

Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 101-110

Chapter 101

I felt like I was going berserk. I wanted to shout at him to ask him to stay away from me. His little kindness only made me want to puke, but of course, I did not do that. I still had to maintain the image of our marriage in public. Likewise, Crystal knew she could not do anything at the party, so she could only eye me irritatedly from afar.

As I looked away from Crystal, I spotted Christopher's father. He was a slender middle-aged man who looked graceful and polite, but at the same time, gave off a deterrent vibe.

Everyone's attention was on the man. Some even went forward to give him gifts. It was plain as day that those who attended the gathering had ulterior motives. They wanted to get on the good side of the powerful family. That was why they present rare and exorbitantly priced gifts.

I looked at the walnut cookies in my hands in remorse. Regardless, I was sure that Lyle had a gift prepared. Since the Smiths and the Lanes were not particularly close, we were not obliged to give anything expensive.

Before I knew Christopher was engaged, I was fixated on scoring some brownie points with his dad, but now that things had turned out this way, there was no point in me trying to please him anymore.

"Mr. Lane, this is a painting I drew on my own. I hope you'll like it." Crystal went ahead and gifted him her painting after seeing the others did so.

I stole a peek at the drawing and nodded approvingly. I had to admit that Crystal's skills had improved by leaps and bounds after she went overseas. There was no way I could draw something as good as this.

"Wow, this is impressive. I have to say you're a gifted painter," Gordon exclaimed. "I'm sorry but I don't think I got your name."

"I'm Crystal Yates, Mr. Lane. I came to your house before, but of course, that was a long time ago. I was only ten back then," Crystal replied with a shy smile on her face.

Gordon's eyes widened in disbelief. "Oh! So you're the girl who saved Chris last time. Of course, I remember you. You're a brave girl. You're all grown up now."

It went without saying that Gordon was extremely pleased to meet Crystal. His remarks reminded everyone of what happened years ago.

"Ah, so she's the girl. No wonder the Miller brothers and Mr. Smith like her so much. She even saved my son back then."

"Yeah. She practically saved so many people."

Everyone started complimenting Crystal. Some of them even used that incident to justify Lyle and her relationship.

Crystal looked at the crowd and faked a humble smile. "I was actually very scared too, but when I saw I was the only one who was awake, I knew I had to do something to get everyone out."

I could clearly remember what happened that year. I was only eleven, and Crystal was ten. A group of kidnappers went to an elite school in Avenport and abducted the children of some of the wealthiest people. They refused to let the kids go unless the parents pay one billion for every child they got.

I was one of the kids who were kidnapped. After the incident, Crystal shot to fame and became a heralded heroine among the high society.

As always, I remained in her shadow, just as how it was now. I knew she was up to no good when I saw her walking toward me.

"Yvonne, didn't you bring a gift for Mr. Lane as well? Why don't we unwrap the present now?"

Chapter 102

I was suddenly put under the limelight after Crystal approached me. I knew she directed their attention toward me on purpose. I had no money and no one who would stand up for me. All I had was that pathetic-looking box in my hand that made me look out of place.

"I didn't know you brought something for my dad too, Eve. Come on, give it to him. He'll be happy to see it." Christopher stood beside Gordon, giving me an innocent smile. Monica whispered in his ears and a smile broke out on his face, lodging a barb in my heart.

"She's your friend?" Gordon asked Christopher.

"We've met a few times."

Christopher's casual tone chilled my heart. It was true that we had only met a few times, but they were no usual encounters. I had given him my heart after all the nights we spent together, but just as I thought we were in for a serious relationship, I found out I was fooled. I was like a clown in a circus, putting up a show under the eyes of the mocking crowd.

"Come on, Yvonne. Don't be shy. I already gave the painting I drew to Mr. Lane, so it's your turn now. You've been carrying this box since the beginning of the party. I'm sure it's something of great value." As she spoke, Crystal came forward and reached for the box in my hand.

I stepped backward intuitively and evaded her hand. She flashed me a sweet smile, but I could see the hatred in her eyes. She crossed her arms and waited for me to disgrace myself.

I clenched my jaw and went toward Gordon. "Hi, Mr. Lane. I have no idea what you'd like for your birthday, so I got you some cookies. I heard Avenport is known for this local delicacy, so I got you some. I hope you'll like them."

I did not care if I was going to make a fool out of myself. My reputation was marred, to begin with. If humiliating me was what Christopher wanted all this while, then I would give him what he wanted. This would be the end of us.

“Walnut cookies?” Gordon took the box and asked.

His question elicited a boisterous laugh from one of the guests, who quickly quietened down when he realized his mistake. Everyone cast disapproving glances toward me.

Scorn spread on Yvette’s face as she looked at me. “My dear sister, do you seriously have to go so cheap? I mean, sure, I accepted your gift for me even though it was just some random stuff you got from the streets. But that’s only because you’re my sister. I’m happy as long as I get something from you, but how could you do this to Mr. Lane?”

It went without saying that Crystal was enjoying the scene. She looked at me pitifully and spoke to Gordon apologetically. “I’m so sorry, Mr. Lane. Yvonne doesn’t mean to offend you.”

It seemed like she was helping me on the surface, but she was implying that I was being tactless. Her words were meant to embarrass me further.

Nathan’s face stiffened as the fiasco unfolded. He probably did not know the box I had been holding all night was actually a present. “Do you think this is a joke?” he snarled before turning toward Gordon.

“I’m so sorry, Mr. Lane. Please don’t mind my daughter.”

“Oh, it’s totally fine.” Gordon’s reply took everyone by surprise. He did not seem disturbed at all. He looked at the box of cookies in his hands and his gaze softened. He held out his gift and waved it lightly at his wife, Julia Xavier. “Look, Jules, walnut cookies.”

A faint but blissful smile curved on the woman’s lips as she gave it a try. “Yeah. Remember the first time we went out together? I gave you some walnut cookies too. It’s the same brand. It still tastes the same after so many years.”

“I told you I wanted the same cookies for my birthday, but both of us have been so busy we’ve forgotten about it,” Gordon said nostalgically. “Do you still remember what I told you that day?”

Chapter 103

Julia was an elegant woman. Although she was in her middle age, she still looked her prime. The dimples on her cheeks showed when she smiled shyly at Gordon. “Of course I remember what you said. You said you’ll stay with me forever.”

It was not until then that I realize that walnut cookies had a special meaning to them. I took a look at Christopher and was stunned when he winked at me as if I owed him a big one this time. He took a cookie from the box and ate it.

“Hm, it really tastes nice. It’s just as sweet as how you two are right now,” he said playfully looking at his parents before taking up another cookie. “Here’s to more happiness in your marriage. May both of you live to a good old age.”

His childish behavior almost made me laugh. He had given me an unexpected gift this time around, but when my gaze settled upon Monica who was beside him, any urge to smile that I had vanished instantly.

I had to admit that I felt jealous. I was married, but my marriage was not a successful one. My husband had another woman, and all the outsiders thought I deserved such a pitiable fate. I knew how it felt to be in an unhappy marriage, as such, I would never be a homewrecker.

Besides, someone as perfect as Monica deserved a good marriage.

Julia looked up at me and nodded. “Thank you. This means a lot to me.”

“This is the best gift I’ve received tonight!” Gordon remarked before laughing heartily, yet I felt even if he did not like it, he would still stay courteous and thank me for the present. After all, he looked like a man with a good heart.

“I’m glad you like it, Mr. Lane.” I smiled at him. When I saw Christopher raising his brows at me trying to get a compliment, I shifted my gaze swiftly. There was no way I could look at him and still stay calm.

That being said, when I saw Crystal and Nathan’s faces, I felt exhilarated. These two cunning souls had brought this on themselves, but guilt soon budded in my heart.

Nathan was my father. I should not gloat over his misfortune, but when I ponder about it further, he only had himself to blame after all he had done to me. I was not obliged in any way to feel bad for him.

After my narrow escape from a situation that could have been utterly shameful, Julia gestured at me to go over. I reckoned she must really like my gift a lot.

I went over nervously, thinking what I should say to her. There were a few other young women who wanted to speak to her while we talked, but she kindly turned them away.

Social events like this had always made me tense. I was always looking over my shoulder because I was afraid Crystal would do something nasty. I was scared that people would make a laughingstock out of me, ripping off the last shreds of my dignity.

Julia observed the tiredness on my face and asked me to take a rest. I excused myself politely and went to sit down, but before I could even take a seat, the person who was the crux of all my problems came over again. “How did you know you should bring walnut cookies? Did Christopher tell you that?” Lyle sounded testy as if he was interrogating me. It could also be that he was tired after waiting for me for some time.

“So what if he did? It’s not like this has anything to do with you. Don’t channel your anger toward me if someone else steps on your toe. Just leave me in peace. I just want to get this party over with and go home, so stop following me around.”

I could tell Lyle was already trying to sound friendlier, but my reply was not helping at all. "Don't you dare talk to me like that! Who do you think you are?"

"Who I am is none of your business," I said tritely, scanning the crowd of attractive women. "The woman you love is not here, so stop bugging me and get lost."

I shook off his hand and fled before he could do anything. I wondered who Lyle thought he was. He spurned me, yet he expected me to still love him like I used to. Does he really think he's a king? Why should I accept everything he does?

Chapter 104

Since it was Gordon's sixtieth birthday, the party lasted for three days. The Lanes were politicians. From what I heard, Gordon used to be a governor. Although he had retired, Darius was still a mayor, so it went without saying that many influential figures graced the party. As for Christopher, it was likely that he would inherit the family business from his mother.

The capacious courtyard was temporarily remodified to provide a resting area for guests. The servants busied themselves attending to them while I stood along the hallway, not knowing how I should dispose of the time at hand.

Just as I was walking past a room, a hand came out of nowhere and tugged me in. Before I could even let out a scream, I was already pushed against the shut door.

My eyes widened in shock when I saw Christopher's face up close. I could see my own reflection in his dark and gentle eyes. I almost lost myself in his captivating gaze as he fixed his eyes on me.

A playful smile curved on the corner of his lips before he rested his head on my shoulder. "Why does the party have to be so long? Why do they have to invite so many people? I can't even hold your hand in front of everybody and act all lovey-dovey like my parents," he whined like a child. "When are you getting a divorce, Yvonne? I don't think I can wait any longer."

I suddenly remembered that Christopher was already engaged. "Let go of me," I said, pushing him away.

"No way. I waited for so long just to hug you. I'm not letting go." He insisted and pushed himself against me again. He placed his leg between mine and locked me in his arms.

The familiar scent of his tobacco wafted in the air and his warm breath beat against my neck. The moment was intoxicating, but the words I uttered were hurtful. "Christopher, I don't want to see you anymore."

"Why?" He pouted.

"We shouldn't continue on with this. We should draw a line from now on." I struggled to get away from him. His expression suddenly turned cold and it frightened me.

He cupped my cheeks and kissed me. The taste of mint chewing gum soon spread on my lips. I wanted to break free, but he gave me no chance. I felt his teeth on my lips and I gave way to the biting pain.

His lips mashed against mine as our tongues tangoed at his lead. Every thought in my mind became jumbled up as I felt him sucking every ounce of strength from my body. I hooked my hands around his neck so that I would not slump to the ground, for my legs had turned to jelly then.

He bit my lips again before finally pulling himself away. His burning gaze scorched my skin as he looked at me intently.

Christopher wiped my lips with his cold fingers as his voice echoed in the room. "Take this as a punishment. Don't ever talk about drawing a line between us again. You're mine."

Anger rose in my heart. "What do you want me to do then? I don't ever want to be the other woman in someone else's relationship. I can't do a relationship that's not serious."

I turned and reached for the doorknob, but Christopher dragged me back. He seemed perplexed and helpless at my sudden change in attitude. "You have to at least explain to me why you're upset. You can't do this to me. I'm innocent."

Chapter 105

"Innocent?" I bit his arm. "You have a fiancée! I will never be your mistress. You know I hate women like that. I clearly told you that you should just tell me if you're already taken. I told you I will accept it gladly and not make a fuss of it, but now I'm caught in a difficult position because of you."

Although it was just an engagement, I did not take it lightly. When a woman became someone's fiancée, it meant she had all her hope on the man that he would live up to his promise.

If Christopher did not have a fiancée or a girlfriend, I would stay with him until he got tired of me, but I would never allow myself to get into an affair with him. This was what I loathed the most. I would never become someone I hated.

"I have a fiancée?" He rubbed his chin and looked at me cluelessly. "Why don't I even know I'm engaged?"

"Cut the crap, Christopher. You're no different from Lyle."

My heart chilled at his blatant denial. Everyone was in the know, so there was no point negating the fact. "Your fiancée is a good woman. I hope you don't end up hurting her even if you don't like her."

I turned my back toward him and stopped at the door. I told myself to never look back after walking out. My heart ached at the thought of ending things with Christopher. After all, he was the man who had treated me the best aside from my former parents.

I could not believe I would lose him so soon. This was the cruelest joke life had played on me. The man I loved already had a fiancée.

Before I could get out, Christopher lifted me off the ground and swung me on his shoulder. He locked the door and put me on the bed before pressing his body against mine. When he saw me trying to get off, he grabbed my hands and pinned me on the bed.

“Don’t tell me you think Monica is my fiancée?” There was hurt written all over his face. I rolled my eyes at him. His acting skills were really on point. He might be the heir of a powerful family, but to me, he was no different from a Casanova.

“Are you going to keep lying to me?”

What happened next completely confounded me. Christopher burst out in uncontrollable laughter holding his stomach. His laughter pulled at my heartstrings and I found myself reaching for his face.

I wondered how someone could be this handsome. Someone like me did not deserve a man like him.

“How I wish you’re single,” I mumbled.

When he finally stopped laughing, he pinched my nose and rubbed his face against mine. He always liked doing this. He said it made him feel love and warmth. He said this was something only people deeply in love would do.

“Eve, you look adorable when you’re jealous, do you know that? It’s a little scary, but when I looked at your puckered lips, I feel like I can swallow you whole.”

“This is not about me getting jealous, it’s about doing the right thing, Christopher.” I tried persuading him, and myself.

He planted a kiss on my cheek and shrugged. “But the thing is, I don’t have a fiancée. I’m not engaged to Monica. Our families are really close, so we meet each other at a lot of events. If this itself is enough to make you think I’m engaged, then I guess you can say I have a lot of fiancées.”

A teasing smile played on his lips as he spoke. “Why don’t you be my fiancée? I promise I’ll treat you like my queen.”

Chapter 106

Flowers of joy blossomed in my heart when I heard this news. Just as I thought I was on the verge of falling into an abyss of heartbreaking pain, my heart was lifted again. I started sobbing when I found out it was all a misunderstanding.

Christopher sighed and kissed my eyes, trying to dry my tears. “Why are you crying? Do you not trust me at all?”

I was at a loss for words. Christopher had been really nice to me. I should not have believed what other people said just like that and even gave him an ultimatum, yet he did not even get angry with me and was even comforting me right now.

“You can’t blame me for getting jealous. You even danced with her,” I complained, glaring at him.

“Are you blaming me? You’re the one who’s still married here. I would gladly take your hand and dance with you if you were not married. I want to show the world that you belong to me, but I can’t.”

He looked at me like a disappointed child. “You got angry with me and even bit me when I did nothing wrong. How should you make it up to me? Can I ask for some kisses and hugs now?”

My face turned red and I quickly gave him a peck on his cheek, but he was clearly not satisfied. “I want the full package, not just a kiss.”

He loved asking me to kiss him. He would not stop until I kiss every inch of his face. Since I know I was the one at fault, I lifted my head again and kissed his forehead, his nose, and his lips.

When I was finally done, he smiled contentedly and lay in bed beside me. I tilted my head and looked at his profile, admiring his exquisite face. I moved closer and kissed his ear, ending the kiss with a soft bite and wet lick on his earlobe.

When I heard his breathing became quicker, I smiled and kissed his neck. I knew this was his sensitive spot. Every time I kissed him on the neck, he would get all excited.

He shot up and pushed me down on the bed beneath him. “Darling, you’re playing with fire.”

I smiled at him mischievously. “I thought you wanted a full package?”

He ruffled his hair and groaned as if he was vexed. He pulled his tie away and looked back at me. “You little minx. I’m gonna punish you.”

An inexplicable blend of thrill and panic took over me. It had been a long time since Christopher and I slept together. It even got me thinking that he had had too much of me from last time.

“There’re a lot of people outside though. You sure you want to do this?” I asked.

“You say that, but I can tell your body is craving me.” Christopher had already unbuttoned his clothes, revealing his muscular and defined torso. His hands fondled my body as he smiled.

“Don’t you think it’s exhilarating to try something different? I bet it’s nice doing it in a guest room too.”

“But...” I was still a little worried, yet my body was already answering his beckoning.

“No one can stop me from doing what I want in my house. You’re the one who started this, so you’re bearing full responsibility for it.” He pushed himself between my legs and his hand traveled south. When he saw that I was about to speak again, he planted his lips on mine to shut me up.

All worrying thoughts left me and I reciprocated his kiss passionately. Christopher was assertive and impatient. “It’s been such a long time since I’ve tasted you. I’m definitely gonna have my fill tonight.”

Glints of desire festered in his eyes as he focused his consuming gaze on me. I had a feeling it was going to be a rough one.

Chapter 107

Just like what Christopher promised, he had his fill of me for the next few hours. By the time he was done with me, there wasn't a spot on my body he hasn't tasted.

He came into me like an insatiable beast over and over again. He did not kiss me again, although at the climax he would kiss me coarsely on my neck.

"You're mine, Yvonne."

"Yes, I'm yours..." I muttered subconsciously.

At the end of the day, Christopher still came back to his senses and stopped after a few rounds. It was his dad's birthday party, after all, and we could not be spotted missing for too long a time. He carried me to the bathroom and helped me wash up.

I lay against him frailly as I let him showered me with warm water. "Shit. My makeup! And my hair too! I can't go out like this."

"Don't worry, I already have everything prepared," he said, opening the wardrobe and taking out a hairdryer and some makeup.

"Did you plan this?" I stared at him.

"Of course not!" he said in all seriousness. "I was just preparing for an emergency. After all, there's no telling what a man will do when he sees his beloved."

"I knew it!" I kicked at him, but he grabbed my leg and placed a kiss on my foot.

"Ew, that's dirty." I tried pulling my leg back, but he was not letting go. "No, it's not. I love it."

"What if I have smelly feet?" I pursed my lips.

"I don't care. I'll still love you." He took up my other foot and tickled me. After we were done, he helped me put on my clothes and dried my hair.

He ran his fingers through my hair tenderly and I closed my eyes, enjoying the moment. My heart was full.

I used to dream of marrying a man who loved me when I was younger. I would imagine us living together happily. I would cook for him and take care of him, while he would dry my hair every time after I showered.

However, I stopped having those dreams after I married Lyle. I could stay up all night waiting for him and cooking him food, but he would never be appeased.

“Christopher, why are you so nice to me? If there ever comes a day where you get tired of me, I won’t be able to get used to it,” I said softly as if I was talking to myself, but Christopher heard everything despite the noise from the hairdryer. “Stop talking nonsense. I won’t ever get tired of you and I’ll treat you like my queen as long as you want to.”

I nodded and bowed my head shyly. His words made me get butterflies in my stomach. I felt like we were a couple who had just gotten married.

After my hair was dry, Christopher tied my hair into a ponytail. I was surprised watching his adroit fingers in the mirror.

“Do you do this often?” I asked. He glanced at me and answered, “Of course. I’ve been doing this ever since I was ten. I have full confidence that people will compliment your hair after you walk out of this door.”

So he had done this for another woman... “I see.” Since it was in the past, I decided to just let it slide. I should not be greedy.

Christopher continued, “You might think my mom is a capable woman who can do simply anything, but she actually doesn’t even know how to tie her own hair properly. My dad used to do it for her, but he got really busy after he was transferred, so my brother took over, but Mom was not satisfied, so I ended up doing it.”

Chapter 108

I snorted. Christopher really did have a way with words. The relationship between his parents drew envy from the crowd just by listening to them speak to one another in a loving manner. “Is your mother’s hair done up by your father?” I was in disbelief.

Her hair was tied up beautifully, fitting for a lady of her status. It wasn’t a simple ponytail as it appeared, but rather a fashionable variation of it. This style did not appear either childish or old-fashioned, however. She shone with the radiance of a mature woman in full bloom.

“Of course he did. My dad is a powerful man in his company but not many people know how meek he is toward his wife at home,” Christopher teased as he pulled me in front of the mirror and pulled out the make-up kit.

I was overwhelmed with the sheer number of make-up products he had in that kit. As a woman, it was essential to have a face redeemable with make-up. But since Mother had left the Tanner family, we have lived a life of vagrancy, knowing nothing about dressing up. It would be inappropriate for me to attend the party in a simple ponytail.

“Isn’t there something simpler for me?” I gestured helplessly at the numerous make-up products.

“Why do you have this many requests? Fine, I’ll help you.” Christopher pressed me down into a chair, washed his hands, and rolled up his sleeves.

“You know how to apply make-up too?” I asked in disbelief. “Are you actually a man?”

“Didn’t you just experience the true extent of my manhood? If that wasn’t enough for you, we can go back and relive that experience several more times. I guarantee that you wouldn’t be able to get out of bed for at least three days.” Christopher lifted my chin with the poise of a confident lover.

I thought it wiser to not respond to that. Christopher was exceptionally talented in bed, the type that would go seven times a night. Though when I thought that it sounded exaggerated when reading about it, but now that it applied to Christopher, I found it to be word for word. He could take me to bed and make love all night, save the time spent in between for sleep and meals. I was left with no doubt that he would have been capable of letting me experience what it was truly like being a woman.

After a while, Christopher set down the eye shadow to hand me the mirror. “Here, time to witness a miracle by yours truly.”

I stared at my reflection with surprise. It was simple makeup that had brought on a lovely effect. Before, my makeup had been done by another make-up artist which looked a little heavy to my tastes. However, this natural look that Christopher had managed to create accentuated the natural beauty of my features.

I touched my face, in awe at his expertise in nearly everything. “You look like a typical dude but you’re not as dumb as they are,” I remarked.

“That’s very kind of you,” Christopher replied courteously. “Your name is engraved on my heart.” He took my hand and kissed it lightly.

I was flabbergasted. Everything was fine until he started saying these stupid sweet nothings, which made me feel so loved that I felt like crying.

“I’ll be outside to get rid of them.” Christopher stood up. “Come out in ten minutes.” He rubbed my cheek with affection as I nodded obediently, though I was so attached at that moment that I did not want him to leave.

I tugged at his arm, unwilling to part with him even for ten minutes. My days with Christopher were simple and peaceful. It would be nice if we could carry on living like this forever.

“What is it? Do you miss me already?” He teased, pinching my nose.

“Yes, I do,” I answered with a truthful nod.

“Hurry up and get a divorce. Then we’ll be together at last.”

“It won’t be long now after we get back. Besides, Lyle is pretty set on being with Crystal.” I shrugged. “Please don’t get involved with other women when you’re out and about,” I added before I could stop myself.

He was such a desirable man. With hardly any effort, I was sure that he could have gotten any woman he wanted. Actually, I was able to tell that Monica was into him by the way she constantly stood next to him and pretended to be his girlfriend. She didn’t even bother correcting the assumption that she was his fiancée.

“You’re an awfully jealous girl, aren’t you?” Christopher smiled. “I will if you won’t flirt with other men too, not even your current husband. Do you understand? You are mine.” Christopher hugged me once more before leaving. I watched him depart with a smile on my lips.

Though Christopher had always claimed dominion over me in such a domineering and possessive manner, I loved hearing that as it sounded very romantic.

Chapter 109

There was nobody out in the corridor when I exited the room. I had no idea where Christopher had sent the crowd but it suited me just fine. The feeling of cheating on my husband felt thrilling.

I smoothed the front of my dress and ensured that I looked prim and proper before striding into the hall. Even though our secret rendezvous were urgent and passionate, Christopher was always careful not to leave any traces of himself on me.

The party had already commenced by the time I arrived. I could smell the delicious scent of dinner wafting out from within. When I reached the entrance, Lyle was already standing there with a scowl on his face as he waited for me. “Where did you wander off to?” He barked impatiently. “We still have a toast to give! Do you have sh*t in your brain?”

“Yes, I do,” I replied serenely. “You. You’re always on my mind.” I was pleased with the way I retorted. Lyle attempted to belittle me so I went with the flow. My wit had astounded even myself.

Lyle shook with anger at my impertinence but somehow managed to have kept it under control as the dining hall was crowded. The most he was able to do was curse under his breath. If he were to do anything more than that, he would definitely make himself out to be a laughingstock.

“Let’s go and toast Mr. Ziegler,” Lyle muttered as he tugged on my wrist roughly. A bruise was going to appear on that spot, that’s for sure.

The hall was abuzz with chatter and the clinking of silverware and glasses. In it, I was forced to toast his business partner and act like Lyle’s loving wife. After the first round of drinks, I was feeling tipsy despite it being premium champagne.

It tasted sweet and harmless but had a powerful kick that manifested some minutes later. The dizziness soon became difficult to ignore, necessitating me to hold my head. Lyle merely frowned as he was worried that I would embarrass him in front of everybody. To remedy the situation, he took me out to

the garden and procured a glass of juice from seemingly out of nowhere. "Have some juice, that will help with the dizziness."

I took several sips and felt the overwhelming effects of the champagne diminishing a little. Leaning against a tree to remain upright, a gust of cold wind met my face and intensified my discomfort. The scene swam before my eyes. Even the sight of Lyle standing before me began to split into multiple copies of himself.

I shook my head vigorously in an attempt to ward off the effects of the champagne.

"What are you doing here? I've been looking all over for you." Benjamin arrived as he chastised Lyle in a loud voice. "We are going to start some drinking games. The whole gang is there except for you."

"Yvonne is drunk," reported Lyle curtly.

"Leave her be, then," replied Benjamin with a disdainful look at me. "I don't understand why your grandmother picked such a useless woman to be your wife. She couldn't even hold her liquor at a party as important as this."

"Alright, quit your yapping. I'll be right with you," Lyle said, though he remained where he was.

"Crystal is there too. If you do not come at once, don't be mad at us for going after her. We all like her, you know," Benjamin said candidly. I couldn't tell if he was joking.

That captured Lyle's attention. After all, Crystal was a popular character in the socialite circles of Avenport. The fondness that the Miller brothers had toward her was common knowledge. "Go up and rest," Lyle ordered as he turned to me. "We still have rafting tomorrow, don't forget."

"I have already promised Grandma that I will sit through this banquet without leaving," I protested. "I keep my promises." However, my body decided not to cooperate as my head was feeling heavier by the minute. That was not the only thing bothering me. My body felt so hot that despite it being a fall night, all I wanted was to take a cold shower.

Something was not right. I did not want to remain by Lyle's side, so I waited for him to leave. As soon as that notion formed in my mind, he shoved me hard and berated me for being crude and uncultured before leaving without another word.

I ran several steps before being forced to hold on to a tree trunk, narrowly avoiding falling onto the ground. A servant walked past and was attracted by my calls. He helped me into a guest room where I staggered in with the intention to plop myself down onto the bed to sleep.

My body refused to comply. I felt the warmth in my body turn white-hot and spread slowly like fire throughout my body, searing my wits. I peeled off my clothes frantically as the heat became unbearable.

My vision worsened. I heard the sound of the door being pushed open and the voice of somebody speaking to me, but was unable to identify the person standing before me no matter how hard I tried to

open my eyes. My body grew even hotter as that person helped me to my feet. The last thing I remembered was their fingers around my throat.

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I was so out of it that I didn't even know where I was at that point. The only thing that mattered was that the hand around my neck felt cool and refreshing. I felt a sudden urge to press myself against him to cool myself down. That was a unique quality that men had that aroused my passions.

As he lowered me onto the bed, I felt that something was off but could do nothing about it as I felt so weak that I was unable to move an inch. A pair of large hands began massaging my cheeks and body. It felt divine as I moan in satisfaction and begged for more. I edged myself closer to the man with the icy cool body before me, wanting nothing more than to snuggle up against it.

"I'm feeling so hot..." I murmured.

"Oh my, that really turned me on. I didn't think you had it in you, Yvonne. You usually look so innocent. And it's really sexy how you wriggle around like a little snake when you're aroused."

The voice was familiar but at the moment I can't quite place where I've heard it before, but it wasn't important. The only thing that mattered at that moment was to bring my body temperature down. Instinctively, I burrowed myself in the coolness of his embrace.

"There's no need to rush. I will have you begging for mercy soon." The man's voice dripped with malice. His calloused hand stroked my body and it tingled pleasantly. His touch felt magical as they glided over my silky skin. Trembling in anticipation, I threw back my head to let out a primal noise deep in my throat.

I heard the rustle of my clothes being removed. The next moment, I was shoved onto the bed. The sheets felt blissfully cool against the blistering heat of my bare skin. Could it be Christopher? I opened my eyes as wide as they would go, but all I could see was the blurry image of a figure.

I had wanted to call out Christopher's name, but I was dimly aware of the hazard of calling out his name under a state as intoxicated as this. The sharp odor of alcohol pierced my nostrils, along with the dense scent of his cologne. It was only when he was attempting to lift my skirt up that I realized that the man wasn't Christopher.

In a flash of clarity, I deduced that it wasn't Christopher as his typical scent of tobacco and mint were absent. The shock of that realization was enough for me to completely regain my senses as I attempted to shove him off of me as hard as I could.

"Who are you?" I demanded. "Let go of me!"

"Stop resisting," the man growled as he leaned his full weight on me against the bed.

I was pinned down and had no energy left to struggle. With a shudder of realization, it occurred to me that I had been drugged, which explained my predicament. The alcohol at the party was not the

problem, because many other guests have had the same champagne and did not end up as intoxicated as I was.

Therefore, it must have only been the glass that I had. Did Lyle have to resort to this? I thought in despair. He had always accused me of cheating on him. This time, he had decided to punish me by delivering me to the arms of another man.

No, I will definitely not let him get away with his plan. I bit down hard on my tongue, and the pain cleared my senses to my surroundings. I took a close look at the man on top of me but did not recognize him. I pushed hard against him as I fumbled for the heavy ashtray on the nightstand and swung it against his skull.

Blood splattered over the sheets from the side of his head but I did not stop. He probably did not expect me to have been able to regain my wits to defend myself in my drugged state. I attacked him relentlessly until he was on the floor.

As he struggled to get to his feet, I raised the ashtray and brought it crashing down onto his head without hesitation, rendering him motionless on the floor. "Please stop," he croaked. "You're going to kill me if you keep going."

The ashtray fell and shattered into a thousand fragments from my limp fingers. I collapsed on the floor next to him, panting from exertion. My body temperature began to soar again as confusing mirages of desire and emptiness rushed through my mind. I did not know who the man was who lay beside me.

I felt the savage urge to force a confession out of him regarding the origins of the potent drug that I have been sedated with.

Not daring to venture outdoors for fear of who I might run into, I did not even know where I had left my purse. My breathing was haggard as I failed to resist the urge and dashed across the room to where he lay.

I felt another surge of rage as soon as I touched him. Without thinking, I grabbed a shard from the broken ashtray and stabbed him in the arm. "I will not be taken advantage of," I panted as I plunged the shard into his arm repeatedly. "I will not be taken to be a fool. Not like this."

He did not faint but grew alarmed at the sight of my violent assertiveness. He swallowed and spoke weakly. "Bloody hell, I had thought that I was being gifted a meek little lamb. Turns out she's a man-eating flytrap."

Crystal's voice came suddenly from outside the door. "The servant had said that Yvonne is resting in this room, but I have a bad feeling about it. Let's take a look inside."