've suffered a great deal at my uncle's hands.

I knew about Mom going after the Tanner family. I had thought that she was just snatching away some of the family's businesses out of spite, but she actually managed to overwhelm the Tanners in just half a month. Grandma told me how Dad had married Mom and built his company using the money from Mom's family, only to betray her love for him later on. I could understand why Mom would do what she did, but... Is her ultimate goal to destroy the Tanners completely? Honestly, the thought of a beautiful and gentle woman like Mom turning into a merciless avenger scares me. Just how much pain and despair did she suffer to end up like that? Also, if this is the way she now behaves, how could she possibly approve of my relationship with Christopher? Nathan thought I was reluctant when he saw no response from me; he got a little anxious. "I hate having to ask you for help, Yvonne, but I really have no other choice now. Besides, you grew up in this family! We may not be as rich as those wealthy families out there, but we never had to worry



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I had wanted to tell Dad about my marriage with Christopher as it was killing me to keep so many things bottled up, but I held my tongue because I knew he wouldn't care.

"I was just curious, that's all. Mom seemed to care a lot about Uncle Robert when she spoke to me the other day. She's really sad about his death, too. Do you know how Uncle Robert died?"

Nathan shuddered and said after a brief pause, "The Andersons were quite a prominent family in Avenport back in the day. Robert was a brilliant businessman, but his stubbornness and arrogance got to him and he couldn't get back up after taking a few huge blows. The Andersons faced bankruptcy after a major project of theirs failed, and Robert... Well, he couldn't take it and jumped off a building."

"Really?" I remember Mom telling me that Julia was the last person Uncle Robert saw before he died, but it seemed everyone else thought he had taken his own life.

"That's right. He jumped from Centurion Tower ten years ago. That building was owned by the Andersons, and your mom has been conflicted about it ever since. It happened shortly after we got married," Nathan said in a low voice.

My mind was completely filled with thoughts about Christopher after leaving the hospital that I ignored both Crystal's taunts as well as the strange looks Scarlett and the others gave me.

I thought about paying the Goldstein family a visit even though I really disliked them, which was probably due to the conflicts I had with the Tanners.

While crossing the street, I saw Mom and Darius on the other side. They seemed to be having an unpleasant conversation, judging by the angry look on Mom's face. Darius, on the other hand, looked helpless as though he was plagued with guilt. He was trying to tell Mom something, but she simply brushed his arm off and walked away.

The two of them used to be really close and nearly became a couple. I waited until Mom drove off in her car before coming around the corner.

Darius stood there in place for quite a while, only to jump in shock when he noticed me standing next to him. "You saw everything?"

I shook my head. "I just happened to pass by."

"I was going to help Chris out, but it looks like our past feelings for each other weren't enough to change her mind!" Darius said with a wry smile and an inexplicable look of regret on his face.

I wasn't sure if his regret was due to me and Chris becoming enemies or him being unable to protect the beautiful memories he had with my mom.

It's probably more the former than the latter, I guess.

"Does Mom know that you used to..." Love her? I left the sentence hanging, but Darius clearly understood what I was implying and shook his head. "I couldn't possibly tell her that until I was certain of her feelings for me, or it would only stress her out. Besides, your mom only loved your dad the whole time."

"My mom loved my dad..." I kept repeating that sentence in my head. If she loved Dad so much, why did she leave him so decisively back then? Why would she now return to the country as Mrs. Goldstein? She's not the kind of person who would do such a thing! Mom is a smart woman, so she wouldn't have easily given up on the man she loved, even with Scarlett in the picture!

"Come over to the Lane residence when you have the time. My mom wants to see you," Darius said.

"I will!"

I saw Mom sitting on the sofa in the living room the moment I got home. She was instructing a bunch of servants who were packing my belongings. "What's going on, Mom? Where are they taking my stuff?" I asked anxiously as I ran up to her.

"Ah, you came just in time! You shouldn't be staying here now that we're finally reunited, so why don't you move in with me? I bought a mansion in Avenport; we can live there together!" Isabelle replied with a smile and continued instructing the servants. She didn't even bother to ask me if I wanted to live with her.

I had wanted to tell Dad about my marriage with Christopher as it was killing me to keep so many things bottled up, but I held my tongue because I knew he wouldn't care. "I was just curious, that's all. Mom seemed to care a lot

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In my state of panic, I stopped the servants and shouted, "Wait! I didn't say anything about moving out, Mom!"

"You don't want to stay with me?" Isabelle's expression turned gloomy with displeasure.

She had me at a loss for words. While there was technically nothing wrong with me staying with her after her return, this house belonged to both Christopher and me, so it meant a lot to me.

Although it was just a tiny apartment unit, it was the warmest and coziest place for me. Christopher had prepared this place as a safe haven for me when I was being bullied by Lyle. This was the place he brought me to when Lyle and Crystal made me homeless.

If he had not done that, I could very well have slept out on the streets.

"But this is my house. It'd be a waste to just leave it empty." I didn't dare mention Christopher in front of her as I didn't want to upset her even further.

"So what? You could just tidy the place up and rent it out for some passive income! The mansion I bought is so spacious that you can even alternate between living upstairs and downstairs anytime you like!" Isabelle said with a smile. She was clearly satisfied with my reply earlier as she didn't even say a word about the men's toiletries in the house.

"But... But..." I was about to protest further but kept quiet when I recalled Sabrina's words. I then stopped the servants who were packing my stuff and said through clenched teeth, "Please leave everything the way it is. Since you've bought a new house, you could just replace all these items with new ones instead. We'll have a fresh start!"

In actual fact, I didn't want Christopher to return to an empty house and get upset.

"That works, too!" Isabelle then motioned at the servants and said, "All right, put everything back where you found them. I've got tons of money to afford things of much higher quality anyway! Come on, let's go shopping! We need to replace those rags of yours with some decent clothes! Besides, it's my fault you've barely been able to buy yourself anything nice throughout these years."

She brought me into her car and handed me a platinum-colored card. "Here's some pocket money. Spend it however you like, and feel free to ask me for more if you run out. No need to be too frugal, okay?"

I recognized that card – it was only a grade lower than the black card Christopher gave me. After accepting the card and stuffing it into my handbag, I went shopping with Isabelle and bought a bunch of stuff before moving into her new mansion. It was next to a huge lake and had a balcony with a great view of the lake.

"Mom, do you know about Dad being hospitalized?" I asked while leaning against the balcony.

Mom was sitting on a recliner with a glass of wine in one hand and a cigarette in the other. She looked like a completely different person from who she used to be, and I couldn't help but find her a little unfamiliar. The mother that I once knew had changed so much with the passing of time that I barely recognized her anymore.

"Nathan is in the hospital?" Isabelle looked up all of a sudden and blinked a couple of times before breaking into a disdainful smile. "I bet he's been drinking too much coffee and staying up late too often, huh? Honestly, he should've collapsed long ago from overwork! I take it that he went looking for you?"

"Yeah!" I saw no trace of affection for Dad in Mom's eyes at all. Perhaps whatever they had going between them was long gone...

"Mom, what if... What if Dad were to beg you to spare the Tanner family? Would you be willing to do that?" I asked cautiously.

"Your dad told you to say that, didn't he? He sure is a smart one for seeking your help. He knows I don't see anyone else but you."

Isabelle pursed her lips into a faint smile; I couldn't tell what she was actually feeling. "I helped him build the family business from scratch using my own money, and guess what? He goes on to keep a mistress using that money and even has a daughter the same age as you! As if that wasn't bad enough, he even wanted me to place Scarlett before myself! Things probably wouldn't have been any better for me even if I stayed."

She then turned to look at me as she continued, "How about... I give you everything the Tanner family owns as dowry? I mean, everything is technically mine to begin with anyway. It's clearly stated on the shareholders' agreement that I am the rightful owner of the Tanners' assets, even though Nathan has probably destroyed that document by now."

In my state of panic, I stopped the servants and shouted, "Wait! I didn't say anything about moving out, Mom!" "You don't want to stay with me?" Isabelle's expression turned gloomy with displeasure. She had me at a loss for words. While there was technically nothing wrong with me staying with her after her return, this house belonged to both Christopher and me, so it meant a lot to me. Although it was just a tiny apartment unit, it was the warmest and coziest place for me. Christopher had prepared this place as a safe haven for me when I was being bullied by Lyle. This was the place he brought me to when Lyle and Crystal made me homeless. If he had not done that, I could very well have slept out on the streets. "But this is my house. It'd be a waste to just leave it empty." I didn't dare mention Christopher in front of her as I didn't want to upset her even further. "So what? You could just tidy the place up and rent it out for some passive income! The mansion I bought is so spacious that you can even alternate between living upstairs and downstairs anytime you like!" Isabelle said with a smile. She was clearly satisfied with my reply earlier as she didn't even say a word about the men's toiletries in the house. "But... But..." I was about to protest further but kept quiet when I recalled Sabrina's words. I then stopped the servants who were packing my stuff and said through clenched teeth, "Please leave everything the way it is. Since you've bought a new house, you could just replace all these items with new ones instead. We'll have a fresh start!" In actual fact, I didn't want Christopher to return to an empty house and get upset. "That works, too!" Isabelle then motioned at the servants and said, "All right, put everything back where you found them. I've got tons of money to afford things of much higher quality anyway! Come on, let's go shopping! We need to replace those rags of yours with some decent clothes! Besides, it's my fault you've barely been able to buy yourself anything nice throughout these years." She brought me into her car and handed me a platinum-colored card. "Here's some pocket money."

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"Of course, that doesn't matter anymore. What's mine will still be mine. My daughter can't get married without a proper dowry!" Isabelle smiled.

She wants to give me everything? Naturally, my first response was to refuse her offer. "I don't want any of that, Mom. You know how I've always preferred drawing since I was a kid, right? I'm getting kind of famous now and a lot of people have acknowledged my artistic skills. I'm really happy to do what I like for a living, and I don't need anything else."



Isabelle gave me a strange look and said after a brief pause, “You silly girl! Why would you defend that scumbag father of yours after all the suffering they’ve put you through? You should spoil yourself a little sometimes, you know? I’d grant your requests even if they are selfish.”

“In that case, could you spare the Tanner family? I mean, we’re already free to live our own lives now. We don’t need to bother with certain things anymore,” I said softly.

I did sometimes want to be a little selfish but I couldn’t bring myself to do so with anyone other than Christopher. Isabelle and I seemed to have this barrier between us; things simply didn’t feel the same anymore. The cost of being selfish with her was far too great and I was afraid of losing what I had.

“Enough. Look, I know what I’m doing. Nathan wants to protect the Tanner family but he chose to send you while he hides in the back. How smart of him, treating us both like fools!”

Hearing that, I knew better than to say any further because she would get mad if I did. She then brought me shopping for clothes and had me try on a ton of them. She also bought a lot of clothes after simply asking for my size without me even trying them on.

This was the longest Christopher and I had been separated, and I had been feeling increasingly uneasy since he left. It was as if I had lost my pillar of support. The past two days without him felt like two years.

However, I knew Christopher had left to give Mom some time to cool off and slowly accept him. He knew that having me cling to him at all times would only anger my mom even further, so he decided to take things slow and easy.

My mom came over and got me to move out today, Chris. She even bought a mansion because she knows I don’t like to live with the Goldsteins. I can feel that she’s really making an effort just for me. I know you’re probably mad about me leaving, but Sabby’s right: a brief separation is necessary for the sake of a better time together in the future. You tried getting closer to me in your own way, and now I’m trying to do the same. I love you, Chris.

That was what remained of the long text I sent Christopher after a lot of editing. I didn’t expect him to reply at all. I was flipping through a magazine with pictures of Remington’s artwork for an art exchange in Fleynia when I

heard my phone vibrate. I quickly turned around and grabbed my phone, only to see a text message reminding me that I had a package to receive.

Feeling a little disappointed that it wasn't from Christopher, I texted the delivery man and had him bring it to the mansion instead.

The delivery man brought the parcel over to me before dark that day, and I quickly opened the package in my bedroom. It wasn't until I saw the content inside that I froze on the spot. I carefully took the box of lollipops out of the package and saw a note on it that read: Remember to have these lollipops whenever you're feeling down.

Lollipops were my favorite snack. He would give me lollipops every now and then, so I knew Christopher was the one who sent these.

My phone vibrated again all of a sudden, and I quickly swiped at the screen in response. What greeted me was a text message from an encrypted number. You're such a naughty girl, moving out all by yourself! Don't expect me to go pick you up when you move back in next time! I'm angry. I'm not going to talk to you unless you coax me!

"Of course, that doesn't matter anymore. What's mine will still be mine. My daughter can't get married without a proper dowry!" Isabelle smiled. She wants to give me everything? Naturally, my first response was to refuse her offer. "I don't want any of that, Mom. You know how I've always preferred drawing since I was a kid, right? I'm getting kind of famous now and a lot of people have acknowledged my artistic skills. I'm really happy to do what I like for a living, and I don't need anything else." Isabelle gave me a strange look and said after a brief pause, "You silly girl! Why would you defend that scumbag father of yours after all the suffering they've put you through? You should spoil yourself a little sometimes, you know? I'd grant your requests even if they are selfish." "In that case, could you spare the Tanner family? I mean, we're already free to live our own lives now. We don't need to bother with certain things anymore," I said softly. I did sometimes want to be a little selfish but I couldn't bring myself to do so with anyone other than Christopher. Isabelle and I seemed to have this barrier between us; things simply didn't feel the same anymore. The cost of being selfish with her was far too great and I was afraid of losing what I had. "Enough. Look, I know what I'm doing. Nathan wants to protect the Tanner family but he chose to send you while he hides in the back. How smart of him, treating us both like fools!" Hearing that, I knew better than to say any further because she would get mad if I did. She then brought me shopping for clothes and had me try on a ton of them. She also

bought a lot of clothes after simply asking for my size without me even trying them on. This was the longest Christopher and I had been separated, and I had been feeling increasingly uneasy since he left. It was as if I had lost my pillar of support. The past two days without him felt like two years. However, I knew Christopher had left to give Mom some time to cool off and slowly accept him. He knew that having me cling to him at all times would only anger my mom even further, so he decided to take things slow and easy. My mom came over and got me to move out today, Chris. She even bought a mansion because she knows I don't like to live with the Goldsteins. I can feel that she's really making an effort just for me. I know you're probably mad about me leaving, but Sabby's right: a brief separation is necessary for the sake of a better time together in the future. You tried getting closer to me in your own way, and now I'm trying to do the same. I love you, Chris. That was what remained of the long text I sent Christopher after a lot of editing. I didn't expect him to reply at all. I was flipping through a magazine with pictures of Remington's artwork for an art exchange in Fleynia when I heard my phone vibrate. I quickly turned around and grabbed my phone, only to see a text message reminding me that I had a package to receive. Feeling a little disappointed that it wasn't from Christopher, I texted the delivery man and had him bring it to the mansion instead. The delivery man brought the parcel over to me before dark that day, and I quickly opened the package in my bedroom. It wasn't until I saw the content inside that I froze on the spot. I carefully took the box of lollipops out of the package and saw a note on it that read: Remember to have these lollipops whenever you're feeling down. Lollipops were my favorite snack. He would give me lollipops every now and then, so I knew Christopher was the one who sent these. My phone vibrated again all of a sudden, and I quickly swiped at the screen in response. What greeted me was a text message from an encrypted number. You're such a naughty girl, moving out all by yourself! Don't expect me to go pick you up when you move back in next time! I'm angry. I'm not going to talk to you unless you coax me!

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Although it was an angry text, I couldn't help but smile when I read it. Christopher was simply so nice to me that he couldn't bring himself to upset me at all. For some reason, all the negativity in me vanished that very moment, while the world around me seemed to have magically become a lot better.

Christopher had this special ability to warm my heart each time without even saying much. Instead, it was the little things he did that worked wonders. There was no way I could ever give up on a man like him, let alone leave him.

He had spoiled me to the point of no return. I would be a fish out of water without him – no one could possibly treat me better than he!

I'll let you do whatever you want to me when you get back, okay?

I sent that text to him just to share my current mood with him, even if he couldn't see me on the spot.

Things didn't seem to be getting any better for the Tanner family. When I woke up the next morning, all I saw on the news were rumors about them going bankrupt. Looks like the stuff I told Mom yesterday backfired... Dad has hurt Mom so badly that she no longer has any feelings of affection for him. The deeper you fall in love with someone, the more you hate them when they hurt you. Judging by how angry Mom looks whenever she talks about Dad, I can tell that hatred is all that remains in her heart.

Maybe the reason why I don't hate Lyle is that I met Christopher before I fell to the darkest depths of hell. It was Christopher who pulled me out of that abyss just in time.

Dad had just completed a checkup and looked like he was going to be discharged when I arrived at the hospital. His servants could be seen carrying his bags and standing at the entrance.

Nathan ran up to me and asked anxiously when he saw me, "How did things go? Did your Mom agree to spare us?"

I shook my head and let out a sigh as I said, "I'm sorry, but I don't think I can help you out with this one, Dad. I tried to talk Mom out of it, but she's very firm about her decision. It's obvious that she won't change her mind just because of what I said."

Nathan went pale and grabbed me by the wrists as he shouted desperately, "What? Why? Belle cares so much about you; she would definitely consider your requests! Eve, I know I have mistreated you and you have every right to hate me... But you must help me this one time or the entire Tanner family will be finished!"

“Calm down, Dad!” He was squeezing my wrists so hard that I broke out in a cold sweat from the pain.

“I can’t calm down! You’re a member of the Tanner family too! How could you just sit idly and watch us go bankrupt? That’s my life’s work, damn it! Your mom helped me build it back then, so why is she now hell-bent on destroying it completely? She could just come after me alone if she hates me! Why destroy something that belongs to her as well?” Nathan yelled with a twisted expression.

“No, that’s not true! Mom only turned out like this because she loves you way too much! You should go explain to her and resolve the matters from the past. That’s the only way for her to let go of her hatred.”

Nathan looked like he was about to kill someone with that expression and the constant panting, but I could only comfort him by saying, “I do want to help you, but Mom is a very determined person and won’t change her mind simply because of what I say. You’re the only person who could move her, Dad. You need to go see her yourself, okay?”

It was obvious that Mom hated Dad for cowering behind me, and that she was waiting for him to go see her in person.

“Hmph! Spare us the bullsh\*t and just admit it if you don’t want to help us! Yvonne, you ingrate! I can’t believe you’d just sit by and watch the family you grew up in getting destroyed! No wonder you’re not part of the family! We should’ve kicked you out and left you to die on the streets back then!” Natalie shouted angrily at me.

Although it was an angry text, I couldn't help but smile when I read it. Christopher was simply so nice to me that he couldn't bring himself to upset me at all. For some reason, all the negativity in me vanished that very moment, while the world around me seemed to have magically become a lot better. Christopher had this special ability to warm my heart each time without even saying much. Instead, it was the little things he did that worked wonders. There was no way I could ever give up on a man like him, let alone leave him. He had spoiled me to the point of no return. I would be a fish out of water without him - no one could possibly treat me better than he! I'll let you do whatever you want to me when you get back, okay? I sent that text to him just to share my current mood with him, even if he couldn't see me on the spot. Things didn't seem to be getting any better for the Tanner family. When I woke up the next morning, all I saw on the news were rumors about them going

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“What did you say? What do you mean I’m not part of the family?” I raised my voice as well.

Natalie wouldn’t have said that without a reason, so there must be some kind of secret that I did not know of.

“Natalie!” Nathan yelled at her.

“It’s time to stop hiding it, Uncle Nathan! Yvonne doesn’t give a sh\*t if you treat her like family, so you should just tell her the truth! Yvonne isn’t your daughter, and yet you’ve raised her like your own! She has no right to treat you like this!” Crystal butted into the conversation as well.

I stared wide-eyed at Crystal in shock. All these years, I have never considered the possibility that I’m not Nathan’s biological daughter! I simply assumed he was angry and frustrated at my mom for leaving him, so he took it out on me. I used to hate him for betraying Mom, but... If I’m not his biological daughter, then what’s the point of all this?

I grew up knowing Nathan and Isabelle as my parents. Imagine the shock and disbelief I felt when Crystal told me I was not Nathan’s daughter!

The next thing I knew, we were surrounded by a group of journalists who kept snapping away while firing questions about our family relationship.

“Is Yvonne Tanner really not your daughter? Is what Ms. Yates said true?”

“Ms. Tanner has been living with the Tanners since childhood, so whose daughter could she be? Please answer us, Mr. Tanner! Who’s causing the Tanner family to go bankrupt? Rumor has it that the Goldstein family plays a part in this incident. Is that true?”

That was a question that I wanted to know the answer to as well, and I looked at Nathan in hopes of him giving me the answer. All sorts of thoughts began running through my head, but I had a feeling that Crystal was telling the truth.

That was the only way to explain everything that had happened. It made sense why Nathan would love Crystal and Yvette more than me – that was because I wasn’t his daughter, to begin with!

The fact that he had raised me even though we weren’t related by blood was indeed a selfless act of generosity in itself.

“Dad... Is what Crystal said true?” I forced those words out of my mouth. Even though I already knew the answer to that question, I still wanted to hear it from the man himself.

Nathan glanced deeply at me and took a moment to calm down before saying in front of all the journalists around us, “Yes, it’s true. You are indeed not my daughter. I even have a DNA test report here that clearly states we are not related by blood at all, and that you...you’re not my daughter.”

The look on his face made it seem like admitting this fact was the hardest task in the world.

I staggered a few steps back in shock and leaned against the wall to stop myself from falling. “When did you find out?”

I remembered him being really nice to me back then, but he started hating me at one point and began treating me horribly. Perhaps that was the time he found out about the truth.

Nathan took a deep breath. “I knew about it long ago, even before Yvette was born.”

I closed my eyes. Whatever hatred I felt toward Nathan seemed to have vanished in that instant. I used to hate him so much for being an irresponsible father, but it turned out he wasn’t my father to begin with, so he didn’t owe me anything.

As Crystal said, he wouldn’t have been in the wrong even if he kicked me out of the Tanner family. Instead, he simply let me stay even after Mom left me behind.

“What did you say? What do you mean I’m not part of the family?” I raised my voice as well. Natalie wouldn’t have said that without a reason, so there must be some kind of secret that I did not know of. “Natalie!” Nathan yelled at her. “It’s time to stop hiding it, Uncle Nathan! Yvonne doesn’t give a sh\*t if you treat her like family, so you should just tell her the truth! Yvonne isn’t your daughter, and yet you’ve raised her like your own! She has no right to treat you like this!” Crystal butted into the conversation as well. I stared wide-eyed at Crystal in shock. All these years, I have never considered the possibility that I’m not Nathan’s biological daughter! I simply assumed he was angry and frustrated at my mom for leaving him, so he took it out on me. I used to hate him for betraying Mom, but... If I’m not his biological daughter, then what’s the



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