

Midnight III 101

Chapter 1583 - 101: Group Chat Rumors

Instead of answering, Crystal lowered her head and gave Nathan a soft kiss on the lips, and she spoke to him with her eyes, saying, I'm being gentle. Can you be gentle, too?

Nathan kissed her back slowly, and as he did, she opened her robe for him. She had just gotten out of the shower, so she was naked, and her breasts were like cupcake tops with pink cherries on top.

After a few minutes, Nathan pulled away, and he rolled Crystal over so that he was on top, and she was on the bottom. He placed his left hand on her right breast and then kissed her entire body. He started at her earlobe and worked his way down, but when he got to her neck, he was startled to discover the black leather collar she was wearing. He pulled away and gave Crystal a dirty look. "What the fuck is this?" he growled.

Crystal began to shake, and she burst into tears. She tried to cover her shame by covering the collar with her hands. "Eric Bush did this to me," she cried.

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"I know where it came from!" Nathan roared. He pulled her hands away and asked, "Did he touch you?"

Crystal hurriedly shook her head. "No," she said. "I wouldn't let him."

Nathan: "I had better not hear otherwise!"

Crystal recognized the threat in his words. She frowned slightly and nodded. It was the first time that Nathan had given her such a firm order, and she suddenly recalled something that Eric had said - wear this necklace, and no one will dare to touch you. She wondered if that included Nathan. After all, he hadn't dared. She hated to think that she might be putting her husband in danger.

When Nathan saw the collar, he became another person. It was both strange and terrifying. And Crystal couldn't help but think that the two men had a history together.

Crystal lifted her head, but Nathan had lost his interest in having sex. Crystal scowled. Then she nodded and said, "I see."

Nathan had no idea whether she was serious or just being perfunctory. Ignoring her words, he got up irritably and said in a serious voice, "Go get dressed. I'm going to take a shower." Then Nathan stormed out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

Crystal groaned as she stood up. She felt like every inch of her body was on fire, and she was glad that they hadn't made love. Likely, it would have made the pain worse. She shrugged off her robe and walked over to her wardrobe. She frowned as she ran her fingers through the clothes inside. She had so many outfits that she never knew what to wear. Finally, she chose a light-yellow lace one-piece dress and applied a thin layer of make-up to her bruised face. I look like shit - she thought sadly - but the doctor was right. I am lucky... Typically, her skin was very good. She had a fair complexion, and she looked better without make-up - Not today, though...

Once Crystal was ready, she sat on the bed and waited for Nathan to return. When he didn't return right away, she pulled out her phone to check to see if there were any messages. There were none, so she entered a WhatsApp group she was in, composed of people she'd gone to High School with. There were a few people online, and they were all gossiping about their wealth.

The people in the group annoyed Crystal. They always had, but she was bored, and that was the only reason she'd signed on. There were about a hundred open threads, and she opened them one at a time as she looked for something interesting.

As Crystal read through the various messages, she realized that she was being mentioned in it, and many things people were saying were quite malicious. There were also videos and pictures, including ones that had been taken during her dispute with Cecelia at the purse store. And the video of her father begging her for mercy, one of her being egged and urinated on, and a series of photos taken at the police station. Along with each video and picture, there was a description of what was taking place, and in each instance, the description was either a distortion of the truth or an outright lie.

Crystal recognized the names of the people commenting, and none of the comments were positive. Emily Deerborn, for example, had written: "I am surprised by Crystal's behavior. I used to think she was self-righteous and arrogant but otherwise harmless. It turns out, though, that she's a high-class sugar-baby."

Carol Watson: "Who's her sugar daddy? I'm really curious..."

Jack Elfman: "He must be an old man. Old men always like young girls."

Missy Black: "Is it my imagination, or is she better looking than before? Has she had cosmetic surgery? If so, it's not surprising, not if she has a rich sugar daddy. It's too bad for her, though. No amount of money can fix the face she was born with!"

Carol Watson: "Too Funny! And too true!"

Jack Elfman: "She's a vicious cunt! I can't believe what she did to her father!"

Missy Black: "Don't worry. She'll get what's coming to her. Karma's a bitch. And it will befall to those who ill things against other people,"

Skater Deiter: "Careful with the language, you guys. You never know when the moderator might show up. Anyway, has anyone even asked Crystal for her side of the story? She was always nice to everyone she met. And all of you talked bad behind her back, sounds like a jealous people,"

Emily Deerborn: "How would it be? She is not even popular, no reason to get jealous of her. If she has a side of the story, it's probably a lie. And I'll say what I want. I'm not afraid of the moderator."

Carlos Foster: "I'm with Skater. I don't think these videos are as incriminating as they seem, and I would be interested in hearing her side of the story."

Chapter 1584 - 102: Guard Your Tongue

(Warning: This chapter contains a sexual scene and violent words. If you're not comfortable reading it kindly skip it and move to another chapter)

Nothing about Carlos or Skater's comments made any impact on the direction of the conversation, and the next thing Emily Deerborn wrote was twice as cruel as what she had first written. She'd said, "Oh, God... Wake up, Carlos! Are you blind? You're just taking her side because you still love her."

Carol Watson: "Hey, Skater. Was Crystal still a virgin when you dated her in high school?"

Skater Deiter: "Oh, stop it. You guys are too much. You guys are going to scare her away from the get-together this weekend."

Jack Elfman: "If I were her, I wouldn't dare leave the house.."

Missy Black: "Ha-ha!"

Carlos: "Crystal, ignore all the slander and all the laughter, and just be yourself. I'm always on your side."

Out of all the comments, the only one that surprised Crystal was the one from Carlos. She wouldn't have expected him to stand up for her. Where is the get-together? - she wondered, and she clicked on the Event Page. Then, when she saw the venue, she began to laugh. These people are all losers - she thought. And she logged out of WhatsApp.

People in the group had been aware of Crystal's presence in the group, and even after she had gone, their conversation continued.

Emily Deerborn: "She must feel guilty."

Otherwise, why did she leave the group? If she is innocent, there would be no need for her to be afraid. SHE DIDN'T EVEN SPEAK OUT TO DEFEND HERSELF!"

Jack Elfman: "If I'd been at the hospital that day, I'd have pissed on her. She brings shame to our class. Recently, people have been asking me if she was one of my classmates. I lie and say that I don't know her."

A notification bubble appeared: Celia McIntyre has joined the conversation.

Carol Watson: "Hey, Cecilia. We're talking about Crystal Smith. Did you know that that bitch returned the bag you gave her? A primary school classmate of mine is a salesgirl there, and she told me all about it."

In Richard's room at the hospital - Cecelia saw the message on her phone, and as upset as she was about it, she was too preoccupied with his swollen member in her mouth to reply. Richard had a hand on either side of her head so that he could control the rhythm of the blowjob she was giving him, and she was trying to text with her left hand while fingering his anus with her right and to say that it was a difficult task would have been the understatement of the century.

Richard read the message over her shoulder and said, "I didn't know that Crystal was so disliked." As he moaned, she pulled away, and his prick sprang out of her mouth like a frantic jack-in-the-box. "What the fuck?!?!" Richard growled.

"That girl has gone too far," Cecelia typed.

"You can't be serious," Richard snapped. Then, when Cecelia didn't take his prick back into her mouth, he snatched her phone, threw her on the sofa, and took her pants off.

Cecelia began to panic. "Take it easy," she whispered. "I don't want to be caught."

Richard knew how flexible Cecelia was, so he grabbed her legs and pushed them up so that her head was between them. "I'll f**k you anywhere I want," he said. "I will f**k you on the sidewalk of a crowded street if I want to! And I will be as loud as I please!"

Cecelia sighed and submitted to his hunger. She knew from past experiences that he meant what he said. One time he had forced her to have sex with him on the back seat of a crowded bus. At first, people turned and stared, but once they recognized Richard, they turned back around and pretended that nothing untoward was going on.

Richard enjoyed making a spectacle of himself. He always had.

As Richard pushed himself into Cecelia, her phone rang. She was going to ignore it, and she was surprised when he put her phone in her hand and told her to answer it.

The call was from Joyce, and just as Cecelia accepted the call, Richard pressed the tips of the fingers on his right hand against her clits. He applied pressure, and then he began to rub it, making small circles against her sensitive flesh. Cecelia bit her lower lip to contain a moan of ecstasy.

Joyce's voice came through the microphone, and she sounded angry. She said, "Cecilia, that bitch was released on bail, and your father was useless. Tell me what I should do?"

Cecelia tried to reply, but all that came out was a low-sounding groan.

Joyce: "Cecilia, what's wrong with you? Where are you? Are you sick?"

Cecelia: "N-N-N-Nothing is wr-rong... D-D- D-Don't w-worry... I've g-g-g-got a p-plan... W When I'm r-ready... ah... I'll t-t-tell you."

Richard was so cruel. He had never put so much effort into pleasuring her, and he was only doing it now to torture her. Then, suddenly, he thrust his manhood into her, and her hips rose to feed on his girth. Joyce asked another question, but all Cecelia could do to prevent herself from screaming was clench her teeth, make her hands into fists, and dig her nails into her palms.

Richard slowly retracted his hard member until its tip hovered above Cecilia's vulva. Then, in a show of force, like a sword being sheathed, he rammed his manhood back into her. This time, she could not contain herself, and as she began to shriek in pleasure, Richard laughed. "You little naughty bitch," he said. "You're amazing." He began to plunder her for all she was worth, pumping up and down like a hyperactive jackhammer. "As a reward, I'm going to fill you up."

At Air Cosme - Crystal had thought that the dinner Nathan invited her to was a date. Thus, she was surprised when she saw Alex Jordan and Owen Lane waiting for them in the private room that Nathan had reserved for them.

Alex and Owen were equally surprised to see Crystal. They had thought that this was a Boy's Night Out.

Owen: "Hey, Nathan. Today's our big brother's welcoming party. I'm surprised you brought one of my girls. Aren't you afraid of what our big brother will say?"

Crystal was a student at Olman University, and Owen was the headmaster of the school. So, in a sense, she was "one of his girls." That being said, the label, in this context, seemed inappropriate.

"Your girl?" Alex scoffed. "Guard your tongue."

Crystal stood quietly behind Nathan. She had no idea what they were talking about, and she was more than a little worried.

Chapter 1585 - 103: She Is My Woman

Nathan gave Crystal his jacket, and she dutifully hung it up for him along with her own. Then, as they sat down at the table, he made the introductions. "Crystal," he said, "These are my brothers, Owen Lane, Alex Jordan."

Crystal nodded and said, "It's nice to meet you."

Then Nathan put his arm around Crystal and glared at his brothers. "Crystal is my woman," he said seriously. "So, no funny stuff, you hear me?"

The other two nodded, and Owen said, "Of course. That goes without saying."

Alex: "We would never take anything that belonged to you."

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Owen: "Yeah! Everybody knows to stay out of your way."

Suddenly the door opened, and Antony and Eric barged in. Nathan smirked at Eric and said, "Not everyone knows that. I mean, I, for one, certainly do not know that!"

Eric lazily leaned against the door frame. He had a cigarette in his hand, and he took a casual drag from it. He held it in for a moment, and then he blew the smoke into Owen's face.. Then, as he took a second drag, his fox-like eyes turned to Crystal. "Isn't that right?" he asked.

Crystal was taken aback. She frowned and turned away, saying nothing.

"I didn't know that Nathan Davis was the man who'd tried to claim you," Eric said. "Why didn't you say so? Nathan and I grew up together. When we were little, we shared many things, including a yard and a pair of pants." He sighed. "Alas, that was then, and this is now. Nothing ever lasts, does it?"

Eric and Nathan had been like brothers, but they'd had a falling out, and now they hated each other. If it hadn't been for their "big brother" acting as a mediator, once upon a time in the early days of their careers - they might have killed each other.

Antony nodded to Owen and Alex, and they moved over so that he could sit down beside them. When he looked up, he could see the murderous look in Eric's eyes from this angle. Below the anger, though, he could also see a dark sadness. Eric's rage had been birthed by pain, and Antony worried about what would happen next. After all, Eric wanted Crystal, and he typically got what he wanted. And he was never unwilling to fight for what he wanted.

Nathan glared at Eric but remained silent for the moment.

"Nathan and I have had our disagreements," Eric continued, "but that doesn't mean we can't be civil around each other." Then, he touched Crystal's shoulder and said, "Make some room for me, will ya?"

Crystal moved over, and Eric sat down beside her, across from Antony. Then he crushed the remaining of his cigarette on the table. The air was thick with tension, and for a while, nobody said a word. It was like time had been put on pause, and they all knew that things would never be the same once it started up again. There was a sense of danger at the table, and it was palpable.

Finally, Antony turned to Alex and asked, "Where's big brother? I thought he would be here by now."

Alex: "He's gone to the lab to get the results."

Antony: "From the paternity test?"

Alex nodded, and Antony said, "If I'm big brother's blood brother, that wouldn't be so bad. But the alternative would be unbearable."

Alex: "You don't trust the results Leslie showed us, do you?"

Antony: "Of course not! And neither does big brother."

Alex took his pants off as they talked, folded them, placed them on the table, and farted. Owen frowned and said, "That's disgusting! How dare you take off your pants and fart like that, and with Mrs. Davis here no less! How rude! Your sense of consciousness gone?"

Crystal blushed, and she said, "There's no need to be formal around me. Make yourself comfortable, and please, call me Crystal."

"They've not yet married," Eric said, "so it is premature to call her by Nathan's surname anyway."

Nathan remained silent, but the corners of his mouth lifted to form a half-smile. He knew Eric would still deny the fact that Crystal is his woman and stubbornly compete with him.

Suddenly, the door opened again. Several men in military uniform walked in, and all of the men at the table stood up to greet him. The man in the lead was General Arnold Corin, and the other men were his bodyguards. When the General saw Crystal, he smiled and said, "And who might this be?"

"This is Crystal," Nathan said, answering for her. "She is my woman." Then he turned to Crystal and said, "This is my big brother, General Arnold Corin."

Crystal was impressed by Arnold. She had thought that Nathan had a muscular build, but Arnold made his muscles look small in comparison.

Eric smiled, and he hugged Arnold. "It is good to see you," he said. "What a sight for sore eyes. It has been too long, hasn't it?"

Arnold nodded and agreed that it had, indeed, been too long. Then he hugged the other men, and lastly, he hugged Crystal. As they parted, Arnold swept the hair out of Crystal's face, and he stared into her eyes for a few seconds. Then he turned to Nathan and said, "This must be the girl that you called in the army to rescue from the corrupt police."

Nathan nodded. "She is," he said.

"What a mess that was." Arnold laughed and said, "I don't envy whoever had to write up the paperwork." Arnold had a gentle voice. His tone was soft. His pitch was low, but he spoke with authority. And power. Here is a man who could put the fear of God into a man without raising his voice - thought Crystal. She didn't know what to call him, so she looked meekly into his eyes and said, "General Corin, I don't know what to call you..."

General Corin laughed, gave Crystal another hug, and said, "That's sweet of you to say, but you're family now; call me Arnold."

Chapter 1586 - 104: Would You Let Me Kiss You?

Owen happened to look in Eric's direction, and he saw that the other man was seething. His face had turned red, and the veins in his neck were bulging out. He was clenching and unclenching his fists, and he was glaring daggers in Nathan's direction. Owen turned to Nathan and was not surprised to see his trademark self-satisfied smirk. Oh, fuck - thought Owen - If I don't do something quickly, we're going to have World War Three here!

Owen clapped his hands together five times to get everyone's attention, and once he had it, he said, "We are all excited about having Arnold back with us, but you must all be as hungry as I am, so let's settle down and get the waiter in here so that we can order!"

"An excellent idea!" Alex said. He sat down first, and everyone else sat around him, assuming the seats they'd previously occupied, with Arnold sliding in next to Crystal. And while they were getting settled, Antony went outside to get the waiter's attention.

When Antony returned with the waiter, Nathan smiled at Arnold and said, "Big brother, why don't you order first?" But Arnold didn't hear him. He was too distracted by the black leather collar around Crystal's neck.

Eric frowned and said, "Is there a problem, Arnold?"

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Arnold ran a finger along the collar and said, "This is a problem?"

Eric rolled his eyes and said, "That's nothing. Are there any real problems?"

Arnold sighed and said, "There might be."

Alex: "Was there a problem with the test results?"

Arnold shrugged and said, "It seems that the report Leslie showed us was accurate."

Alex: "So, you and Leslie are not related by blood?"

Arnold: "That seems to be the case."

Alex: "What are you going to do now?"

Arnold: "What can I do? I can do nothing. Leslie's grown up, and I can't handle her wild temper. She's 21 years old now. I need to marry her off before she gets any worse."

Owen: "There's no need for you to worry about that. Now that Leslie isn't our sister, we can wash our hands of her."

Alex: "And besides, we don't even know where she is, do we?"

Arnold: "No, we don't. Despite all of my efforts, she is still missing."

Eric stretched and turned to face Arnold. "Let's change the topic," he said. "Arnold, I want you to be our witness."

"What is this about?" Crystal asked.

"It is about a debt owed and a favor promised," Eric replied. He turned to Nathan and said, "You remember, don't you?"

Owen gasped, and the room went silent.

Oh, shit! he thought.

Alex's face had turned white as he suddenly remembered that Nathan still owed Eric one undeniable favor. If Eric called that favor now and demanded that Nathan reject Crystal, things could get very ugly.

Crystal didn't know what Eric was talking about, and she looked around the table nervously.

Nathan nodded and said, "I remember. And I am a man of my word."

Eric: "What if I said that I want Crystal?"

Nathan: "Then I would tell you to ask her if she wants you. I don't own her."

Eric: "If she said she wanted me, would you stop pursuing her?"

Nathan: "It doesn't matter. She doesn't want you."

Crystal looked back and forth between the two men. She didn't like being treated like a piece of meat, and she felt embarrassed and sick to her stomach. These men were acting like two dogs fighting over a bone. But I am no man's bone - thought Crystal.

Arnold saw the look of discomfort on Crystal's face, and he said, "You two need to stop acting like kids and behave yourself. We all came here to have a good time. Let's order our food and try to make the most of this night without fighting!" He clenched his fist. "I had better not have to repeat this because if I do, heads are going to roll!"

Nathan took a deep breath, nodded, and apologized to Crystal.

Crystal hadn't anticipated Arnold's help, and she kissed him on the cheek and thanked him. Nathan began to regret bringing Crystal. He had to worry about Eric and Arnold now.

They ordered their food, and then Crystal excused herself to go to the restroom. She didn't need to go to the washroom, though. She needed a break from the men at the table. Once she was alone in front of the mirror, she splashed cold water over her face and looked at her reflection. She wasn't much to look at. She knew that, and she had never understood why men were always fighting to be with her. It makes no sense - thought Crystal - I am too much of an uggo to warrant this much attention!

Suddenly, Eric barged into the women's washroom, and Crystal was so startled that she nearly peed.

Eric glared at her from across the room.

"Tell me!" he growled.

"Tell you what?" Crystal cried.

Eric: "Tell me if you were the girl that spat beer all over my face at the Merah Club. And tell me what is going on between you and Nathan Davis."

Crystal was surprised by his demand. She said, "I can't believe you haven't figured this out on your own..."

"I have some ideas," Eric said, "but I want to hear you say it."

Crystal: "What if I told you that all of your inferences were correct? What then?"

Eric: "Then, I would respectfully ask for one last thing before we parted ways."

"Is it a kiss that you want?" Crystal asked.

She was slightly unsettled by Eric's sudden willingness to cease his pursuit of her. And she felt more than a little wary of this sudden change of attitude. She thought, suddenly, of the big bad wolf-What big teeth you have, Grandma!

The better to eat you with, my dear!

Eric took four steps forward, bridging the gulf between them. Then he smiled and tucked a loose thread of hair behind her ear. "Would you let me?" he asked. "Would you let me kiss you... one last time?"

Crystal took a deep breath. "What if I said no?" she asked.

"It would be too late," Eric replied. Then, as the words left his mouth, he leaned forward and pressed his lips to hers.

Chapter 1587 - 105: Should I Be Honored?

Crystal was caught off guard as Eric's sculptured lips pressed down on her. She was able to turn away at the last minute, though, and his kiss landed on her cheek. Luckily, Eric was not annoyed by her cheeky maneuver.

Crystal's faint fragrance was like a sweet orange blossom. It penetrated his nose and moistened his lungs. He winked at her. Then he lowered his face into her neck, and before she knew what was happening, he was sucking on her sensitive skin.

"Stop it!" Crystal shouted. She pushed him away with all of her strength. Then she reached out to slap him across the face. The sound was jarring, and it left a ringing in his ears.

Eric could have dodged it, but he didn't.. He was willing to take anything she wanted to give him, even if it left a coppery-blood taste in his mouth. Because it was Crystal that had hit him, the taste of his blood was like a pleasurable malt sugar. "Does your hand hurt?" he asked. "Next time you want to hit me, just tell me, and I'll just hit myself."

Crystal's brow furrowed. "Are you crazy?"

"Crazy about you," Eric replied. "Crazy like a Mad Hatter, but as crafty as a fox."

Crystal gave him a blank look, and she was about to leave, but he grabbed her wrist. "Did you guys make it?" he asked.

Crystal, "What do you mean?"

Eric, "I mean, did you make love? Did you fuck? Well, did you? You can tell me if you did, and I'll forgive you."

Crystal blushed and said, "I guess it's none of your business."

Eric looked at the red flush on her face and then at the bruised mark that he'd left on her neck. "I see," he said presumptuously. "And do you know why he didn't touch you?"

Crystal was uncomfortable with his smug eyes on her. She said, "Sorry, I don't want to know."

Eric gazed at the collar around Crystal's neck. The ruby on the pendant was getting brighter and brighter. "What a coincidence that history is repeating itself," he said. "It seems that fighting for women is our inevitable fate.

Be careful, and don't fall in love with him. You'll regret it if you do."

Crystal frowned. She thought that he sounded like a crazy person. Not only that, but his remark made her eardrums ache. She wondered - Why does falling in love sound so dark and scary? Suddenly her collar felt hot against her skin. She shouted, "Take it off!"

"Oh, crap!" Eric snickered in mock-dismay.

"I forgot the code. Whatever will I do?"

Crystal rolled her eyes and shook off Eric's hand.

Eric, "There is another way to unlock the necklace."

Crystal, "What way?"

Eric leaned back against the wall, lowered his head, and smirked. Then he gave her a malicious look, quickly kissed her lips, and said, "Have sex with me."

Before Crystal could reply, Nathan stepped into the room. He was smoking a cigarette, and his face was void of any emotions. He looked as if he were the King of the Dark. He let go of his fag and crushed it under his foot. Then he stepped forward and punched Eric in the face. His fist hit his jaw. His face was twisted to the wall, and blood splattered out of his mouth. "That'll teach you to kiss girls that don't want to be kissed," he said.

"Give her to me..." Eric said as he looked up. He licked the blood that was pooling on his bottom lip. "...and let bygones be bygones." And then, from his seated position, he punched Nathan in the gut.

Nathan flinched, but he had rock-hard abs, so he was not seriously hurt. After he got over his surprise, he lifted his knee and smashed it under Eric's chin.

Eric's chin slammed up towards the ceiling, but Nathan had left his genitals unguarded, and Eric punched him in the d*ck, which really fucking hurt!

The two went blow for blow, and even after they were both bruised and bloodied, they kept going. Finally, Crystal had enough. She said, "Hey! You two, that's enough! I have no interest in either of you dunderheads."

The two men stopped fighting momentarily, but by the way they were looking at each other, she could tell that they would be ready to get back to their fight any minute now.

She frowned and said, "Come on, you guys. There are better ways to solve your disagreements. Fighting is so childish!"

Of course, the men didn't like to be called children, so they stopped immediately.

Eric turned to Crystal and raised his eyebrow. He said, "Well, so this is what it looks like when my girl gets angry. This is the second time I've fought for a woman with the same man." He gave Nathan a significant look as if to remind him of something.

"So what? Crystal asked. "Should I be honored? Well, I'm not, and it will never work out between us."

"You don't get a say in the matter," Eric sneered, and he seductively licked a pool of blood from his bottom lip like a vampire. "I'm tough, and I always get the last laugh," he said. "Besides, I love the way you taste, and I'm looking forward to the next time I'm able to press my lips against yours." He straightened up and shot Nathan a determined look. "She will be mine!"

Nathan leaned against the wall. Even after the fight, his face was still more beautiful than anything in the world, and his slightly wrinkled brow and unmistakable frown gave it a masculine charm. His laugh was low and arrogant. It was apparent that he didn't respect Eric; he didn't even reply to him. This silent response, however, was more powerful and frightening than saying something would have been.

At this time, Nathan was like a blood-thirsty animal eager to break out of his cage and go on a killing spree to vent his anger.

When Nathan looked at Crystal, he saw the faint bruise on her neck, and he remembered how Eric had kissed her lips. Without warning, he reached out and grabbed her hand. She tried to get free, but he squeezed so hard that she thought he was trying to crush her bones.

Crystal frowned at Nathan as he yanked her into the men's room and slammed the door shut behind them. "What are you going to do?" Crystal cried. "This is the men's room!" Nathan seemed not to care, though. He knew what he was doing. Once they had a little privacy, he wanted to remove the kiss that Eric had left on her lips.

Chapter 1588 - 106: Shut Up

Nathan lifted Crystal and forced her to sit on the counter. Then he turned on the tap, wet his handkerchief, and used it to rub her lips. He acted roughly, without any tenderness, as if he wanted to wipe the skin off her lips. Eventually, Crystal's lips began to burn, and there was a fishy-sweet taste in her mouth. What's going on? - she wondered. She tried to push him away and asked him what he was doing, but he refused to let her go or answer any of her questions. Instead, he roared and slammed his handkerchief down on the counter.

Nathan condescendingly pinched Crystal's jaw, and he began to kiss her all over her face.

These kisses were different from his previous ones. Then, they were overbearing, crude, and aggressive. She felt as if he was trying to absorb her life force, and when he started gnawing at her lower lip, she assumed that he had lost his mind entirely.

Crystal shouted, "You're out of your mind!"

And she tried to push him away, but he was too strong. He kissed her forehead. "Did Eric ever kiss you here?" he asked. "Like this?"

Crystal glared at him. "Maybe. But, so what if he did?" she snapped. "What's it to you?!?!" She found his possessive attitude really annoying.

Nathan: "I never knew that you were so good at seducing men, but now that it's plain to see, I can't see how I didn't see it sooner. You first seduced Carlos, then Eric, and now me. Who's next? Do you have standards? I don't think so, but I don't know why you pretended to be chaste and innocent when in reality you were anything but."

Crystal never thought that he would use such strong words against her, and she felt utterly humiliated by them. "Since you think I'm so good at seducing men," she said, "you should know that my trick is to play hard to get. And you took the bait, like a fool - hook, line, and sinker. Do you know why I went to the Merah Club that night? I was looking for Eric. I love watching men fight over me. It makes me feel powerful. What do you have to say about that?" By the time Crystal finished her speech, she was furious.

"Take that back!" Nathan shouted. "Take it back, NOW!"

"I won't!" Crystal said stubbornly. "You don't like being played with, do you? Or maybe you just can't face the truth... I lost my virginity to one of those men, though. Did you know that?"

When Nathan heard that, he got so angry that he punched the mirror behind Crystal. It shattered. His skin broke, and his knuckles began to bleed. When Crystal saw the blood, she said, "Oh my gosh!" And she tore off a piece of her skirt to wrap his hand.

Suddenly, Nathan picked Crystal up and threw her over his shoulder. She struggled to get away, but he was too strong for her. She shouted, "Stop it. Are you out of your mind? Your hand is bleeding. Put me down!" But he didn't say a word in return.

As they left the washroom, Nathan's bodyguards fell in line behind them, and nobody dared to look at them as he carried her out of the restaurant and forced her into his car. Once she was strapped into the vehicle, he got behind the wheel, and they fled the place.

"Slow down!" Crystal shouted as they hit the last speed bump. "You're going to get us killed!"

Nathan shouted at her, "Shut up!"

After that, Crystal didn't dare make a sound, not even when they sped through a red light and were almost killed.

Finally, they arrived at the Beverly villa, safe and sound at last. Crystal wasn't sure that she was safe, though. Nathan scared the Hell out of her. "Please let me go," she whined.

"Let you go?" Nathan laughed and said, "That's funny. You don't think that's a possibility, do you?" Then, without waiting for a reply, he hauled her from the car, into the house, and up to his bedroom. He threw her on the bed, and then he went back to shut and lock the door. When he turned back around, he

noticed that she was trembling. "You're so sensitive," she scoffed. The nervous expression on her face was an incredible turn-on for him.

Nathan walked over to the bed and climbed on top of Crystal. Underneath him, she could feel his manhood harden, and it pressed uncomfortably against her pubic mound. He pulled the blanket over them, and suddenly she was so hot that she felt like she might vomit. But, unfortunately, she couldn't even move. Now she regretted some of the things she'd said to him. Now he's going to force me for sure-she thought. "Don't forget that you promised you wouldn't force me to have sex with you for a month," she said, hoping desperately that he would stay true to his word. "If you force me, I will be very unhappy with you."

"That's fine," Nathan said. "I just want to check to see if your hymen is intact." As he spoke, he lowered his hand to the waistband of her skirt. He was furious about what she'd said in the washroom, and he wanted to announce to the world not just that she belonged to him but that she had never belonged to anyone else.

Crystal began to panic, and she tried to argue with him, but when she opened her mouth, he blocked her words with his kisses.

With his free hand, Nathan coved the leather collar that was locked around her neck. He hated that necklace. He couldn't look at it and not think about Eric and wonder if Crystal had given him her virginity. We will see soon enough, won't we - thought Nathan. Despite his intent and excited anticipation, he discovered that he was sad and didn't know why. Is this a violation? - a meek inner voice wondered. Definitely not! - a more authoritative inner voice replied.

Crystal continued to struggle, but he didn't give her the slightest chance to rebel. He had given her chances in the past to be good and to be obedient, but she had blown them all. His rough palms rubbed her delicate skin, and he watched as her epidermis turned an attractive shade of pink under his magical ministrations.

Nathan's hand slipped under the elastic of her panties, and he tickled the light down that covered and protected her vulva. Crystal flinched away from his fingers. "Don't touch me!" she shrieked.

Chapter 1589 - 107: Say You Want Me

Nathan pulled his hand out of Crystal's skirt and hoisted himself up on his elbows to hover over her. He had an angry frown on his face. "Why are you so desperate to get away from me?" he asked. "Is it because of Eric, or does it have something to do with the necklace?"

Crystal wanted to tell him that he was paranoid, but he blocked her words with a violent kiss when she opened her mouth. The kiss was so vicious that she couldn't bear it. She started to struggle again, and before she knew it, he had laid back on top of her again so that she couldn't move.

Crystal could feel Nathan's becoming more intense as he bent his head to nibble on her earlobes. Then, suddenly, he raised his head, looked her in the eye, and said, "You're mine; everything you do and all that you are belongs to me."

When Crystal heard this, her body began to tingle. She could feel his desire, strong, hot, and hard against her. The pressure made her toes curl, and her struggles lost their intensity. And as he began to kiss her neck, she felt her desire to resist him fade away..

Nathan tickled her ear with his tongue.

"Say you want me," he whispered.

Suddenly, Crystal felt like her abdomen was a little bloated. This was a sign that her period was starting, and she began to panic. If he forced himself on her, and she bled on him, she would be very embarrassed. She shook her head as she clung to what little remained of her sanity. "I won't say it," she moaned. "Never! And you can't make me!"

Nathan laughed and said, "You are a fool, but that is okay because you are my fool. My little fool. I can make you do or say whatever I want you to say. You aren't still insisting that you don't want it, though, are you?"

Nathan grabbed Crystal's hands, and he held them above her head with one hand. She tried to fight him off, but her struggles were in vain. Then, once she'd given up, he pulled up her skirt and placed his hand against her vulva on top of her panties. He gently massaged her genitals, and despite her fears, the pleasure center in her brain took over. She moaned as she raised her hips to meet his hand and increase the pressure. Her face was beet red, and she was more embarrassed than she'd ever been in her life. She didn't think she could control herself, but when she saw the smug look on his face, she was able to push his hand away and tell him to stop what he was doing.

"Why did you stop me?" Nathan asked. He was genuinely bewildered. "You liked it, didn't you?"

Crystal began to cry, and she turned away from him so that she wouldn't have to look him in the eyes.

Nathan: "What is it?"

"I th-think I j-just had my p-p-period," Crystal stammered.

Nathan's eyes went wide as he pulled his hand away from her wet core, and he climbed off of her as quickly as he could. He was terrified. She had bled through her panties, and his hand was glistening, painted red by her shed uterus lining. He held his hand as far away from his body as he could, and he began to curse at Crystal for what she'd done to him. "Couldn't you have held it in?" he asked.

"That isn't h-how it w-works," Crystal replied. She pressed her hands together and held them out as if they'd been tied. "C-Can you -let me g-go now?" she asked.

"Fine," Nathan growled. "Take a shower and clean yourself up. Leave your panties on the floor. I'll have the servant take care of them."

Crystal nodded uncomfortably. She didn't like to be told what to do. Of course, Nathan knew that about her, so he said, "I won't force you to clean up if you don't want to."

"It's okay," Crystal mumbled. She looked down and saw that there was blood trickling down her leg. "I'll have a shower. I don't have any clean underwear, though, or pads..."

Nathan: "I'll have the servants take care of it. What brand do you prefer?"

Crystal: "Tampax, I guess, but any brand will do."

Nathan nodded and left the room, and then Crystal went into the bathroom, closing and locking the door behind her. Men - she thought absently-? they never seem to know anything about anything... It would be cute if it weren't so damn aggravating! Once she was in the tub, she turned on the water as hot as she could, sat down, and brought her knees to her chest. More than anything, she wanted to cry, but her eyes remained dry. Thus, she was unable to vent any pent-up pain, rage, embarrassment, or shame that she was feeling. More than anything, she hated that when he sexually assaulted her, it brought her pleasure. She felt like her body was a traitor, and she didn't know how to bring it in line with her conscious thoughts.

Finally, she stood up, cleaned her body, and got out of the tub. While she'd been having her shower, Nathan had filled the room with shopping bags. The servants had bought every brand and size of the pad, tampon, and panty liner that was available. Along with these, there was also an assortment of women's underwear, everything from lingerie to boxers to grannie panties. He means well-she told herself as she selected a pair of modest blue cotton underwear and pressed a medium-flow pad to its crotch.

When she went downstairs, she found Nathan waiting for her in the dining room. He'd made tea, and he poured her a cup as she descended the stairs. "Here," he said. "Drink up. It's peppermint tea. The pharmacist told me that it would help with the cramps. If you are still not feeling better after that, you should go to bed early."

Crystal nodded and thanked him. She thought it was funny how he could be so thoughtful one minute, but at other times he could be such a predator. It occurred to her that he was like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and the thought brought no comfort.

Chapter 1590 - 108: Who Are You Saying Goodbye?

Nathan tucked Crystal into bed, and when he climbed in beside her, she didn't think she had to worry about him forcing her. She assumed that when she was menstruating, he wouldn't be interested in having sex with her. She lay on her back, and he laid on his side beside her so that he could look at her and rub her distended belly. His touch felt nice, and it alleviated some of the pain from her cramps. Before long, though, his hand began to wander up towards her breasts.

What the fuck? - thought Crystal - This man is relentless! She rolled over to her side and brought her arms to her chest to protect herself from his advances. She could hear his huffing behind her. He was obviously displeased, and after a few minutes, he said, "Are you sure that you want to sleep on your side? Aren't you afraid of side leakage?"

"You seem to know a lot about period hygiene," Crystal said accusatively. She assumed that he'd gained his knowledge by being with other women.

Nathan: "You can lie down on your back. I promise I won't touch anything except your stomach."

Crystal sighed and rolled back onto her back, and he placed his hand on her stomach. And before she knew it, she'd fallen asleep.

The next day, when Crystal woke up, Nathan was gone. It was at half-past nine. She sat up slowly and reached for her phone, and when she turned it on, she saw that there were dozens of missed calls from Eric and Serenity. The ones from Serenity were asking if she was okay. She messaged back to say that she was, but she didn't even bother to open the ones from Eric.

Crystal was hungry, so she got out of bed, washed up, dressed, and went downstairs for breakfast. She had a toasted bagel with cream cheese and a cup of peppermint tea, which she enjoyed while watching the ten o'clock news. She tuned in just in time to catch a bit about the stock market, and the news anchor was talking about how The Henry Group had taken a significant hit. For two days in a row, their shares had been at an all-time low. She wondered how much worse things would get and if Nathan was to blame for what was happening.

Crystal finished her bagel, and she was turning off the TV when her phone buzzed.

She'd received a text message from Serenity that said, "Thank god! I can finally catch my breath. As soon as you get this message, come to school!"

Crystal replied that she was on her way. Then she grabbed her backpack and left the house. A blue Buick was waiting in the yard, and the driver came out to open the door for Crystal.

"Why did you change cars?" asked Crystal.

"Mr. Davis specifically ordered me to drive a low-key car," replied the driver. "The last time you were offered a ride, you turned it down because it was luxurious. Do you remember?"

Crystal nodded and said, "Well, this car looks a lot nicer."

The driver was speechless. He didn't understand Mrs. Davis's strange preference in vehicles.

"But I don't want to take the car today," Crystal continued. "I want to walk by myself."

The driver was beside himself, and she was gone by the time he thought of something to say.

Crystal chose her favorite songs on her phone and put them on her earphones. She liked to listen to music while walking. As she passed a bus stop, a massive motorcycle stopped in front of her. The driver was dressed in black leather, and his helmet was red. He called out to her: "Hey, pretty, get on my motorcycle!"

Crystal took two steps away from the road and continued walking without saying a word. The motorcycle kept pace with her, and when the driver took off his helmet, she was shocked to see that it was Eric.

Crystal frowned and said, "Leave me alone, Eric. I'm not getting on your motorcycle."

Eric: "Are you in a bad mood? Come drag racing with me. It's the coolest. Come on, give it a shot!"

Crystal stopped suddenly. She turned to him and asked, "How fast does your bike go?"

"Up to 370," Eric replied. A sinister smile appeared on his face as he spoke, and he offered her an extra helmet. Crystal took the helmet, put it on, climbed onto the bike, and wrapped her arms around him.

"Hold on tight," Eric said. Then he revved the engine, and the bike shot out like a bat out of hell. In less than a minute, Eric had the bike up to 100, and he quickly brought it up to 260. They were going so fast that everything was a blur. Crystal would have thought that she'd be afraid, but the rush from the speed and the feeling of the wind against her face and her body pressed to Eric's back had a calming effect on her. Somehow, the faster they went, the less real her problems seemed. "Faster! Faster!" she shouted, not knowing if he could even hear her.

Behind them, they were being followed by two off-road vehicles, but Crystal didn't notice them. Eventually, they stopped at a clearing at the top of a mountain. They took off their helmets as they got off the bike, and Eric lit up a cigarette that he'd drawn from a pack in his pocket. He took a drag, held it for a half minute, and let it out in a series of O's. Then he turned to Crystal and said, "I can give you whatever Nathan can give you. And more. Do you want to reconsider?"

Crystal sighed and said, "I'm not interested in either of you. As far as I'm concerned, the two of you may as well fall in love with each other!"

After hearing Crystal's words, Eric began to cough and choke. Once he was over his shock, he said, "That's not funny!"

"Anyway," Crystal continued. "It's not me that you love, it's the chase. There's something about the competition that turns you both on. This has happened before, hasn't it?"

Eric sighed. "It has," he admitted. "Nathan and I fell in love with a woman that no one could replace."

"It is just as I expected," Crystal said. There was a cliff nearby, and she walked to the edge. Then she looked down upon the valley and shouted, "Goodbye!"

Eric looked at Crystal as if she had gone insane. "Who are you saying goodbye to?" he asked.

Crystal: "I'm saying goodbye to you and Nathan."

Chapter 1591 - 109: What A Phony Bitch

Eric sighed and said, "You may as well get back on the bike. This conversation isn't going anywhere, so I may as well take you to school."

When Serenity saw Crystal pull up in front of the school on the back of a motorbike, she rushed out to see if anything was wrong. Once she got to the curb, she said, "Crystal, I was so worried about you last night. I called you so many times, but you didn't answer. I was scared to death." Then she saw Eric and was immediately distracted by his good looks. "Is that Eric?" she asked.

"This is Eric," Crystal replied. "I'm sorry I didn't return your texts. I got my period, so I went to bed early."

Serenity: "What on earth is going on?"

Crystal: "What are you talking about?"

Serenity: "All the videos on the Internet have been deleted, and the public's opinion is being controlled. Do you really have no idea what I'm talking about? Not only that, but I heard that the people who assaulted you were arrested. Was Professor Davis behind this? Did your father hire the people who assaulted you?"

Crystal: "I guess so."

Serenity: "Anyway, we can talk about that later. What are you doing on the back of a motorcycle? Are you crazy?"

Crystal: "Eric saw me walking and offered me a ride. It's no big deal."

Serenity: "Is it that simple? You can't fool me! Since when have we kept secrets from each other?"

Crystal: "Come on! Stop it!"

Serenity grabbed the helmet out of Crystal's hand and passed it back to Eric. "We should get to class anyway," she said.

Crystal nodded, said goodbye to Eric, and they walked in the direction of the school.

There was still some time before class started, and Crystal had planned to study in the Library, but Serenity insisted that they go to the Auditorium, and she wouldn't tell her why.

When they got to the Auditorium, Crystal saw that there were many lines of students, and the room was so full of people that the smell of sweat was barely bearable. Serenity asked her if she had her Student ID card and Driver's License with her, and she wasn't sure if she did, so she checked her bag. Once she found her identification, she held it up for Serenity to see. "Well? I've got them," she said. "Now what?"

Serenity: "Have you forgotten that the class director is looking for two hot assistants for the economic channel?"

Crystal: "Oh, I almost forgot. But I'm not hot..."

Serenity dragged Crystal into the line. "Don't worry," she said. "I'm hot enough for both of us."

"Are you sure we should sign up?" Crystal asked. "There are so many people. We'll have to wait in line for hours, and we probably won't get the job anyway."

Serenity: "Come on, don't be like that! Think about it; if you get hired, you'll be able to work at a TV station. Why don't we get in separate lines and see who gets to the front first?"

Crystal shrugged and said, "Sure." Serenity joined a short line, and Crystal stood in the one next to her.

Serenity: "I heard that this recruiting session is open to all of the university and college students in the city. No wonder there are so many people."

Crystal: "Oh, dear. There must be thousands of people here!"

Serenity: "I guess so. This position is very popular, and everyone wants to work at a TV station, and these kinds of opportunities are few and far between. But if God is on our side, we should get the positions!"

When Crystal heard that, she began to panic.

"So, do I need to pray to him every day?" she asked.

Serenity: "Yes, you do."

Crystal thought about that for a minute, and then she realized that she was silly. She didn't understand why she would put her hopes in someone she didn't believe in. She said, "Oh, come on. I think it's better to rely on myself. Anyway, I believe in Karma. If you do good things, good things will happen to you. And I'm a good person, aren't I?"

Serenity: "Yes, you are. You rock, girl. I admire your values, but you may suffer losses because of them one day."

The line moved forward slowly, and they were able to take a step forward every minute or so. It seemed that Crystal's line was moving faster, though. Serenity looked at her watch and frowned. Then she turned to her friend and said, "I don't get it...."

Crystal: "What?"

Serenity: "Since they require professional candidates, why wouldn't they recruit from their Host Department?"

Crystal shrugged and said, "Think of the hype."

Serenity: "The hype? What do you mean?"

Crystal: "If students with Host majors don't know about finance and economics, they would not be qualified. The job of being a Host is easy and requires little training. Thus, it is better to hire someone with a more rounded education. Do you get it now?"

Serenity nodded but said nothing. As they got closer to the front, someone came by and handed them clipboards with applications pinned to them. There wasn't much to them, and both girls were done quickly.

The person collecting the applications was Tiffany Ford, and when Crystal saw her, she suddenly felt sick to her stomach. She hadn't seen Tiffany since she was staying at her house with Nathan. Tiffany wore

gorgeous make-up and was the most beautiful teacher at the school, and when she saw Crystal, she smiled sweetly.

What a phony bitch - thought Crystal, and she smiled back and waved.

Tiffany walked up to Crystal. "Oh, it's you!" she exclaimed, "Crystal, we haven't seen each other for a long time!" She took Crystal and Serenity's applications and added them to an envelope she was carrying under her arm.

"Hello, Miss Ford. I was a bit taken aback when you left me as suddenly as you did." Crystal spoke softly but emphasized the word "suddenly" to imply that not only had Tiffany left without saying goodbye, but she had run away as if something had scared her off.

"I'm sorry about that," said Tiffany. "There was an emergency, and I wasn't able to say goodbye. I've felt bad about it ever since and was hoping to run into you like this so that I could apologize... and here we are."

Crystal: "Here we are..."

Tiffany's face turned red suddenly. She giggled and lifted her hand to cover her mouth.

Of course, Crystal knew what the 'emergency' was, and Tiffany knew that she knew.

Chapter 1592 - 110: I Appreciate Your Apology

7-8 minutes

Tiffany had lost her sincere smile, but she quickly replaced it with a false one. She turned to Serenity and said, "I'm going to change my shift right away, so why don't you and Crystal join me for a bite to eat?" Then, she turned back to Crystal and said, "There are some things that I want to talk to you about anyway."

Crystal wanted to say no because she didn't want to share a meal with Tiffany, but she wanted to hear what the woman had to say. So, after signing up, Crystal and Serenity followed Tiffany out of the school. As they were leaving, Serenity remembered that she had to stay at school and meet up with one of her teachers, so the other two walked to a nearby restaurant without her.

As they walked, Tiffany said, "The selection process for the Host position is very competitive. I have several related books that I could lend you. I'll bring them to you another time."

Crystal nodded and said, "Thank you."

Tiffany: "Anyway, I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry about what happened when I left, but there were too many people in the auditorium to explain what happened."

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"Never mind." Crystal shook her head and said, "The past is in the past. Right?"

Tiffany: "That may be so, but I'd still like to explain myself. You see, I was foolishly sentimental. The other day, Professor Davis called me and said that he could reverse his decision to demote my dad, but only if I went to stay at the Beverly villa."

They arrived at the restaurant and stopped a few meters away from the door. It seemed that Tiffany wanted to get the conversation out of the way before they went inside. "I was acting like a silly schoolgirl," Tiffany continued. "I thought that Professor Davis had a crush on me, but I waited for four hours that day, and he never showed up. Then I learned that Professor Davis had found out that there were people taking pictures around the neighborhood. To protect you, he was using me as a decoy."

Crystal thought this was too much information for her to digest. Did Nathan do all of this for me? - she wondered.

Tiffany paused and smiled bitterly. "I was jealous of you," she admitted. "And even now, I don't understand why Professor Davis tried so hard to protect you. At the time, I did a series of things in an attempt to discern the truth. Now that I think about what I did, I realize how stupid they were, and I feel embarrassed. Not only that, but they have been eating at my conscience. That's why I asked you out today so that I could explain what happened and apologize, and hopefully clear the air between us. After all, we will see each other at school every day, and I don't want it to be uncomfortable."

Crystal was shocked by Tiffany's words, and even more so when she took out a box of jewelry and passed it to her. "Here," she said. "I didn't have a chance to return this to Professor Davis."

Crystal took the box with a puzzled expression on her face, and when she opened it, she was more than a little surprised. Inside was an amber cufflink with a black spider inlaid in the middle. The arachnid was so detailed that the hair on it could be seen. This is a handmade, one-of-a-kind cufflink - thought Crystal.

"The jewelry box is mine," Tiffany explained. "I wanted to protect the cufflink, so I put it inside. The cufflink looks fancy, but it doesn't suit Professor Davis. None of his outfits require cufflinks."

Crystal nodded and said, "Thank you on behalf of Professor Davis."

Tiffany: "Now that is out of the way, shall we go in?"

Crystal nodded and said, "Why not?"

By the time Tiffany and Crystal were done eating, Crystal saw no point in going back to school, so she decided to go to the hospital. Tiffany still had one more class in the afternoon, so she headed back the way they'd come, and as she walked, she thought - Crystal is only 18 years old, but she is charming, and her future is full of possibilities. It's no wonder Professor Davis is willing to protect her. She is so lucky."

When she got back to the school, she located Crystal's application form, and she tore it up and threw the pieces into the trash can.

After the delightful lunch they'd had, Crystal would have been shocked by Tiffany's behavior.

She knew that the woman was two-faced, but she would have never guessed that she was as jealous of her. Thus, by the time she arrived at the hospital, all thoughts of their lunch had left her conscious mind.

When she arrived at the hospital, she went directly to the room where her father was, only stopping briefly to get a cup of peppermint tea. Her cramps were still bothering her, but the drink helped. She also got a coffee for her father, black, as he liked it.

Todd was resting in his bed. It had been set to a sitting position, and he was reading the newspaper. When he saw his daughter, he smiled and said, "There you are. Come on in. Auntie Green was just here, but she went home to get a little shut-eye."

Crystal returned his smile and brought him his coffee. Then she sat down in the chair beside him and said, "I have a question for you."

Todd: "Go ahead."

Crystal: "Did you hire the person who threw eggs at me in front of the hospital?"

"No. Of course not." Todd closed the newspaper, sighed, and said, "Why would you think that?"

"What about Mrs. Green?" Crystal asked, ignoring his question. "Do you think she did it?"

Todd: "Crystal, I don't know who did this terrible thing to you, but we didn't have anything to do with it. Why would we? Look at me. I'm old. I don't want to spend the rest of my life fighting. I'd rather make peace with my mistakes and go to my grave with a clear conscience."

Crystal bit her lip and said nothing.

"Your grandfather did leave all of his shares to you, and we had no right to take them," Todd admitted. "But there are some things that your grandfather didn't know. I did you wrong, and I'm sorry about that, but I still have a big family to raise. And now you have Nathan. The Henry Group is nothing to you, but to us, it is everything."

Crystal: "I appreciate your apology, but there is someone else you need to apologize to."

Todd: "I know that I owe your mother an apology. When I get out of the hospital, I will go to her grave and solemnly apologize."

Crystal: "Good. And when you're done apologizing, I'll think about convincing the Brilliant Group to stop buying The Henry Group."

Todd: "But I'm afraid that The Henry Group won't last that long."

Crystal shrugged and said, "You'll just have to try and get better faster."

Todd's mouth dropped open. He was aghast and at a complete loss for words.