

Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 50-59

Chapter 50

“Ooh, spicy. I like that. Don’t worry; I’ll make sure to give you some tips.” The man was inching closer to me for a kiss. Seeing as such, I pushed him away with all my strength and hit him with the mop beside me.

He snapped and pushed me onto the ground. Terrified, I screamed out loud, but no one came to my rescue. Just as I thought it was all over for me, a man came forward and kicked the man off me.

In a daze, I caught a glimpse of a tall silhouette against the bright ceiling lamp. The man’s eyes were filled with anger.

Christopher kicked the drunk man a few more times, rendering him incapable of getting up from the ground. The man then turned his head toward me and gave me a minatory look. I looked at him, too petrified to speak.

Christopher was furious, and surprisingly, his anger was directed at me. Why though? Did I offend him?

“Why... Why are you here?” I murmured.

Christopher remained taciturn as he helped me up from the ground. He then started dragging me toward the exit. “Wait. My luggage is still in my room.”

Christopher held my hand firmly as we walked back into my room to get my luggage. After we got downstairs, he decided to carry me in his arms so that we could move faster.

Shocked, I uttered, “What are you doing? Let me down. Don’t you realize we’re on the streets right now?”

“Shut up!” Christopher dropped me off in his car.

He had never been this angry with me before, so I was rather stupefied by his behavior. Sitting in the car, I was afraid to even move an inch. All I could hear in the car was his heavy breathing.

He lit a cigarette and started smoking. His face exuded a sense of loneliness and melancholy as he did so. Seeing Christopher like this, my heart started aching. Christopher is a proud and willful man. He shouldn’t have this kind of look on his face.

It was rather warm and cozy in the car. Exhausted and hungry, I felt my vision grow hazy. Christopher’s handsome face started looking blurry to me. I ended up closing my eyes a short while later.

In a drowsy state, I heard a voice beside my ear say, “Am I that untrustworthy to you? You would rather live in a cheap hotel than seek my help?”

I wanted to reply but was strangely unable to open my mouth. I must be dreaming.

“After what Lyle has done to you, you are still in love with him. Why would you do this to yourself? I really can’t bear to see you suffer anymore.”

The voice sounded deep and warm. Even if it was just a dream, I felt comforted and cherished.

That being said, I was still quite hungry. Not bothering to open my eyes, I grabbed hold of what resembled meat and took a bite of it. “Yummy! It tastes just like roasted pork!” I yelled out loud.

A groan was heard immediately after that. Startled, I opened my eyes and directed them toward Christopher. Upon taking a closer look, I noticed a bite mark on his thumb.

I let out a silly grin before uttering, “Uh, sorry. I thought I was eating roasted pork.”

“How long has it been since you’ve last eaten?” Christopher shot me a resigned look.

“I ate breakfast and nothing else after that.” I gazed at him with puppy eyes, hoping he wouldn’t be angry with me for biting him. That being said, I was still perplexed by his behavior back at the hotel. Why was he so angry? As much as I want to know the answer to that question, I should probably abstain from asking it for now.

Chapter 51

Christopher reached out his hand to me. “Blow onto it. I’ll go and cook for you after this.”

I blew onto his thumb obediently and even licked it a few times. They say saliva can be used for disinfection, right? There, it should be fine now.

Christopher’s facial expression suddenly changed. He lifted my chin and gave me a fervent and intense kiss. It felt like I was about to be swallowed by him.

His kissing technique was rather impressive. I was completely overwhelmed by him as our tongues engaged in a fierce and scorching battle of their own. After he was done, I was left panting in his arms.

Christopher’s face was looking red-hot. This expression of his was very familiar to me. It’s the face he makes whenever he’s exercising.

After letting me go, the man gave me a pat on my head and uttered, “I’ll go cook for us. Try to behave, okay?”

I nodded in response. I’d like to avoid infuriating him again if possible. He’s scarier than Lyle when he’s angry. After he went out of the room, I was finally able to focus on my surroundings and figure out where I was. The house I was in had two bedrooms and a living room. The whole place was decorated very nicely.

I was quite fond of the interior design of the house. The light blue curtains and the checkered tablecloth complemented each other very well. Moreover, the carpet on the floor was very soft and warm. There were also a few vases of orchids meticulously decorated around the balcony.

After putting on a pair of house slippers, I went to the kitchen and saw Christopher cooking in an apron. Is this the same Christopher I know? Look at him go! I didn't know he was such a good cook...

I really didn't expect Christopher, who had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, to be so good at cooking.

Even though he was wearing an apron, he still looked suave and attractive. Lyle could really learn a thing or two from him. It would be nice to have a helping hand in the kitchen.

"What are we having tonight?" I queried.

He winked at me, saying, "Caramelized pork ribs!"

Upon hearing his response, I recalled the moment I first made caramelized pork for him. Caramelized? This is not going to be good. Surprisingly enough, the caramelized pork ribs tasted amazing. Ravenous, I finished all of it in one breath.

After I was done eating, I laid down lazily on the couch. When I saw Christopher glaring down at me, I shot him a bright and silly smile.

"Christopher, you're amazing, you know that? The dishes you made were even better than mine."

"If you want, I can continue to cook for you in the future," he piped up while scrolling through his phone.

I shook my head before replying, "There's no need. It's not like I can't cook for myself."

Christopher aligned his eyes with mine and was reticent for a while. Suddenly, he uttered, "You should just live here from now on."

"No, it's okay. I'll find a house soon. Living here is inconvenient..." I rejected his offer. I can't possibly live here. If Lyle finds out about this, he'll use this to claim that I am indeed cheating on him.

"What? This is your house. I don't see why it would be inconvenient," he replied nonchalantly.

Hearing his statement, I was bewildered. "I have a house? When did that happen? Why wasn't I aware of this?"

"Half a year ago!" Christopher opened the drawer beside him and started rummaging through it. He then took out a property ownership certificate and gave it to me. Having perused through the certificate, I was stupefied to find out that the house was indeed mine.

Half a year ago was the time when Christopher first arrived in Avenport. Could it be that he bought the house for me during that time? “Why do you have my ID document?”

Chapter 52

“Six months ago, you left your bag at the party, so I took your ID to buy this suite under your name.” Christopher persisted calmly.

I only remembered replacing my identity card after losing it. At that moment, I was completely at a loss for words. I stared hard at him suspiciously. “Christopher, you know I’m divorcing Lyle, so you had everything planned out, right?”

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“What do you think?”

What am I supposed to think? I certainly had no reason to believe that a perfect guy like him would have eyes on me or even thought of Lyle as his rival. Besides, it was absurd to think that the second son of the Lane family would hatch such a plan to accomplish his motive.

“You must’ve had some problems with the paperwork when buying a house for yourself, so you used mine. Haha... That must be it!” I laughed dryly to hide my anxiety. He fixed his deathly serious gaze on me. His eyes were so memorizing I could drown in them.

“Actually, I think I’d better find another place-”

“And what? Live like a homeless, wandering in the streets and live your life in a basement? Don’t you feel bad for those who genuinely concern about you?” He shot back before I could finish, leaving me no room for negotiation.

Suddenly, it hit me. I had nowhere to go. Hence, I stayed in that fully furnished suite. Once I had settled in, I used the laptop prepared for me to look for jobs online. I sent out tons of resumes that same day.

At night, a thought suddenly occurred to me when I lay in bed. How did Christopher know I fell out with Lyle and moved out of the apartment? I reached out my phone on the bedside table and typed the questions that had been lingering in the back of my mind. After a moment of hesitation, I groaned and deleted them.

Then I received his text. New home, new beginning. Good night and sweet dreams. There was even a cute emoji! I read it a dozen times. Eventually, my foul mood dissipated.

I learned that life without faith and hope was meaningless, and I considered myself fortunate to see the beauty in it.

The next morning, I sorted my morning routine and turned on the laptop to resume my job hunt. All I needed was a steady income to support myself and to hold my head high in front of Lyle and Crystal.

There was an interview invitation from a foreign enterprise in my inbox. I went. Lady Luck must favor me because they hired me as the secretary. Although the salary was below my expectation, the job is the right fit for me, so I signed the employment contract without much hesitation.

“Mr. Gordon, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I will do my best to fulfill this role.” I babbled enthusiastically as I poured a cup of water for the chubby manager.

“Yvie, you are most welcome. If you do well during the one-month probation period, you will become a permanent employee,” he said with a delightful smile. I was thrilled to hear that.

Outside the company building, I accustomed my eyes to the bright sunlight. I called Christopher excitedly to share the good news. I totally agreed that women need to be financially independent from their men.

“Christopher, I got a job! Isn’t it amazing? I can finally earn my own living!”

We laughed as I rejoiced over my new job. Suddenly, I froze when I saw my sister approached me, along with Crystal and Sally.

Chapter 53

The moment I saw them, I wanted to run, but my feet were glued to the ground. I cursed myself for feeling a coward in front of the three bullies. Moreover, Wendy was still my mother-in-law, so I couldn’t ignore her and leave.

“Yvonne, what a coincidence! Are you shopping as well?” Crystal put a grin on her elegant face.

“Yeah, hi!” I greeted her with a forced smile. Christopher was still talking over the phone. I immediately bid him farewell and hung up to focus on the upcoming confrontation.

No matter how hard one tried, life could still feel stressful. That was how I felt at that moment. I wished I didn’t have to accommodate these women, but I had to.

“Geez! You spend all day loafing around while Lyle works so hard at the company. Don’t you care about him? I can’t understand why he married you in the first place. Grrr!” Wendy scoffed sarcastically.

I merely smiled because I didn’t have an answer to that question. Then, my gaze shifted to Crystal. The two locked arms like a real mother-daughter duo.

“Mrs. Smith, don’t say that. After all, she quitted her job after she married Lyle. Naturally, she has more free time. Wow, what a nice watch you got there. I bet it is worth over two million. Lucky you, Lyle treats you so well,” Yvette chimed in.

Maintaining my silence, I glanced at my watch which was my most valuable possession. Christopher had trapped it to my wrist before I left the suite in the morning to remind me not to be home late.

“Has the cat got your tongue? Gosh, you’re such a disgrace! Come on, follow us.” As usual, Wendy was being unreasonable.

She took the lead like a queen bee and we trailed behind her when she walked into a shopping mall. Then she whispered something to Crystal and chortled. I wanted to leave, but my feet just wouldn't budge.

Wendy had her ways to make my life a living hell at home. After I married Lyle, she turned the Smiths against me too. Initially, I would stand up for myself. She was too formidable, and I gave up fighting.

The trio shopped as I struggled to carry everything gifts from Wendy to Crystal. In return, Crystal bought a necklace for her and tossed a few words of praise. Surely she was ecstatic.

Panting, I tried to keep up with the mountain of bags. Nobody offered to help.

"Yvonne, hi! It has been a while, huh?" My little sister walked over to me with a mischievous grin. Before I could respond, she stepped on my foot really hard while no one was watching.

The pain made me lose my balance, and I fell face-first onto the ground. Passerby chattered amongst themselves as they watched me. It was humiliating.

Wendy roared, "Yvonne! You're doing this on purpose, don't you? Can't you walk properly? Gosh, you are a good-for-nothing!"

I ignored her and massaged my toes to ease the pain. Then I gazed up at Yvette to see her mocking me.

"I'm sorry, Yvonne. I didn't notice your hands are full. Here, let me help you." Crystal came up to me and reached out her hands. Yet, I declined her offer to assist and scrambled up myself. Then I figured it was a chance for me to excuse myself from that evil mother-in-law.

Chapter 54

"Let her be. They are not even heavy. Geez." As soon as I got up, Wendy picked up the shopping bags on the floor and shoved them in my hands. She eyed me with such disdain as if I were trash.

An employee received better treatment.

After shopping, Wendy was hungry. Then, at that very moment, Lyle called to inform her he was joining us for lunch. My heart skipped a beat because I was not ready to meet him after our big fight.

Like a bad penny, he showed up. As soon as he walked into the restaurant, he went straight to Crystal and sat beside her. I figured he probably didn't see me behind all those shopping bags. He looked genial as he chatted with them. It was his smile that I missed because it once lit up my world.

"Yvonne, call the waiter," Wendy instructed as she walked to our table.

"Eve?" He turned to me in surprise. It was clear that he didn't notice me at all. "Why are you here? And where were you yesterday?"

I don't want to be here either, you know. I gritted my teeth. Before I could mumble an answer, Wendy remarked sarcastically, "Well, someone is slacking off in broad daylight. Hmph! If I hadn't caught her, she wouldn't return home to do the chores."

Lyle frowned at me. He seemed to hold himself back. I guessed he was boiling mad when he saw the stuff mess in the apartment.

I threw and broke every single thing since no one appreciated the effort I put into that house.

"Lyle, I'm hungry. Let's eat," Crystal interrupted when she saw Lyle and I exchanged a long gaze.

In fact, I had always thought that she had lost interest in him since she chose her career over him years ago. Yet she was eyeing me like a rival.

"May I take your order?" The waiter handed the menu to us and waited to take the order.

Lyle ordered five different dishes.

Suddenly, it brought back memories of. When Lyle and I were here previously, I had mispronounced a dish and made a fool of myself. His voice jarred me back to the present. "It's been a long time since we eat here. I hope your favorite dishes are still the same," he said to Crystal.

"No, they are still my favorite. Here, let me order some for you too." At that, she added more to the list without looking at the menu. I was completely dumbfounded because the dishes she ordered were strange to me. "Am I right? I remember these are your favorite."

Naturally, he was impressed. "You're right. I didn't expect you to still remember them!" He looked at her affectionately.

"Shall we get a dessert? We always eat this after the meal, remember?" She pointed it at the waiter with a smile.

I soon realized that it was their usual place of meeting. Indeed, such a fancy restaurant was fit for an elegant lady like her.

"Sir, you two make such a lovely couple. Since you are our regular customers, we will serve a soup special for you as the best wish. It's on the house," the waiter effused.

Chapter 55

As soon as I heard that, my expression shifted. I immediately removed my ring. "Look, Crystal. Shall I give my ring to you? I think it suits you better. Darling, what do you think?" My voice was icy.

I deliberately dragged the word "darling" as I narrowed my eyes at Lyle. The atmosphere was exceptionally awkward. Then the waiter bowed his head and apologized to me profusely.

I didn't take his words to heart because my attire was a bit sloppy. Moreover, he merely did his duty to please his customers. "It's fine. My husband and my cousin are really close. They do look like a cute couple together. How lovely."

"Yvonne, stop it!" Lyle roared.

"Yvonne, what are you talking about? Crystal just returned, so there's nothing wrong with him taking care of her. As her cousin, you should know better. Don't overreact." Wendy chimed in.

Overreact, huh? Then what should I do? Should I just give in and leave my husband to this woman? Why? Because they share true love?

I held the ring in my hand and chuckled. "Wendy, relax. I'm just joking."

A moment later, the food was served and everyone dug in. I looked at all the luxurious dishes on the table. They looked delicious and certainly fit my taste, but my appetite was spoiled by all the drama. Still, I forced a smile on my face and ate slowly.

After we were done eating, Wendy went to the washroom and Lyle excused himself to answer a call, leaving only the three of us at the table. Yvette just wouldn't leave Crystal's side because she treated her like a boss.

Suddenly, Crystal put down her cutlery and spat some ugly words with a smile on her face.

"Yvonne, I heard you ran away from home yesterday. As a married woman, you should better. People will gossip about it."

I frowned. I knew that behind that smile well; she had something up her sleeve. Each time she carried out her evil plan, she would shift the blame to others and play victim.

I figured she went to the apartment and saw the mess I made. "So, a single woman can do as she pleases and flirt with someone's husband?" I sniggered.

Her expression changed drastically, but she maintained her elegant demeanor. "Yvonne, why don't we make a bet? Let's see who Lyle will help. If he chooses you, I'll fly back to Fleynia tomorrow and let you have him. Deal?"

She blinked innocently at me. Suddenly, I was exhausted. She was a beautiful swan, but I was just an ugly duckling. I could never win.

As Lyle's legal spouse, I was no different than a third wheel in Crystal's presence.

I sneered. "That's very generous. But do you really want to play around with something as fragile as feelings?"

Chapter 56

“You must be heartbroken. You have always been affectionate towards Lyle. There’s nothing wrong with that,” Crystal stated nonchalantly while resting her chin on her right palm. “You’ve loved Lyle for a long time now, haven’t you? If I’m not mistaken... Around ten years, am I right? Crushing on someone must be so hard. Being able to love someone publicly is such a privilege. As your cousin, I should give you at least a chance, shouldn’t I?”

My expression darkened. No one except myself knew about the fact that I had a crush on Lyle. Even on my wedding day, I had only told this secret of mine to Sabrina. Not even Lyle knew about this, so how did Crystal find out?

“You must be wondering how I found out. My dear cousin, seeing you like this sure isn’t giving me any satisfaction in winning.” Crystal lounged lazily on the couch with a wide smile. “You know, in the past, I saw you as the spoiled child of the Tanner family, whereas I’m the poor kid whose dad had died. But now, you’ve lost your mom and your dad’s affection. Even your husband is in love with me.”

Crystal placed her hand on her lips as she gasped coyly and said, “Oh no, I sound rude, don’t I?” She then looked at me sympathetically. “This is reality, but it’s almost agonizing to see you looking so disheveled, dear cousin. However, Lyle and I go way back. I’ll be generous and offer you another chance with him. Whether or not you succeed is up to you.”

Crystal’s words pierced through my heart, causing the cracks to deepen. There wasn’t anything I could refute because all she had said was true. I truly had lost everything, even before she returned. As I fiddled with the watch on my wrist, however, my heartache seemed to have dulled.

“Well, Crystal, aren’t you just as despicable as you were back then? I really don’t mind that you keep stealing my things. After all, the ones that you can’t steal are the ones worth keeping. No matter how proud you act, you can never run away from the fact that you’re still the poor kid who lives under our roof. Friendly reminder that you’re a Yates, not a Tanner.” I smirked.

“Still being difficult I see. Here I was considering playing nice so you and Lyle could have the chance to part amicably, but apparently, you still need to be taught a good lesson. You have already lost by a landslide, yet you’re still ridiculously stubborn.” Crystal clicked her tongue and scoffed.

Nevertheless, that last sentence was incredibly familiar. She used to say the same sentence every time she bullied me in the past. I knew for sure that she wanted me to surrender, so I would obey her and live under her mercy. Never could I understand such a twisted mindset. Was there really satisfaction in stepping on others to get ahead?

I slammed my chopsticks onto the table and wiped my mouth with a napkin before getting up to leave. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of Yvette running toward me to step on my feet as she had done before. Instinctively, I stepped to the side, forgetting that Crystal was beside me. Crash!

I could swear that the force behind that collision would not have knocked over even a young girl at the age of three. For some reason, however, Crystal looked as though she had collided with a truck. She fell onto the ground, bringing some of the dishes along with her and spilling the contents all over her face. Upon seeing the dumbfounded look on her face, I almost burst out laughing. I guessed she had intended to fake a dramatic fall but had accidentally knocked over the plates too.

“Yvonne, what are you doing?” Lyle’s furious voice could be heard from behind me. The next thing I knew, he grabbed my arm and flung it forcefully, making me stagger. If it were not for the waiter standing nearby who caught me just in time, I would have fallen head-first into hot soup.

“Crystal, are you alright? Did you burn yourself? I’ll send you to the hospital right away.” Lyle hurried over to the woman on the floor to help her up before shooting daggers in my direction. He looked as though he wanted to rip me into pieces.

The man then turned to look at the waiters in the restaurant and hollered, “Why are you people just standing there? Call the ambulance! Go!”

“Sir, that’s cold soup. You only need to wipe it off. She’ll be alright,” one of the waiters explained patiently, trying to cover up his exasperation.

“Pfft!” I could not help but chortle at that. Suddenly, Lyle turned and slapped me across the face with all his might. “How can you be so vicious? If that was hot soup, Crystal’s face would have been disfigured by now!” he thundered.

The impact of the heavy hand caused me to become dizzy. Before I could speak, Yvette suddenly hugged me by my arm and wailed, “Yvonne, please just give Crystal and Lyle your blessing.”

Chapter 57

“They truly love each other. They have for ten years. If you hadn’t got in between them, they wouldn’t have broken up. Now that they have finally gathered up their courage to give it another try, you wouldn’t be so heartless to separate them from each other again, would you?”

Tears started streaming down my sister’s face as she whimpered, looking pitiful. Even though I was the victim of being slapped just a second ago, Yvette had managed to make me look like the villain of this story.

“So she’s the true mistress. And here I was about to offer her my sympathy. Sure ain’t worth it,” mocked Crystal.

“Damn right it isn’t. Lyle and Crystal have been in love with each other for ten years. She was the one who forced herself between them and caused their separation. Women like her deserve to get beaten up.”

Unfortunately, it just so happened that Wendy had emerged from the restroom and heard the last line. Upon seeing Crystal’s messy state, Wendy stormed forward and slapped me twice without a second thought. “I knew you had ulterior motives, Yvonne! What did Crystal do to deserve this?”

Murmurs started to rise around us, just like what had happened in the banquet last time. Even though I was not in the wrong, I was still the one being accused at the end of the day, abandoned by all with no one by my side. Despite all that had happened, I kept my gaze firmly on Lyle.

Even after hearing them calling me the mistress, he had not once spoken up on my behalf. I closed my eyes before taking a deep breath. "Lyle Smith, do you also see me as the homewrecker that got in the way of your future with Crystal?"

"Can you stop being unreasonable? You shouldn't have hurt Crystal," he responded with a voice as cold as ice.

"I'm unreasonable?" My eyes flew wide open in shock. "Lyle Smith, you were the one who never believed me. When you were hooking up with some other woman behind my back, did the fact that I am your wife ever cross your mind?" Exhaustion filled my eyes as I looked at Lyle, my gaze hard. To my surprise, my eyes were not welling up; perhaps I was too disappointed to even have any energy to cry over him.

"You cheated on me with Christopher too! If I hadn't seen you two myself, I wouldn't have believed it."

"Huh, I thought I heard my name." A familiar sound called out from behind me. The next second, I was pulled to the side by Sabrina while two figures stood in front of me. The pounding in my heart slowed down as a wave of calmness washed over me. I was not alone.

Christopher placed his hands in his pockets. He glanced at me coolly before turning his eyes toward Lyle, eyeing him up and down. "Argued again, Lyle?" asked Christopher in a neutral manner. "The one in your arms right now seems to be your ex-girlfriend whom you've broken up with two years ago. Well, that's not very appropriate, is it?"

"Keep your nose out of our business, Christopher! Don't think for a second that no one will find out about you and Yvonne, no matter how flawless you think your secret is." Lyle's eyes burned in anger as he gritted his teeth as if he had seen his arch-nemesis.

"Oh, Eve and I? You were the one who introduced us to each other. She has always followed you to every gathering, after all. Are you pointing fingers at us right now because we have started to grow close? That's one heavy accusation, don't you think? Or must you make yourself a victim when you were the one who cheated? That's a bit unfair, Lyle."

Christopher spoke in a serious manner, shaking his head occasionally as he did. After hearing what he had said, my anger dissipated. The man sure was brilliant, being able to untwist the story of me being the mistress in just a few sentences. Even Lyle was rendered speechless. I, on the other hand, only knew how to yell at my opponents with no true content.

"Are you okay?" Sabrina whispered into my ear, and I shook my head in response. Besides, I had only been slapped; it was nothing I hadn't experienced before.

"Christopher... You..." Lyle's face had turned red in rage by then. After all, he had no solid proof of me cheating with Christopher, while I had caught him in action with another woman.

"Next time, pal, best resolve all these problems at home. People are going to make you a joke if you do this in public. Men who bullied their wives while cheating on them are all scumbags, understood?"

When no one was looking, Christopher shot me a wink, signaling that he expected a reward from me for standing up for me.

Yvette piped up, "Chris, don't call Lyle that. He and Crystal have been in love for ten years..."

"Don't call me Chris. Call me Christopher. We aren't close." Christopher cut her off mercilessly.

Chapter 58

He seemed to be undefeatable when it came to a battle of wits. I could learn a thing or two from him. Amidst all the chaos, I accidentally caught sight of Crystal leaning on Wendy with a pitiful look on her face. The moment she noticed me staring, she arched an eyebrow.

"You lost," mouthed Crystal smugly.

She was right. I had lost. In fact, I never had a chance to begin with. If Christopher and Sabrina had not shown up to save the day, things would have been worst. I would be publicly labeled a mistress, cast aside, and stomped on.

With all my might, I yanked off my wedding ring and handed it over to Lyle. "Two years ago, after you broke up with Crystal, it was you who came and asked my hand in marriage. You promised me a lifetime of happiness. That was why I married you. Now, I'm giving this ring back to you. Since you want us to be divorced, I'll fulfill your wish."

That was the first time I discussed the matters of our divorce in front of others. Lyle gaped at me, shocked. Seemingly hesitant, he did not accept the ring. Scoffing at the idea that he was reminiscing about our memories together, I grabbed his hand and pressed the ring down onto his palm.

"Lyle!" Crystal called out to Lyle with tears in her eyes. Their loving and affectionate gazes locked over the crowd. I rolled my eyes, annoyed. I had seen this scene happened so many times I was sick of it.

Crystal had made her intention crystal clear that day. Lyle was the reason she had returned. As for me, I no longer had the will to fight.

Just then, a crowd of reporters swarmed into the restaurant. Camera flashes and the clicking of shutters could be heard as they hurried over to us. While running, some of the reporters starting asking questions, shoving their microphones towards Crystal. "Ms. Yates, as an up-and-coming artist, you are well-known all over the world. However, rumor has it that you are a homewrecker. Is that true?"

"Mr. Smith, what is your relationship with Ms. Yates? Are you married? Who's your wife? If Ms. Yates were to marry you, what will happen to your wife? Are you sure you want to abandon your wife?"

It was fortunate that Lyle and I had not conducted a party for our wedding. Even though I was the young mistress of the Smith household, the media had never known of my existence. At first sight of the reporters, Christopher snuck me away from the group while Sabrina stayed back to prevent the reporters from seeing me. As the mistress of the Zimmer household, the reporters should be more interested in Sabrina than they were with me.

“Come on, let’s get outta here. It will be troublesome for you in the future if the reporters were to catch a photo of your face.” Christopher’s tall physique prevented me from getting hit by the people walking around. As for my husband, he was too busy protecting the goddess of his heart.

I could not help but turn and look at him. Perhaps I really was stupid. Even then, I wanted to know what Lyle would tell the media. My expectations for Lyle were too high. A small piece of my heart still hoped that he would not be so shameless.

Luckily, Lyle did not dare to act rashly in front of the cameras. He even warned Wendy to keep quiet when she was about to speak. Suddenly, the hands on my shoulders felt heavier. I winced in pain before looking up at Christopher. He looked displeased, clearly upset that I had turned to look at Lyle.

Just as I was about to leave, I caught sight of a chandelier swaying intensely on the ceiling. It looked like it was about to crash any second. Before I could register what I was doing, I flung away Christopher’s hands and dashed toward Lyle through the crowd, lunging at him.

Crash! The chandelier fell to the ground, barely brushing my shoulder. The clear sound of metal hitting the ground and glass shattering reverberated across the restaurant. The broken pieces of glass flew everywhere, cutting my arm and leg, but I had been fortunate. If it weren’t for the fact that I sprinted fast enough to push Lyle out of the way, the chandelier would have hit my head.

My husband was stunned. Perhaps he had not expected for me to save him at that critical moment instead of leaving. “Eve...” he mumbled.

“Lyle, my leg hurts!” Crystal was holding onto her leg as blood gushed out from a cut. Her tears did not stop rolling down her cheeks as she whimpered to Lyle.

At the sight of the wound on her leg, Lyle snapped out of his daze. He then quickly turned his gaze back to me and stuffed the wedding ring back into my hands. “We’ll talk about the divorce back home. Wait for me in our house,” Lyle commanded in a gentle manner.

Chapter 59

He comforted me softly, as usual, thinking that I would obey his words without any objections as I had done in the past. Without missing a beat, he walked toward Crystal, leaning over to pick her up bridal-style and walking away from the crowd.

Staring at the ring in my hand, a lump began to form in my throat. I truly was stupid. I had loved Lyle for way too long; it was to the extent that I would risk my own safety for his, forsaking everything to push him out of the way because I could not bear to see him hurt.

Deep down in my heart, I still loved the man, even after the countless times I thought I had given up. That was the true reason I was reluctant to divorce him, and it was a truth that I could not deny. If that were not true, I would not have kept this ring with me.

After a few minutes of shocked silence, the reporters hurriedly began snapping photos of us. Lyle was carrying Crystal while I, his wife, was bleeding on my own, abandoned in a corner. I sucked in a deep breath before declaring, "Lyle Smith, there is no more 'our house.' And definitely no home."

With that, I swung my arm out, throwing the ring toward him. Even amidst the cacophony in the restaurant, I could hear the sound the ring made as it hit the ground. I could hear my heart break as I watched the ring fall.

"Miss, are you the secret wife of Lyle Smith, the CEO of the Smith Corporation? How did the two of you get married? Was he the one who cheated, or were you the one who got in between him and Ms. Yates?"

"Mrs. Smith, you must be the mistress of the Tanner household. Can you tell us the story between your husband and Ms. Yates? As for the divorce you mentioned, was that for real or for show?"

Numerous voices and questions rang in my ear. A dull ache on my face was caused by a microphone being thrust toward me. The reporters had turned all their attention at me after Lyle had told them off.

Seeing the excitement written all over their faces, their voices became a buzz. I could not make sense of what they were saying.

Soon, my vision began to blur. Reality seemed to be distorted. I could see the mouths of the reporters moving, but I could no longer hear what they were saying. After risking my own life to save Lyle, he abandoned me by myself in front of all those pesky reporters. I truly am stupid.

Out of the blue, someone squeezed through the crowd and headed toward me. It was Christopher. He furiously pushed aside the reporters, his eyes not leaving mine. In that second, I could see all the hurt and disappointment in his eyes, yet I could tell he was worried. I was reminded of the time he had given me the same look at the hotel. Sudden clarity flashed through the back of my mind – I had let Christopher down.

He had been so good to me, yet I had pushed away his kindness to get to Lyle and even putting myself in danger in the process. I wanted to apologize. I wanted to tell him he should not be so good to me. After all, I was just a haggard wife who was disdained by even her own husband. I had no money, no looks, and no talent.

However, no matter how hard I tried, I could not seem to speak. The world began spinning around me. At the next second, I thought reality had been altered. How did all these people grow so tall? How are they towering over me? I don't want to be stepped on... The more I tried to stand, the darker my vision got. The last thing I saw was a familiar handsome face.

Right before I lost consciousness, I managed to blurt, "I'm sorry!"

I started dreaming. I knew I was dreaming because I saw my mother. She was a gentle, demure woman. Unlike how pretentious and hypocritical Crystal was, Mom carried herself with grace and elegance, as if she had walked out of a painting of the Victorian era.

Her voice was always soft and gentle, sounding like a lullaby, and her smile was the prettiest thing I had ever seen. She loved me deeply and was always attentive. She would listen patiently as I rambled on about my likes and dislikes. I told her I wanted to become an artist when I grew up, so I could draw her beautiful smile.

When she heard that, she kissed my cheeks with a smile, assuring me that I would be the best artist in the whole world. I held out a bunch of quality markers in my small hands and walked toward my father then, asking him if I could draw his smile after I drew my mother's. I wanted to capture the smiles of the two people I loved most, in the most detailed way possible, so that I could keep it with me forever.