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Love Coming from the Least Expected

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This was the second time I heard that. The first time was when we were in the restaurant and the waiter complimented Lyle for being so attentive toward Crystal in almost the exact same words.

I simply smiled in response, choosing not to explain too much.

At that very moment, the divorce papers in Lyle's hand fell to the ground because of his restless pacing. When the nurse bent to pick them up, she noticed that they were divorce papers and finally realized she had said the wrong thing with a surprised expression on her face. She quickly picked them up and passed them back to me before rapidly finishing up the bandage and leaving the room.

I heard her mumble as she walked away, "I shouldn't have been jealous at all! They're not even married anymore!"

I waved the documents in my hand. "What about I call Sabrina and ask her to bring me to the City Hall so we can get this over with?" I suggested to Lyle.

He simply reached out for the documents and looked at me as he muttered, "Why did you have to save me? Don't you hate my guts?"

I rolled my eyes. As if one could pick and choose when to save someone else! Lyle was way too calculative of a person. Apart from Crystal, he gauged everybody else based on what they could do for him.

At my silence, Lyle continued. "I used to always feel like you only married me for my money, but I finally realized that that's not the case. You love me, don't you? If you don't, you didn't need to save me over and over again while putting your own life at risk."

He was starting to change topics rapidly and I didn't like where it was going, so I quickly cut him off. "I don't think we need to talk about such things anymore. What about you?"

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He never used to care about whether I loved him or not, so why would he start now? Besides, I had a crush on him for eight years and everyone could tell except for Lyle himself. There was no point in thinking about such things anymore.

“Of course we need to. Eve, you threw yourself into danger for me time and time again and I never appreciated it.”

Lyle suddenly tore the divorce papers right down the middle and I inhaled in shock. “Lyle, have you gone insane?” I yelled.

“No. In fact, I’m more sober than ever. Yvonne, I don’t want to lose you.” I reached out in an attempt to save the two halves of the documents, but Lyle was quicker and he ripped them to even smaller pieces.

I stared at the ruined documents as Lyle tossed them into the trashcan. If it weren’t for my injured leg, I would have already started beating Lyle up.

He walked toward the bed and embraced me. “Since you love me so much, let’s not get divorced anymore, okay?” he said gently.

“Wait!” I was barely coherent in my urgency. “I didn’t save you because I loved you! I just didn’t want Sharon to be sad over you! Even if it was a random passerby or a stray cat in your place, I would still save them. Call me Mother Teresa for all I care, but it wasn’t because I love you, got it?”

“You don’t have to hide it anymore, Eve. The way you looked when you ran toward me and pushed me out of the way without hesitation...the worry in your eyes was so beautiful. Rest up, okay? I’ll go settle some things and come back as soon as I can.”

Lyle ignored my struggling and bent down to kiss me on the cheek before walking out of the hospital ward, leaving me completely stunned.

“Lyle, get your *ss back here right now! B*stard!” I yelled as I threw a glass of water in his direction. It slammed into the wall and shattered all over the ground.

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Sadly, Lyle had already walked away. I continued destroying everything within arm's reach in my ward before collapsing on the bed and pummeling my pillow. What the h*ll do I do now?

My phone continued to ring incessantly, as it had been for the past few minutes. Annoyed, I picked it up and hung up when I saw Christopher's name on the screen.

He went out with Monica behind my back after all. Why should I answer his calls?

Despite me not picking up, Christopher seemed adamant to talk to me and kept calling until I finally picked up out of irritation. "Yvonne's not here!" I yelled, frustrated.

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Regret quickly settled in after I shouted. I had always been a little too easily frazzled and never learned to keep my feelings to myself.

I didn't think I could be blamed, though. Christopher and Monica were off at God knows where having the time of their lives, and being kept in the dark really rubbed me the wrong way, despite constantly saying otherwise.

I could feel those emotions slowly festering in my heart.

*I continued punching the pillow relentlessly. What the h*ll is going on? Has Lyle gone insane? Should I have acted as if I didn't see the car about to run him over and just let him die?*

Maybe I should have let him die and just shed a couple of tears before sending him to the emergency room. It's up to fate whether he lives or not, right?

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Almost instantly, I felt like explaining everything to Christopher. He treated me so well and yet I always exploded for no reason. It was as if I was trying to stay single for the rest of my life.

The phone rang again and I quickly picked up. "I'm sorry! I'm in a bad mood and didn't think before yelling at you. Don't be mad at me, okay?"

The person on the other end was silent for an eerily long time before I heard a loud chuckle coming through. "Yvonne, who did you think I was? First, you yelled at me and now you're apologizing?"

"Huh?" I quickly went through my recent calls and discovered that I had never gotten a call from Christopher. Sabrina had been on the other end of my sudden outburst.

"Ah, that really scared me." I wiped off the cold sweat forming on my forehead. "Thank God it was you the whole time, Sabby. You won't get mad at an idiot like me, right?"

"If you know you're an idiot, then maybe you should start learning from your mistakes." Sabrina clucked her teeth. "Recently, you've just been a bit quicker with the comebacks. Everything else is still the same ol' Yvonne. Where are you? Let's go shopping."

"In the hospital," I said with a sigh.

Sabrina reached the hospital surprisingly quickly. She knew that I must have been alone since Christopher wasn't around to take care of me.

Once I told her the whole story of what happened, her eyes shone in surprise. "Next time this happens, you probably should just close your eyes. Lyle's brain must have short-circuited."

"It's not like I wanted this to happen!" I cried out as I burrowed into my blankets. "Why did I have to be such a busybody?"

"Poor thing!" Sabrina looked at me pitifully and pulled the blanket off my head. After a second, she said, "What about you bring this up with Christopher? He'll definitely think of a solution."

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I shook my head and massaged my temples in frustration. I always made everything out to be way too simple, but in reality, everything was much more serious than I thought.

I had a strong gut feeling that I would have a very intense rival if I wanted to date Christopher, and that rival's name was Monica.

They were a brilliant match no matter what you were looking at. When I stood next to Christopher, it was as if I were a scarecrow standing next to a handsome farmer.

"Did you argue?" Sabrina blinked in confusion before realizing, "So the one you wanted to scold was Christopher. I thought you were talking about Lyle! Calm down a bit. Don't scare away the man of your dreams."

I groaned in frustration. "Don't get it wrong. we're not involved in any way."

"Not involved? What exactly is 'being involved' supposed to be, then? Just let Christopher come up with a solution for you to get divorced. After that, you can live out your dreams with him for the rest of your life. You might even become a CEO. Doesn't it sound like heaven to get married to someone as rich and handsome as him?"

Sabrina's teasing gaze caused me to flush in embarrassment. She was definitely aware of the relationship between me and Christopher. The last time she saw all the marks on my body when I was changing at the Lane house was enough for her to laugh at me for a long while.

This time, though, her words only served to get on my nerves and I huffed. "As if I want anything to do with him."

Sabrina patted me on the head as if I was a child, which only served to make me feel even more like I was throwing a petty tantrum.

"Don't make a fuss. He's good for you."

I was speechless.

What exactly had Christopher done to Sabrina for her to go over to his side completely?

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I was stuck in the hospital for a whole day. Lyle actually treated me like his wife for once, which I was completely unused to. Even though I tried to be petty and pick here and there, he treated my complaining as flirting and let me be.

I lost count of the number of times I had sworn at him in my heart. Even my appetite was affected and all I wanted was for Crystal to swoop in and take Lyle away.

My prayers didn't go to waste. At Lyle's second visit, Crystal walked in all decked out. Her elaborate outfit almost lit up the room as if she were a disco ball.

"Crystal! What are you doing here?" Lyle stood up nervously and put down the apple he was peeling for me.

"I just wanted to visit Yvonne," Crystal said and she stared at me like she was trying to bore a hole through me. I lay there, letting her stare me down. I even returned her stare with a goofy smile.

If this had happened before, this smile would have seemed like confirmation that I was small fry to her. However, in this context, I knew this smile came across as mocking.

As expected, Crystal's expression darkened and she walked toward me.

Her stifling perfume threatened to choke me and I sneezed. Impatiently, I said, "Ugh, I don't like that smell. Please don't come closer."

She was practically hissing at me now. "Rest well, Yvonne. I'll be going now."

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After that, she stalked out of the hospital ward. I even heard her sobbing faintly, and Lyle did too as he shot up and started running toward her. Before he stepped outside, he turned back to glance at me as if asking for permission.

I shrugged with a grin. "Go ahead. If you don't go now, you might really lose her. You can get tickets to Anglandur any other time."

"How did you know?" Lyle asked in shock.

Innocently, I said, "Next time, don't bang in the middle of a public park. It pains me to have to bump into that. Cleansing that scene from my brain took a long time, you know."

Lyle couldn't handle my eerie calmness and finally left, but not before he said, "Yvonne, give me three days to settle everything, okay? I won't forget your feelings for me."

Can someone please come and take this absolute fool away?

The hospital ward fell into silence once again after he left. I sighed softly, completely at a loss for what to do.

How long was Lyle going to drown himself in this puddle of infidelity? He was acting as if it were a heroic decision to only remain loyal to one of us.

He would just lose the housekeeper he had for years, but he could very well just hire another one.

I took out my phone and checked my caller history. Christopher hadn't called or texted.

I almost called him, but I didn't even know what to say if he picked up. I ended up sending a text after what seemed like hours of typing and erasing, only to settle on a lame 'Have you eaten yet?'

I was seriously cringing at my own awkwardness.

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Someone knocked on the door and I called out, "Come in!", expecting the doctor to enter. I didn't expect Sabrina to suddenly show up with a package that the hospital guard passed to her when she came back from my place to help me pick up some things.

I was kind of surprised. I hadn't bought anything and I wasn't a regular at this hospital, so how did the sender know to deliver it here?

I glanced at the address and my heart skipped a beat when I noticed that it was from Coldbridge. Excited yet nervous, I tore open the package and saw a simple ribbon-entwined box inside.

There was another box within the first one that was also quite pretty. What is this? I opened the second box again only to see another box nestled inside.

I was more confused than ever. Did Christopher just send me a bunch of boxes?

I patiently opened all the boxes up and the true present finally showed itself: a set of paintbrushes and a box of regular paints.

At the sight of the art supplies, my eyes started to tear up.

I carefully positioned my fingers around one of the brushes as tears dripped silently down my face. Once upon a time, paintbrushes never left my hands and I painted artwork after artwork, never thinking of the day I would finally stop.

Even during my hard times in the Tanner family, I still saved up and bought some paints and brushes whenever I could. I would lock myself in my room and painted all my dreams and hopes for the future.

Painting remained my one true love until I got replaced by Crystal and got chased out of the Tanner residence. Then, I lost all faith in my skills and truly gave up on my future.

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I didn't know how Christopher could have known that I used to love painting. My tears fell relentlessly as I gripped the brush tightly, sobbing my heart out.

No one knew how much I loved and yearned to paint again. All of my love and hope for painting could be seen in Autumnal Panorama.

That oil painting took me two whole months to complete. After that, I sent a picture of it to an online friend called Key, who complimented it and told me that it could really be worth something.

At the time, I thought so too. The art teacher I've had since young had always told me that I was very talented and even felt sorry for me when he learned that my drawings didn't get selected.

Someone called and I saw Christopher's name on the screen. I stayed silent after picking up, so Christopher started speaking first. "Why are you so quiet? Did you forget me already? It's only been a few days. That's kind of sad."

I continued feeling the smooth handle of the brush in between my fingers. Even though it was just a normal paintbrush, the meaning behind it was completely different to me.

"I don't know what to say," I said softly, almost getting choked up.

"What's wrong? Did you cry?" Christopher asked both urgently and helplessly. "Did something happen?"

"No!" I shook my head and asked, "Are you mad because I didn't pick up your calls the past few days?"

"Why would I get mad over something so small, silly? I would be angry about plenty more things if I were that short-tempered. Since you asked, though, you should tell me why you didn't pick up my calls," Christopher said in a faux-angry voice.

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I couldn't see him, but I could hear the gentleness and love in his voice alone. How could I bear to bring up Monica and ruin it?

No matter what they had going on between them, I could only feel gratitude toward Christopher right now.

I knew that I lost my principles when it came to Christopher, just like how I was with Lyle. If they treated me well, I was willing to leave everything behind for them.

"Something happened that morning and I sprained my ankle, so I was in the hospital when you called me and couldn't pick up," I said, trying to gloss it over. However, Christopher had already started to pester me about the foot injury.

"I can't leave you alone at all, can I? How many times have you gone to the hospital since we met?"

I thought about it and was genuinely trying to remember when I realized that it was way more than I could count on one hand. With a pout, I murmured, "Just once or twice."

What a lie. I could barely count all the small burns, sprains, and minor injuries that I had suffered at this point.

"If I could see you right now, I would spank you for being so careless," Christopher said in a low voice.

I felt slightly warm. Spanking had become part of our bedroom activities and usually ended up getting pretty heated. He always said it was the best punishment for me to truly remember.

"Christopher!" I said urgently. After a pause, I asked, "Did you send me a package?"

"Why, do you have another boyfriend in Coldbridge?" he asked me instead.

Obviously I didn't have a proper answer. If I could manage to attract so many men at one time, would I be in such a state? I would at least be someone like Crystal, who had people falling over for her left and right.

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"Why did you send me brushes and paint?"

"Take a guess," Christopher purposely teased.

I honestly had no idea, but it didn't matter. I loved the gift too much to think too much of it. He always seemed to know more about me than myself, and could guess what I truly wanted before I even thought about it.

"Do you like it?" he asked with a chuckle.

"I love it. Thank you so much," I said, feeling choked up again.

"Then draw something with it, alright? When I come back, you can give it to me in return."

I jerked at the thought. Can I still paint? Could I actually go back to my long-lost hobby again?

"I don't know what to draw," I said. My mind was completely blank.

"Why don't you paint me a pair of eyes that shed no tears?"

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After crying for so long and talking to Christopher for a while, I continued zoning out with the paintbrush in hand as all my emotions clouded my mind. I almost jumped out of my skin when I looked up and saw Sabrina's face in front of me.

"Earth to Yvonne! I've been here for ages, so don't tell me you forgot I was here," Sabrina said huffily with her hands on her hips, looking like an interrogator.

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I giggled and scratched my head sheepishly. "Of course not. I just got a little overwhelmed."

Sabrina took the paintbrush from me and played around with it. When she accidentally dropped it, I picked it up tenderly and said, "Be careful. Don't break these before I even get a chance to use them."

"These are just normal brushes, aren't they? Are you thinking of becoming an artist?" Sabrina chuckled. "I see how it is. You would probably treasure a piece of tissue paper if it was from Christopher."

Sabrina and I met in college when both of us were fighting for our futures, so she had no clue that I could draw. I also didn't plan on telling her.

It started feeling like my little secret. If Christopher knew, then it could be our little secret.

"It's not just because of that! These are good brushes." I blew off the dust on the bristles slightly, despite the brush still being speck-free. I felt as if I had gotten a set of new babies.

"Who was the one who said she wanted nothing to do with Christopher? I really wonder who that could be," Sabrina said teasingly.

"Yeah, who would say such a thing? Come out so I can beat you up!" I said, playing along.

I continued zoning out with the paintbrush in hand for the whole afternoon. There were so many people in the world who had to let go of their dreams in exchange for the harshness of reality, and I was one of them.

I did think of painting throughout my university years, but after getting married to Lyle, I threw all that to the back of my mind.

What else did I lose during that cage of a marriage? I wondered. Perhaps I threw everything else that made me who I was away, too.

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I opened a messaging app and looked at the grey profile picture under the name 'Key'. I remembered adding him as a friend in high school.

Key was always extremely understanding and kind. I never got to know his gender, but he was a great conversationalist and was always ready to listen to me when I needed to rant.

I painted Autumnal Panorama in my last year of high school. After what happened after that painting, I tried to find Key relentlessly so he could give me advice. Sadly, I never found Key again.

I didn't know where Key went, but I continued sending messages to the account every time I got wronged or beaten down. I even told them everything about Lyle.

Now that I had a paintbrush in my hands again, I felt like telling Key about it.

I sent a message. 'I think luck has been on my side recently. I got to know someone and he means the world to me. If I were to pick up a paintbrush again, do you think I could finally fulfill my future?'

I was used to waiting for a reply that never came, so I continued to type another text when a new message suddenly appeared onscreen.

Key: 'Your future is something you need to fight for. Don't get used to waiting. It's not good to always wait for something to happen. If you have the chance, you might as well try again.'

My heart leaped in my chest. After four years of university and half a year of being married, I stopped sending messages to Key. Now that I got a reply, it felt like I was dreaming.

I sent the text I was originally going to send after that. 'What do you think a pair of eyes that shed no tears look like?'

Key replied almost instantly. 'Why don't you draw the most beautiful pair of eyes you've ever seen? That's a pair of eyes that you won't shed tears over.'

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The moment I read that message, I thought of Christopher's deep yet lively eyes. His gaze was like a beacon that shone through my fog of grief and lit up my life.

I chuckled and replied: Thank you, Key. I would love to draw your eyes one day. I'm sure they're absolutely stunning.

Despite meeting Key online, he was an important part of my life. Without him, I might never have gotten closure about all those things and I wouldn't have had someone who listened to me.

Have you been well? I texted.

Key: I wasn't too well a while back, but now I think happiness isn't too far off for me.

I replied: Same goes for me too. I'm glad we're both doing well.

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