

Love Like You Never Loved Before Chapter 181-190

Chapter 181

Once the dishes were ready, I proceeded to sample them and carried on to pack the prepared dishes once I ensured it was adequately seasoned.

In spite of not being a great cook, I could prepare a few simple dishes. The ones I had were at least tastier than the ones Christopher brought me.

After a short while, I noticed Lyle had disappeared. Chuckling, I wondered if he had made his way to our place to verify I was alive or not.

I had no intention to figure out if Lyle had honored his promise and attempted to rescue me. To be precise, I couldn't care less about the things that had occurred once they departed.

If weren't because of Christopher, Lyle might return to my corpse once he made his way back with Crystal. After all, I would either be killed or had committed suicide by then.

No woman could possibly brace themselves through the humiliation. Speaking of which, I recalled the time Lyle left me alone in the hotel and allowed others to take advantage of me.

Once I had everything ready, I retrieved the set of outfits I bought Christopher from the wardrobe and got myself ready to return to the hospital.

All of a sudden, someone rang the doorbell in a hurry. I rushed over and answered the door. I was not surprised by the presence of Lyle at the doorstep at all.

He had his eyes glued to me while panting. Shortly after he caught his breath, he sprinted over and held me in between his arms.

"I'm glad you're fine!"

I started shivering in disgust because I couldn't stand being around that hypocrite. I pushed him away and asked in a callous tone, "What do you want?"

Lyle explained himself, "Please listen to me, Yvonne! It was never my intention to leave you alone! In fact, I brought a bunch of people back to the scene with me once I made my way back with Crystal. However, you were nowhere to be seen anymore."

The sheer thought of recalling the incident that had occurred in the basement sent me to another vicious cycle of despair.

Afraid he would remind me of the times the three vicious-looking men ran their hands across my body, I interrupted him and deadpanned my reply, "Is that any of my concerns? Are you done yet? If you'll excuse me, I'm about to head out!"

“Yvonne, I—” Lyle wasn’t able to finish his sentence. After much considerations, he asked, “How are you?”

He had his eyes glued to my trembling hands. In my defense, he was the one at fault for rushing over to my side without my consent. Christopher was the only man allowed to approach me. Otherwise, my body would start shivering against my will when other men were around.

I took a deep breath to calm myself down. A few seconds later, I yelled, “I’m perfectly fine! Also, congratulation on being promoted to fatherhood! I’ll appreciate it if you can sort things out between us as soon as possible! I’m sure you don’t want Crystal to be concerned when she’s heavily pregnant, do you? You don’t think I’m going to raise the child on your behalf, do you?”

Overwhelmed by my sarcastic remarks, Colors drained from Lyle’s face. After a few seconds of glare, he nodded and announced, “I’ll get the agreement ready as soon as possible. We’ll put an end to everything soon.”

“Sounds like a great idea!” I brought the stuff I had with me and marched towards the car. Lyle came after me and yelled when I was about to board the car, “Yvonne, I owe you once, but I have never done anything wrong! Since you’re also having an affair with someone else, it’s safe to consider we’re even!”

I had to stop myself from throwing the things around me in his direction when he mentioned we were even.

What the heck does he mean we’re even when I’m the sole victim of this messed-up marriage? Is he indicating I have been wasting his time over the years?

Well, I guess it’s not much of a surprise since he can easily deny himself of his liabilities as a husband because the only one he cares about is Crystal!

In spite of the things I had in mind, I decided to pay no heed to the man who would soon be an estranged man in my life. I turned around and bade farewell to him with a bright grin, “I hope I won’t run into you anymore!”

Chapter 182

Christopher wasn’t aware I had made my way back as he was in a deep slumber when I reached the ward. The doctor told me he would be sleeping for quite some time since he had just taken pills that would induce sleep.

I arranged the things I brought along with me and took a seat next to him. Although he had a disheveled appearance after spending a few days in the ward, the fact remained he was a handsome man.

After all, he was seriously injured because of me and his comrades. He had sacrificed himself for a great cause, including keeping me safe.

I couldn’t suppress the urge to turn the memorable moments into a keepsake of mine. Thus, I made up my mind to turn it into something tangible—a painting.

Someday in the future, I could show those around me the man I was proud of with my chest held high. I could share his tales with our descendants, including the great qualities he had as a righteous man.

As soon as I had the easel ready, I unpacked the brushes and paints Christopher bought me. Staring at him in the eyes, I felt inspired to finish the painting because of the idea that came flooding out.

Oil painting would take a long time to complete. As it had been a long time since I last painted anything, I thought those skills were no longer accessible. However, I was wrong—I hesitated no more and started painting once I retrieved the brush.

Soon, I had the outlines of Christopher's face drafted. Immersed in finishing the painting, I wasn't even aware he had been roused from his sleep, staring at me in the eyes.

Once I had his jawline outlined, I caught him tilting his head. Thus, I instructed, "Stop moving around and close your eyes!"

Seconds after I returned to my senses, I put my brushes aside and shot daggers at Christopher. "Hey! Are you trying to mess with me again?"

He chuckled and reached over, grasping my hand to bring me closer to him. Placing my hand on his cheek, he said, "I just don't want to interrupt you when you're in the middle of something. Speaking of which, it's going to cost a fortune to hire me. Are you ready to compensate me in return for my service?"

I rebuked with my chest held high in an attempt to tease him, "Hey, you're the one who needs to consider yourself lucky to be a model of mine, okay? You're about to be painted by a talented painter!"

"Alright, I'll consider it a pleasure of mine. Why don't you show it to me?" Christopher suggested.

"No! You're only allowed to take a look once it's done!" Since he was the person of interest, I would never show him the unfinished painting.

Afraid of ruining the masterpiece, I had to exercise caution while putting everything aside, including the unfinished painting.

Staring at me with his lips pursed, Christopher asked, "Hey, those are merely replaceable goods, aren't they? How can you ignore me and tend to those when I'm here?"

I found his words hilarious and returned to him, kissing him on the cheek once I had everything put aside. "Those precious gifts from you aren't replaceable. It'll always be irreplaceable as long as it's something from you. I'll hold on to it as if my life depends on it."

I got on top of him and confronted with my brows furrowed, "Now, why don't you tell me the reasons you have bought me paintbrushes?"

He once mentioned he couldn't suppress the urge to get me the high-quality paintbrushes he saw. Thus, I refused to believe it was just a mere coincidence. Occasionally, I think he knows me better than I do.

That man is well aware of my preferences, my goals, my ambitions, and everything about me! Although I may get on his nerves for insisting on getting to the bottom of the rationale behind his action, I can't stop myself from being curious!

He had his arms wrapped around my waist and asked, "Do you still remember the banquet held at Tanner residence? You lost yourself in a train of thoughts while staring at Crystal's painting. Thus, I thought you might have a thing for painting. I mean, no ordinary person would lose themselves, staring at a painting."

It was an understatement because I hadn't just lost myself in a train of thoughts—my desire to paint again must have been written all over my face.

Otherwise, it would be impossible for Christopher to figure out the things I had in mind when we were merely acquainted for a short while.

Chapter 183

I spent the next two days finishing the painting while keeping Christopher company in his ward. I would bring him home-cooked meals I prepared as well.

Once I roused from my afternoon nap, I shrieked and started searching high and low for something. Christopher held me firmly in between his arms, caressing my back while asserting, "What's wrong? Is it another nightmare?"

"No!" I wiped my perspiring forehead dry. Instead of a nightmare, I had another serious issue in mind. Grasping Christopher's hand, I asked, "Since Darius is aware of our relationship, is he going to tell your parents? What should I do if they show up and confront me?"

Christopher rolled his eyes and went dead silent for a few seconds. He shook his head and asked, "Don't you think you're way too much of a laggard? Has this just occurred to you when it's already his third or fourth visit?"

I answered in a hushed voice, "Well, your condition had been my sole concern over the past few days. On top of that, I was overly occupied with the gifts you bought me. Now, why don't you stop making fun of me and tell me everything? Is Darius going to tell your parents?"

I was afraid our relationship would be made known to others when Lyle and I had yet to divorce. If his parents figured out the sort of messed-up relationship I had, they might not want me anywhere near their son.

"You need to calm down because Darius has always been a man of few words. On top of that, he dropped by and warned me not to try anything silly. It was evident he cared about you more than me."

Christopher tucked himself in and added with a dejected look, "I'd have thought you were his sister if it weren't because I was certain he was my biological brother. Now, why don't you tell me the sort of

relationship he has with you? I noticed he had been keeping an eye on you since you showed up at our place.”

I was slightly taken aback when I found out Darius was afraid his brother would take advantage of me. It felt so surreal to have someone keeping an eye to ensure I was safe and sound.

“He told me he was a classmate of my mother. I was equally shocked when he shared the news with me while we were in the middle of a dance. After all, he considers my mother, who’s at least a decade older than him, a friend of his.”

“Your mother?” Christopher gaped at the news because he found it unbelievable as well.

“Yes, my mother.” I was slightly upset when we started having a conversation revolving around Amelia. She was supposed to be my emotional pillar, but she was never there when I needed her the most.

As much as I was concerned she would be having it tough on her own, I held a grudge against her for leaving me alone with those from the Tanner family. I tried my best to forget about her, but I just couldn’t ignore her presence in my life.

“Christopher, I hate it the most when someone leaves me without giving me a heads-up. If you have to leave me in the future, can you at least inform me?”

He glared at me and flicked my forehead. I returned the favor and asked with my eyes welling up, “What are you doing? It hurts!”

Christopher answered with a scowl, “I need to teach you a lesson to stop you from overthinking things.”

He started running his hands across my body and announced, “If it weren’t because I was injured, I would’ve long taught you the proper way to behave yourself, including the things to avoid mentioning.”

My cheeks reddened the moment I felt something stiff in between my thighs when he had his arms around me.

I reprimanded the lustful man in a hushed voice, “You should’ve seen it coming! I’m not going to satisfy your urge on your behalf! Just hold it back until you’re able to get rid of it!”

Shortly after he leaned over and kissed me on the neck, he looked at me and confessed, “You don’t have to worry because I’ll never leave you alone. You’re the only one that matters.”

Once again, his confession took me by surprise, overwhelming the needy me. Unable to resist the tidal waves of emotions I felt, I wrapped my arms around him with all my might.

Out of the blue, he instructed, “Since I’m such a lovely man, am I able to get you to do me a favor yet? Come on! It’s time for you to shine!”

I was rendered speechless by the lustful thought he had in mind.

Chapter 184

The night fell and cast a veil over the Earth. I had pulled the curtains earlier. It was pin-drop silent in the ward, except for the erratic breathing of Christopher and the occasional moans that escaped my mouth.

I straddled him and felt my lower abdomen bulging. He was huge and would fill me to my brim every time we did it. I still could not get used to his size despite having done it with him so many times already.

I was starting to think that I had been tricked into doing this. It only took him a little sweet-talking and a beguiling gaze to enchant me into mounting him as he asked me to.

I catered to his every whim—kissing him when and where he asked me to, and gyrated my hips at his beck and call like a docile kitten. Why am I so stupid to succumb to his every desire. Have you no principle, Yvonne?

Christopher narrowed his eyes and basked in the pleasure. Gone was his mischievous manner as he writhed in contentment. He transfixed his gaze at me greedily, yanked off my blouse in a swift motion, and muttered, “You are so beautiful.”

I was abashed looking at the blouse hanging loosely around my waist. Christopher was looking for more, and he traced his cold fingers all over my body—my lower abdomen, my legs, and finally over my bareback.

It seemed like he was sending little sparks of electricity through me as I convulsed with pleasure at his touch. I could no longer hold back, and I began panting.

He always seemed to be full of virility whenever he took the lead, and exhaustion was the one thing he never knew. Why do I feel so tired when I’m the one taking the lead though? What’s more, he hasn’t even come once.

Christopher caressed my butt cheeks and said domineeringly, “Don’t be lazy, get moving.”

“Damn you, Christopher. You’re going over the line here. I’m going to squeeze you dry and make you unfit to even walk for the next three days!” I hit his hand, and he took my hand and placed it in his mouth while raising a brow and regarded me with a wicked look on his face.

“Sure, I can’t wait. Go faster, with the rate that you’re going, I’m going to fall asleep in no time.”

Despite fuming with fury, I felt my face going hot from embarrassment as it turned crimson red. Everywhere he touched burned with passion. I lowered my head and sought for his lips, biting down on him hard.

I handled him pretty well at first, but my lungs gave out as I slumped into his embrace when I felt all air drained from my lungs. In the end, I was the one to suffer.

Christopher bit on my earlobe and blew a hot kiss on my nape as he whispered into my ears, "You used to ask me go harder and faster. Now you've got to return the favor."

"I asked you to get lost too. Why aren't you doing that?" I was rendered speechless. Why did he seem like he was never going to run out of energy while I was all tuckered out already? It's not fair!

Finally, after my unrelenting effort, the man finally came. When I was cleaning him, Christopher cupped his chin and regarded my waist as he said seriously, "It seems like you need to work on your flexibility and endurance."

I gave him a slap right then. A man should take the lead in this matter. I only took initiative this time because he was injured. He'd better dream on if he thought that I was going to take initiative from here on out.

I opened the window to let the air out after we were done. I noticed Darius sitting on a chair in the hallway after opening the door. There were a few cigarette butts under his chair. It seemed like he had been here for some time.

Horrified at the realization, I was at a loss. I had sex with Christopher while Darius was out just there. He should have heard everything.

If there was a hole right in front me, I would have jumped into it without hesitation.

Chapter 185

I sprayed some air freshener in the ward, and just after Darius came inside, I dashed out of it immediately without turning my head despite Christopher calling out after me. I just couldn't face Darius.

It was all Christopher's fault, him and his sweet-talk, the way he said it was best if he could just feel himself inside of me.

I fell for his puppy eyes as he went on about how we had not seen each other for over a week, and how he was bedridden after the excruciating week. It had been almost half a month since his package had seen any action, and how he was getting blue balls from the lack of it.

Weak-minded as I was, I could not resist him and relented. I blushed furiously at the thought and took a seat right beside Zachary who was just standing there. "Has Darius been here for a while?"

Zachary nodded. "It's been over two hours."

That meant that Darius had been waiting for us to finish our business for more than two hours. I smiled dryly at the realization.

"Why didn't you knock? We were just about to start two hours ago. It wouldn't be that awkward if you guys had interrupted us then."

“Darius said it’s best to not interrupt you two, but he didn’t expect for it to last that long.” Zachary peered at me, still stern-faced. “I think you should remind Chris to take it easy these days. He needs to take good care of himself.”

A sense of despair washed over me as the shame kicked in. Even though Zachary and Darius did not cast sideways glance at us, it somehow made me feel even more self-conscious.

Just look where your carnal lust has brought you, Yvonne.

At the sight of Zachary standing right there like a statue, guarding Christopher’s ward, I suddenly felt an urge to burst into a chuckle. What an upright man.

He was there to make sure Christopher was safe. So, the man ended up standing guard right outside the ward almost every hour of the day, except for the night where there would be a change of shift.

“Do you want to take a rest? Darius is here, after all, nothing’s going to happen. I’ll call you after Darius has left.”

“No need.”

I could hear Christopher and Darius engaging in a conversation back in the ward, but I could not figure out what exactly they were discussing. Hence, I took the liberty to lean in and eavesdrop.

At the thought of what Darius must have heard while sitting at the same position as I was, I felt a sudden urge to lodge a complaint to the hospital for having such a poor soundproofing system for VIP wards. Don’t they understand that most VIPs value privacy above all else?

Darius did not stay for long in the room. I sent him off downstairs, and just when I thought he was about to leave, he suddenly turned to me and said, “Why don’t we have a cup of coffee at the café opposite?”

I hesitated for a moment before nodding my head. Darius wouldn’t invite me for a cup of coffee if he did not have anything important to talk about. There must be something that he wants to talk to me about.

A wave of apprehension washed over me as I was unsure of what he was going to say. After all, not only was he the mayor of Avenport, but he was also Christopher’s brother.

I fidgeted nervously while in the café as my brain went into overdrive imagining the myriad of possibilities of what Darius was going to say. Would he slam on the table and demand me to steer clear of his brother, or would he seem nonchalant, but actually had a plan of driving me to leave Christopher on my own?

The possibilities were endless as my brain went wild, sending me into a daze. I did not pay attention to what he was actually saying, and Darius had to call me a few times to get my attention before I finally snapped out of it.

“Ms. Tanner? Yvonne?”

I regained my composure and noticed that he was fishing something out of his bag, and I felt a catch in my throat. Assuming that he was going to offer me something so that I would break up with Christopher, I waved my hands in a dignified manner and said, "Darius, there is no need for you to take the thing out. I will not leave Christopher unless he breaks up with me."

Darius cleared his throat at my remark and regarded me for a while before taking a handkerchief out of his bag to wipe his hand and smiled. "I've noticed that how Chris pays special attention to you at the party. So, I wasn't imagining things. When did it start?"

"Half a year ago," I admitted and lowered my head like a guilty child. I paused for a moment before asking tactfully, "Darius, are you going to give me a check and demand that I leave Christopher?"

Chapter 186

Darius was amused by my questions as the corner of his eyes crinkled into a smile. I supposed he recalled something funny as he shook his head and said, "You girls really live for rom-com huh. A piece of advice though, it's good entertainment, but don't expect your life to turn out exactly the same."

I chuckled and was intrigued. "Darius, it looks like you're quite familiar with rom-com."

"My wife enjoys them, and sometimes I will watch it together with her." Darius ordered a glass of warm milk for me, and a cup of coffee for himself. "It's better for women to take more milk."

I noticed that like Chris, Darius had the tendency to order warm milk for women. The Lane brothers were more attentive toward their women as well.

Cupping the warm milk in my hands, I sipped on it and said, "Darius, you and your wife must be really happy together. I have to say I'm quite envious."

He gave me an enigmatic look, which I did not really understand. However, I did not pay too much attention to it.

"Chris did not come home after getting back from overseas and stayed in the hotel instead. I even heard that he deliberately got close to the CEO of the Smith family. At first, I couldn't quite understand what he was trying to do, but now I think I've figured it out. Have you made your decision?"

"What?" I asked in confusion.

"Have you and made the decision to finally be together with my brother?" Darius asked with a deadpan manner.

I nodded. "Christopher has done a lot for me. I've made my decision back when he pulled me out of depths of despair. I've promised myself that I will not leave him, unless he's the one ending it between us."

I did not say that to impress Darius so that he would go easy on me. Those were heartfelt words.

“It’s going to be a very difficult journey, and there will be a number of obstacles along the way. Are you sure you can make it through?” Darius sipped on his coffee and put down his mug. He traced the corner of his mug and tapped lightly on it as he looked at me.

“I don’t know how long I can hold out for with the impending crises. But one thing for sure is that I’m willing to have faith for this world again because of Christopher.”

I thought for a moment before looking straight into his eyes and said, “I don’t know how a man can be lying when he’s risked his life for me. Hence, I will persevere and keep on going until the day he decides we are done.”

Darius stopped tapping on his mug and let out a soft sigh. Surprisingly, a hint of sorrow fled across his face, and I could not help but wonder what kind of worries could trouble this man who seemingly did not have anything to worry about.

Darius had already regained his composure when I snapped out of my thoughts. I was almost questioning if I had been imagining things.

“Since you’ve already made the decision, it’s best to follow your heart. I do hope you and Chris will make it till the very end.”

Darius took his handkerchief and wiped his fingers. His fingers were better looking compared to Christopher’s. Darius had a scholarly sophisticated aura to him, as opposed to the stereotypical rigid mayor that I thought he was.

“I normally do not meddle in Chris’s personal matter, and he’s managed himself very well so far. But you guys had better take it easy as he’s quite badly injured this time. You have to refrain him from fooling around too much.”

I almost spat out the milk that I was drinking. Two men had voiced out their concerns about Christopher and my sex life. Could things get any more embarrassing than this?

I was at a loss for words and merely managed a stiff smile. However, at the thought of him saying that the path Christopher and I would have a hard time, my heart sank. It must have something to do with his family. My inferiority complex and insecurities came bubbling up inside of me again.

Why does Christopher have to be so damn rich?

Even though social statuses were no longer the yardstick for compatibility of marriage as in the olden times, it was still going to be a problem if the gap was too wide.

Darius fished out a paper from his pocket and starting to scribble something on it, and I was stumped. Didn’t he say that he wouldn’t issue me a check? What is he writing?

“This is for you!” Darius handed over the paper to me and I held my breath, hesitating if I should reach out and take it.

The man broke into a chuckle again and smiled. “You really do resemble your mother. Take it, it’s my phone number. Be sure to save the number, and you can call me if you encounter any problems in the future.”

Chapter 187

I walked out of the cafe with Darius’ number in my hand. The scrawny handwriting on the note reminded me of Christopher’s. They were indeed brothers.

Does this mean that Darius has acknowledged me?

He really was an open-minded brother.

I did not tell Christopher what went down, lest he made fun of me. Well, could he really blame me when anyone from his family could technically crush me like a bug?

His father used to be the governor and had disciples all over Avenport while his mother was an iron lady running the Lane family empire. Though holding much power and authority, the two were surprisingly friendly and approachable.

Besides, his brother was the mayor as well. It was a miracle that Christopher did not turn out to be a playboy who only knew how to fool around, and was even more impressive considering he was actually a very bright man.

I had no idea what he used to do in the military, but I supposed he had to be one of the more outstanding ones.

Five days later, I went to the café and met up with Lyle as promised. It seemed like he had been having a good time because the man was beaming.

The way he looked reminded me of when I first met him when we were eighteen. After all, he already had children with Crystal. He was just happy.

At the sight of me, the trace of a smile disappeared from his face, and he looked troubled. Maybe he thought that his happy looks would make me misunderstand that he still cared about me. However, I just thought his grim look was doing us both a favor.

He could have just dropped his hypocritical act. I snorted to myself and said nothing. After all, we were going to be strangers after today.

Some people believed in staying friends after breaking up with somebody, but I knew it was just a bald-faced lie that even children wouldn’t believe. Couples who had children together could even turn into enemies after getting a divorce, much less us.

There was no sense in troubling myself over Lyle and Crystal. Why would I squander my time on those two?

If someone was truly belittling me and putting me down, the best revenge was for me to rise up and improve myself for the better. Their judgmental attitude and words should be the least of my worries.

Lyle handed over the divorce papers to me, and this time without hesitation. However, there was a hint of guilt in his eyes.

Maybe it was for the better. He had wanted to ruin my reputation when the topic of divorce first came up. At least when he was plagued with guilt, he wouldn't stir up any trouble for me anymore.

As with last time, I skimmed through the terms and realized that the compensation had been amended to five million as opposed to the ten from before. I crossed it off again and penned down my signature.

There were two copies of it, one for each of us. I did not even need to go to the City Hall to get it notarized as Lyle would take care of the rest. Even if he chickened out last minute, Crystal would have personally seen it done.

"Please post me the notarized agreement afterward. That way we won't have to see each other again," I said impassively.

Lyle took the second copy of the agreement and peered at my signature underneath. An inexplicable glint flashed across his eyes as he asked, "Grandma said you had a crush on me for eight years. Is that true?"

I was taken aback and I did not expect Sharon to tell Lyle about it. It seemed like it would be near impossible to keep her in the dark about the divorce. Shrewd as she was, Sharon would have figured it all out. Otherwise, she wouldn't have told Lyle about it.

I lowered my head and smiled as I placed my copy of the agreement in my bag. Even if something were to happen, notarized documents were legally binding. Whatever happened next would be the least of my concerns.

Everyone knew I was in love with Lyle—Crystal, Yvette, and even Grandma, literally everyone but Lyle. It was ironic that the man should be the one oblivious to the fact.

However, I cast a glance at Lyle and said, "Do you think there's a point in asking that question right now?"

He was stumped, and I noticed his hand which was holding the documents shook before he replied in a dejected manner, "Yvonne, I just want to let you know that I did consider living a good life together with you. Do you believe in me?"

Chapter 188

My lips curled into a smile. Divorce was not really a cause for celebration in most cases for women. However, I begged to differ. I thought this divorce was one of the best things to happen as it finally freed me from the shackles that had bound me for two years. It was liberating, to say the least.

I could almost taste the sweet scent of freedom which was enough to make me drown in them.

“It doesn’t matter whether I believe you or not. I wish your family nothing but happiness.” It was not entirely a heartfelt wish. I had a hunch that Crystal would not stay meek for long. It was possible that she had a bigger plan in motion.

However, I was not that dumb to tell Lyle that. Besides, he wouldn’t believe me either.

He believed in Crystal wholeheartedly, as I once did in him.

“Thank you, Yvonne. Truly.” His voice was a bit hoarse. “What are your plans for the future?”

“I don’t think it concerns you, ex-husband.” I rose from my chair and put down a bill on the table before turning around to leave. The sunshine felt warm and reassuring against my skin as I made my way out of the cafe, warding off any lurking gloominess over my head.

Right then, I could feel weights lifted off my chest as I raised my hands triumphantly, cheering at passersby and cars along the road, “I’m finally free!”

Paying no heed to the mocking glances of the people, I beamed with delight as I skipped in the direction of the sun like a child.

Finally, the depressing marriage between me and Lyle was over.

With the heavy weight lifted off my chest, I was almost skipping as I strode down the road. I even found myself whistling.

Some people would say to grit one’s teeth and get through to the end after one had chosen a particular path.

I could not resonate with that statement. One of the worst things that could happen to a woman was to marry the wrong man. Why can’t we choose for a second time if our first choice turns out to be the wrong one? I’m the only one to suffer if I give a dime about what others think.

With the phone in my hand, I could not wait to share the good news with Christopher and Sabrina.

Even though a divorce could not strictly be construed as a cause for celebration to most people, it was for me. My ego wouldn’t have let me stay together with Lyle even if Christopher had not appeared in my life.

A car stopped by my side, and it was Lyle’s Porsche. He wound down the car window and said, “Where are you going? I could drop you off.”

“No need. I can just walk even if I don’t have the money to hail a cab,” I smiled and winked at him.

Lyle’s face sank in response, perhaps from thinking that I was too cheery. He stared at me and said coldly, “Are you that happy that we’re finally divorced? Are you that desperate to get another man?”

"Of course, I'm happy!" I had no idea about what was on his mind since he knew I would spare him no niceties if he tried to talk me up again. However, I was too happy to squander my time with him. Just one little retort will do.

"I married you for two years, being the haggard wife as I was, you dumped me in a hotel to let another man sleep with me. We haven't even slept together before you sent me off to a bunch of kidnapers and I was nearly raped by them. So, do you think I should be happy that I'm finally free from you?"

I noticed all colors drained from his face, then it slowly turned red from embarrassment. To be honest, I was starting to feel bad.

"Do you think I should walk alone along the road, sobbing as I go? Or do you think I should be crying out loud in a corner, and wait for you to come to comfort me? Then, you will say something along the line that you still have feelings for me, turning me into the third wheel between you and Crystal instead?"

I swore the man appeared guilty at my remark. It was as if I was spot on, and that he truly had the intention in mind. Then, I thought I was going too easy on him.

"Tanner, do you really want to be my enemy? I was just caring about you seeing that we had been married for two years after all, and yet you're thinking that you're some hotshot," Lyle berated me.

Chapter 189

I narrowed my eyes at him. Actually, Lyle was a clear-headed person most of the time, except when he was with Crystal. He was rational and reasonable back in the cafe. Why is he being so dumb right now?

I peered at the passenger seat through the car window, and there was Crystal. She draped over Lyle's coat and waved triumphantly at me with a poised elegance. The crinkle in her eyes was telltale of her glee.

"I'm sorry, Yvonne. It's my fault that you and Lyle have to get divorced. Given the choice, I really wish that I can leave and stop being the third wheel between you and Lyle, but you of all people should know how it feels to grow up without a father. I don't want my child to go through the same."

Her eyes turned red as she peered at me guiltily. "Please don't be mad at Lyle. I was the one who suggested for him to help you out, seeing that you're all alone. Anyway, even if the two of you aren't married anymore, you guys are still friends who have known each other for a long time. You're my cousin, and will soon be Lyle's cousin-in-law as well."

Wrapping my arms around myself, I narrowed my eyes at the troublemaker. She must have said something behind my back just now to make Lyle change his mind. This woman was really ingenious at sowing discord between people.

"I'm sorry, I have no interest in hitching a ride with my ex-husband and the homewrecker who is pregnant with his child. Get out of my sight if the two of you know better. The two of you make me sick."

“Yvonne, you cannot talk to Crystal like that. Do you think I would have caught up to you if she hadn’t begged me to do so?” Lyle could not bear to see me chide Crystal, and roared at me. He even got off the car and looked like he was ready to strike me at any moment.

“Shh!” I gestured at Lyle to shut him up, and closed my eyes, breathing in the light floral scent in the air. “Look, the air smells like freedom. Why are the two of you relentless going after me? Why can’t we just go on our separate ways and never see each other again?”

“Yvonne, could you cut it out? You can hate me, but you cannot do that to Lyle. He really does care about you.” Crystal sat in the backseat and tried to make me look like the evil woman who was trying to stir up trouble.

“Did you hear that? Crystal knows better than you do. Yvonne, you’re going to be a nobody after leaving me. There’s nothing more you can achieve in life. Don’t pin your hopes up on getting another good man. You don’t deserve one either.”

The mixed doubles are at it again. I rubbed my sore temples and decided to let out my secret weapon. I turned my head to the side and looked deep into Lyle’s eyes.

“Lyle, are you only going to stop when you see me crying? Did you know how difficult it was for me to force a smile like that? My heart is broken beyond repair.” I almost threw up after saying that.

“I had a crush on you for eight years, and you married me. But you never said you loved me. Did you know how hard it was for me to endure those sleepless days and nights without you? I was practically living the life of a widowed woman.

“Now that we’re divorced, why do you have to go to the extremes and hurt me again?” For a web of lies to be believable, it was necessary to weave some truths into it. My eyes turned red from recounting the unbecoming and dark past.

“Yvonne, I...” Lyle seemed to have recall some memories at my remark, and stammered. It was apparent that he was plagued by guilt once again.

I grabbed his hand and put it on my chest and said, “You can feel for yourself how badly it hurts right here.”

“I’m sorry, so sorry, Yvonne!”

Yeah, damn right you are. I tore off the clothes on my body in a swift motion and yanked it down my shoulders as I pinned down his arm. Then, I screamed at the top of my lungs, “Help, there’s a pervert here! Please help!”

“What? How dare that pervert attack a woman out in broad daylight?”

“My goodness, he’s even torn off her clothes! What a scumbag!”

“Damn it, I have to teach that b*stard a good lesson!”

Chapter 190

A middle-aged woman and a young man dashed over to my rescue. The woman hurled her bag of carrots at Lyle's head and I took the opportunity to step on his toes.

"Damn right you're sorry! Serves you right for trampling all over me!" I kicked him in his legs, and someone came over to stop Lyle from striking me.

A crowd started to gather around the scene and onlookers gesticulated as they engaged in hushed whispers. I covered my face and pretended to break into a sob as I said, "He doesn't want to let me go after tearing off my clothes..."

"Don't worry, Miss. We have reported this to the police."

"I called over some reporters. They're on their way here."

What? Someone's called the reporters? I did not want to make the news, and hid behind the middle-aged woman who was still clutching on to her other half of the carrot. Noticing that Lyle was giving me the death glare, I gestured thumbs down for the loser.

He grimaced at my provocation. If there weren't any people around, he would have beaten the crap out of me.

In the end, we did not split on good terms. I did not want to hate him, but he was the one pestering me relentlessly. In the end, we ended up hating each other. Perhaps this was for the better since it was near impossible that we were going to stay friends after this.

I did not believe that my life would turn for the worse after leaving Lyle. I still have Christopher, and even if we did not end up together, at least I would have some sweet memories to treasure.

Crystal panicked after seeing that Lyle was at a disadvantage. She got off the car and shouted at the crowd, "Don't listen to the nonsense that the woman spewed! She tore off the clothes herself, and was just trying to extort money out of us."

I did not wish to stay and listen to her. Pointing straight at her, I shrieked, "Look at her! Isn't she the new school artist, the one who ruined a family? Everyone, look!"

The crowd grew bigger with my remark, surrounding the two of them.

Scurrying out of the crowd, I stood outside and watched as Lyle and Crystal shot daggers at me. I waved gleefully at the two and turned around to leave the place.

Even from some distance away, I could still listen to the mutters of the crowd.

"Ah, so she's an artist. It's my first time seeing one in person."

“Well, she’s a homewrecker. I read an article about her some time ago, and she said she has an aptitude for art. What a disgrace to the art community.”

“Let me hit her a few more times with this carrot. I hate these homewreckers ruining families! Boy, protect this young miss behind you.”

I stood underneath the tree and looked at the ever-growing crowd and burst into a laugh. It was a hearty laugh in a long time. Back a dog up in the corner, and it’s going to bite.

Crystal still thought that I was the type to never fight back despite being squashed and toyed with. She had forgotten one little convenient fact that she was a public figure while I was a nobody.

Actually, it was not a big deal being an artist, nor was she as influential as celebrities. However, she was too fixated on the idea of being famous that she had curated her image to resemble that of a rising star by going on talk shows and getting featured in art exhibitions. With her high-profile marketing plan, it was near impossible to find someone who did not recognize her in Avenport.

A hint of sorrow crept up as I chuckled. I was such a loser back then, and I had despised myself back then.

The camera flashlights kept going off as shutters clicked. I knew that Lyle and Crystal would make the headlines tomorrow, and the duo would become a hot gossip topic.

Even though I felt sorry for putting Sharon through this, I did not regret my actions. After putting him down this time, it was unlikely for Lyle to keep pestering me.

“Are you that happy that you’ve done something bad?” A familiar voice rang behind me, and I traced the voice to see Christopher who was standing right behind me.

It was as if he had been standing behind me all the while as if he had never left. Whenever I turned around, I had the luxury of knowing that he would be there for me. As I looked at him, my thoughts strayed and I stood frozen on the ground.

Many years later, the way he looked when I turned around that day would be vividly etched in my mind, for I knew that day was the very day that I started to look at the world from a whole different perspective.