

Midnight III 301

Chapter 1783 - 301: Michelle Evil Scheme

Before going to bed, Crystal released the first series of photos and videos showing Clark having fun with his mother, and like all the media that went before them, they went viral. The snowball fight video was particularly touching, and by the morning, it was all that anyone was talking about.

The tide of public opinion had turned once more, and once again, it was Paul's word that people were suspicious of. Unfortunately, things were not as one-sided as they once were. The public was now divided between those who supported Paul and those who supported Nancy, and #TeamPaul and #TeamNancy was trending on all Social media. One thing about Paul's followers, though, is that many of them were bots, and those that were not had been misled by his propaganda.

Paul had a tech-savvy team that supported him. They created fake news and made it go viral. They went into chat rooms and stirred up animosity towards Nancy, and his bots voted against her in online polls. Of course, Nathan hired people to defend Nancy, but he was limited by her decision that they would only tell the truth. If that were not the case, the battle between them would not have been as close as it was. As it was, the two opponents were standing neck-and-neck.

However, everything changed when a doctor came forward and said that Michelle had been admitted to the hospital where he worked. According to his police statement, she had suffered severe burns to seventy percent of her face and a blow to the bridge of her nose. Two of her front teeth had been knocked out, and she had a broken leg.

Suddenly, #TeamPaul and #TeamNancy was a thing of the past. #SupportMichelle was everywhere.

Michelle had been abandoned in a secluded place in Paul's backyard, and by the time she was found, she had been in a coma for a long time. Furthermore, her wounds were severely inflamed and infected. "She is being treated in the Intensive Care Unit," he concluded.

The doctor's statement was leaked to the media, and when it aired, they showed a video of Michelle. She could be seen lying on a hospital bed, and so much of her body was wrapped in gauze that she looked like a mummy.

The screen split suddenly. On the left side, an image of Nancy and Noah appeared. On the right, there was an interview with a police officer being live-streamed. The officer looked into the camera and said, "If you have seen either of these individuals, we will encourage you to contact your local police station or dial 9-1-1."

After that, there were a series of clips from interviews. An old lady that lived next door to Paul said that she had heard a heartbreaking cry for help on the same day that Michelle had been hurt. A young lady who lived nearby also claimed that she had heard the screams.

Several servants testified that Nancy had instructed her bodyguards to pour boiling water over Michelle's head.

Outside of the hospital, Michelle's fans held a vigil by candlelight. There was a giant poster of her on the wall, and beneath it, there were flowers and plush toys, cards, jewelry, and an assortment of other items of significance. They were all praying that she would have a swift recovery.

Inside the hospital, Michelle's doctor was carefully removing the gauze from her face, and she smiled when she saw her reflection in the mirror. The burns had covered seventy percent of her face, but there would only be a minimal amount of scarring. Her nose had been repaired, and her two false teeth looked real.

As she examined her face, the doctor pulled out an apple from his pocket. He polished it on his shirt and began to cut it up.

"It's a miracle!" Michelle exclaimed. She turned to the doctor and said, "Thank you so much!"

"You're welcome." The doctor smiled. He stuck a piece of apple into Michelle's mouth and said, "In a few months, once the swelling has gone down, you will barely even notice the scars."

Michelle touched his chest and let her fingers slide down his body, and when she got to his belt, she gave it a seductive tug. "Whatever can I do to repay you?"

"I have an idea," the doctor replied. He quickly closed the blinds and went to the foot of the bed. Then he pulled up the quilt and began to kiss her toes, and it wasn't long before he was sucking on them.

Michelle moaned. "Baby, you are so nice to me!"

The doctor looked up, and her big toe slipped out of his mouth. He smiled and said, "I would do anything for you. I have been a fan of yours since you first began your modeling career. I'll never forget your spread in Victoria's Secret magazine..."

Michelle smiled and wriggled her toes playfully, but just as he began to lick in between her big toe and her index toe, somebody knocked on the door.

The doctor quickly covered her feet, smoothed out the quilt, and stood up. "Come in," he said.

It was one of the nurses. She came over and whispered something into the doctor's ear. He nodded grimly and promised, "I'll check on it. Is there anything else," he asked irritably.

The nurse hesitated for a moment, and then she said, "There are a lot of Michelle's fans outside the hospital. They are holding a candlelight vigil, and they have brought presents. Should I let them in?"

"Absolutely not!" the doctor exclaimed.

"The patient needs rest. They are not allowed to come in."

"But I want those gifts," Michelle interrupted. "And I want to tell my fans that I'm on the mend. I don't want them to worry about me."

The doctor coughed and said, "Fine." He turned to the nurse and instructed her to bring the presents in.

Very quickly, the room was filled with flowers, fruits, and dolls that had been modeled in Michelle's image.

When Paul had seen the images of Michelle abusing Clark, he had been inclined to believe what he was seeing. Then, when it seemed that she had run out on him, her guilt seemed like a certain thing. Now that he knew what Nancy had done to her, though, it was clear to him who the real victim was.

Now that he knew "the truth," he called the hospital and asked the doctor to take care of Michelle, and before hanging up, he said, "Please ask her to call me as soon as she wakes up."

Paul ended the call without saying goodbye, and he called his bodyguard, who had been sitting in the hallway.

"What's up?" The bodyguard asked.

"I want Michelle's room guarded 24/7," Paul replied.. "Who knows what Nancy is capable of...."

Chapter 1784 - 302: Something Was Wrong

As chance would have it, Crystal saw the report about Michelle at the same time as Paul. Their reactions, though, were vastly different. By the time the segment had reached its conclusion, she was thinking - Some people might think we went too far, but I think that we did not go far enough. We should have killed her! If we had killed her and disposed of her body, we would not be in the position we are in now!

Because Michelle was a public figure, her case would receive much more attention than it otherwise would have. But if there had been nobody, then there never would have been a story.

Crystal was trying to think of ways to punish. Michelle - it would be hard with an ocean between them - when wolf began to bark, she went to the window, and she saw that Noah and Clark had been building a snowman in the backyard, but the dog was running around in circles in a way that suggested to her that something was wrong.

Nancy was in the living room, and when she heard the barking, she came to the same conclusion: Something was wrong! She got up right away and ran towards the back door. Crystal was also on her way, and the two friends slammed into each other as Nancy passed the stairs. Crystal almost fell on her ass, but Nancy grabbed her arm and helped her steady herself.

"Quick!" Crystal huffed. "...The backyard... Trouble..."

"I know!" Nancy exclaimed. "There's no time to wait!"

They ran to the back together, and when they stepped outside, they were both relieved to see that Clark was alright. But then they saw Noah. He was lying in the snow, and he was clutching his chest. Nancy ran to his side. "Noah, what's the matter with you?" Nancy picked up Clark, who was frightened.

Noah did not reply, and Crystal noticed that his breathing was shallow, so she called for several bodyguards to carry him into the house. Once he was inside, she called for a doctor. When the doctor

arrived, he examined Noah, and when he was done, he said, "It looks like shock caused by heart atrophy."

"Heart atrophy?" Nancy frowned. "Does that mean that he had a heart attack?"

"No, I don't think so. It looks like there was a contraction caused by a lack of blood flow to the heart."

Nancy touched Noah's arm. "How could that be? Will he get better?"

The doctor sighed and shook his head. "His rate of exhaustion is extremely high. At this rate, he will soon be dead..."

Nancy grabbed Crystal's hand to support her shaky body.

"Does he have a history of heart problems in his family?" the doctor asked.

"I'm sorry. I'm not sure." Nancy sighed. "You're a doctor. Can't you find out?"

"I cannot," the doctor admitted.

"How long does he have?" Crystal asked.

"Three days? Five days? A month?"

"It depends on his situation," the doctor replied.

Noah struggled to sit up, and he glared at the doctor. "Who are you to say that I'm dying?" he growled.

"I think that I know my body better than you do!" He stood up and began to walk towards the door.

He was about halfway there when Crystal shouted at him. "Stop!"

Noah stood still. He was still clutching his chest, but he was doing his best to hide his pain. "Who do you think you are?" he snapped. "I am a grown man. I can come and go as I please!"

"Is that so?" Crystal smirked. Then she turned to the guards that had carried him in and ordered them to put him in his bed. And despite his curses and complaints, they followed her order.

Later that evening, when Nathan came home, Crystal sat on his lap and told him about Noah's prognosis. Once everything had been said, she asked him what he thought, but he just shrugged. "Why do you care so much about him?" he asked.

"He saved you once." Crystal put her hands around his neck. "He saved me, too. He saved Nancy and Clark. Doesn't that mean something to you?"

"Not really. If he had not been there, I would have arranged for someone else to rescue you."

Crystal pleaded with him. "Don't be so cold. The point is that he was the one that saved us. It wasn't anyone else, and now he is sick. We can't turn our backs on him."

"Without his family history, what can we do?" Nathan wondered. "If the doctors can't find it, and he won't tell us, then there is no hope for him."

'What do you know about Noah?' Crystal stared at him suspiciously. She knew that by now, he would have done a background check on Noah. That was just the kind of person he was. He did not trust anyone.

"I don't know anything," Nathan replied.

"Are you sure that you don't know anything?"

"You don't believe me?" Nathan was taken aback. "You are hurting my feelings..."

"I highly doubt it!" Crystal glared at him. "Anyway, can we not make this about you? This is a matter of life and death for Noah, and you're acting like a spoiled child. Can't you just help? If not for his sake, then for mine?"

"Fine." Nathan sighed and said, "We'll get to the bottom of this."

"You have to hurry!" Crystal exclaimed. "The doctor says he won't live much longer." She put her arm around his neck and kissed him on the forehead. "I'll leave it to you. Okay?"

Nathan nodded and said, "I will do my best."

Nathan felt like he was stuck between a rock and a hard place. Noah had been poisoned, and only Paul had the antidote. He could tell Crystal this, but there was no point in doing so because Paul would never hand over the anecdote, and they could not come up with it on their own. So, it seemed that the best option was to pretend to search for a cure.. Then, when Noah died, everyone would think that he had died of natural causes.

Chapter 1785 - 303: How Could I Have Forgotten?

While Crystal was in the shower, Nathan picked up his cell phone and sent Vic a text message. "Has the bracelet been finished yet?" he asked.

"It is done," Vic replied. "I haven't picked it up yet, though. Do you want me to pick it up now?"

Nathan replied that he did, and as he put his phone away, he began to laugh. Crystal had escaped him before, but with what he had in mind, that would never happen again...

The next day, Crystal was rudely awoken by a hard tug at her wrist. Her eyes popped open, and when Nathan saw the startled look in her eyes, he burst into gales of laughter.

"What's this?" Crystal growled.

"It's time to get up," he replied. "Don't be such a slacker."

Crystal sat up in bed, swung her legs over the edge, and kicked him in the shins.

"Ouch!" Nathan yelped. His pupils dilated, and he cursed her out.

"That's what you get." Crystal chuckled as she got out of bed. She went over to her wardrobe to pick out an outfit, and as she lifted her hand, she saw that there was a strange bracelet on her wrist. She frowned and turned to Nathan. "What's this?" she asked.

"It's a GPS Locator," Nathan replied. "It is a permanent fixture, so you might as well get used to it. The only way to get it off is by cutting off your hand."

"What the f**k?" Crystal's face turned red from rage. "You've gone too far! Why did you put this on me? You knew I wouldn't approve!"

Nathan smiled. "This is my way of ensuring that what is mine remains mine."

"I'm not yours!" Crystal hissed. She glared at him, and she wanted to kick him again, but she knew that it would not help. More likely than not, it would just turn him on.

"I've got another gift for you." On cue, a servant appeared in a white dress. "Try it on," Nathan prompted.

"I will not!" Crystal stomped her foot and said, "Take off my bracelet first. Then I will try the dress on."

Nathan frowned. "So," he said. "You don't want to save Noah?"

Crystal glowered at him angrily. Finally, her voice softened. "Am I going to some party?" she asked.

"No. It's not a party."

"Where are we going?"

"We are celebrating a very important occasion," he replied. "No more lollygagging. Do you hear me? Clean up and get dressed."

Crystal's cheeks turned red from embarrassment. She did not like it when he treated her like a child.

"Where are we going?" she shouted. "I won't go unless you tell me where we are going!"

"Fine!" Nathan smirked. "Be that way." And when she still did not move, he picked her up, threw her over his shoulder, and carried her into the bathroom. Once inside, he cleaned her himself, washing her face, brushing her teeth, and braiding her hair. Finally, when she was all ready to go, he said, "We're going to an auction."

"Why are we going to an auction?" Crystal asked. "And why couldn't you have just said that from the start?!?!"

"It was more fun this way," Nathan replied. "And the reason that I want to go is that there is a rare treasure that I want to bid on,"

After breakfast, Nathan and Crystal drove to a small airfield where a helicopter waited to take them to the auction house. Crystal did not understand why Nathan had insisted that she go or even why he

wanted to go. In the past, if Nathan took a fancy to something, he would ask Vic to buy it. When she asked him about it, though, he just shook his head and said, "You'll see when we get there."

The trip wasn't long, and when they arrived, Nathan handed her a fox mask.

He had a wolf mask for himself. Crystal thought that they were gaudy, but she kept her opinion to herself.

Near the entrance, there was an army of journalists, bodyguards, and security guards. Crystal was full of questions, but there was no one to ask. All that she could do was link her arm with Nathan's and go where he led her. Vic and six bodyguards followed them.

When they entered the auction hall, Crystal noticed that almost all of the guests were lovers. That's weird - she thought as the receptionist led them to balcony seats on the second floor.

Beautiful models walked around and posed on the auction stage to display an assortment of gems and necklaces.

"Did you notice that there are a lot of couples here today?" Crystal asked.

Nathan nodded and said, "You must know why. It's Valentine's day!"

Crystal's face turned white. "How could I have forgotten?" she gasped.

Several strong men carried items to the stage one at a time, and the Auction Master explained what each one was and what the starting bids would be. There were antiques, paintings, and jewelry, but nothing caught Crystal's eyes - That is until a lunch box was opened to reveal pieces of what looked like a paste. They were black and white, black as ink and white as congealed fat, and they appeared edible.

"Cupid's Arrow," the Auction Master called them. "They were refined from ancient birds. This kind of bird mates for life, and if its partner dies, it never remarried. If one bird is caught, the other will follow it. They would rather die than live on their own.

Crystal had never seen anything like it. She turned to Nathan and asked, "Would this save Noah?"

Nathan frowned. "Why are you always thinking about other men?"

"Isn't this medicine?" Crystal began to cry. "If it isn't medicine, then what is it?"

"Just watch!" Nathan hissed.

On the stage, a glass cabinet protruded from the ground floor, and in the center of it, there was a wooden box carved with a pair of birds, and there were two balls of black and white Cupid's Arrow. It was very lifelike, and when the reporters saw it, they began to take pictures excitedly.

"Every person wants to be their partner one and only," the Auction Master continued. "But how many relationships actually last? Typically, love fades, but that needn't be so. Ancient Egyptians created Cupid's Arrow for use by Pharaoh on his beloved concubines. The interesting thing about Cupid's Arrow is that it has a built-in fail-safe.. If, after taking it, you betray the person that you have committed yourself to, your heart will seize, and you will die."

Chapter 1786 - 304: You Drive Me Crazy

The black and white pieces glowed mysteriously in the glass cabinet.

Could there really be such a strange medicine - Crystal wondered. It sounded more like magic than science to her, and she had never believed in the supernatural.

The Auction Master continued. He said, "There are plenty of couples who want Cupid's Arrow. Mostly, some have investigated this peculiar dr*g beforehand, and I admire the courage it takes to take your love to the next level!"

Nathan gave Crystal's hand a light squeeze as if to say, "I love you." He leaned over and whispered into her ear. "Do you know why I brought you here?"

Crystal shook her head.

Nathan showed her his biggest grin and said, "After we eat Cupid's Arrow, we will never want anyone else, and if either of us betrays our relationship, then that person will surely die!"

Crystal nibbled on her lower lip. She did not know if this was what he wanted. It sounds so ridiculous - she thought - It sounds like a prison! Like Hell on Earth! So, why is my heart beating so fast?

Nathan circled her waist with his arm. "If you do this with me," he said, "I can give you a lifetime of love, which is a thousand times what Eric has to offer."

Crystal's mouth felt dry, and her head began to spin as an old Britney Spears song played out in her head - You drive me crazy...

With the mask on her face, she felt like she could barely breathe.

While she was distracted, Nathan held her hand. He gave it a loving squeeze, and then he stealthily slipped her wedding band off her ring finger without her noticing. He looked at it for a second, and then he threw it on the ground where she was unlikely to see it. I should have done that a long time ago - he thought. But the time had never felt right. And now, with it gone, he felt his entire body relax.

Nathan stretched out his arm, wrapped it around Crystal, and embraced her. "You don't know how much I love you," he said. "I cherish you more than my life. Crystal Smith, I love you."

His sudden honesty made Crystal's heart flutter, and her cheeks turned red.

"This is not the first time that I have said these words to you," he continued. "I have to say it again, though, because I'm afraid that I did not declare it earnestly enough. I am also afraid that I don't have enough time to let you know how much I love you."

Crystal did not know what to say. She felt like the room was spinning, and when he kissed her, not only did she let him, but she kissed him back. Meanwhile, the bidding on the pieces of Cupid's Arrow had

begun, but they were too involved in their kiss to notice what was going on around them. Nathan had not intended to get involved in the bidding war anyway. His plan was to wait until the very end, and then Vic would swoop in and outbid everyone else.

Their kiss continued, and even though Crystal knew that she was falling into his trap, she did not resist him. A tingling started in her midsection and spread through her body until she was immersed in a euphoric bath. She gripped his shirt and moaned.

She was infatuated with the feeling, and she wanted more, but there was an inner voice that demanded her attention. It sounded like her mother's voice. "Use your mind," her mother said. "Don't trust your body or your emotions. They will betray you." She remembered all the times he had betrayed her, and some of the passion faded.

Suddenly, a beam of light fell on them, forcing them to squint and cover their eyes with their hands. "It's ours!" Nathan exclaimed, and he lifted his fist triumphantly.

Vic had successfully bid on the pieces of Cupid's Arrow.

Crystal frowned. She had been secretly wishing that someone else would win.

In the dim auction hall, everyone turned to see who had won the pièce de resistance. Every eye glared enviously. There was only so much Cupid's Arrow in the world, and their likelihood of ever getting any for themselves had just reduced exponentially. Nobody was happy for them.

Nathan shrugged and went back to kissing Crystal. Let them hate - he thought - Haters gonna hate... It was not so easy for Crystal to ignore them, though. She could not handle everyone looking at her, and she pushed Nathan away.

Nathan sighed. "Alright," he said. "Let's go." He took her hand, and they stood up together. Luckily, they had aisle seats, and they were able to leave without interrupting anyone. Much to their annoyance, though, the spotlight remained on them.

Crystal's curvy figure was wrapped in a white close-fitting dress. The fox mask covered the upper half of her face, and from her elegant temperament and manner, people could tell that she was a great beauty.

Nathan was wearing a hand-made exclusive suit, and his olive-black pupils never moved away from Crystal. It was obvious to everyone that he was in love.

They were going to exit the way they had come, but the Auction Master called them to the front, and with so many eyes on them, they felt like they had no choice but to do as he said.

Crystal felt like she was going to cry, and Nathan could sense her distress. He squeezed her hand gently and leaned over so that he could whisper into her ear. "We'll make this quick," he promised.

Crystal nodded silently and allowed herself to be led to the stage.

As they approached, the Auction Master carefully opened the glass box. He took out the wooden box with the carved pattern on it and passed it to Nathan. Instead of taking the box, though, he opened it, took out the black piece, and put it into his mouth.

The audience gasped in unison, and then they began to clap and cheer. With this gesture, he won them over. The journalists jumped to their feet and began taking pictures.

Nathan motioned for Crystal to take the white piece, but she was hesitant. "Don't worry," he said. "It tastes good!"

"How does it taste?" she asked nervously.

"It tastes like..." Nathan paused and thought about it for a moment. Then he smiled and said, "There isn't really a taste. When you chew it, it ignites a feeling. For me, it was the feeling of loving you."

The Auction Master was astonished. He had never seen anything like this. He turned to Crystal. "Do you know what this means?" he asked.

Crystal frowned and shook her head.

The Auction Master smiled. "It means that whether you take the other piece or not, he will be unconditionally devoted to you until the day that he dies!"

Crystal's mouth dropped open. She had known that she was being pulled into a carefully devised trap, but she had not realized how complex or devious it was. It was beyond her ken. "How far down this rabbit hole are you willing to go?" It was her mother's voice again, and only she could hear it.

Why did my mother leave me in his care? - she wondered - There must have been a reason!

Nathan raised his eyebrows. "Are you going to eat the other piece now, or do you want to save it for later?"

"What if I don't want to take it at all?" Crystal asked.

"Then I will respect your decision," Nathan casually lied.. Of course, if she refused to take it, then when they got home, he would force her to take it.

Chapter 1787 - 305: Good Boy

Much to Nathan's surprise, Crystal picked up her piece of Cupid's Arrow, popped it into her mouth, chewed, and swallowed. His eyes lit up when she opened her mouth to show that it was empty, and the crowd stood up to give her a standing ovation.

Nancy was now standing by the windowsill. It was a beautiful sunny day, and the sun's glow was reflected off the snow in a way that implied that everything was right with the world. From her perspective, though, it seemed that nothing was right with the world. She had just learned that Paul had poisoned Noah. That was what caused his heart problem, and it was unlikely that they would find an antidote.

At this point, Crystal was her only hope. Crystal had a way of making the impossible possible. Nancy did not know how she did it, and she was always amazed by how she managed to turn things around. Unfortunately, she had no idea where Crystal was.

Crystal had gone out earlier that morning, and she had not returned. Now it was the middle of the afternoon, time was of the essence, and she had no way of reaching her.

Crystal had recently changed her phone number, and Nancy did not have the new number programmed into her phone yet. Thus, all she could do was wait. The longer she waited, the more anxious she became.

The doctor said that Noah did not have much time left, and Nancy feared that he would die while she waited.

Wolf stepped out of his doghouse, and when he saw her, he barked and wagged his tail. She called his name and said, "Good boy!" It was good to have a distraction. If Crystal did not show up soon, she would be forced to call Paul and beg for the antidote, and that thought terrified her.

The next morning - Eric was wearing a white fencing suit. He had his sword in his hand, and he was practicing a variety of jabs and stances. His victim lay defeated nearby.

Finally, he stuck his weapon in the ground and took off his mask to reveal a wicked grin. He wiped the sweat off his forehead, and then he offered his opponent a hand up. The other man scowled and pushed his hand away.

Eric had been interested in fencing for a few years, but no one had expected that he would one day defeat his fencing coach, who was a fencing champion: A world champion.

Eric tossed his mask to one of the servants, and then he walked to the table with water on it. He poured himself a glass, sat down, and as he took his first sip, a servant rushed in. He had a yellow envelope in his hand, and after putting it on the table, he said, "Master Bush, this is from Master Davis."

Eric rolled his eyes as he opened the envelope. "I can't imagine what this is," he muttered.

Inside the envelope, there were pictures from the auction and a short description of what had taken place, and as Eric scanned the images, his ire began to rise. Finally, he crumpled the photos into a ball and threw them on the ground. He thought- Nathan Davis... If it is a war that you want, then it is the war that you shall get!

He looked at the photos with scorn. Even crumpled and ruined, they seemed to taunt him. Along with the pictures and the short descriptions, there were media clippings, and many of them featured Nathan and Crystal.

From these clippings, Eric could tell that they had been the talk of the town. By sending them, Nathan had sent a clear message: "You may as well give up. Crystal belongs to me now!"

When Crystal woke up, it was nearly noon, so she was not surprised to find Nathan was not by her side. He seldom slept in. Clark had taken his spot, and he was staring at her. Finally, he smiled and said, "Good morning, Aunt Crystal."

She ruffled his hair and said, "Good morning, sweetie. How long have you been here?"

"So long," Clark replied. "Forever, I think. Aunt Crystal, where's my Mommy?"

Crystal frowned. "You don't know where your Mommy is?"

Clark shook his head sadly. "Mommy's gone."

"Where could she be?" Crystal wondered. She was having a hard time thinking straight, and she had to give her head a shake to get her thoughts in order. When she returned from the auction with Nathan the day before, he had brought her upstairs and f****d her until midnight, and now her whole body was numb.

"Did she leave any clues?" Crystal wondered. "After all, she has to be somewhere, right!"

"There's a paper on the table," Clark replied hopefully. "But I can't read... Here, I'll go get it."

Without waiting for a reply, the boy dashed off, and he was back in no time. He had a piece of paper in his hand and a giant grin on his face.

Crystal took over the note, and as she read it, she began to panic. It said, "Crystal, I have gone to look for Paul. I will be back as soon as I can. Take care of Clark while I am gone. Love, Nancy. P.s. I know what I am doing, so don't worry."

"Don't worry!" Crystal exclaimed. She thought - How can I not worry? Nancy didn't even say why she was looking for Paul. And even if she has a good reason, wouldn't her time be better spent looking for a cure for Noah?!?!

"Where's my Mommy?" Clark asked again.

"I don't know," Crystal admitted. "I'm sorry."

"I want my Mommy," Clark whined, and he began to cry. "I'm scared..."

"I know." Crystal gave him a big hug and rubbed his back. "There, there," she said. "I'm sure that she won't be gone for long."

For a long time, Clark did not say anything. He cried into her bosom and crutched his sleeves tightly in his tiny fists. Finally, he began to settle, and it seemed to Crystal that he was on the verge of falling asleep, but then the front door open and his eyes

opened wide. "Is that Mommy?" he asked hopefully. "It must be her!"

"Let's go find out," Crystal replied hopefully.

It was not his Mommy, though. It was Nathan, and when the boy saw him, he curled up on the couch and began to suck his thumb. It was a habit that he had broken almost a year ago, and it hurt Crystal's

heart to see him like this. Nancy had better have a good reason for abandoning him like this - she thought angrily.

Nathan frowned. He looked at Crystal and asked what was going on. She explained everything, and he was as disconcerted by Nancy's actions as she was. "I don't know what to do..." she cried. "And I don't like seeing Clark like this."

"Don't worry." Nathan gave her a big hug and said, "We will find her. I will arrange for a search party, and the fact that you know what she likes will help."

Crystal kissed him hard on the mouth and said, "Thank you so much. I do not know what I would do without you. Clark and I will get ready, and then we can go."

"Hold your horses." Nathan chuckled. "I don't want to go off half-cocked. If we are going to find your friend, we need to be smart. So, while I get things in order, you have some time. Have a shower, eat, and do whatever else you might need to do."

"Crystal nodded. "Alright. You are right.. It is best that we keep our wits about us."

Chapter 1788 - 306: Don't Overthink It

While Crystal was getting ready, Nathan attempted to feed Clark, but the boy kept his lips tight and refused to eat. "Did you forget that I'm your Uncle?" Nathan asked.

"I'm not hungry," the boy grumbled. "I just want Crystal to hug me."

"She's tired."

"Don't care." Clark pouted.

Nathan sighed unhappily, and then he called up to Crystal: "Clark is not willing to eat, what should I do?"

"I'll be there in a second," Crystal replied, and as she came down the stairs, she said, "Don't worry about it. He's not familiar with you, and he's going through a tough time."

"But I bring him toys every day," Nathan grumbled.

"That's true," Crystal admitted. "But how often do you play with him?"

Nathan glared at Clark. "What does that matter?"

"It makes all the difference in the world,"

Crystal snapped. "Now quit acting like a child!"

"I'm not a child," Nathan muttered. He scowled as he sauntered over to Crystal. "I'll show you that I am a man!"

Crystal began to tremble as he clamped his hand on her shoulder. He gave it a hard squeeze, shoved her against the wall, and grabbed her vag*na with his free hand. "I think I am ready for round two," he chuckled. "How about you?"

"We don't have time for this!" Crystal cried. "We have to find Nancy!"

Nathan smirked. He did not care about Nancy. Apart from Crystal, he did not care about anyone, and if it were not for Crystal, he could have happily let Nancy die. At this point, his only reason for helping was to get Clark out of his hair.

As if on cue, Clark began to cry. "What a boner-killer," Nathan muttered. No matter where Crystal went, Clark followed closely behind her, leaving no chance for him to have his way with her, and every time the boy approached, Crystal pushed Nathan away for fear of setting a bad example.

"Crystal, is my Mommy coming back soon?" Clark asked.

"Just finish the meal," Crystal replied. "She will return when she returns. That's all that I know."

Clark thought about that for a moment, and then he said, "I'll wait until she gets back. Then we can eat together."

Crystal scooped a spoon of macaroni and took a sniff. "Don't you want to eat?" she asked. "I made this special for you, and by the time Mommy gets here, it won't be good anymore..."

Clark stuck out his bottom lip and pouted.

"Not hungry!"

Nathan smirked and said, "If he doesn't want to eat, I will eat it for him."

Crystal's eyes went wide. "You see? If you don't eat it, your Uncle Davis is going to eat it, so hurry up!"

Crystal put the spoon in front of Nathan. She was pretending to feed him while observing Clark's reaction. Much to her surprise, Nathan actually stole the boy's food.

"What the Hell was that?" Crystal demanded. "Nathan Davis, you are such a pervert! This is Clark's meal!"

"Hey!" Nathan wriggled his eyebrows and said, "If you put food in front of my face, I will eat it!"

"But you knew it was for Clark!" Crystal shouted. "I was only offering it to you to coax him into wanting it. And I think you knew that!"

Nathan shrugged.

"You are super childish!" Crystal hissed. "Now, do not make any more trouble, okay. The servant said that he hadn't eaten anything since last night and I was worried. Where the Hell is Nancy? What if she doesn't come back? What if Clark continues to refuse to eat?"

"Mommy won't come back?" Clark began to cry again.

"I... no..." Crystal did not know how to explain away what she had accidentally said.

Nathan rolled his eyes and said, "Don't worry about the kid. When he gets hungry enough, he will eat. Worry about your own food before it gets cold."

Crystal sighed. "I have no appetite either," she admitted. "I am worried about Nancy..."

"If you don't eat, you won't have any strength..." he winked at her. "...You know... to do the dirty."

Crystal gave him an angry look. "Stop thinking about that," she hissed. "I will sleep with Clark tonight."

"What about me?" Nathan protested.

Crystal smirked and said, "You can sleep outside with Wolf."

"So, I'm in the doghouse!" Nathan growled. "Is that how it is?"

"You can sleep where you want," Crystal replied. "Once you've decided where you want to sleep, Clark and I will sleep somewhere else."

"We could all sleep together," Clark suggested.

Nathan gave the boy a dirty look. "You can't sleep with her if you don't eat!" he hissed. "Since you don't want to eat, you will be locked in a dark closet!"

When Clark heard that, he began to wail.

"Are you going to eat?" Nathan wondered.

Crystal's face had turned red from rage.

"Hey!" she shouted. "How could you be so cruel to a child?"

"It worked," Nathan replied. He pointed to Clark. Sure enough, he was eating. "You're the good cop, and I'm the bad cop. This will be the way that we educate our child."

"There is no way that I would ever threaten to lock my child in a closet," Crystal shouted. "But it doesn't matter. If you ever made me pregnant, the child would never be allowed to be born. I would use a coat hanger if that were my only option!"

After giving Clark his bath, Crystal read him a story and put him to bed. She snuggled with him for a long time, but he refused to fall asleep. Finally, she lifted her head and said, "I need to give your Uncle Davis his bath, but I will be back soon. Okay?"

Clark frowned. "But Uncle Davis is an adult... Why can't he do it by himself...?" Before Crystal could reply, Nathan's deep low voice sounded in the bathroom. She sighed and said, "Don't worry about it." She handed him his stuffed gorilla. "If you can't sleep, then play with your toy until you feel sleepy."

Clark smiled. "Okay, Auntie."

Nathan was sitting naked in the bathtub.

Crystal sighed. "You're annoying, you know?"

Nathan smiled sheepishly. "Come here, okay."

Crystal walked over to the side of the tub and scowled. "How do you expect to be a father if you are more of a baby than Clark is?"

Nathan ignored the question. He reached out and tried to pull her into the tub, but before he could get any traction, Clark began to cry. Crystal pulled away. "I have to check on him," she said. "He's crying."

Nathan shook his head. "I don't hear anything. You imagine things." He gave her a serious look. "Why did you eat the piece of Cupid's Arrow without hesitation? Do you know what it means?"

"It doesn't mean anything." Crystal shrugged. "Don't overthink it."

"Maybe you aren't giving it enough thought..." Nathan reached for Crystal, but she pulled away.

"This conversation is over!" she exclaimed. "I have to go to Clark!"

Nathan was not so easy to be ignored. He pointed to his hard member and, sure enough, it was as hard as a rock. "Be reasonable," he groaned. "I need some relief, and I can't wait another minute!"

Crystal scowled at Nathan's genitals.. Finally, she said, "Take care of it yourself," and then she stormed out of the room.

Chapter 1789 - 307: Are You Sure You Can Handle Him?

Crystal sat down beside Clark. He was clutching his toy gorilla, and tears were streaming down his face. "Why is Mommy so late?" he cried.

"I don't know," Crystal admitted. "Hopefully, she will be here by the time you wake up. Why don't you put on your pajamas? I could read some more stories to you, and we could fall asleep together. Would you like that?"

Clark nodded and said, "Thank you, Aunt Crystal. I love you."

Crystal smiled and kissed him on the forehead. "I love you too."

Nathan waited for a half-hour before he angrily gave up on Crystal. He took a cold shower to calm his lust, and then he got out of the bathtub. After drying himself with a towel, he went back into the bedroom, only to find Crystal and Clark asleep. The boy was sleeping in the middle of the bed, so there was no room for him to sleep next to Crystal. Something about what he saw, though, sated his anger.

By the way that Crystal had cared for Nancy's son, he could tell that she would make a great mother. He stood over her for a few minutes, and then he tucked in her quilt, kissed her on the forehead, whispered that he loved her, and slipped out of the room.

The following day, when Clark woke up, he thought that Crystal was his mother. When he tried to roll her over, he saw that he was wrong, and he began to cry. It was not a pleasant way to be woken up, but Crystal felt empathy for the boy, and she embraced him. "There, there," she whispered. "All will be well. You will see."

Crystal noticed that Clark was extra wiggly. "Do you have to pee?" she asked.

Clark nodded.

"Well, what are you waiting for?"

Clark jumped out of bed and went into the bathroom. Nathan was already there, so he helped him. And as the boy did his business, he thought - I would never let Crystal help the little lad pee!

Crystal was making the bed, and as she listened to Clark pee, she felt an unexpected warmth in her heart. She thought - If time suddenly stopped, and Clark belonged to Nathan and me, I could be happy...

Before she had a chance to examine that thought properly, Nathan's cell phone rang. It was in his coat pocket, which was hanging over a chair by the window. It was his private phone, so she figured that it was Vic calling to give him an update.

Without overthinking it, she got the phone and checked the Caller ID. That is strange - she thought. She didn't recognize the number, and the phone didn't either. Nevertheless, she accepted the call and brought the phone to her ear.

"Master Davis. I am sorry to bother you." It was a man's voice.

"Nathan is in the bathroom," Crystal explained. "If you have anything urgent, I'll let him know that you called."

"Is this Crystal Smith?" the man asked.

Crystal's brow furrowed. "This is Crystal. "Who am I speaking with?"

"This is Mrs. Davis's butler," the man replied. "I was actually looking for you, but I didn't have your number."

"Me?" Crystal looked at the bathroom door uneasily.

"Yes. Miss Smith, Mrs. Davis wants to see you."

That's weird - thought Crystal - Why does Nathan's mother want to see me...? After a moment of silence, she asked where Mrs. Davis wanted to meet.

The butler gave Crystal the information, adding, "Could you please keep our conversation confidential?"

"Why?" Crystal wondered.

"Mrs. Davis wants to meet you in private," the butler explained. "She said that it will simplify the meeting."

Crystal said, "All right," and she ended the call without saying goodbye. Then she deleted the call's record from the phone. She was putting it back in Nathan's jacket when, from out of the blue, Clark began to scream.

Crystal barged into the bathroom. She looked at Clark, and then she looked at Nathan. "What the f**k is going on here?" she shouted. Nathan had stripped off the boy's clothes and was trying to force him into the bathtub.

"Did I wake you up?" Nathan asked.

"You did not!" Crystal hissed. "But don't try to change the subject. What are you doing? He just had a bath last night! Are you some kind of pervert? Do you like little boys? Is that it?"

"How dare you!" Nathan's face turned white. "He missed the toilet and piddled on his feet. I thought you were sleeping, so I was trying to clean him up myself!"

Crystal frowned and said, "You could have just given him a couple of baby wipes. This is something he could have handled himself. He is capable of doing more than you give him credit for. And now you have upset him. Just leave, okay. I'll handle this."

Nathan crossed his arms beneath his chest and knitted his brows. "I will not leave," he said. "From now on, the only man that you are allowed to bathe is me! I will not allow you to lay eyes on his little thingy!"

Nathan's words were so ridiculous that Crystal could not help but burst into gales of laughter. "He's just a kid," she said. "How can you be this jealous? Are you mentally ill?"

Nathan's face turned red from embarrassment and anger. "I am not mentally ill!" he roared.

Crystal smirked and said, "I think the lady doth protest too much."

At this point, Nathan would have thrown a fit if not for Clark's intervention. "Uncle Nathan!" he shouted happily. "I want Uncle Nathan to give me a bath!"

The sound of these nine words was like music to Nathan's ears, and they calmed the savage beast within him.

Crystal gave the boy a skeptical look. "You want Uncle Davis to give you a bath...?"

Clark nodded his head excitedly.

She looked at Nathan. "Are you sure you can handle him?" she asked.

"Sure." Nathan seemed to be full of confidence. "I'd like to show you that I can be a good father."

Crystal shrugged and said, "Fine. I will play the role of a good big sister today, and I will make everyone breakfast."

"Where are you going?" Clark asked. "I want you to give me a hug..."

"I'm going to make breakfast," Crystal replied. "I will hug you later when you are clean. Your Uncle Davis will help clean you up and get dressed. Then you can have your hug, and we will all have breakfast together."

When Clark heard that, he started to cry again.

"Oh, my f*****g God!" Crystal grumbled as she grabbed the baby wipes from the counter. She pulled out two wipes, knelt in front of Clark, and hurriedly cleaned his feet. He had been crying. Now he was wailing, but Crystal paid him no mind. Once he was clean, she looked him in the eye and said, "Now, shut up and quit acting like a cry baby! I do not know what game you're playing, but it stops right now. Do you hear me?"

Clark nodded unhappily. There was a stream of snot running from his nose, and it cascaded over his partially open mouth.

"Now, I want you to go to your room and get dressed," she continued. "When you are dressed, if you have stopped crying, you can come downstairs for breakfast. Until then, you are to stay in your room. No crybabies at the table!"

Nathan smiled as she watched Crystal in action. The sight of her taking control like this was more arousing than anything he had ever seen before.

Crystal was so angry that she did not even stop to change out of her pajamas after storming out of the room.

Chapter 1790 - 308: You Would Die Without Me

As Nathan and Crystal sat down to eat - Clark was still in his room crying - she asked him if he had heard anything from Nancy yet. He said that there was no news, except that her phone had been found in the underground parking lot of a downtown high-rise, along with several articles of clothing.

After that, there was not a lot to say, so they ate in silence. They were just about done with their meal when Vic appeared. He had a big bag in his hand.

"What's in the bag?" Crystal asked curiously.

"Nancy's clothes and her mobile phone," he replied. "I just picked them up from the parking lot."

Crystal took the bag and poured its contents on the floor. There was a coat, a sweater, and a pair of shoes. She recognized the garments right away. "These belong to Nancy," she said, "Did you check her cell for any recent calls?"

"I did," Vic replied. "But, sadly, the call history was deleted before it was abandoned. There are a few threads from WhatsApp, but nothing of interest..."

Crystal thought about it for a moment, and then she said, "Nancy may not be here, but we should still be thinking about Noah." She turned to Nathan. "I think that he was poisoned, and I think that you've known about it all along. Do you deny it?"

"I cannot," Nathan replied. "I just didn't want you to be worried. Anyways, I am working on it."

"Sure, you are," Crystal scoffed. "Don't lie to me. I can only imagine what you would have said to me if I had never figured out what was going on. You would have said that he had an incurable disease, and after he died, we would have moved on with our lives as if nothing insidious had occurred."

For a moment, Nathan was speechless. That is exactly what he had planned.

"There is something that you are keeping from me," Crystal continued, "and I want to know what it is and why you have kept it from me. Is it because you fear that I will encounter Eric, and we will have a love affair?"

Nathan's eyebrows furrowed. It is as if she is reading my mind - he worries.

When Nathan did not reply right away, Crystal turned around to leave. Before she could take a single step, though, he grabbed her and embraced her. "This is all my fault," he cried. "But I only do what I do because I am afraid of losing you..." Tears began to well up in his eyes. "Maybe you were right... Maybe I am mentally ill..."

When Crystal heard that, her anger dissipated, she knew that it must have been hard for him to say those words. She smiled sadly and said, "I appreciate you saying that, but you cannot go around acting like this. It is not right, and I think that deep down, you know that. It would be best if you tried to do better. Can you do that? For me?"

"I can and I will," Nathan replied. "And I promise to do everything that I can to find the antidote."

Crystal kissed him on the cheek. "You must also promise not to do silly things. You will never have a true friend or a family of your own if you insist on misbehaving. What can you say about this? Will you promise?"

Nathan smiled. "With you by my side," he replied, "I know that I will be able to behave. But you have to promise me something in return..."

Crystal gave him a sideways glance but said nothing.

Nathan kissed her forehead and said, "Promise me that no matter what happens, you won't leave me, okay?"

Crystal smiled and said, "I promise."

There was a squeak on the stairs, and everyone turned to see what had caused the noise.

Clark was standing on the third step. He was fully dressed, and not only had he stopped crying, but he was smiling. "I'll be a good boy," he said. "I'm sorry that I was bad. I am worried about my Mommy..."

"That's alright. We forgive you." Crystal went to Clark and gave him a big hug.

When Nathan saw that he laughed and said, "Look at you, Crystal. You will be such a great mother!"

Crystal frowned. "What about you?"

"What about me?" What Crystal had said hurt him. "Why can't I be a good father?"

"I don't know." Crystal thought about it for a minute, and then she asked Clark what he thought.

The boy was happy to be included in the conversation, and he said, "Would a good mother and a bad father give birth to a baby like me?" He was thinking about how his mother was good, but his father was bad.

"We would," Nathan replied. "But our baby would be a girl."

Nathan winked and blew Crystal a kiss, but she just rolled her eyes and said, "Anyway, it's almost time for lunch. We're going to have spaghetti, and Clark must be starving."

"Starving!" Clark agreed. "I'm starving!"

They were just about done eating when Clark suddenly started to cry. After a minute, he pushed away his plate and said, "Not hungry!"

Crystal frowned. She had thought that they had moved past this. "What's wrong," she asked.

Clark rubbed his eyes with his hands. "Mommy's not here," he whined. "She must be starving too!"

"You little fool!" Nathan hissed. "Wherever your Mommy is, I am sure that she has eaten. It would be best if you ate so that you would have the strength to protect her when she returns. If you do not start behaving, you are going in the dark closet for the rest of the day!"

Suddenly, Clark began to punch himself in the face. "I'm not listening to you!" he shouted. "You're a bad, bad daddy. And I don't love you!"

Crystal glared at Nathan. "You promised to stop doing silly things!" she growled. "I will deal with you later, though. For now, I need you to get out of here. Go figure out how to save Noah and how to find Nancy."

Once Nathan was gone, Crystal knelt in front of Clark, took hold of his hands, and held them to his sides. Once he was subdued, she embraced him and comforted him. This was not like earlier when he had been playing games. He was deeply upset about his mother's disappearance.

Despite everything that Crystal had done, she was unable to get Clark to stop crying. He did settle down significantly, though. His wails turned to sniffles, and the torrent of tears that had run down his face had been turned down to a trickle. And eventually, she was able to leave him in front of the television.

When Nathan returned, he cornered Crystal, pinned her to the wall, and said, "You're babying that brat. He needs to be taught who the boss around here is."

"You are not his boss!" Crystal argued. "That job belongs to his mother. You are a bully, and not only is your behavior inexcusable, but you are breaking your promise to be!"

Nathan's face turned red. He knew that she was right, but he did not want to admit it. "F**k you!" he growled. He pushed her to the ground and stormed away.

"Where are you going?" she shouted antagonistically. "Are you going to go and cry in your beer?"

"I have a business to attend to," he snorted. "Now piss off. I'm sick of your face!"

"As if!" Crystal smirked. "You would die without me.. You said so yourself."

Chapter 1791 - 309: Does He Actually Love Me?

The time for Crystal to meet with Mrs. Davis had arrived, so she got dressed, arranged for Clark to be taken care of while she was gone, and set out. At first, she could not think of why Nathan's mother would want to meet with her, but then she remembered that the older woman disapproved of her relationship with her son.

Most likely, Mrs. Davis wanted to scare Crystal away, but she did not frighten easily. Besides that, now that she had the bracelet, Nathan would have no trouble finding her if she disappeared.

Mrs. Davis's black RV was waiting for her in the parking lot. So far, everything was set exactly as the older woman had said it would be. Crystal had her driver park next to the RV, and before getting out, she instructed the driver to get the RV's License Plate number. "Just to be on the safe side," she said. "If I am gone for more than three hours, contact Master Davis immediately and tell him that I am in trouble."

The driver nodded and said, "Be careful, okay?"

"I will be," she replied, and after shutting the door behind her, she climbed into the RV. Mrs. Davis had said that she would be waiting for her in the RV, so Crystal was taken aback when she realized that the only other person in the car was the driver. "Where is Mrs. Davis?" she asked nervously.

"I'm the driver," the driver replied. "I was sent to pick you up."

Crystal's brow furrowed. "This isn't what we discussed," she grumbled. "I'm out of here." She tried to open the door, but they were locked. "What's going on?" she asked.

"You aren't getting out, so you may as well settle in and enjoy the ride," the driver replied. "The scenery is pleasant, and there are beverages and snacks in the cooler between the seats."

Crystal sighed and sat back in her seat, and she did not move or say anything until they had reached their destination.

It took a half-hour to get to the zoo, where Crystal was transferred to a tour bus which brought her to a huge indoor farm. At the door, someone received her and led her to an open hall. They walked through the open hall, down a flight of stairs, turned a lot of corners, and continued walking for a while after that.

The longer they walked, the more uneasy Crystal felt. Why did they bring me here? - she wondered.

At last, the bodyguard pushed open a heavy iron door. On the other side, there was a warm, delicate room. There were a few wooden tables and wooden chairs, and the fireplace cast eerie shadows on the wall. Her guide closed the door behind her and retreated.

A man was sitting in front of the fireplace, with his back to Crystal.

"Are you the butler?" Crystal asked. "You must be... so where is Mrs. Davis?"

The man's head turned slightly, and when she saw who it was, she gasped.

Eric laughed. "I see that you are surprised to see me."

That is an understatement! -thought Crystal. He was the last person in the world that she had expected to see, but now all of the secrecy made complete sense. "E-E-Eric..." She stuttered his name. She knew that she should say more, but her brain seemed incapable of forming words.

"What's wrong?" Eric's smile disappeared. "Are you not happy to see your husband?"

"You lied," Crystal muttered. "You are not Mrs. Davis's butler... Wh-Wh-What are you doing here?"

"What am I doing here?!?" Eric shouted.

"You are my wife. Isn't it right that I should come for you? The call did come from Mrs. Davis's butler, though."

"You're lying!" Crystal shouted. "That call was made by you!"

"No..." Eric chuckled. "Don't you think you would have recognized my voice?"

I would have - Crystal realized. Her face lost its color. "Why would the butler have set this up?" she asked. She felt like she was in a cheesy mystery movie from the 1980s, where the butler was almost always the evil mastermind.

"You still don't get it, do you?" Eric smirked. "Mrs. Davis is my ally."

As if on cue, a voice sounded in Eric's Bluetooth headset. "Master Bush, has she arrived?"

"She has," he replied. "Please tell Mrs. Davis that I like her wedding gift very much." Eric disconnected the headset, and as he stood up, he let it fall to the ground.

Crystal took a gun out of her pocket and pointed it at his head. "Don't come any closer, or I'll shoot you!" She had stolen the pistol from Nathan's bodyguard. Just to be on the safe side - she had thought. Never in a million years would she have expected to be using it.

Eric frowned. "Would you shoot your own husband?"

"Does that upset you?" Crystal asked. He was nowhere near as angry as she would have expected him to be.

"I am not angry," he replied. "I am sad. Are you really going to kill me? If I am guilty, my only crime is loving you..." he took a step towards her.

Does he actually love me? - Crystal wondered. Her hands were trembling. "Don't come any closer!" she cried. "I am not kidding! I don't want to shoot you, but I will if I have to..."

"You don't have to do anything that you don't want to do." Eric remained as cool as a cucumber. "And, as you said, this isn't what you want to do. Think about the repercussions. My men are everywhere. What do you think will happen to your friends if you shoot me?"

Crystal was taken aback by what he said. "Wh-Wh-What do you mean?" she stammered. Suddenly, she had a hard time staying focused on her target, and while she was distracted, Eric stepped forward and knocked the gun out of her hand.

Crystal cried out, and before she could say anything, Eric grabbed hold of her chin and squeezed it. "Do you know why I wanted to meet with you here?" he asked. "It is because I wanted to show you something amazing. And I still do, so don't give me any more trouble."

Crystal was terrified. She had no idea what he was up to, but she doubted that it was anything good. It was not until the man outside started screaming that she realized how diabolical he actually was. Even though the walls were thick, the sound was loud, and Crystal recognized the voice immediately. It belonged to Carlos....

"What the f**k are you doing to him?" Crystal growled.

"You are a smart girl." Eric chuckled. "Why don't you take a guess?"

"How the hell am I supposed to know?" Crystal hissed.

"Why do you care so much?" He gave her a nasty look and said, "He is your ex-boyfriend. You don't still have feelings for him, do you?"

"I do not have feelings for him," Crystal argued. "But I am a Humanitarian!"

Eric scowled. "What in Sam Hill is a Humanitarian? Is that like a Trinitarian or a Vegetarian?"

Crystal could not help but chuckle. She thought he was such an ignoramus. "As a Humanitarian, I believe in the intrinsic value of life," she explained. "And I believe that we have an obligation to do good and reduce suffering whenever we can! Whatever you have done to Carlos goes against everything that I believe in!"

"You made me do this," Eric complained. "You drove me to do it."

"Don't you dare pin this on me!" Crystal pulled her chin away and took two quick backward steps. Now, where is that gun? - she wondered. She looked around, but she did not see it. "Where's Carlos?" she spat on the ground in front of Eric and said, "Take me to see him!"

"Why not?" Eric shrugged casually. "I can't wait to see the two of you talk about the old days. If he can still talk, that is."

Eric led Crystal to a small iron door. There was a poorly vented passage on the other side. It led to a flight of stairs. At the top, there was a prison-like compound. There were a dozen bodyguards placed around the perimeter, and each one carried an Electric baton.

Inside the compound, there were a plethora of individual cages where all manner of beasts were on display. There were wolves, tigers, mastiffs, and leopards, and their stench was most heinous.. They were obviously being mistreated, and it broke Crystal's heart to see them this way.

Chapter 1792 - 310: He Looks Like A Dead Man

The beast closest to them was a ferocious mastiff, and when it heard them, its eyes lit up, and it began to growl. Crystal could tell that it had been mistreated and that if it ever got out, it would kill whatever or whoever got in its way. A cold shiver ran down her back as they walked past the angry beast.

In the middle of the compound, they found Carlos. He was in a cage, curled up in a corner, and his eyes had a vacant look to them. He was no longer screaming, but the fresh wounds on his back implied that he had been recently whipped. Crystal whispered his name, and he snarled at her.

Crystal was dumbfounded. She thought - He doesn't even recognize me...

Eric turned to the closest guard. "Was this animal roaring just now?" he asked.

"He was," the guard replied. "But we gave him an injection, and it has already taken effect, as you can see."

Crystal gave Eric a dirty look. "What dr*g did you give him?" she asked. "And why have you locked him up like some kind of violent beast?"

"That's enough of that!" Eric snapped. "Did you forget what I said? You are to be blamed for his suffering."

"I will not accept the responsibility for this!" Crystal shouted. "Don't be so fucking stupid! You did this! It is on you!"

Carlos flinched when he heard Crystal yelling, and it gave Crystal hope. She turned to him and said his name, but all he did was a growl. She said it again, and this time he tried to attack her. Just as he reached the bars, though, Eric thrust an electric baton into the cage and jabbed him in the midsection.

Carlos's body did the jitterbug as Eric pushed and twisted the baton. The sound that came out of Carlos's mouth was unlike anything Crystal had ever heard. She grabbed Eric's arm and shouted for him to stop.

Eric stopped right away, but he seemed to be confused by her reaction. "I was protecting you..." he explained.

"That's bullshit, and you know it." Crystal glared at him hatefully. "He's in a cage. Even if he were a vicious beast, he would not be able to get to me. Now shut the fuck up and let me see if I can help him."

"Do what you want," Eric grumbled. "It's your funeral. Has anyone told you what an unappreciative bitch you are?"

Crystal ignored Eric's comments, and she knelt in front of Carlos. She looked him in the eyes and said, "Carlos, don't you recognize me? I am Crystal. You once loved me... Do you remember...?"

Carlos's face had a blank expression, and there was nothing there to indicate that he had even heard her. Crystal was not one to give up easily, though. She stretched her hand through the bars and touched his arm. "It's me.... Crystal..."

Still, there was no response.

Eric stood over her with his arms crossed.

"You see," he said. "He is not a man."

"He is still a man." Crystal ran her hands through Carlos's hair and gently touched his face. "I can reach him. You'll see."

Suddenly, Carlos turned and bit into her arm. His teeth dug into her flesh, and he tugged at it viciously. Crystal did not fight him, though. She just looked him in the eyes and said, "I am not a threat to you... I am your friend..." Carlos paused, and for a second, Crystal thought that she saw the light in his eyes. It was quickly extinguished, though, the moment that Eric pressed his electric baton to his ear.

Crystal was let go, and Carlos began to flail about you. "Bad dog!" Eric growled. "I will teach you to bite!"

One of the other guards jabbed his baton into the cage, and he pressed it against Carlos's genitals. Carlos's pelvic thrust forward, and he pissed himself. Then he began to vomit. Eric thought it was jolly good fun, and he laughed uproariously.

Without warning, Crystal slapped Eric across the face, and the baton fell out of his hand. She slapped him again. Then again; - three times in quick succession.

Eric's pupils dilated. "Darling, if you dare to slap me again..."

Before his words were finished, she slapped him again. His threats meant nothing to her. Finally, Eric grabbed her arms. He held them to her sides and smirked. Crystal was not to be deterred, though. She hocked a loogie and spat it into his face. Some of it went into his mouth, and he began to gag on a wad of hot, salty snot.

"You are a real bitch," He muttered. "Who does that?" He had two of his men hold Crystal for him so that he could clean his face.

Crystal had thought that the wad of snot would send him into a blind rage, and she found his calm demeanor disconcerting. She thought that she only had a chance if she could get him so angry that he could not think straight. Only then would he start making mistakes. She looked him in the eyes and said, "Eric, you are not a man! You are nothing but a pansy-ass little girl!"

Eric smiled wantonly. "Fine. I'm not a man. It's time to get this show on the road."

Crystal's brow furrowed. "I don't want to see a show."

"Too bad." Eric shrugged. "The show must go on. Isn't that what they say...?" Crystal began to tremble as Eric approached her. He had his baton pointed at her, and he was grinning. "N-No!" she pleaded. "No... please.... I'll be good..."

Eric sighed. "It's too late for that," he said. "Nobody spits in my face and gets away with it." He jabbed the baton into her ear, and she shrieked as the electricity passed through her body. Now it was her turn to do the Jitterbug. She was vaguely aware of the fact that she had wet herself, and then she lost consciousness.

On the opposite side of the zoo, there was a stadium, and this is where Crystal found herself when she woke up. She was sitting high up in the bleachers. Her arms were tied behind her back, her legs were tied together, and she noticed that her pants had been changed for her. For that, she was equal parts grateful and humiliated. She wondered who had seen her vag*na and if anyone had done anything to her. She did a quick body scan, and she could not tell. After being electrocuted, her entire body felt numb.

The place was very bright, and it took a second for Crystal's eyes to adjust. Once she could see, she looked around. There was a guard to the left of her, and Eric was sitting to her right. She realized then that the place smelled like death, like blood and guts and pissed and shit, and her nose scrunched up involuntarily.

"Where's Carlos?" she asked. As she asked the question, she noticed the shark-like Cheshire's grin on Eric's face, and she wished that she could take the question back.

"I will take you to see him," Eric replied. Then he stood up and threw her over his shoulder. Crystal hated it. Unfortunately, bound up as she was, she had no way to resist. She wanted to kill him, though, and she thought that if the opportunity showed itself, she would.

As Eric took the stairs two at a time, Crystal began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" Eric growled. "He hasn't been eaten by those beasts yet, so you have no reason to be so upset."

Crystal bit her lips hard. She knew that it was useless to cry...

Finally, they reached the ground, and Eric set her on the ground. He pointed to an entrance where the players would enter from if there were a sporting event going on. As it was, there was a gate over each entrance.

"They are electric," Eric explained. "It keeps the beasts from rushing the stadium."

Crystal shaded her eyes and squinted so that she could see the gates better, and then she gasped. Carlos was leaning against the cement wall. He looks like a dead man - she thought.. From this far away, there was nothing to suggest that he was actually alive.