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Love Coming from the Least Expected

Chapter 216 - 220

"I don't care if you don't refer to me as your sibling or not. I'm the daughter of dad's original wife, and you're just a bastard daughter. If you're here for business matters, then let me give you a piece of advice. Don't let people find out that you're a mistress' child. Our boss absolutely detests extramarital affairs."

I was trying to scare her on purpose. If Crystal was around, I would have watched my mouth, but Yvette was on a completely different and lower level of intelligence compared to Crystal.

As I'd expected, her face grew green. When she opened her mouth to speak, I interrupted, "You're here as a representative of the Tanner Corporation, no? Are you sure such a high-ranking secretary like yourself should be here arguing with an employee instead of, I don't know, actually going to your meeting?"

Yvette raised her hand to hit me in a fit of rage, but the sound of the elevator doors opening startled her, her documents all falling to the floor. She quickly stepped back and bent down, waving me off before I could do anything. "It's fine."

"You are very punctual, Ms. Tanner. Our meeting is at four in the afternoon, but you're already here at half-past three." Richard stepped out of the elevator, smiling when he saw her standing close to me. "Do you know my employee, Ms. Tanner?"

"Getting to work with you is my honor, Mr. Whitrow; of course, the very least I could do is show up early. As for this employee..." Yvette's face scrunched up in confusion. "I feel like I've seen her somewhere before, but I just can't put my finger on it..."

She tapped her head lightly, seemingly deep in thought before suddenly recalling something, her mouth falling open in fake shock. "Oh! Aren't you that little thief from the mall? I mean—"

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Slapping her hand over her mouth as if she hadn't meant to say that, she glanced at me apologetically. "Sorry, sorry. It's just a joke."

Public humiliation like this was what Yvette and Crystal were both good at. I could already feel the curious gazes of the higher-ups standing behind Richard burning into the back of my head. Is there a hole somewhere for me to hide in? Anywhere?

"You watch your mouth! You know very well why those diamonds ended up in my bag! How dare you act all clueless as if you didn't frame me and go and cry to Dad, causing him to throw away my birthday gift!" I blew up at her. I knew that this was not the time or place to be arguing with Yvette, but I couldn't take her nonsense any longer.

"What are you talking about?" Yvette snickered. "We may both share the same surname, but we aren't related in any way."

"Um... Vonnie, you should leave," one of the managers spoke up, stealing nervous looks at Richard's slowly darkening expression. "We have an important meeting to get to."

Hugging my documents to my chest, I silently retreated from the scene, the sounds of Yvette talking badly about me slowly growing faint.

"The employees here should be valued by way of their morals and ethics more than they should be for their work efficiency. You can't have a thief working amongst your company; it'll be bad for the company's reputation! If anything happens at any sort of corporate banquet because of her, the company will be blamed for it..."

"Yes, of course, Ms. Tanner..."

I wasn't sure how I made it through the rest of the day. On the way back home from work, I paid a visit to the supermarket and bought a ton of groceries, immediately heading for the kitchen as soon as I got back.

About an hour later, I stood in front of a table full of multiple dishes, finally having burnt through all of my leftover anger from that morning. It was only then that I remembered Christopher saying he wouldn't be coming back for a few days.

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The entire house was silent except for the sound of my heartbeat echoing in my ears. Loneliness slowly crept up upon me, threatening to overwhelm me and pull me back into the depths of despair.

Picking up my cutlery, I cut off a small piece of the caramelized pork I'd made and put it in my mouth. It tasted the same as always, but for some reason, I found it hard to swallow and ended up throwing all of the food away.

It was hard for humans to get used to loneliness after having enjoyed the company of another person, after all.

I used to wait excitedly for Lyle to come home like this, only to find out that he didn't care whether or not I would be waiting up for him. Thus, I resolved to never do such a thing again, and yet, here I was – anticipating someone who wasn't coming back.

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Chapter 217

Christopher...

My mind was filled with thoughts about him; his voice, his face, his touch. The memory of him clung to me like a disease. It had barely been one day since we'd last seen each other, and I was already on the brink of breaking down. I hated finding out what might happen to me if I did truly lose him one day.

My phone suddenly rang. Thinking that it might be a call from Christopher, I hurriedly rummaged through my bag and answered it without even looking at the screen. "Hello? When are you coming back? I'm waiting for you."

"I have no intention of being the third wheel. At least remember to look at the name of the caller before answering next time?" Sabrina joked. I blinked owlishly and let out a self-deprecating laugh at myself. I'm going mad.

"Hello? Are you still there?"

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“Did you need me for something?” I replied dryly.

“Hey, what are you going on about? Can’t I just hit you up randomly to chat?” she grumbled. Seemingly sensing that I was acting weird, she proceed to change the subject. “Did you get into a fight with that Greek god boyfriend of yours? Come on; you should lower your standards a little! I swear, if I didn’t already have a partner of my own, I would have pounced on him a long time ago. Be careful not to scare him away, alright? I don’t think you’ll ever find another guy like him if you do.”

“We didn’t get into a fight.” I would have much preferred it if we did; at least I would be able to find out why he was so angry at me. Instead, he insisted on ignoring my existence and giving me the cold shoulder.

“That’s good! By the way, there’s going to be a super-luxurious yacht party soon with lots of people attending. Do you want to go with your boyfriend on a little vacation? I bought two tickets, but Zachary is busy, and I don’t want these to go to waste. I’ll gift them to you if you want.”

“No thanks. I don’t think I’ll have any spare time soon to go anywhere.” There was no way Christopher would agree to go with me on vacation.

“You can take leave from work! Besides, there’s a public holiday coming up soon, and it’d be too sad to spend it at home sulking!” She giggled at that.

I could hear her giddy happiness even through the phone. Even though she complained about Zachary, I could picture her grinning at the mere mention of him.

“I’ll consider it.”

“You don’t sound hyped about this... Not even one bit. Listen, I promise there’ll be a surprise if you go. But I guess with Mr. Lane’s wealth, he technically doesn’t need my ticket. He could get an invite if he asked for one.”

Sabrina went on and on as I quietly listened to her, occasionally interjecting with some sounds of acknowledgment until she eventually ran out of steam and hung up the call. I

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was left holding my phone, staring blankly at the screen and waiting for any sort of message from Christopher.

Nothing came for me. I threw it off to one side and tiredly crawled into bed, curling up under the blankets and falling asleep.

“What’s been up with you these few days, Yvonne? You’ve been lifelessly drifting around... Is everything alright at home?” Mave later asked me while at work.

“I’m fine. Just a little under the weather, that’s all,” I reassured her with a weak smile. I couldn’t possibly tell her about what happened between Christopher and I. She might just figure that I’d read too many romance novels and was pretending to be the ugly little duckling of my own love life.

“Don’t care too much about what other people are saying,” she sighed, patting my shoulder comfortingly. “They always run their mouths without knowing the whole situation. Seriously, don’t they know how to mind their own business?”

I felt my heart swell with relief. Yvette’s appearance had caused a new wave of unpleasant rumors and gossip among the company staff. It was becoming increasingly common for me to overhear other employees talking about me whenever I passed by the breakroom, although I never bothered to try and defend myself.

It was just a shame that my pleasant working environment had gone down the drain all because of my vile sister.

Right before I was supposed to get off of work, my manager called me to his office. “You need to pay a visit to the finance office later,” he told me, a complicated expression on his face. “The company has terminated your contract. They will pay you three months’ worth of salary as compensation.”

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I stood there, frozen for a long while before it finally hit me. I was getting fired.

“Did I do something wrong? Please tell me what it is, and I promise I’ll improve in the future,” I begged. I really needed this job.

The manager frowned at me, sighing regretfully. “Vonnie, there are some things that are simply out of my control. This was a direct order from Mr. Whitrow. Even if I wanted to keep you, I can’t. I’m really sorry; three months of pay is the most I can offer you right now.”

Is it because of Yvette? I closed my eyes, taking a deep breath to recompose myself. She was the young lady of the Tanner family. It made sense that there wasn’t a single boss or CEO who would dare go against her words, and she had already publicly criticized my morals in front of my boss.

“Thank you for taking such care of me all this time. I won’t trouble you any longer.”

I left my workplace, my bag heavier with the ten thousand more that I’d come into work with. I could never figure out why my manager was always so kind to me, but I knew it would be fruitless to expect him to fix my problems for me.

Mave, not knowing that I would never come back here, waved at me as we parted ways at the building entrance and even reminded me to disregard what everyone else was saying. I merely brushed her off with a smile.

“According to our latest reports, Mr. Christopher Lane of Avenport and Ms. Martin will be getting engaged soon! The wealth of the powerful Lane family can be traced back to three generations, while Ms. Martin, a famous pianist, is from the scholarly Martin family! Yesterday at Ms. Martin’s piano concert, Mr. Lane went up to give her a bouquet of roses as the audience erupted into cheers...”

A loud voice from somewhere startled me awake from my depressed daze. I raised my head and looked towards a large LED screen in the middle of the plaza. It was playing a video where Monica wore a gorgeous gown, standing in front of her piano as Christopher handed her a bouquet of roses, a warm smile on his face.

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The two of them looked like a picture-perfect couple together.

So Christopher went to watch Monica's concert yesterday? I wonder if he thought of me at all.

I stared dumbfounded at the dazzling man on the screen.

He was getting engaged with Monica. He was distancing himself from me because of this, possibly because he was worried that I would cling to him, even though he knew very well that I never would.

So we've finally reached this point, huh. It wasn't like there was anything concrete between Christopher and I in the first place. I was always just a hobby to him.

Standing in the middle of a bustling city, I felt more lost than ever. Last time, when I found myself with nowhere to turn to, Christopher had been the one who gifted me with a house. Now that he was engaged, I couldn't possibly go back there.

I didn't want to become what I hated most — a shameless homewrecker.

But why does my heart hurt so much? My body moved forward as if on autopilot. I'd yet again lost the best thing I had in my life.

If you hadn't intended on staying, why did you bother creating such a beautiful illusion for me to lose myself in?

"Mommy, why is that lady crying? Is she lost?"

"Shush, sweetie. Let's not bother her."

It was only when I reached up and touched my wet cheeks that I realized I was crying.

God, I was so useless. All I did whenever I ran into hardship was cry. But what was I supposed to do other than cry? Go and look for Christopher? I didn't think I would be able to even step foot within the Lane residence without their security guards stopping me at the front door.

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Even if I do get to see him, what am I supposed to say? Why did you propose to Monica? Why did you abandon me?

He'd never said a single word about marrying me. His "I love you"s had no meaning or weight to them; they were merely sweet phrases spoken in the heat of the moment whenever we were entangled between the sheets.

"Yvonne? Is that you?" Crystal's voice rang out from beside me. "Why are you crying? Did a guy hurt you?"

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Crystal and Lyle stood in front of me, hand-in-hand with matching couple outfits and matching happy smiles on their faces.

The romantic sight made me taste bile in the back of my mouth as my chest squeezed a little tighter.

Too drained of energy to bother arguing with them, I tried to step past them and walk away when Crystal grabbed ahold of my arm.

"Yvonne, there was no way you could have ever been with a guy like Christopher. When Lyle told me about it, I thought he was only joking. But now that you know Christopher is getting married to Monica, you should try to step away from the situation as soon as possible. Besides, you're a divorcee as well. Trying to cling onto someone else's fiancé will only ruin your reputation further."

I wonder who the cause of my divorce was. I glared daggers at her.

"Ms. Martin is the most famous bachelorette in Avenport, and there are lines of men waiting for her hand in marriage! They will now retreat only because her fiancé is Christopher. There's no way you could beat someone like that. I'll give you a piece of advice. Give up. If you need money, you could always come to me! I have too much to

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spare," she said, finishing with a saccharine-sweet smile that contrasted her venomous words.

"Stop crying! People are staring!" Lyle interrupted as he gave me a sidelong glance, then turned back to tell Crystal, "Now's not the time. You can head on first to the restaurant; I'll catch up later."

"But the baby in my tummy is getting hungry," she pouted, one hand on her baby bump.

"I just have something to tell Yvonne, okay?" he coaxed. "Good girl."

"Alright, then. You better hurry up, or I won't wait for you." Crystal turned around and threw a disdainful sneer over her shoulder at me before striding away.

I couldn't be bothered to give her a reaction. The warm October wind felt like an incessant chill slipping in through my clothes and freezing me to the bone. Not even hugging my arms proved helpful in warming myself up.

"I told you before to not get involved with Christopher, but you wouldn't listen. Now, look what happened." Lyle's eyebrows were furrowed together in frustration, an expression that I was all too familiar with. He used to always look at me this way whenever I made a fool of myself in public. "When will I ever be afforded the reassurance that you'll be fine?"

"The joke's over. Curtains are drawn. Can I leave now?" I deadpanned.

God's being particularly cruel today. I'd just been fired from my job, Christopher was getting married to a woman who I would never be able to match up to, and when I was at the lowest of my low, I just had to bump into who else but my ex-husband and his mistress.

Having fun watching the show from up there, God?

"I care about you, Yvonne. You can't not let me call you out on your bullcrap when it's clearly bit you back." He aggressively tugged at my arm as if trying to shake me awake. "You move out of there tomorrow, you hear me? If you need money, I'll transfer a million

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over to your bank account right this second. For goodness' sake, you're a lady of the Tanner family and my ex-wife! You can't let yourself be treated as a plaything by a guy just for money! That reflects badly on me, too!"

A lady of the Tanner family. I'd never wanted to acknowledge that part of my identity, so Lyle bringing it up only made me want to laugh out loud.

"Stop acting like a knight in shining armor, alright? I would rather sleep on the streets than rely on your money," I spat out. I didn't want to see him or anyone else. All I wanted was to find a quiet place where no one would be able to find me so I could cry my heart out. "Can I go yet?"

"You..." Clearly taken aback by my outburst, Lyle shoved me away from him. Due to the height of my heels, I instantly stumbled backward and somehow ended up in the middle of the road. As I vaguely registered a throbbing pain in my ankle and saw a car speeding my way, a thought crossed my mind. Death doesn't sound too bad right now.

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Out of nowhere, a large hand forcefully pulled me back onto the walkway, and I crashed face-first into a familiar embrace. My nose hurt from the impact, but all I could do was stand there frozen as I stared up at Christopher.

"Let go of her!" roared Lyle.

"Yvonne is mine. Not someone for you to push around and bully like that. I'd advise you to watch yourself, or else I will be forced to take severe measures against you."

Christopher's chest rumbled as he spoke, one arm wrapped around my waist. However, my heart didn't skip a beat as it would have in the past.

"What the hell are you talking about? Yvonne is my wife! You're already engaged to someone else, so don't try to play around with her feelings any longer, Christopher! I'm

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not scared of you just because you're from the Lane family!" Lyle walked up to us, trying to pry the two of us apart.

Instinctively, my arms tightened around Christopher's body. If this was the last time I was able to touch and hug this large, broad body, then I was going to make the most out of this moment. At the very least, I wouldn't feel as upset in the future when I looked back on this moment.

Perhaps I should be relieved that the news of Christopher and Monica's engagement had been made public through the mass media, instead of me having to witness it with my very own eyes.

"Correction. She's your ex-wife. If you didn't cherish her enough back then, you don't get the chance to do so now," Christopher responded coldly. "Besides, your fiancée is right behind you."

Lyle and I both looked behind him at the same time. Crystal was standing there since who-knows-when, staring at all of us anxiously as if trying to figure out how and where she should insert herself into our altercation.

"Come on, Lyle. You shouldn't try to help Yvonne if she clearly has other ideas. She's not going to accept your help even if you insist on it." Looping her arm through Lyle's, she looked up at him with puppy-dog eyes. "The baby and I are both getting hungry. Let's go and eat, okay?"

"You be careful!" With those parting words, Lyle finally led Crystal away from the scene.

Meanwhile, Christopher tugged on my arm and walked off in a separate direction. He moved too quickly, so I soon found it hard to keep up with him, especially with my busted ankle. Before I knew it, I tripped and was hurtling towards the ground when he caught me and hoisted me back upright.

He glanced down at my leg and picked me up in his arms in a bridal carry without a second thought. If this were any other time, I would yell at him out of embarrassment and tell him to put me down, but now I just curled into him obediently without a single complaint.

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I wish time would stop right here, right now.

Mentally and physically fatigued from the events of the day and from not getting a wink of sleep last night, I eventually drifted off into unconsciousness in his arms.

When I came to, we were in the house that I once thought of as perfect and a “home.” Christopher set me down on the couch and dug out some ointment for my twisted ankle. Thankfully, there was no swelling, although it still hurt.

After that, the man took off my top to inspect the slash wound on my arm. He pursed his lips upon seeing my messily changed bandage, carefully undoing it and reapplying some antiseptic cream before wrapping it back up with new, clean bandages.

It might have been because of the tenderness of his actions and his tender touch, but I somehow fell asleep laying there on the sofa. In the midst of my foggy dreams, I could vaguely hear a long sigh before I felt myself being moved to a softer, warmer place.

“Stupid woman. Why didn’t you call me if you knew I was mad at you? You didn’t even greet me when we passed each other in the street. You’re too stubborn for your own good.”

He continued in an exasperated tone, “Have you still not figured out what I’m mad about? I’ve only left you alone for two days, and look at the mess you’ve gotten yourself into. If I hadn’t gone to pick you up from work today, you would have gotten hit by that car! Seriously, don’t you have any self-preservation instincts?”

After a moment, he sighed. “I used to find your stubbornness cute. Today, I really want to pinch you to death for causing me so much worry.”

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