

Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 591-600

Posted by **chapter novel**, 64 Views, Released on July 13, 2022

“It’s all right.” Isabelle walked around me, crossed her arms, and laughed as she saw the scar on her face. “Tsk tsk, I think you must have provoked Nathan, and he hurt you. Am I correct? Nathan appears to be gentle, but when enraged, he is not to be trifled with. There is a time where he has single-handedly beaten a gangster who flirted with me until he ended up in the hospital for three months.”

“Isabelle, you b*tch! You’ll die a horrible death!” Scarlett was enraged by Isabelle and yelled angrily at her, “The Tanners is my daughter’s. It should all belong to my daughter. Who do you think you are? Why do you have to take away my daughter’s inheritance? You’re just a shameless b*tch who eloped with a stranger. You have no right to do this!”

What Scarlett said was far too excessive. It had an impact on Mark as well. I was also feeling very uneasy about it. When I looked up at Isabelle, she was expressionless in response to what Scarlett said. She did not even have a guilty expression on her face. Instead, she was becoming happier and laughing even louder.

“Even Nathan and Natalie will show me some courtesy and refrain from speaking loudly to me when they are in my presence. You’re just a mistress who destroys another person’s family with your children and body. Do you really believe you have what it takes to be the lady of the house?” said Isabelle.

“Bullsh*t, Nathan and I have genuine affection for one another. When he first met me, he told me that he had long been bored with you because of your cheating behavior. Yvonne is proof. You continue to date other men after you’ve married. It’s entirely your fault that Nathan dumped you. I’ll tell you right now that if you don’t return my daughter’s properties to her, I’ll end your life,” Scarlett replied.

Isabelle’s smile was getting wicked, and she lifted Scarlett’s chin with her hand and looked at the scar on her face. She then laughed and said, “I’m standing here right now. Let’s see how you want to end my life.”

She then turned to the bodyguards and said, “Are you all statues? Mrs. Tanner is being disrespectful. Shouldn’t you do something to shut her up?”

For a brief moment, the bodyguards were stunned. Then one of them suddenly pulled Scarlett's hand behind her back, and the other began slapping Scarlett in the face. He did not appear to be having mercy on Scarlett, and her face was swollen as a result.

"Ahh... Isabelle, let go of me. It is entirely your fault that you are unable to keep your husband. What does any of this have to do with me? You can't force love. Ahhh... If Nathan truly loves you, I will not be able to break your family apart. Isn't it difficult for you to accept that you have been kicked out of the family years ago? If you have the guts, you can simply tell Nathan to kick Yvette and me out and take you back in the Tanner family. If not, you should return the Tanner family's properties to my daughter."

"You're still going to be spouting nonsense? Continue!" Isabelle did not seem to have any intention of relenting, and it was not very comforting to see. I let go of my mom's hand, thinking that she was a total stranger to me at the time.

"Please don't hit my mom. Let her go!" Yvette appeared out of nowhere and ran over to Scarlett, hugging her and trying to free Scarlett from the two bodyguards.

As Isabelle did not order the bodyguards to stop, they did not dare to stop and continued slapping Scarlett together with Yvette.

Yvette did not dare to plead with Isabelle. Instead, she sobbed and begged me, "Please, Yvonne, tell them to stop. Everything I've done to you in the past has been under Crystal's orders. It was her ideas, and I only do what she tells me to. Isn't it true that I am the most pitiful member of the Tanner family besides you? We are the daughters of the Tanner family. However, we have been treated poorly, worse than Crystal, our cousin. Tell them to stop hitting Mom, please."

The mother and daughter were screaming and crying as they hugged each other. Finally, I could not stand it any longer and gently pulled Isabelle's hand. But she shrugged my hand away and did not respond to me.

I felt uncomfortable and really did not like to see this kind of scene. So, I yelled at the bodyguards, "Stop it!"

The bodyguards continued because Isabelle had not ordered them to stop. Fortunately, Mark had ordered them, "Do you not hear Ms. Yvonne telling you to stop? Let Mrs. Tanner go."

"It's all right." Isabelle walked around me, crossed her arms, and laughed as she saw the scar on her face. "Tsk tsk, I think you must have provoked Nathan, and he hurt you. Am I correct? Nathan appears to be gentle, but when enraged, he is not to be trifled with. There is a time where he has single-handedly beaten a gangster who flirted with me until he ended up in the hospital for three months." "Isabelle, you b*tch! You'll die a horrible death!" Scarlett was enraged by Isabelle and yelled angrily at her, "The Tanners is my daughter's. It should all belong to my daughter. Who do you think you are? Why do you have to take away my daughter's inheritance? You're just a shameless b*tch who eloped with a stranger. You have no right to do this!" What Scarlett said was far too excessive. It had an impact on Mark as well. I was also feeling very uneasy about it. When I looked up at Isabelle, she was expressionless in response to what Scarlett said. She did not even have a guilty expression on her face. Instead, she was becoming happier and laughing even louder. "Even Nathan and Natalie will show me some courtesy and refrain from speaking loudly to me when they are in my presence. You're just a mistress who destroys another person's family with your children and body. Do you really believe you have what it takes to be the lady of the house?" said Isabelle. "Bullsh*t, Nathan and I have genuine affection for one another. When he first met me, he told me that he had long been bored with you because of your cheating behavior. Yvonne is proof. You continue to date other men after you've married. It's entirely your fault that Nathan dumped you. I'll tell you right now that if you don't return my daughter's properties to her, I'll end your life," Scarlett replied. Isabelle's smile was getting wicked, and she lifted Scarlett's chin with her hand and looked at the scar on her face. She then laughed and said, "I'm standing here right now. Let's see how you want to end my life." She then turned to the bodyguards and said, "Are you all statues? Mrs. Tanner is being disrespectful. Shouldn't you do something to shut her up?" For a brief moment, the bodyguards were stunned. Then one of them suddenly pulled Scarlett's hand behind her back, and the other began slapping Scarlett in the face. He did not appear to be having mercy on Scarlett, and her face was swollen as a result. "Ahh... Isabelle, let go of me. It is entirely your fault that you are unable to keep your husband. What does any of this have to do with me? You can't force love. Ahhh... If Nathan truly loves you, I will not be able to break your family apart. Isn't it difficult for you to accept that you have been kicked out of the family years ago? If you have the guts, you can simply tell Nathan to kick Yvette and me out and take you back in the Tanner family. If not, you should return the Tanner family's properties to my daughter." "You're still going to be spouting nonsense? Continue!" Isabelle did not seem to have any intention of relenting, and it was not very comforting to see. I let go of my mom's hand, thinking that she was a total stranger to me

at the time. "Please don't hit my mom. Let her go!" Yvette appeared out of nowhere and ran over to Scarlett, hugging her and trying to free Scarlett from the two bodyguards. As Isabelle did not order the bodyguards to stop, they did not dare to stop and continued slapping Scarlett together with Yvette. Yvette did not dare to plead with Isabelle. Instead, she sobbed and begged me, "Please, Yvonne, tell them to stop. Everything I've done to you in the past has been under Crystal's orders. It was her ideas, and I only do what she tells me to. Isn't it true that I am the most pitiful member of the Tanner family besides you? We are the daughters of the Tanner family. However, we have been treated poorly, worse than Crystal, our cousin. Tell them to stop hitting Mom, please." The mother and daughter were screaming and crying as they hugged each other. Finally, I could not stand it any longer and gently pulled Isabelle's hand. But she shrugged my hand away and did not respond to me. I felt uncomfortable and really did not like to see this kind of scene. So, I yelled at the bodyguards, "Stop it!" The bodyguards continued because Isabelle had not ordered them to stop. Fortunately, Mark had ordered them, "Do you not hear Ms. Yvonne telling you to stop? Let Mrs. Tanner go."

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Hearing Mark's words, the bodyguard stopped beating Scarlett. Dissatisfied, Isabelle frowned and shook her head. "I don't know who you take after. How can you be so kind."

"I just don't think it's necessary." I smiled. People were born to sympathize with the weak. I could not bring myself to be an onlooker when two men were beating weak women. Moreover, they were Nathan's wife and daughter. Even if they had nothing to do with me, I should stop it because of Nathan.

"Forget it. It's up to you." Shortly afterward, Isabelle waved her hand and brought Mark to the garden.

Then, I walked over and assisted Yvette in helping Scarlett up. However, as soon as I touched Scarlett, she pushed me away. "Get lost! You don't have to pretend to be kind. Do you think I'll appreciate your fake kindness and help you deal with Crystal and her mother? Don't even think about it!"

Frankly, I had never thought about it that way. The only thing I ever wanted in my life was to live a good life with Christopher. It was too taxing to take revenge on others, so there was no need to get even with every single person that had set me up.

When I saw that Scarlett could not even stand properly, I called an ambulance for them because of her miserable look. After they moved Scarlett on the stretcher and carried her into the ambulance, Yvette, who had already got into the ambulance, came down again and said to me, "Thank you, Yvonne."

"It's okay. I just did what I wanted to do. I have a clear conscience," I replied softly.

Lifting her head, she glanced at me and whispered into my ears, "I saw your mother meeting with Crystal very frequently. You'd better be careful. I've got a feeling that Crystal is plotting something again."

"What?" My first reaction was that Yvette was trying to drive a wedge between Mom and me.

"No matter you believe it or not, that's all I can say. Perhaps, some things aren't as simple as you think. You'd helped me once, and I've returned your favor, so we're even now. The next time we meet again, we're still enemies." Yvette cast a brief look at me before turning around and leaving.

Staring at the leaving ambulance, I knitted my brows. What did she mean? Is there some kind of cooperation between Mom and Crystal?

Compared to Crystal, I would rather trust Yvette, but I could not ask Mom directly about the matter. Even if I asked, she would not necessarily tell me.

Three days later, there was a grand banquet at the Goldstein residence, and it was prepared for me. After Mark acknowledged me as her daughter, he completely changed his attitude toward me. Probably, it was because he did not have any children. He liked me very much.

In addition to giving me the best room in the mansion, he also bought a lot of things for me. Every time I wanted to refuse, he would say that he was not by my side when I was young, so he wanted to do something for me to make up for all those years.

Since he had said so, I could not refuse him anymore. The banquet was organized by Mark. He wanted to hold an unprecedented grand banquet and solemnly announce my identity to the upper class in Avenport.

Standing in the piano room, I ran my fingers on the limited-edition piano in front of me. Actually, I had mixed emotions. From time to time, I could hear the sound of car engines and people's laughter from downstairs.

"Ms. Tanner, it's almost time. Mr. Goldstein asked you to change your clothes and entertain the guests with him." A servant walked in and said respectfully.

"I'll go right away." Moments later, I went back to my bedroom and opened the closet. Just when I was about to change, a lot of servants came in. Some helped to take off my clothes; the others put on the evening dress for me. After I sat on the chair, a professional makeup artist and stylist did my makeup and hair.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I felt strange. The delicate makeup accentuated my beauty, but I did not resemble Isabelle and Mark at all. Am I really Mark's daughter?

Hearing Mark's words, the bodyguard stopped beating Scarlett. Dissatisfied, Isabelle frowned and shook her head. "I don't know who you take after. How can you be so kind." "I just don't think it's necessary." I smiled. People were born to sympathize with the weak. I could not bring myself to be an onlooker when two men were beating weak women. Moreover, they were Nathan's wife and daughter. Even if they had nothing to do with me, I should stop it because of Nathan. "Forget it. It's up to you." Shortly afterward, Isabelle waved her hand and brought Mark to the garden. Then, I walked over and assisted Yvette in helping Scarlett up. However, as soon as I touched Scarlett, she pushed me away. "Get lost! You don't have to pretend to be kind. Do you think I'll appreciate your fake kindness and help you deal with Crystal and her mother? Don't even think about it!" Frankly, I had never thought about it that way. The only thing I ever wanted in my life was to live a good life with Christopher. It was too taxing to take revenge on others, so there was no need to get even with every single person that had set me up. When I saw that Scarlett could not even stand properly, I called an ambulance for them because of her miserable look. After they moved Scarlett on the stretcher and carried her into the ambulance, Yvette, who had already got into the ambulance, came down again and said to me, "Thank you, Yvonne." "It's okay. I just did what I wanted to do. I have a clear conscience," I replied softly. Lifting her head, she glanced at me and whispered into my ears, "I saw your mother meeting with Crystal very frequently. You'd better be careful. I've got a feeling that Crystal is plotting something again." "What?" My first reaction was that Yvette was trying to drive a wedge between Mom and me. "No matter you believe it or not, that's all I can say. Perhaps, some things aren't as simple as

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All of a sudden, there was a knock on the door. Mark was outside of the bedroom and urged, "Eve, are you ready? Everyone is here."

"I'm coming!" Shortly afterward, I opened the bedroom door and walked out. When he saw me in the elegant dress, his eyes lit up, and he exclaimed, "My daughter is so beautiful!" Subsequently, he stretched out his hand in front of me.

After some hesitation, I took his hand. When we arrived at the stairs, I could feel everyone's gazes focused on me. With an elegant smile on my face, I fixated my eyes on Mom, who was greeting the guests.

She was talking to a family, but they did not seem to be from Avenport because they looked unfamiliar. As I walked down the stairs, Mom pointed at me and said something to the dignified-looking man. The next moment, he looked toward me and smiled at me. In response, I nodded slightly.

My gaze swept across the hall, and I realized that many people were present. Moreover, I was familiar with most of them. Benson was downstairs as well, but he looked less arrogant and did not stand beside Crystal. On the contrary, Crystal attended the banquet as the heir of the Tanner family, standing proudly in the crowd.

The Lane family and the Goldstein family were originally business rivals. Even if only one of them came, it was great respect to the Goldstein family. However, everyone from the Lane family had turned up. I saw Christopher placing his hand on where his heart was while glancing at me with a smile on his face. His smile was much more genuine compared to others. The Lane family must have attended the banquet for my sake.

“Welcome to everyone who attends this banquet, and thank you for taking your time to join us. Of course, the star of the day isn’t me but the person next to me.”

Mark pointed at me with a gentle smile and announced softly, “I believe everyone had read the newspaper and heard some rumors. That’s right. Eve is my daughter. I’m heartbroken for not being able to fulfill my responsibility as a father for so many years, so today, I solemnly introduce her to everyone. From now on, Eve is the daughter of the Goldstein family.”

After he finished speaking, there was a round of applause from the crowd. As one of the bigwigs in Avenport, everyone showed him respect.

Since I was the main focus of the banquet, naturally, I would have to do the opening dance. Instantaneously, I wanted to walk toward Christopher, and he was also looking at me. With my current identity, I was finally a woman worthy of him. In one of the most important moments of my life, I wanted to hold his hand and dance together with him in the public as a gesture of love.

“Eve, come here!” When I was about to walk toward Christopher, Isabelle suddenly came over and blocked my way. There was a smile on her face, but I could see the anger that flashed across her eyes. Pointing at the man next to her, she uttered, “This is Tobey Osborn from Horington. He’s a decent man. Would you like to ask him for a dance?”

Although she sounded implicit, as someone who grew up in the Tanner family, I immediately understood the meaning behind her words. She was trying to set me up with him. In an instant, my expression darkened, and the smile on my face faded. Nevertheless, I could not say anything to Mom on that kind of occasion.

“Hi, Mr. Osborn!” I stretched out my hand to Tobey, not to invite him for a dance but to shake hands. The seemingly graceful man held my hand and did not let go. I could feel that his thumb was constantly rubbing the back of my hand with a hint of infatuation.

Thus, I pulled my hand slightly, but he did not let go. While thinking about how ignorant he could be, I got closer to block everyone’s sight and yanked my hand back. After that, I turned my head and caught a glimpse of Christopher. He had already walked to the front of the crowd. Immediately, I stepped forward and wanted to reach out to him.

Just then, Sabrina blocked in front of me and shook her head. I stopped dead in my tracks and glanced at Christopher, only to see him shaking his head as well, telling me not to be too impulsive. Pursing my lips, I fixated my gaze on Zachary. Then, I stood in front of him and stretched out my hand.

On the other hand, Zachary was puzzled and could not comprehend my actions.

All of a sudden, there was a knock on the door. Mark was outside of the bedroom and urged, “Eve, are you ready? Everyone is here.” “I’m coming!” Shortly afterward, I opened the bedroom door and walked out. When he saw me in the elegant dress, his eyes lit up, and he exclaimed, “My daughter is so beautiful!” Subsequently, he stretched out his hand in front of me. After some hesitation, I took his hand. When we arrived at the stairs, I could feel everyone's gazes focused on me. With an elegant smile on my face, I fixated my eyes on Mom, who was greeting the guests. She was talking to a family, but they did not seem to be from Avenport because they looked unfamiliar. As I walked down the stairs, Mom pointed at me and said something to the dignified-looking man. The next moment, he looked toward me and smiled at me. In response, I nodded slightly. My gaze swept across the hall, and I realized that many people were present. Moreover, I was familiar with most of them. Benson was downstairs as well, but he looked less arrogant and did not stand beside Crystal. On the contrary, Crystal attended the banquet as the heir of the Tanner family, standing proudly in the crowd. The Lane family and the Goldstein family were originally business rivals. Even if only one of them

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“Zachary, we’ve been friends for such a long time. You won’t reject my invitation to be my dance partner, right?” Zachary’s silly expression was too cute. On the surface, he had a solemn expression, but anyone who knew him well would know that he was in a daze and at a loss for what to do.

I was amused by his reaction and stuck out my tongue at him. No matter he was willing to be my dance partner or not, I dragged him to the dance floor. Even though Mom still looked unhappy, her expression had relaxed a little.

Zachary’s dance style was the same as his personality, scrupulous and methodical. If he participated in a dancing competition, I believed he would claim first because his movements were too standard.

Sliding into the center of the dance floor, he suddenly piped up, “Yvonne, I’m a married man, and I’ve never thought of divorce. Neither do I want to be a two-timer. Although you’re my savior, this is a matter of principle.”

All of a sudden, I was nonplussed and began to wonder why he was so simple-minded.

“I only invited you for a dance. You don’t have to let your imagination run wild,” I responded flatly.

“Every discerning guest knows that you should do this dance with your significant other,” he replied gloomily. “I can already predict the headline of the newspapers tomorrow.”

“I think you should worry about how to explain it to Mr. and Mrs. Zimmer.” Having said that, I could not help but chuckle. No wonder Sabrina loves to tease him. This is fun.

“I think I’ll die a horrible death. Can we turn back time?”

After the opening dance, Mark brought me around to greet every guest. Every time he introduced me, he had a serious demeanor and kept emphasizing that I was his daughter.

Compliments from the guests came one after another – what a young and promising painter, beautiful and charming lady, as expected of the daughter of the Goldstein family, and so on. I found it strange because those words were used to describe Crystal in the past. Now that my identity was different, they

also praised me the same way. It could be said that my net worth had skyrocketed.

After a while, Sabrina came over and whispered into my ears, "Your prince charming is waiting for you in the rose garden."

Immediately, I understood the meaning of her words. Since I was not used to all the flatteries, I excused myself and quietly left the banquet. When I was on my way to look for Christopher in the garden, Crystal suddenly appeared and blocked my way.

As we were in the Goldstein residence, I hoped she was not thinking of embarrassing me because that would be absurd. Casting a brief look at her, I questioned, "What's the matter?"

In response, she snorted. "Yvonne, don't be too full of yourself. Even if you're the daughter of the Goldstein family, I won't admit defeat. Sooner or later, I'll rise to a status so high that you can't reach it."

I could not understand. Is she living her life to prove that she's better than others? "Is that the only thing you're pursuing? What benefits do you get by trampling on me?"

Curious, I questioned again, "Other than that, do you have nothing else to pursue? Your happiness, a lover, and a good career aren't important to you?"

"All those are ruined by you! Yvonne, I'll take back what you'd taken from me. Just you wait and see!" With that, she turned around and walked upstairs.

Her provocation took me by surprise. Also, I had never expected her to go upstairs in front of me. Thinking of what she was holding earlier, I frowned and queried the servant passing by, "Why did Ms. Yates go upstairs? Was she upstairs just now?"

"Yes, Ms. Yates was upstairs, together with Mrs. Goldstein. She should be going back to look for Mrs. Goldstein now," answered the servant respectfully.

"She was upstairs for the whole time? Are you sure?" I inquired in surprise.

"Yes. After you finished the opening dance, she went upstairs with Mrs. Goldstein and stayed until now."

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“Other than that, do you have nothing else to pursue? Your happiness, a lover, and a good career aren't important to you?” “All those are ruined by you! Yvonne, I'll take back what you'd taken from me. Just you wait and see!” With that, she turned around and walked upstairs. Her provocation took me by surprise. Also, I had never expected her to go upstairs in front of me. Thinking of what she was holding earlier, I frowned and queried the servant passing by, “Why did Ms. Yates go upstairs? Was she upstairs just now?” “Yes, Ms. Yates was upstairs, together with Mrs. Goldstein. She should be going back to look for Mrs. Goldstein now,” answered the servant respectfully. “She was upstairs for the whole time? Are you sure?” I inquired in surprise. “Yes. After you finished the opening dance, she went upstairs with Mrs. Goldstein and stayed until now.”

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What exactly is Mom up to?

All of a sudden, I remembered what Yvette said. She told me that Crystal had a close relationship with Mom. For some reason, I was flustered. No matter where I went, I could see Crystal as if I would never be able to get rid of her.

The question kept bugging me, and when I found Christopher in the garden, I was still immersed in my thoughts.

“Is there something in your mind? You look disturbed.” Christopher wrapped his arms around my waist, leaned against the tree trunk, and asked softly while gently tapping my nose.

“Is it that obvious? I thought I've done a good job of concealing my emotions recently.” Scratching my head, I smiled embarrassedly.

“I've said so much, but you didn't even answer my questions. And you're telling me that you're good at concealing your emotions? In your eyes, do I look like such a stupid man?” He raised his head high and pretended to be furious. “I'm angry. Hurry up and coax me.”

“Okay. I'm sorry!” I stood on tiptoe and kissed his cheek. As soon as I backed away, he held my neck and pulled me back. Then, he kissed my lips and pried them open, deepening the kiss.

Our tongues were dancing at his lead, and he was constantly sucking every bit of air in my mouth. My brain was fuzzy, and I suddenly lost the ability to

think and allow him to hug me. The kiss continued to deepen, and there was basically not a gap between our bodies.

His dark eyes were soothing and gentle. The shimmering light deep in his eyes almost sucked me in. For a moment, I forgot where I was. My eyes were full of him and the happiness that belonged to us.

After our lips parted, I buried my head in his chest, panting. He leaned my head on his shoulder, and his tone was incredibly gentle. "Do you feel at ease now?"

In response, I nodded and grinned. "Chris, I'm blessed to have you by my side."

"Hmph! We haven't met each other for three days, and you've already distanced yourself from me. Not only that, but you don't even talk to me about your concerns. Wait, don't tell me that you've fallen in love with Zach. If that's true, I'll abuse my power and send him on a mission to another city. It'll be better if he can spend his entire life away from us so that I have one less love rival." Christopher turned his head away and quipped with a smile.

"If Sabby hears this, she'll never let you off easily." Rolling my eyes at him, I laughed when I imagined the scene and reached out to tickle him.

While standing on the spot, he kept trying to dodge my hands. In the end, he pinned me against the tree trunk and pressed on me. I tiptoed and gave him a peck. "It's nothing special. I'm a little lost, as I'm not used to being the center of attention."

"I'm the focus wherever I go, and I've never felt any discomfort. You're hopeless. I'm right in front of you, but I can't make you feel at ease," he muttered, pouting like a child throwing a tantrum.

"No, when I won in drawing contests back then, I also felt discomfort. But that kind of discomfort is totally different from the one I'm feeling right now." As I talked, I felt that my way of expressing myself was wrong, and I could not help but feel dejected.

"Chris, I'm really puzzled and anxious. All these happen suddenly, and they don't feel real at all. Do you think I'm really Mark's daughter? Why do I feel so out of place?" Finally, I told him the doubts deep in my heart. Ever since Mark acknowledged me as his daughter, I had been feeling anxious.

“Is he treating you badly?” Christopher asked in a deep voice. Immediately, his expression turned serious.

“No, he’s very good to me. It’s just that everything feels so strange. Maybe I still can’t adapt to it,” I answered after much hesitation.

“It’s my fault. I didn’t notice that your mother was pregnant with you earlier. I can understand why you’re feeling anxious.”

Out of the blue, Mark’s voice came from behind me. In an instant, I turned my head around.

What exactly is Mom up to? All of a sudden, I remembered what Yvette said. She told me that Crystal had a close relationship with Mom. For some reason, I was flustered. No matter where I went, I could see Crystal as if I would never be able to get rid of her. The question kept bugging me, and when I found Christopher in the garden, I was still immersed in my thoughts. “Is there something in your mind? You look disturbed.” Christopher wrapped his arms around my waist, leaned against the tree trunk, and asked softly while gently tapping my nose. “Is it that obvious? I thought I’ve done a good job of concealing my emotions recently.” Scratching my head, I smiled embarrassedly. “I’ve said so much, but you didn’t even answer my questions. And you’re telling me that you’re good at concealing your emotions? In your eyes, do I look like such a stupid man?” He raised his head high and pretended to be furious. “I’m angry. Hurry up and coax me.” “Okay. I’m sorry!” I stood on tiptoe and kissed his cheek. As soon as I backed away, he held my neck and pulled me back. Then, he kissed my lips and pried them open, deepening the kiss. Our tongues were dancing at his lead, and he was constantly sucking every bit of air in my mouth. My brain was fuzzy, and I suddenly lost the ability to think and allow him to hug me. The kiss continued to deepen, and there was basically not a gap between our bodies. His dark eyes were soothing and gentle. The shimmering light deep in his eyes almost sucked me in. For a moment, I forgot where I was. My eyes were full of him and the happiness that belonged to us. After our lips parted, I buried my head in his chest, panting. He leaned my head on his shoulder, and his tone was incredibly gentle. “Do you feel at ease now?” In response, I nodded and grinned. “Chris, I’m blessed to have you by my side.” “Hmph! We haven’t met each other for three days, and you’ve already distanced yourself from me. Not only that, but you don’t even talk to me about your concerns. Wait, don’t tell me that you’ve fallen in love with Zach. If that’s true, I’ll abuse my power and send him on a mission to another city. It’ll be better if he can spend his entire life away from us so that I have one less love rival.” Christopher turned his

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Mark walked toward us with a kind smile on his face and his hands behind his back. Suddenly, I was at a loss for what to do. It was bad to talk about people behind their backs, and I was caught in the act.

"You're here," I mumbled without calling him Dad. That form of address was still too difficult for me.

"Mr. Goldstein." Christopher stood beside me.

"You're still unwilling to call me Dad." Abruptly, Mark sighed and glanced sideways at Christopher. His eyes were cold, and I could feel an invisible pressure exuding from his body as if he would get angry at any time. Immediately, I was intimidated by the intense aura.

Standing next to Christopher, I did not dare to step back. If Mark was angry, I could not let him vent his anger on Christopher.

Nevertheless, Christopher did not give in and looked into Mark's eyes. Neither of them moved. Abruptly, I felt nervous because if there were any conflicts between them, the consequences would be disastrous.

"Hahaha!" After a while, Mark burst out in laughter and remarked, "As expected of Gordon's son. Not bad."

"Thank you, Mr. Goldstein." Christopher was still standing beside me, and a faint smile appeared on his face.

"You're patient and calm. These days, there aren't many young people who can carry themselves well like you. Most of them are impetuous." Touching his chin, Mark pulled me to his side satisfyingly and said proudly, "As expected of my daughter. You've such a good taste in men."

I was a little embarrassed, for he would praise me at every chance he had. In the past few days, I had heard more compliments than I had heard in the past two decades. Could it be that he's even making up this aspect for me?

"It's a pity that today isn't a good time to chat. Let's find a time and have a good talk," remarked Mark.

"Sure. It just so happens that I've got a lot of things that I want to ask you too," replied Christopher. The next moment, he asked casually, "Why didn't I see Wesley? As your competent assistant, I can't believe he actually didn't attend such an important event like this."

"He's probably in Anglandur right now. Since he's in charge of many of my businesses, he doesn't have time to attend even if he wants to." At that moment, an indecipherable emotion flickered across Mark's eyes.

Meanwhile, I did not expect Christopher to mention Wesley out of the blue. After the previous incident, although I was aware that Mark knew about it, we avoided the topic subconsciously because with my identity now, it would be appropriate to pursue the matter further.

"Ms. Tanner, Mrs. Goldstein is looking for you. She asked you to go over quickly and stop hanging out with some riff-raff here." Just then, a servant hurried over and repeated what Isabelle said. In an instant, I knew that the riff-raff she was talking about referred to Christopher. Obviously, the servant did not expect Mark to be there as well. As soon as she finished speaking, she was struck dumb looking at Mark with a panic expression on her face.

I waved my hand and asked the servant to leave first. When Mark saw that, he did not pursue the matter further. Frowning, he piped up, "Sometimes, your mother can be quite stubborn, and no one can do anything about it. She hasn't changed at all over the years."

Upon hearing that, I remained silent while maintaining the polite smile on my face. I just can't get close to Mark. Is it because my resentment towards him is too intense? Looking at Christopher, I was reluctant to leave because recently, I had fewer opportunities to meet him.

"Chris..." I called out his name. Before I could say anything else, tears began to well up in my eyes. What should I do for us to be together?

"Go ahead. I'll find a chance and have a good talk with your mother one day. Don't worry." Mark patted my head lightly and turned to Christopher. "My daughter is deeply in love with you. Don't let her down. As long as you don't give up, I have a way to make Belle agree with your relationship."

At that instant, Christopher exchanged looks with me while raising his eyebrows. Then, a wicked smile spread across his face. "Mr. Goldstein, even if you object, I'll never give up."

Mark walked toward us with a kind smile on his face and his hands behind his back. Suddenly, I was at a loss for what to do. It was bad to talk about people behind their backs, and I was caught in the act. "You're here," I mumbled without calling him Dad. That form of address was still too difficult for me. "Mr. Goldstein." Christopher stood beside me. "You're still unwilling to call me Dad." Abruptly, Mark sighed and glanced sideways at Christopher. His eyes were cold, and I could feel an invisible pressure exuding from his body as if he would get angry at any time. Immediately, I was intimidated by the intense aura. Standing next to Christopher, I did not dare to step back. If Mark was angry, I could not let him vent his anger on Christopher. Nevertheless, Christopher did not give in and looked into Mark's eyes. Neither of them moved. Abruptly, I felt nervous because if there were any conflicts between them, the consequences would be disastrous. "Hahaha!" After a while, Mark burst out in laughter and remarked, "As expected of Gordon's son. Not bad." "Thank you, Mr. Goldstein." Christopher was still standing beside me, and a faint smile appeared on his face. "You're patient and calm. These days, there aren't many young people who can carry themselves well like you. Most of them are impetuous." Touching his chin, Mark pulled me to his side satisfyingly and said proudly, "As expected of my daughter. You've such a good taste in men." I was a little embarrassed, for he would praise me at

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I did not know what Mark told Mom. Although she was upset that I met with Christopher in the garden on the day of the banquet, she did not vent her anger on me.

That night, something came up, so Mark left the house, but there was an extra person at the dinner table. The person's name was Crystal Yates. Honestly, I was really surprised by the fact that Crystal stayed behind as a guest. Moreover, I was traumatized by her appearance.

"Crystal, eat up. There's no need to be too courteous. Make yourself at home." Isabelle smiled softly and said to Crystal.

"Thank you, Aunt Isabelle. You should eat more too. Try this carrot. It's not just a vegetable. Eating more carrots can help keep your skin healthy and vibrant. You'll always stay as beautiful as you're now. If we go out together, others might think that you're my elder sister."

"Oh, come on. You're flattering me so much that I almost think that I'm only eighteen years old."

In fact, Crystal was really good at sweet-talking. She was a master in making the elders happy back then. Mom was no exception as well. For the whole night, she had kept a smile on her face and even ate an extra serving of food.

"How is it? After taking over the Tanner family, are there any problems that you can't handle? Just tell me if you encounter any problems. I'll definitely help you solve them and prevent others from taking advantage of it," Isabelle inquired while grinning.

"Well, there's a little problem." Looking at Isabelle, Crystal was hesitant to speak.

"You can be honest with us. We're not outsiders."

Having said that, Isabelle nudged my arm lightly. In response, I nodded in agreement. I did not even know what the food tasted like. Looking at Isabelle and Crystal, who were chatting happily, I felt that they were mother and daughter, and I was an outsider.

Crystal was definitely the most amazing person I had ever seen. She seemed to be born with a kind of talent that could make people treat her kindly. Even Mom was no exception.

Sighing in my heart, I completely lost my appetite.

“It’s about the business of the Tanner family. Because of the misrepresentation in the newspaper before this, our business has been affected. After I take over, the situation has gotten worse. Aunt Isabelle, you know well that I’m not talented in doing business. If it hadn’t been for Uncle Nathan, the company would have been in a mess right now.”

Immediately, Crystal told Isabelle about the situation of the Tanner family. In actuality, Isabelle was well aware of the situation, but she still listened very seriously just because Crystal was the one who was talking.

“This is certainly a problem.”

After putting down her spoon, Isabelle had a grim expression. At that moment, I realized that she was actually thinking about the issue seriously.

She pondered for a moment and said to Crystal, “I’m attending a business gathering tomorrow, and everyone else is either the person in charge of prominent families or investment companies. Why don’t you go with me? Actually, I’m looking for investors for a project. The Tanner family should participate in the project too. It’s just that you won’t profit much from it. What do you think?”

In an instant, Crystal’s eyes lit up, and she exclaimed, “I’m very much willing to participate in the project. Thank you, Aunt Isabelle. You’re my life savior!”

“Life savior? You’re exaggerating.” Amused by Crystal’s words, Isabelle burst into hearty laughter.

I had never seen Mom laugh like that in front of me. Suddenly, I was stunned, and a thought crossed my mind. Mom is laughing happily because of Crystal. On the contrary, the relationship between Mom and me has been tense because of Christopher.

“Yvonne, why aren’t you eating? All these dishes are prepared by Aunt Isabelle. They’re her hard work. Even if you’re used to eating the food from the Lane family, you shouldn’t let her effort go to waste.”

After Crystal finished speaking, I clearly noticed Mom’s expression had darkened, and she seemed to be very unhappy. My face immediately fell as Crystal was obviously sowing discord between Mom and me. Not to mention that she purposely mentioned the things that Mom hated.

Hearing that, I snorted and responded dissatisfiedly, "Watch your tongue. This is the Goldstein residence. Do you mean I don't even have the right to eat as much as I like?"

I did not know what Mark told Mom. Although she was upset that I met with Christopher in the garden on the day of the banquet, she did not vent her anger on me. That night, something came up, so Mark left the house, but there was an extra person at the dinner table. The person's name was Crystal Yates. Honestly, I was really surprised by the fact that Crystal stayed behind as a guest. Moreover, I was traumatized by her appearance. "Crystal, eat up. There's no need to be too courteous. Make yourself at home." Isabelle smiled softly and said to Crystal. "Thank you, Aunt Isabelle. You should eat more too. Try this carrot. It's not just a vegetable. Eating more carrots can help keep your skin healthy and vibrant. You'll always stay as beautiful as you're now. If we go out together, others might think that you're my elder sister." "Oh, come on. You're flattering me so much that I almost think that I'm only eighteen years old." In fact, Crystal was really good at sweet-talking. She was a master in making the elders happy back then. Mom was no exception as well. For the whole night, she had kept a smile on her face and even ate an extra serving of food. "How is it? After taking over the Tanner family, are there any problems that you can't handle? Just tell me if you encounter any problems. I'll definitely help you solve them and prevent others from taking advantage of it," Isabelle inquired while grinning. "Well, there's a little problem." Looking at Isabelle, Crystal was hesitant to speak. "You can be honest with us. We're not outsiders." Having said that, Isabelle nudged my arm lightly. In response, I nodded in agreement. I did not even know what the food tasted like. Looking at Isabelle and Crystal, who were chatting happily, I felt that they were mother and daughter, and I was an outsider. Crystal was definitely the most amazing person I had ever seen. She seemed to be born with a kind of talent that could make people treat her kindly. Even Mom was no exception. Sighing in my heart, I completely lost my appetite. "It's about the business of the Tanner family. Because of the misrepresentation in the newspaper before this, our business has been affected. After I take over, the situation has gotten worse. Aunt Isabelle, you know well that I'm not talented in doing business. If it hadn't been for Uncle Nathan, the company would have been in a mess right now." Immediately, Crystal told Isabelle about the situation of the Tanner family. In actuality, Isabelle was well aware of the situation, but she still listened very seriously just because Crystal was the one who was talking. "This is certainly a problem." After putting down her spoon, Isabelle had a grim expression. At that moment, I realized that she was actually thinking about the issue seriously. She pondered for a moment and said to Crystal, "I'm attending a

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We were not in the Tanner residence, and I was no longer the former me. Previously, Crystal could make things difficult for me and bully me in the Tanner residence, but now, I would never allow her to provoke me.

"I- Aunt Isabelle..." Crystal was stumped by what I said, and her expression changed. Immediately, she looked at Isabelle and explained, "Aunt Isabelle, that's not what I meant. I just..."

With that said, she was on the verge of tears as if she had been greatly wronged. Back then, she loved to use that kind of forlorn expression to say some specious things to make everyone misunderstand. Looking at her, I sneered. We were not in the Tanner residence, and her close male friends were not present either. Who was she showing the pitiful expression to?

"Eve, you've gone too far." Isabelle looked at me displeasingly and scolded, "Crystal is our guest. As the host, how can you talk to her like this? Hurry up and apologize."

“Mom!” Upon hearing that, I widened my eyes in shock. I was so surprised that I was at a loss for words. Mom actually sided with Crystal and asked me to apologize. Did I say anything wrong?

The next moment, I turned my head to look at Crystal. She was still looking at me pitifully, but the triumph in her eyes had already betrayed her true feelings.

“Aunt Isabelle, please don’t scold Yvonne. It’s my fault. I shouldn’t talk nonsense and make her angry. I’m the one who should be apologizing.” Suddenly, Crystal stood up and uttered in fear.

“You didn’t say anything wrong.” Immediately, Isabelle pulled her back onto her seat and glared at me. “You only told the truth and made someone irritated.”

Smack!

The next instant, I put down my spoon, pushed aside the chair, and stood up. “Suit yourselves.”

I could no longer stand it. Hence, I turned around, left the living room, and walked into the garden. Blood was rushing through my veins. I was so furious that even the flowers were an eyesore. Infuriated, I stepped on a red flower and crushed it.

I’m Mom’s daughter. How can she side with an outsider? Not to mention that the outsider had always bullied me, and I hated her to the core.

“What’s so great about you? The only thing you can do is say nice words to please others. Even if you’re good at doing that, you still dug your own grave in the end. What else can you get? Argh! I’m so angry!”

“The flower didn’t offend you. Will it apologize to you if you bully it?” Just then, Lucas walked out from behind the big tree and picked up the flower under my feet with a sympathetic expression.

“It’s just a flower. As the daughter of the Goldstein family, can’t I even step on a flower?” Under the influence of anger, I spoke without thinking. I sounded like an unreasonable woman who was taking out my exasperation on Lucas.

“This camellia is extremely rare. I had liked camellia when I was young, so I bought this from a place at a high price and shipped it here by air,” he said

with an innocent expression. While holding on to the flower, he lowered his head. "If I'm the flower, this will be its expression."

In an instant, I was bemused by his funny expression and was shocked by what he said. So that's why the flower is planted in a separate flowerbed. Feeling embarrassed, I apologized, "I'm sorry. I was blinded by rage just now. Should I ask the gardener if there's any way to save this flower?"

"I'm an expert. If you want to ask a gardener, you might as well ask me." Casting me a contemptuous look, he piped up, "As my cousin, you don't even know my craftsmanship. What kind of friend are you?"

Hearing what he said, I scratched my head and flushed with embarrassment. After he took care of the flowers and was about to leave, I looked at his back and thought of everything that happened back then. Abruptly, I asked, "Lucas, you'd known my identity since a long time ago, right? Am I really Mark's daughter?"

We were not in the Tanner residence, and I was no longer the former me. Previously, Crystal could make things difficult for me and bully me in the Tanner residence, but now, I would never allow her to provoke me. "I- Aunt Isabelle..." Crystal was stumped by what I said, and her expression changed. Immediately, she looked at Isabelle and explained, "Aunt Isabelle, that's not what I meant. I just..." With that said, she was on the verge of tears as if she had been greatly wronged. Back then, she loved to use that kind of forlorn expression to say some specious things to make everyone misunderstand. Looking at her, I sneered. We were not in the Tanner residence, and her close male friends were not present either. Who was she showing the pitiful expression to? "Eve, you've gone too far." Isabelle looked at me displeasingly and scolded, "Crystal is our guest. As the host, how can you talk to her like this? Hurry up and apologize." "Mom!" Upon hearing that, I widened my eyes in shock. I was so surprised that I was at a loss for words. Mom actually sided with Crystal and asked me to apologize. Did I say anything wrong? The next moment, I turned my head to look at Crystal. She was still looking at me pitifully, but the triumph in her eyes had already betrayed her true feelings. "Aunt Isabelle, please don't scold Yvonne. It's my fault. I shouldn't talk nonsense and make her angry. I'm the one who should be apologizing." Suddenly, Crystal stood up and uttered in fear. "You didn't say anything wrong." Immediately, Isabelle pulled her back onto her seat and glared at me. "You only told the truth and made someone irritated." Smack! The next instant, I put down my spoon, pushed aside the chair, and stood up. "Suit

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Lucas stopped, turned to look at me, and said with a frown, “Are you still bothered by this issue? That's not like you. I've always thought that you wanted a loving family. Isn't it good to have a father?”

Lucas had always been a good friend. He had read my situation very accurately; I did yearn for a close and affectionate family where there would always be someone who cared for me. Surprisingly, when it was revealed that I was Mark's daughter, I found it hard to accept and actually felt uneasy. Was it because the weight of the name Goldstein was too much to bear?

“I do wish for a loving father, but, oh!” I sighed softly. “Perhaps it is too much to wish for, and it’s rather unbelievable. After all the twists and turns, I’ve finally become your cousin. Isn’t it incredible?”

“Nothing is impossible. You are now a member of the Goldstein family. Just enjoy the power that comes with it and do whatever you wish to. You can be willful and difficult and even raise hell. You can be sure Uncle Mark will be there for you,” Lucas told her.

He showed such certainty that I was sure that he knew about the relationship between Mark and me long before this. I felt a little confused and whispered, “Do you regret being so good to me before? After all...”

Lucas had been treated very badly by Mark and though I did not say it, Lucas had sensed it. He broke into a hearty laugh and said, “Has this got anything to do with you? Aren’t you going to be friends with me anymore?”

Lucas immediately put me at ease. He is such a charming and charismatic man. It’s no wonder that I can never forget my first impression of him lying on the sickbed and laughing away despite his depression.

I punched him and said with a smile, “You are a real buddy, Lucas. You told me that I can raise hell. Well, let me know whenever you are in trouble and I’ll raise hell together with you.”

“Remember your words,” said Lucas as he looked deeply at me. “When the time comes, don’t make excuses.”

“Shall we make a pinky swear then?” I said. “My intention is magnanimous and I am ready to go through hell and high water for a friend, but your words are like pouring cold water on me.”

To my surprise, Lucas put out his little finger for the swear and said seriously, “He who lies is a puppy.”

I gave two woofs in agreement and said gently, “If you don’t always put on that melancholy look, I guarantee you’ll be the best of friends with Chris.”

“If I say that I’m not interested, will you beat me up?”

“Get lost!”

I felt much better after Lucas' comforting words. Even the knowledge of Crystal and Isabelle going to a spa beauty treatment together did not bother me anymore. They had their common interests, all of which did not appeal to me at all.

Perhaps Mom is thinking of using Crystal to help the Tanner family. Despite the love and hate, I somehow get the feeling that Uncle Nathan has a special place in Mom's heart.

I made up my mind to be an ostrich to keep my mind at ease.

That night, while I was in bed chatting with Christopher over the phone, there was a knock on the door. This was Isabelle's favorite time for a milk bath and I thought it might be the housekeeper bringing the clothes over. I shouted for her to come in and went to run the bathwater.

"I'm going for my bath now. Love you, Darling. We'll talk tomorrow." I was about to take off my clothes when I saw Crystal's ghostly figure. I almost yelled in fright.

"Crystal, what the hell are you doing acting in this ghostly manner? Well, let me tell you, I'm not afraid of ghosts," I said angrily.

"I didn't want to disturb you as you were on the phone." Crystal seated herself on the couch in a familiar manner. She said in a half-smile, "Aunt Isabelle doesn't like the Lane family, and here you are carrying on furtively with Christopher. Do you think that's acceptable?"

"That's none of your business. I don't care what you do to get into my mom's good books, but I warn you, Crystal, don't you dare get funny ideas in your head. Lady luck does not smile on you all the time."

Lucas stopped, turned to look at me, and said with a frown, "Are you still bothered by this issue? That's not like you. I've always thought that you wanted a loving family. Isn't it good to have a father?" Lucas had always been a good friend. He had read my situation very accurately; I did yearn for a close and affectionate family where there would always be someone who cared for me. Surprisingly, when it was revealed that I was Mark's daughter, I found it hard to accept and actually felt uneasy. Was it because the weight of the name Goldstein was too much to bear? "I do wish for a loving father, but, oh!" I sighed softly. "Perhaps it is too much to wish for, and it's rather unbelievable. After all the twists and turns, I've finally become your cousin. Isn't it

incredible?" "Nothing is impossible. You are now a member of the Goldstein family. Just enjoy the power that comes with it and do whatever you wish to. You can be willful and difficult and even raise hell. You can be sure Uncle Mark will be there for you," Lucas told her. He showed such certainty that I was sure that he knew about the relationship between Mark and me long before this. I felt a little confused and whispered, "Do you regret being so good to me before? After all..." Lucas had been treated very badly by Mark and though I did not say it, Lucas had sensed it. He broke into a hearty laugh and said, "Has this got anything to do with you? Aren't you going to be friends with me anymore?" Lucas immediately put me at ease. He is such a charming and charismatic man. It's no wonder that I can never forget my first impression of him lying on the sickbed and laughing away despite his depression. I punched him and said with a smile, "You are a real buddy, Lucas. You told me that I can raise hell. Well, let me know whenever you are in trouble and I'll raise hell together with you." "Remember your words," said Lucas as he looked deeply at me. "When the time comes, don't make excuses." "Shall we make a pinky swear then?" I said. "My intention is magnanimous and I am ready to go through hell and high water for a friend, but your words are like pouring cold water on me." To my surprise, Lucas put out his little finger for the swear and said seriously, "He who lies is a puppy." I gave two woofs in agreement and said gently, "If you don't always put on that melancholy look, I guarantee you'll be the best of friends with Chris." "If I say that I'm not interested, will you beat me up?" "Get lost!" I felt much better after Lucas' comforting words. Even the knowledge of Crystal and Isabelle going to a spa beauty treatment together did not bother me anymore. They had their common interests, all of which did not appeal to me at all. Perhaps Mom is thinking of using Crystal to help the Tanner family. Despite the love and hate, I somehow get the feeling that Uncle Nathan has a special place in Mom's heart. I made up my mind to be an ostrich to keep my mind at ease. That night, while I was in bed chatting with Christopher over the phone, there was a knock on the door. This was Isabelle's favorite time for a milk bath and I thought it might be the housekeeper bringing the clothes over. I shouted for her to come in and went to run the bathwater. "I'm going for my bath now. Love you, Darling. We'll talk tomorrow." I was about to take off my clothes when I saw Crystal's ghostly figure. I almost yelled in fright. "Crystal, what the hell are you doing acting in this ghostly manner? Well, let me tell you, I'm not afraid of ghosts," I said angrily. "I didn't want to disturb you as you were on the phone." Crystal seated herself on the couch in a familiar manner. She said in a half-smile, "Aunt Isabelle doesn't like the Lane family, and here you are carrying on furtively with Christopher. Do you think that's acceptable?" "That's none of your business. I don't care what you do to get into my mom's good books, but I

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Crystal had a big mouth, and I had to warn her. She was quite capable of dropping snippets of nonsense in my mom’s ears and creating a rift between me and my mom.

“Tsk, Tsk. I won’t dare to think of any crooked ideas. Besides, I rely on Aunt Isabelle to get what I want. Why would I want to offend you, Yvonne Tanner?” Crystal flashed a provocative look through her narrowed eyes.

She called me Yvonne Tanner! People now addressed me as Ms. Goldstein or Yvonne Goldstein. Only Christopher would refer to me as Yvonne Tanner and that’s because he knew that I liked him to do so. But when Crystal said it, it just sounded sarcastic.

“No doubt, you are now Ms. Goldstein, all high and mighty. You have every right to be so. But, you must be thinking, what right do I have to speak to you in such a manner? I’m just a miserable nobody, right?” Crystal gave a strange laugh of delight as if she held some secrets over me, of which I didn’t even know of.

“What are you trying to say? I have no time for such chattering. Please leave if you have no other business. To put it plainly, get lost!” I had no wish to talk to her at all. Her carrying-on with my mom in the afternoon had infuriated me enough.

“You have a guilty conscience because in your heart you are still uneasy about everything.” Crystal laughed loudly. “Yvonne, shall we have another bet? Let us say, whether I can get into the Remington art exhibition, and hang my painting at the space allocated for you.”

Crystal’s words were loaded with meaning. Taking my space meant that she wanted to replace me. I narrowed my eyes. I had great confidence in my painting skills. “Are you sure that your own painting is good enough to replace mine?”

“Perhaps I don’t even have to paint it.” Crystal laughed in an inscrutable manner, but her face exuded every confidence of sure success.

This made me flustered because, in the past, I had always lost my bets with her. Hearing these familiar words and seeing the same old arrogant and dismissive expression on her face made me feel like my pathetic old self.

The more I panicked, the more determined I became. I said between gritted teeth, "What have you done, Crystal?"

"You will know when the time comes, Yvonne. You will never defeat me. No matter how high you climb, you will never beat me. Haha."

Crystal's words and Crystal the person were a curse to me. I could not be rid of it no matter what I did. Because of what she said, I did not get a good night's sleep. My dreams were nightmares of Crystal. You can't beat me. You are a pathetic worm. It's only in your dreams that you can defeat me. I will take away everything that is yours.

When I woke up in the morning, I had the self-fulfilled two dark circles under my eyes. There was no one around at breakfast. After asking around, I found out that Isabelle and Crystal had gone shopping.

"What the heck? Who the hell is her daughter!" I slammed down the bowl and cutlery angrily.

Christopher clapped his hand over his mouth in laughter when he saw me with my panda eyes. I punched him angrily. "Have you never seen a panda before?"

"I've never seen such a lovely panda, indeed. Did our sex chats give you such erotic dreams that you couldn't sleep well?" Christopher said slyly. "I should have broken in last night and gotten myself an eager panda. That's a nice thought."

"How can you still joke about it?" If Christopher had come and we were caught in flagrante by the likes of Crystal, there would be a big brouhaha. I sighed gloomily at the thought of Crystal.

"What's the matter? Why the long face?"

Crystal had a big mouth, and I had to warn her. She was quite capable of dropping snippets of nonsense in my mom's ears and creating a rift between me and my mom. "Tsk, Tsk. I won't dare to think of any crooked ideas. Besides, I rely on Aunt Isabelle to get what I want. Why would I want to offend

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