

Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 91-100

Chapter 91

Speaking of the Lane family, I immediately looked at him. "Tomorrow is your dad's birthday? Um, what gift should I get? Ugh, I only cared about fighting with Lyle today and forgot about buying gifts."

Since I was going over as Lyle's wife, I did not actually have to worry about bringing gifts since Grandma would prepare everything. However, the situation was different now. I wanted to dump Lyle and get together with Christopher. Thus, I should be more serious when meeting his father.

"Don't worry. I've already prepared it for you." He then jutted his chin toward the coffee table. On it, there was a plainly packaged box. I was dumbfounded when I picked it up. "Walnut cookies? Oh, come on, you want me to bring such a thing to a luxury party? I'll get laughed at."

I then glared unhappily at him and asked, "You're not playing tricks on me, right?"

"Trust me, I'll play tricks on anyone but you," he replied, patting the top of my head. "Why? Is my reputation that poor?"

As I looked deep into his eyes, for some reason, I trusted him. I believed that no matter what he did, he would not hurt me. Thus, I wrinkled my nose and said, "I'll believe you then. But if I lose face, I'll beat you up."

"Can you bear to?" he asked, carrying me onto his lap as he began to put food in my mouth. I willingly took a bite. Although I had had dinner with the Smiths earlier, I did not actually eat anything.

Those truths had already caused my heart to bleed. If another stab came, my heart would collapse completely. Fortunately, I met Christopher in that abyss.

"Of course I can!" I said, taking another bite. I lightly pinched the skin around his waist, then picked up some food and fed him.

In that manner, we fed each other until we were both full. After the meal, I wanted to do the dishes. However, he pressed me onto the sofa and said that he would do it. Thus, I merely watched him, giving him moral support.

I was grinning like a fool as I watched him. Then at night, as usual, we did not go all the way. After we were done, we lay on the bed as I nestled in his arms. "What's your family like?"

"Don't worry, although my family has some wealth, there's nothing messy going on. Both my parents and my brother and his wife are loving. My brother's five years older than me, so I don't need to worry about most of the family matters. I only need to accompany you well."

What a happy family. No wonder he can do whatever he wants. "Do you think they'll like me?" I asked.

“Of course. My eye for picking people is better than average,” he replied before kissing me on the forehead.

In reality, I was somewhat surprised by my question because I had said it out of worry about whether my future parents-in-law would like me. It turned out that I had already regarded myself as his girlfriend and had accepted that identity very gladly.

But I’m a divorcee. Can they really accept me? At that moment, anxiety emerged in my heart. After all, it was human nature that once someone had something beautiful, they would want and desire even more.

Previously, I had intended to stay by Christopher’s side quietly, and only when he got married and had children would I leave. I rubbed my hand against his chest, suppressing the thoughts that had just come up.

To divorce Lyle, I had even been willing to be labeled as a mistress who got in between others’ relationships. As a result, I had no right to make others accept such a notorious person.

I was satisfied that I could stay with someone who had no reason to be nice to me. I could not hope for more. Thus, it was fine as long as I still had him.

When I woke in the morning, Christopher was beside me on the bed. He was quiet when he slept, having none of his usual rushed mannerisms and unruliness. He also seemed to have dreamt of something nice, for there was a slight smile on his face, making him look like a young boy.

My young boy. I leaned over and pecked him on the lips before I got up. Just then, one of his hands cupped the back of my head, and he deepened the kiss. It was a long and deep kiss—full of sweetness and calm.

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Since the Lane family was holding a party, he had to head back first. He took my hand and constantly shook his head. “The next time my dad holds a party, I must openly hold your hand.”

I laughed. “You’d better work hard then. I’m not that easy to woo.”

“Don’t worry. We’re already in love, so happiness isn’t far away.”

Yeah, my happiness should be nearing. Once he left, I then began to prepare and dress up for the party. However, I soon became troubled. What exactly should I wear this time to make a good impression on his parents?

I first tried on the gown that Sabrina had prepared for me but found it too revealing. Although it showed off my figure and covered up flaws, elders and youths had different perceptions. Maybe they’d find me frivolous. Nope, absolutely not this one.

Then, sportswear? However, no one would wear sportswear to a party as it was very out of place. Eventually, I took out the dress I had worn when I met Mary after I got married. It was not because I was feeling nostalgic. Instead, it was because it was the most decent dress I had that was not too exposing.

I then made myself some lunch. Every meal, I would receive a call from Christopher. He said impatiently, "Dad's merely celebrating his birthday. Why do they have to make it so troublesome? Isn't it enough for everyone to have a family dinner together? As someone who doesn't work, they arranged so many things for me to do. How annoying."

He couldn't stop whining. Thus, I smiled and replied, "He's your dad, so you should do something for his birthday. Be good. I'll be there in the afternoon. Don't be annoyed. Remember, you're not allowed to look at pretty girls."

"Okay, okay. I'll listen to you, Eve."

After hanging up, I put the walnut cookies into a small bag, picked up my handbag, then left. Although I already picked my dress, I still needed proper styling. After all, if I merely pulled my hair into a ponytail, others would laugh at me. This was the most troublesome part of the upper class. One had to pay attention to their image at all times. Sometimes, I hoped that Christopher was a poor boy because that way, I would not have any burdens.

After spending the entire afternoon getting everything done, I took out my phone, which had been in silent mode. There was a series of missed calls from Lyle. I sneered and called back, asking in an impatient tone, "Why'd you call?"

As I could not bother to play along with Lyle then, there was no need to give him face.

"Where are you? I'll come to pick up," he asked fiercely, not caring about my tone at all.

"It's fine. I'll take a taxi. We can meet at the gates of the Lane family mansion." Then, before he could get angry, I hung up. I did not want to spoil my good mood because of him.

In any case, he was with Crystal then. I had already heard a woman's voice in the background, yet he still dared to call me. I wondered what she was thinking then. Why didn't she force Lyle to divorce me? Does she like this kind of torment?

Thinking of Crystal, I then wanted to catch up on her news. Although many online discussions would probably be unfavorable to me, I at least had to know how much others scolded me. That way, I would not be too embarrassed.

Unexpectedly, the news from the day before yesterday had disappeared without a trace, especially the fake video. Instead, there was a video about fake and real mistresses circulating online, which had a lot of scolding in its comments section.

On one side, a group of keyboard warriors kept scolding Crystal for being a mistress and being shameless. They said that she was a mistress yet still wanted the legal wife to take the blame. However, another group said that it was true love, and the wife was insignificant.

Confused, I clicked on the owner of the post and was shocked. Two videos were attached. One was the scene of us confronting Crystal in the hotel. Yvette had pushed me, so I knocked into Crystal. However, I

eventually did not say anything about getting bullied and had even saved Lyle. The video was shot very clearly and even included our conversation.

The other video was of us in the hospital. Everything was recorded—from when I entered to when I got hit. Furthermore, it even included what I said. As a result, the fake edited video was then completely baseless in comparison.

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In reality, I was not familiar with the media and reporters. After all, I was neither interested in the entertainment industry nor a public figure. However, the two videos were very crucial, for they clarified almost everything unfavorable toward me. No matter how powerful Crystal's fans were, at that moment, they could only say that true love was invincible, and the legal wife had to retreat.

Although many people still think that since my father had spoken of me that way, the two videos must be fake. However, naturally, some were not stupid. Crystal could be considered as shooting herself in the foot. Hehe, things have cleared up now. Crystal is probably very distressed, for her image is ruined.

Touching my chin, I looked at the account that had posted the video. The username was Kind Person.

If I knew who it was, I would certainly give them a huge hug and various repayments.

As I immersed myself in the feeling of happiness, the cab arrived at the gates of the Lane family mansion. The mansion had classical architecture. Only a part of the mansion was exposed amongst the dense forest, giving off a romantic vibe.

People said that the Lane family has a long heritage in Avenport which only the Goldstein family could compare. It's a majestic, old mansion, alright.

At that time, Lyle had already reached and was waiting for me in the car. I entered the car without saying a word. The sight of Lyle couldn't even affect my joyous mood.

Lyle seemed to be deep in thought as he drove into the driveway. He would look at me every now and then in the rear-view mirror with a frown. When there was no longer any love left, one would come to nitpick on everything about the other party. Thus, his conflicted expression made him look crazy in my eyes.

Lyle probably thought that I was acting coldly toward him. Thus, just as we got off the car, he criticized, "What are you wearing? It's so old-fashioned and wrinkled. Are you purposely trying to embarrass me?"

Upon hearing his words, I looked down at my dress. The wrinkles were because of the patterns on the dress. It was amazing how he even managed to pick on such a thing. I then raised my eyebrows and smiled. Perhaps it had been a long time since I smiled at him, he was stunned.

However, I pointed at my dress and said in a sarcastic tone, "When I wore a fashion-forward dress, you said I exposed myself to seduce men. Today, I'm wearing something more conservative, but you're

saying I'm embarrassing you? How about I go in naked? That way, I can even make it on the headline news. You and Crystal will have nothing else to worry about then."

Seeing as he wanted to hit me again, I leaned backward and put my finger against my lips, signaling him to keep quiet. "You can't hit me. Or do you want me to have a palm print on my face when I enter as Mrs. Smith? Tsk tsk, that'll be embarrassing. When people come over to greet us, will they think that we're a happy couple?"

"Yvonne, you're purposely agitating me, right?" he asked, his face red in anger. If it were not for the fact that we were in public, I might already have been grabbed by the hair and slapped a few times.

"Isn't it because you keep finding trouble with me? Okay, my current husband, we have to go in hand in hand. Are you going or not?"

If looks could kill, I would have been dead hundreds of times by then. I held onto his arm, smiling happily. I always had to deal with upsetting people, but now, things had changed. Since I had gained somewhat of an upper hand, my reactions were naturally different.

My attitude probably angered Lyle, but he had to restrain his anger. Thus, he composed himself before he eventually held my hand as we walked toward the ballroom.

I had initially thought that we could simply enter. However, the guards at the door stopped us and respectfully asked for our invitation. At that moment, I increasingly felt that the Lanes were no ordinary family. I started to become nervous.

Christopher's family background's even better than I thought. Why's a person like him treating me so well? Maybe this is the rumored true love. As I pondered uncertainly, I held Lyle's hand and walked in.

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Just as we entered the house, there was the sound of a car from behind. Lyle turned back to look, so I had to stop as well. After all, we were acting like a loving couple. Even if our marriage only existed in name, Grandma had said that the Ziegler family was around. Thus, I had to play the act.

He was clearly also already in character, for he pulled on my hand so hard that I was practically forced to stop. I turned back, noticing the familiar car. It belonged to the Tanners. Nathan and Scarlett walked in hand-in-hand, followed by Yvette. They looked to be a happy family of three.

Natalie and Crystal then came out from the car behind. Crystal was holding on to a man's arm, who was her male partner for the night. I was a little surprised, for he was Benson, Benjamin's younger brother.

I had heard that Benson also studied art. Thus, it was not surprising that they met each other while in a university abroad. No wonder when Crystal previously got into trouble, he would come forward to speak up for her. Although she did not have many other skills, she had many men who protected her. Even the Miller family's two sons were head over heels for her.

Lyle's grip suddenly tightened around my hand, becoming painful. I glanced over, his expression clearly showing his distress over Crystal holding another man's arm. He was jealous by then, completely forgetting that he was still holding onto his wife.

"Why don't you go over and take back your sweetheart?" I said maliciously, my smile full of sarcasm.

Hearing my words, he snapped back to his senses and turned to me, looking as if he were struggling over something. His expression was strange. After a pause, he said, "Do you really want me to do that?"

I was somewhat surprised by his question. Does it even matter whether I do or not? After all, he had never cared about such a thing before. Thus, I smiled and said, "So you do still care about my feelings. Do you need me to act flattered?"

Then, cooperatively, I laughed, my eyes bright and full of happiness. I deliberately whispered, "Lyle, as long as I still have a place in your heart, I'm satisfied."

Those words were so disgusting that only a scumbag would believe in them. Fortunately, Lyle was one. However, he also knew that I spoke sarcastically. Therefore, although he still looked upset, he did not go over. Instead, he took his anger out on my wrist.

"If you continue using force, don't blame me for making you lose face," I said, frowning in displeasure. His grip hurt a lot.

After I spoke, he loosened his grip but did not let go of me. He stood and waited, wanting to enter with the Tanner family. However, Crystal's luck was terrible that day. A group of reporters came out from nowhere and surrounded them.

Immediately, one of the reporters asked Crystal, "Ms. Yates, do you have anything to say about the two videos circulating online and how you were willing to be a mistress for love?"

Another asked, "Ms. Yates, have you ever felt guilty for breaking up someone else's family? As a new school artist, you have many fans. However, they're disappointed by what you did. Shouldn't you give them an explanation?"

The reporters surrounded Crystal, who was dumbfounded. She looked at them innocently with a sad expression. It was as if they had asked her a sad question. Then, as soon as she blinked, tears filled her eyes.

"About this... Can I not talk about it? Lyle and I... W-We..." Before she even finished speaking, she began to sob beautifully. In reality, I was curious about how she managed to look so good while she cried. Never mind that her makeup did not smudge and her nose did not run, but she was also always shot in the best-looking angle. She wept helplessly, causing others to want to pity her.

However, the reporters did not fall for her tricks and continued to ask for her explanation. I felt happy watching the scene. After all, despicable people had to face the consequences. Does she really think that crying can win over everyone?

Just then, Lyle spoke. "Let's go over, and you tell the reporters that she's our cousin. Tell them not to distort the truth." Finally unable to take it any longer, he wanted to pull me over. However, I was unwilling.

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I would only be inviting trouble if I were to go over now. The reporters would definitely not let me go knowing I was his wife. "You can go if you want to. But I'm not going for sure. I couldn't care less," I said, pushing Lyle's hand away.

"Are you serious?" Lyle was getting impatient.

I glared back at him with my head held high. "I don't care if you're gonna get mad. I came to the party because of Grandma. If you're gonna ruin the event, you'll have to explain yourself to her then."

I could tell Lyle was on the verge of losing it. He gritted his teeth, drilling his gaze through me as he thought about what he should do with me. He then grabbed my hand and tugged me out.

Before I could do anything, the reporters already saw us. They swarmed over instantly and encircled me, bombarding me with a series of questions.

"Mrs. Smith, since you're here with your husband today, does this mean the rumors online are fake? Or does this mean that you're willing to put up with another woman in your relationship?"

Lyle glanced at me and answered on my behalf. "I'm sorry, I don't know what you're talking about. Crystal is just our cousin. Yvonne and I are getting along phenomenally as you can see from the fact that we're here at the party together."

I played along and let him pull me into his arms. I eyed him coldly, wondering where he got his audacity from. He was a greedy man. At work, he was thirsty for power; in private, he wanted his woman to stay by his side, even if it meant covering up his shameful affair.

A gloom settled over Nathan's face when he saw me outside. "I've already said enough at the press conference. Y'all should give Crystal some space now and stop bothering her. She has a bright future ahead of her, so I hope y'all can go easy on her and stop creating trouble for her."

Yvette came over and chimed in, "Please, could you guys stop making things difficult for Crystal? Everything we said is true, and Yvonne can confirm this. After all, she was also there when Crystal and Lyle were dating back then."

Yvette was not helping at all. Her standing up for Crystal at this point only made things worse. Seeing how things were going out of hand, Lyle pushed me forward toward the reporters and the crowd suddenly turned on me. I tilted my head helplessly and caught a glimpse of him as he let go of my hand. He was gesturing at Crystal and the others to leave.

I must be stupid to still think he cares for me. Seems like I have expected too much from our two-year marriage.

Indeed, it was true that even animals could grow attached to humans after spending a long time with them, but this was clearly not the case for our relationship. I was disappointed over and over again. Lyle had repeatedly trampled on my dignity just to protect Crystal.

“Things are really difficult for Lyle and Crystal. They did nothing wrong, so please stop condemning them for something they cannot help. It’s partly my fault too, so please just let Crystal off the hook,” Nathan interrupted.

“Yvonne, you know I’m innocent, don’t you? You have to trust me! You know what happened.” Crystal came forward and looked at me imploringly with tears in her eyes as if she was begging me to defend her.

I hated this kind of person the most. People like her were willing to put up a hypocritical front just to twist the truth. Of course, I knew what happened. In fact, I even knew why Sharon wanted Lyle to marry me.

“Eve, say something. You can’t just let these people tarnish Crystal’s reputation like this.” Nathan was desperate. “Do you really want her to bear the blame for something she didn’t do? Please do something, I beg of you.”

My father was willing to sacrifice me for Crystal. Lies were not despicable, the liars were, especially when they were your own family. Everyone took me for the culprit here, and for a split of a second, I almost believed I was one too.

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Fortunately, I snapped back to my usual self. I reminded myself that I was Lyle’s wife, not anyone else. It was Lyle who asked for my hand in marriage, though his intention was not pure. He married me because of his own business interests. I collected myself and took a good look at the eager reporters surrounding me.

“Why are you guys so curious about my private life? I’m not someone famous. I don’t think I owe anyone an explanation. The truth will surface at the end of the day when you see for yourself who’s the third party in this relationship. We’re living in a modern society today and it’s not like polygamy is a trend.”

I stopped and stole a look at Lyle. A smirk played on my lips when I saw his nervous face. “My husband is not some king or emperor in the olden days. There’s no way he has so many women to himself.”

The reporters clearly did not see this coming. They were busy guessing who the other woman in our relationship was, but I brought Lyle up instead.

“Since you are all here today, why don’t you join us for the party? I’ll make an exception for all of you to come in. Everybody knows about the Lane family in Avenport, and I’m sure you will meet many leaders and luminaries tonight. This will definitely make a better headline than an artist’s love affair.”

I could not help but applaud myself for my wit. As expected, the reporters became restless the moment they knew they were given the leeway to take photos at the party tonight. “Can we really go in? How many of us will be able to enter, Mrs. Smith?”

“My plus one didn’t turn out today, so I’ll be able to bring one of you in. You all can discuss among yourselves and decide who gets to follow me.” I winked at the reporters cheekily, feeling proud of myself.

I finally understood why people loved getting attention from the public. It felt good, and more so when I just turned the table and pivoted the situation to my advantage. Standing in front of the cameras, a sweet wave of victory swept over me.

Meanwhile, Benson had scrambled to leave with Crystal. Nathan was relieved they managed to escape and turned to reprimand me. “Cut it out. You’d better behave yourself now that you’re outside of the Tanner residence.”

I was positive that Nathan was the only man on earth who did not love his own daughter. Even an illegitimate child got better treatment than I did in my own family.

“Not everyone will be allowed in, so make up your mind and choose a few among yourselves.”

Christopher’s voice pierced through the buzzing crowd from behind. I turned and shot him a grateful gaze before greeting him. His outfit was exceptionally formal that night. He looked exactly like prince charming in his white suit.

Does he really have to try so hard to impress? Despite the mocking thought in my head, I still found myself drooling over him. Christopher was a dashing young man—and more so when he was dressed up—I could never deny that.

There was an air of loftiness about him. Perhaps it was because he had had a tiring day, he looked a little drained. He went over with his bodyguards and talked to the reporters. As he walked past me, a flicker of disappointment shone in his eyes as if he was upset because he could not talk to me under so many eyes.

I looked away and smiled subtly.

After the reporters were gone, I could finally go back in. Before I could go into the courtyard, I bumped into my disgruntled father. He eyed me coldly and lambasted me unreservedly. “What do you think you were doing back there? You’re a shame to our family. Things could’ve been worse if it weren’t for Christopher.”

“Yeah, yeah,” I scoffed looking at the stranger before me, “Are you really my dad? Why do I feel like you fancy your niece way more than your own daughter?” I had asked Nathan the same question a lot of times, but his reaction was always the same.

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“You’d better put on your best self later on. Don’t embarrass the family.” With that, Nathan whipped his head in annoyance and left.

I spotted Yvette looking at us and smiling triumphantly at me on the other side, but I simply ignored her. Just as I was about to head in, I saw Lyle waiting for me outside. “What are you doing here? The reporters are gone already, so you can stop acting like you care. Aren’t you afraid that Crystal might get jealous?” Although I was teasing him, I was undoubtedly surprised to see him still standing there.

“Shut up.” He pulled me by my hand and dragged me into the house.

The party was no fun at all. I was uncomfortable with all the eyes that were on me. It went without saying that everyone was aware of what was happening. They were pointing fingers at me and I became the subject of their gossip.

“I really sympathize with Yvonne. Even though she’s the Tanner family’s daughter, that’s just a title.”

“I know right. Not only is her cousin making things difficult for her, but even the illegitimate child in the Tanner family is also giving her a headache.”

I put up a fake smile and brushed off their comments. It was true that I was in a pitiable state, but this was nothing compared to what I used to endure. At least I had a job of my own and could fend for myself now. Back then, I could only survive on the meager sum of pocket money that Nathan gave me.

I was not a sociable person. I disliked events like this where I had to mingle with people, but bearing the mission I had in mind, I came anyway. I surveyed the crowd and nudged Lyle when I saw Mason talking to his wife in a corner.

I could tell they were a sweet couple from how they held each other’s hands when they were talking to other people. Mason would look at his wife now and then when he was engaged in a conversation, and he would even ask the waiter to pour his wife a drink when he realized her glass was almost empty.

“Don’t take too much alcohol, it’s not good for your body. You should have some milk instead.”

Mary smiled gently, shaking her head. “It’s okay. It’s not like I’m taking a lot. It’s a party. People will think I’m such a bore if I don’t drink.”

“Who cares what people think about you? Your health is way more important.” Mason’s chubby cheeks tightened as he squeezed a blissful smile on his face.

“What are you looking at? Are you jealous of Mrs. Ziegler? Do you want to be his wife too?” Lyle’s voice called me back to reality when he saw me staring at the happy couple. I had no idea how Lyle came to this conclusion, but he was fixed on milking this.

“I know Mr. Ziegler is friendly and he’s really nice to you, but you’d better think twice before wrecking their marriage.”

“Not bad, so you’re actually aware that you’re such a bad husband that your wife needs to find another man, huh.” I shot him a cold smile and greeted Mason without waiting for another snarky comment from him.

Mason and his wife saw us and came over to greet us. Lyle tried hard to put on a smiley face but all it did was made him looked constipated as he tried to hide the anger on his face.

Hah! He’d better take me seriously now. I am no pushover.

“Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Ziegler. It’s nice to meet you again. I swear you guys are the sweetest couple at the party.”

Mary’s cheeks were flushed red. “Stop teasing me, Eve,” she said shyly. “By the way, the tea you recommended is really good. It really helped with my sleep.”

“I’m glad it worked. I’ll make some tea leaves for you next time.” I was really fond of Mary. Despite her social standing, she was down to earth and approachable, and she did not look at me differently like others did.

“That’s really kind of you to offer. Mr. Smith is really lucky to have a wife like you.” She chuckled, looking at the two of us.

The rigid smile on Lyle’s face faded away the moment he heard her. I could even see a faint glimmer of antipathy in his eyes.

Lyle’s really a hard-to-please.

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After talking with Mason and Mary, my task for that night was completed. I just needed to meet Christopher’s family and that would be all for the night. While waiting, I found a quiet spot and sat down to eat, but Lyle was not done mocking me yet.

“I can’t believe you’re so desperate that you’re checking an old man out.”

I pushed his hand away. “That’s enough, Lyle Smith. I just want to enjoy the party tonight, but I’ll play along if you insist on picking a fight. I have nothing to lose, and I can readily put everything I have on the line, but can you? You have too much at stake if we fight here.”

“You’ve got some balls, don’t you? You really did a good job putting up a gentle front in front of me for all these years.” Lyle’s grip tightened around my shoulder.

I lifted my leg and drilled my heel right into his shoe. A painful frown carved on his brows although he did not shout out loud. Some of the reporters were laughing among themselves looking at us.

I knew Lyle could not clarify his relationship with Crystal before the reporters. He could never bring himself to say that he found out he was still in love with her after they broke up. I did not see why I should deprive the two lovebirds, so I did not say anything bad about Lyle back there.

It was not like I did not know I should have just taken the chance to badmouth him in public, but I knew my attempt would not amount to any damage to him. The public would at most say he was a charismatic and attractive man who could not make up his mind between two women who were head over heels in love with him, but society would not be as merciful to me. They would say all sorts of mean things about women.

I ignored Lyle and went ahead to get some food. I could feel Lyle's disgusted gaze on me as I ate away.

"You may leave if you don't like how I eat. I don't want to lose my appetite because of you." I did not have time to eat because I was busy getting ready for the party, so I was famished. As I was busy stuffing food into my mouth, someone passed me some caviar, which I had been thinking of getting.

"They are getting more caviar ready in the kitchen. I can ask them to hurry up if you like them." A man's coarse voice resounded beside me as I chomped on.

I looked up disconcertedly and saw a stranger. His face bore a slight resemblance to Christopher, but this man behaved more maturely.

I conjectured that he must be Christopher's elder brother, the firstborn, and the person in charge of the Lane family. I quickly stood up as I wiped away the food on the corner of my lips. I only realized my blunder after I held out my dirty hand toward him. The idea of meeting Christopher's brother made me fidget so much I was not myself.

I darted my gaze around looking for a napkin when I saw the butter on my hand. I gave Lyle a nudge, who was already greeting the man, hoping he would help me, but he simply frowned at me in repugnance when he saw my unsettled state.

Darius noticed it and pulled out a white handkerchief from his pocket in a gentlemanly manner. After I wiped my hands clean, he took his handkerchief back without the slightest hint of revulsion. He talked to Lyle for a bit before excusing himself. I was impressed by how well he carried himself.

His bearing did his family's fame and prestige justice. I could not believe even Darius was so perfect. He behaved so cordially to a stranger like me.

"It's time you stop lusting over him. He's already married and has a family," Lyle berated. "You never fail to surprise me, Yvonne Tanner. You even manage to catch Darius' attention. He's known to be an unfriendly person."

"Whatever." I dismissed his comment tritely despite feeling confused. If what Lyle said was true, then it did not make sense why Darius would treat me so amiably. It was not like I was anyone important.

I was still married to Lyle, so even if Christopher wanted to enter into a relationship with me, he would not break it to his family, at least not yet.

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The party was already coming to an end, but I had yet to meet Christopher's parents. I looked around but did not see him. However, since they were the hosts, I figured I would definitely see them before the night ended. Timely enough, a melodious piano tune rang through the hall.

Everyone lowered their voices upon hearing the music and directed their gaze toward the woman who was playing the piano. She had her head lowered looking at the keys, so I could not see her face. Her deft fingers danced on the keys as the dulcet tune engulfed everyone present.

I got carried away listening to the soothing music, and it suspended the antipathy I felt toward Lyle.

The melody captured my soul, calling to mind all the good memories I treasured in my heart. I closed my eyes and rendered myself to the wave of emotions surging in my heart. Somehow, Christopher's face came to mind as I traveled down memory's lane.

The hall became quiet as the music washed over the crowd. No one spoke until the tune finally ended, and a round of applause rang.

I opened my eyes to the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. The lady stood up and curtsied to the crowd with a composed smile. She was no common woman. I could tell she was a wise woman from the glints of shrewdness in her eyes despite her graceful demeanor.

Not even Yvette or Sabrina was her match. The aura she gave off captivated the crowd and all eyes were on her.

"I've never seen anyone this beautiful before," I could not help but exclaim.

I saw Christopher going past the crowd toward her. There was no way I could mistake him for someone else. After all, he had always stood out among all other men.

The woman walked toward him and hooked her arms around his after she walked down the stage. A pang of chill dominated my heart at that sight and I felt uncomfortable.

The ball had begun. Christopher held her hand and went to the middle of the dance floor. The two made a perfect couple as they danced to the music.

"That's Monica Martin, she's really popular in Avenport. Those were the days when I was crazy about her back at university," a man said to a young lady next to him.

"Yeah, I know of her. She's really talented and smart. She just recently published a book and it sold over five hundred million copies. There's no way someone like her will settle for you."

"Come on, you don't have to be that mean. I didn't win her heart because she's already had her eyes fixed on Christopher. I heard they are already engaged. I think we will all get their wedding invitation anytime soon."

"Christopher's engaged? Gosh, why are all the good men taken?"

My heart sunk when I overheard their conversation. I could feel my strength being sapped away as the man's words echoed in my ears.

So, Christopher already has a fiancée.

Why did he string me along then? Why was he so kind to me?

I wondered if Christopher was just toying with my emotions. He probably found me interesting because he was too bored. Sorrow ate me up bit by bit and my eyes watered as I watched them dance.

I dug my nails into my palms, trying to force my emotions back, but I was no good at concealing my feelings.

My head drooped as I gathered up all my strength to remain composed. "Did you hear that? Christopher's already engaged. His fiancée is way out of your league, so you'd better know your place."

Chapter 100

I sucked a mouthful of cold air and looked up, only to see Lyle, and also Crystal, who was standing beside Benson. She deliberately came closer to Lyle and stealthily touched his hand from an angle only visible to me before shooting me a provocative smile.

Sadness and anger overtook me and I shook off Lyle's hand. "Get the f*ck out of my way."

Lyle was taken off guard hearing me swear. Since the reporters were already gone, there was no need for me to keep up the act anymore. It was time I leave.

"I mean what I said."

Lyle looked at me, confused.

I pointed at Benson and Crystal, and then at myself. "As I said earlier, you're not some king in the ancient past. You don't have to force yourself to maintain a relationship with your queen while sleeping around with your concubines. I don't care if you want to go look for Crystal."

Lyle had wanted to dance with Crystal when the ball started, but he turned back and looked at me intensely right after he took the first step away from me. Nonetheless, I knew him all too well. His heart was already somewhere else.

"Just go do whatever you want to do. The reporters are gone already."

I could see anger burning in his eyes as his gaze wandered to somewhere far away behind me. When he looked back at me again, his gaze was resolute. He almost said something, but he stopped himself. He spared me one last look and walked away.

And so, I was alone again. I turned and saw Mason and Mary behind me, still chatting and smiling at each other.

Their happiness drew tears to my eyes and I walked over to the table. I gobbled up some spicy food so people would think I was tearing up because of it. I stuffed more food in my mouth as tears rolled down my cheeks.

“Cut it out,” Sabrina snatched the food in my hand away before putting it in her own mouth. “Geez, how many did you eat? It’s so hot!”

I did not reply but drank a shot of wine.

Sabrina passed me a napkin and looked at me. “I didn’t know Christopher is already engaged. I wasn’t expecting him to pull this trick after his high-profile return from abroad.”

My heart wrenched when she brought up the matter again. Sabrina was the only person who knew what was going on between Christopher and me. “It’s okay. He’s helped me before, so I’ll just treat it as returning his favor. We’re even now.”

“I’m glad you’re looking on the bright side. Who knows, things might work out between my cousin and you after you divorce that useless man.”

I was not sure how much Sabrina knew about what happened between Christopher and me. It was likely that she only knew he helped me out a few times and was interested in me, and that the feeling was mutual on my side. That was perhaps why she made it sound like it was easy to get over him.

I forced a smile on my face so I could calm down, but it was to no avail.

I noticed that Lyle did not dance in the end. I guessed he was afraid of the paparazzi. He went over to Benjamin and asked him to take Benson away before coming back to me.