

Midnight III 311

Chapter 1793 - 311: That's Not Fair

Carlos was released into the stadium first, but he did not move, and a guard had to encourage him with an electric baton. The tiger was released next, and it attacked right away. He is dead - thought Crystal - he does not even know where he is.

Suddenly, and to everyone's great surprise, Carlos's survival instinct kicked in. He dodged the attack and punched the tiger in the face.

The tiger growled. Carlos growled right back at him, and they began to circle each other and assess each other's strengths and weaknesses.

The tiger was caught off guard when Carlos took the offensive. Carlos jumped through the air and landed on the beast with his nails extended. His movements were so fast that Crystal could not see what was going on. It was not until the final stroke had been struck that things slowed down.

The tiger collapsed at Carlos's feet.

"Did you see that!" Crystal exclaimed. "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes... How did he do that?"

"You don't know?" Eric laughed. "Did you think that he did that on his own? I gave him a serum that I am developing. He is my first guinea pig."

Crystal could not believe it. "You are a monster!"

"Am I?" Eric seemed genuinely surprised by her statement. "Without my serum, he would be dead. Never mind that, though. Just watch the show. By the end of this, I am sure you will have a newfound sense of appreciation for my work."

I doubt that - Crystal thought but knew better than to say.

There was a clicking sound, and the gate reopened. Behind it, there was a wolf, and it immediately began to stalk Carlos.

"Please," Crystal begged. "Make it stop."

Eric smiled and said, "Only you can save him. If you promise to stay with me - never to see Nathan again and never to betray me, then I will let him go."

"I have already married you!" Crystal exclaimed. "Isn't that enough? What else do you want from me? Do I have to kill Nathan to prove my loyalty to you?"

"That would be nice," Eric replied. "But it is not necessary, and it wouldn't prove anything anyway. Even if you killed him, his memory could live on in your heart. What I want is for you to remove him from your heart. I want you to root him out."

"You are crazy," Crystal cried. "Hearts do not have On/Off switches. How can I remove him from my heart?"

"I have a way to keep him alive and torture him at the same time," Eric explained. "If you did your part, he would be removed from your heart."

This ought to be ripe - thought Crystal.

"What is it that you want me to do?" she asked.

"I want you to catch him and let him be my prisoner," Eric replied. "I regret not having poisoned him when I had the chance. If I had, he would be dead by now."

Crystal's face turned white. "You want me to poison Nathan and turn him over to you?" She could not believe what she was hearing.

Eric smiled and ran his fingers through her hair. "You don't have to do it by yourself," he explained. "I will help you. You will be the bait, and I will be the trap."

"No." Crystal had a grave expression on her face. "I will not help you. I will not trade Nathan for Carlos. It would be best if you let them both go. Only then will I willingly stand by your side."

Eric frowned and said, "Hush your mouth. We're missing the show."

Below them, Carlos had just torn the wolf's throat out, and he had his fist raised triumphantly. There was gore dripping down his arm, and from the grin on his face, Crystal could tell that he had regained some of his humanity. "It looks like you're losing," she said. "Don't count your chickens before they have hatched," Eric muttered. He lifted his right hand and showed two fingers.

Almost immediately, two gates were opened, and a pack of wolves emerged from each of them.

Oh, my God! thought Crystal. "That's not fair!" she cried. "Twenty to one is not fair!"

"Who said that life is fair?" Eric chuckled and said, "This should be fun."

Crystal felt like she was losing her mind. She thought about all the things she could do if she had not been bound, and her helplessness taunted her.

The wolves approached Carlos. They formed a circle around him, and the largest one slowly approached him. It raised its head and howled proudly, and the other wolves joined their voices to his. It was a terrifying sight to behold, but Carlos seemed unaffected by their show of strength. He looked at the wolf in front of him, stuck out his tongue, and made a rude noise.

Almost immediately, the wolves pounced. Crystal's whole body was trembling. This is the end - she thought. She wanted to cry, but the tears would not come. All she could do was close her eyes and wait for the end.

A few minutes passed, and when Crystal heard Eric begin to grumble, she slowly opened her eyes. She looked down, and she was amazed by what she saw. The pack had been nearly eradicated.

Unfortunately, those that remained appeared to be the strongest of the two packs. They were hungry, and they were desperate, which made them incredibly dangerous.

Before this, Carlos had never been so fast, agile, or strong. But Crystal feared the serum would not be enough. She turned to Eric. "Do you know that if you kill him, you will lose your bargaining chip?"

Eric scowled. "Hush... If you cannot watch the show in silence, I will have your mouth duct-taped closed."

Crystal turned back to Carlos. She did not want to watch this, but she felt compelled to.

Three wolves attacked Carlos at once, two from the front and one from behind. He dodged one, punched the other in the face, but he had not seen the one behind him. She opened her mouth to warn him, but it was too late.

Carlos shrieked as the wolf's claws scraped down his back. He lost his balance, and he fell to the ground.

Crystal shouted his name as loud as she could. She knew that Eric would punish her for it, but she did not care.. She wanted him to know that someone was rooting for him. "You can do it! I know you can! You are the strongest person that I have ever known!"

Chapter 1794 - 312: It's A Miracle That He Is Alive

Carlos made peace with the fact that he was about to die. The wolves were circling around him. I never really had a chance - he thought not against twenty wolves. But he was proud of himself for how well he had managed with what he had. He closed his eyes and began to recite Psalm 23. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."

Suddenly he heard a woman calling his name. "Carlos!" she shouted. He recognized the voice. It belonged to Crystal. What is she doing here? - wondered.

"You can do it!" she shouted. "I know you can! You are the strongest person that I have ever known!"

Is that true? - he wondered. He opened his eyes. The wolves were closer than ever, but they suddenly seemed like less of a threat than they had a moment ago, and as he got to his feet, he continued his prayer: "I will fear no evil... for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...."

Crystal cheered as Carlos arose, and Eric was so shocked by what he was seeing that he did not strike her. "It's impossible," he muttered. "Totally... Completely... Impossible...."

The largest of the wolves approached Carlos, and he faced it like a warrior. He drew back his arm as the wolf lunged, but just before his fist met the wolf's face, a gunshot echoed through the stadium and his foe dropped dead at his feet.

Carlos gasped. What the fuck just happened? - he wondered.

A second wolf attacked, and it too was shot dead. The bullet passed through its left eyeball, and its brains exploded out the other side of his head.

When the other wolves saw what had happened, they began to retreat.

Suddenly, a bell rang. It signified that dinner was ready. When the wolves heard it, they all turned around and returned to their cages.

The show was over.

And now, finally, the tears came, and it was like a dam had been broken. They came in torrents.

"What the f**k is your problem?" Eric growled. "He lives."

"Does this mean that you are going to let him go?" Crystal asked hopefully.

"You care so much about him, but what about me?" Eric asked. "If I died, would you even care? Or would you jump for joy?"

"It is not like that," Crystal explained. "I like you both equally. If you let him go, I will do whatever you want. Everything except to hurt Nathan...He is as innocent as Carlos. There must be something that I can do instead..."

Eric thought about it for a moment, and then he wiped her tears away with his thumb. "Now that I think about it, there is something."

"What's it?" Crystal asked nervously.

"If you give me a child, I will know that Nathan is no longer in your heart, and I will be able to let Carlos go."

Crystal's back stiffened. "I have taken a dr*g. It is a special medicine. I'm afraid that I can't..."

"I know," Eric interrupted.

"You know?"

"Nathan informed me," Eric explained. "Don't you see? That is what this is all about." Crystal was shocked.

"How do you think it makes me feel to know that you took Cupid's Arrow of your own volition?" Eric asked angrily. "I gave you everything that you wanted, but you betrayed me."

Crystal clenched her fists. She finally understood why Eric was acting so crazy.

"What am I to do now?" Eric asked. "I don't know why you married me if this is what you were going to do..."

"I'm so-sorry," Crystal stuttered. "I d-didn't p- plan it. But what d-does this h-have to d-do with C-C-C-Carlos?"

"I am using your weaknesses against you," Eric replied. "Do you think I am stupid?"

"N-no." Crystal was trembling. "I don't know what you want me to do, though. I have already taken the dr*g, so I can't have sex with you, and if I can't have sex with you, how can I give birth to your child?"

Eric laughed. "Didn't you know about the loophole? If you give birth to a child, the effects of Cupid's Arrow will be rendered null and void."

Crystal frowned. "Why are you so desperate to have sex with me?"

"I am in love with you," Eric explained. "Everybody knows that sex is the quickest way to a woman's heart. And once you are knocked up, we will finally be a real family."

Crystal smiled bitterly. "Eric, I am speechless. How did you come up with this plan? It is despicable."

"I don't see how it matters," Eric replied. "If you do not like it, take it up with yourself. You were the one who turned your back on your husband and took Cupid's Arrow with another man!"

Crystal Sighed. "I said I was sorry. Now, will you please release Carlos?"

"How can I?" Eric chuckled. "You still haven't given me your answer."

"Do I have other choices?"

"There is the third option," Eric replied. "But if you are willing to continue to watch Carlos suffering, then you are more of a monster than I will ever be..."

Crystal's head was spinning. No choice felt right, and the voices in her head were driving her insane as they debated which option was the best. "Give me some time to think about it," she begged.

"Alright." Eric shrugged. "I will give you 24 hours."

"That is too short," Crystal cried. "I need three days."

Eric frowned. "If this is another one of your sick games, Carlos will pay for your error in judgment."

"Don't torture him anymore," Crystal begged. "Let him out..."

"Why not?" Eric smiled and nodded to one of the guards. A few minutes later, they returned, and Carlos was with them.

Carlos was a mess. His body was covered in bruises and matted with blood. His hair was disheveled. It was sticking out all over the place, and Crystal could see that chunks had been pulled out. The worst, though, was the inflamed wounds on his back. It is a miracle that he is alive - she thought.

"Is someone going to help him?" Crystal asked. It saddened her to see that he had reverted back to his previous state. Once again, he was a shell-shocked husk of a man. "How can I think straight when I know that Carlos is dying somewhere?"

Eric nodded amicably. Then he turned to the guards. "Bring him to the infirmary. Get him cleaned up. Have the veterinarian look at his wounds. There are clean clothes in the locker room." Then he turned back to Crystal and said, "Consider this an act of goodwill.. If you betray my trust, you will regret it, but it will be worse for Carlos."

Chapter 1795 - 313: You Are Not Safe

The guards led Carlos to the infirmary. Eric cut the rope that bound Crystal's hands and legs, and they followed behind them. They had not been waiting long when they heard one of the guards begin to yell.

"What was that?" Crystal wondered, and she ran into the infirmary.

When she opened the door, she saw that Carlos had knocked a guard to the ground. The other guard was so frightened that he had backed himself into a corner.

Crystal approached him as if nothing were out of the ordinary. She held out her hand to him and said, "Carlos. It's me, Crystal. Let me help you."

Carlos hung his head but said nothing.

Crystal nodded to the guards, and they ran out of the room. Then she put her hands on Carlos's shoulders, turned him around, and led him to the next room where the showers were.

There was a large bench running down the center of the room, and there were four open showers on either side of it. Each one had an extendable showerhead so that people could bathe from a seated position. Crystal sat him in front of the shower closest to the entrance.

Crystal was about to get the showerhead, but before she could, he grabbed her, pulled her closer, and sniffed her body. He liked the smell. It helped him calm down so that he could start to arrange his thoughts.

Seeing him in this state made Crystal cry. She could not imagine what horrible dr*gs he had been given. She lifted his chin, and when she looked in his eyes, she saw the remnants of his humanity. "Hold still," she said. "Let me get you cleaned up."

Everything seemed fine, but then Carlos bit her wrist.

Crystal could not believe it. This was the second time that she had been bitten by him today. Damn my bad luck! - she thought. Her first instinct was to pull away, but she knew that it would only make the situation worse. So, instead of fighting him, she forced herself to relax. She ran her hands through his hair and said, "If you need to bite me, I don't mind. It doesn't hurt." She looked him in the eyes. "Will you feel better after you've bitten me?"

Carlos eyed her suspiciously. There was blood streaming out from either side of his mouth.

"I don't know if you regret meeting me or not," Crystal continued. "I am sorry that you have had to suffer because of me." Tears began to stream down her face. "If it were not for me, Eric would not have hurt you."

Finally, Carlos let her go, and he used his hand to stop the flow of blood on her wrist. Crystal smiled meekly and said, "Will you let me help you?"

Carlos nodded and let her go.

This time, when Crystal went to get the showerhead, he did not stop her.

Eric watched from the hallway as Crystal took care of Carlos. He had his phone pressed against the side of his face. Paul was on the other end of the line. "It looks like you are ahead," Eric admitted. "But don't get too excited. This is just because your prey is more stupid than mine is."

"Is my prey stupid?" Paul asked. "You had better watch your mouth if you wish to remain my friend."

"But you call Nancy stupid all of the time," Eric complained.

"I can call her stupid because she is mine," Paul explained. "What gives you the right?"

"I suppose, nothing," Eric replied. "I apologize." The call came to a quick conclusion after that, and when his eyes returned to Crystal and Carlos, he stepped into the room.

When Carlos saw him, he immediately became restless. He bared his teeth, and he let out a warning sound between grit teeth. Crystal immediately turned around and told Eric that he needed to leave. He had already seen the bite on her hand, though, and he refused to go.

"He bit you again," Eric argued. "You are not safe!"

"I'm fine!" Crystal exclaimed.

"You are bleeding!" Eric shouted. "Don't you see? You are not fine. If your wound is not taken care of, it will get infected, and you could die!"

"No one is going to die!" Crystal rolled her eyes and said, "Don't be so melodramatic."

Eric scowled, and he glared at her. "An animal who has bitten once will bite again, and it will keep on biting until it is put down!"

"Don't call him an animal!" Crystal gave Eric a dirty look and said, "He is a human, and he is not being put down!"

"Is he human?" Eric asked sarcastically. "He can't even speak, and he doesn't recognize anyone!"

"But that is your fault!" Crystal groaned. "What dr*gs did you give him? Can you change him back?"

Eric smiled and said, "Of course I can, but first, you need to promise to let me get you pregnant. But you had better make up your mind quickly. The longer you take, the less of him there will be when I give him the antidote."

"How long will it take?"

"Don't worry. If you give me the right answer in three days, everything will be fine."

"Alright." Crystal sighed and said, "I will think about it. In the meanwhile, let me get Carlos taken care of. He is going to catch a cold."

"Catch a cold?" Eric scoffed. "He is a cold-blooded animal now. He can't catch a cold."

"What do you mean?" Eric's words had given Crystal a bad feeling in her gut.

"It is all a part of my experimental serum," Eric explained. "Don't you worry your pretty little head about it; you hear me?"

"What happens if your experiment fails?" Crystal asked nervously.

Eric shrugged. "Then he will die. It is no great loss."

Crystal's eyes widened with horror.

Eric took her into his arms. He kissed her on the forehead and said, "Don't worry. You can change his destiny at any time."

"I get it!" Crystal hissed. "Will you finally let me take care of Carlos?"

"I will not," Eric replied. "It is too dangerous. My guards will take over."

"It is more dangerous for them than it is for me," she argued.

Eric snickered. "Watch and learn, my young padawan. Watch and learn...."

Dearest Lovely Readers,

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all of us. Forever so grateful for all the love and support throughout the entire year of 2021 you've given this humble author. Although we encountered many trials and difficulties, we still reached another fantastic year, 2022.

As we enter the year 2022, I wish that all of us could find hope, prosperity, and healing.

May we overcome this pandemic and any hardship that will come along the way—looking forward to reading all your lovely comments and reviews on my upcoming books this year.

I am sending you my warm hug and heartfelt greetings!

Xīnnián kuàilè. Gèng duō zhǔfú dēng nǐ lái! (HAPPY NEW YEAR. More blessings to come your way!)

Anna Shannel Lin

Chapter 1796 - 314: Her Negotiation

Eric cleared his throat, and three guards entered the infirmary. They carried each other with an electric baton. Crystal could tell right away what they were about to do, and she shouted for them to stop, but it did no good. All at once, they pressed the batons to his flesh, and he began to flail about. It looked like he was having a grand mal seizure.

"I don't think that he'll be putting up much of a fight now," Eric laughed.

Crystal felt like a shell-shocked soldier, and when Eric led her into the next room, she went along obediently. He sat her on the bed, and he began to treat her wounds.

There was a clock on the wall, and its steady tick-tock-tick-tock rattled her brain. She looked up at it and saw that it had been two and a half hours since she had stepped out of her car. Before long, the driver would notify Nathan. At that point, the shit was sure to hit the fan. He will use the GPS on my wrist to find me, but what about Carlos?- she wondered.

"Does Paul have Noah's antidote?" Crystal asked anxiously.

Eric's hands froze for a second, and then he said, "I didn't even know if Paul was still alive. I thought that Nancy killed him... unless he killed her...." He smirked.

Crystal's face turned white. She could not believe that Nancy would be stupid enough to go after Paul by herself.

"Do you still want to save her?" Eric asked. "If you submit to me, there are many things that I could do for you and for the people that you love. It is very selfish of you to shun me. You are lucky that I am such a good man. I could assault you and force a baby into you, but I want you to come to me of your own free will. How many men can say the same?"

Crystal was flabbergasted. "If you must blackmail me into coming willingly, then I haven't come willingly, have I? Why are you so intent on having me anyway? There are probably millions of girls who would love to be by your side. And do not tell me that it is because you love me."

Eric sighed and said, "You are my wife. Do you think that I would marry someone that I didn't love? And if you had not put up so much resistance, I wouldn't have had to go to such extremes to keep you with me..."

Crystal crossed her arms beneath her breasts. "You are making a big mistake," she said. "The more you hurt the people around me, the more I hate you. You may be able to force me into doing your bidding, but you will never win my heart this way!"

"Be that as it may..." Eric thought about it for a moment, and then he said, "If I cannot have your heart, your body will have to suffice. And who knows? Once we have a family, you may grow to love me. Do you think that you might love me... eventually?"

"I don't think so," Crystal replied. "After what you have done to Carlos, I feel disgusted just looking at you."

Eric frowned. "You can't mean that...."

"Of course, I do!" Crystal exclaimed.

"But what if I give Carlos the antidote?" Eric asked hopefully. "Would that change your opinion about me?"

"It would be a start," Crystal admitted, "At the very least, it would show that you have the capacity to empathize with someone, so I would be less disgusted by you."

Eric laughed happily. "You are the first woman to use your disgust of me to negotiate with me."

Crystal's eyebrows rose, and she thought- I did not realize this was a negotiation. "How about this?" she said. "If you give Carlos the antidote, I will give you one month to prove that you are a good man."

Eric's eyes lit up. He had hoped that she would give him her life, but he had known that it was unlikely to happen. This was an acceptable compromise.

"I have one more condition, though." Crystal looked him in the eyes and said, "I want you to stop trying to kill Nathan. I may have feelings for him, but I am with you."

"Sure." Eric shrugged. "I never wanted to kill him."

Crystal eyed him suspiciously. "But in Kuerto, you imprisoned him and abused him."

Eric chuckled. "I was just having a little fun with him and punishing him. If I had wanted him dead, he would be dead."

"Well, he wasn't having fun," Crystal hissed.

"Now, if you want to have a child with me, you must let Nathan go and stop trying to catch him. No more traps. Do you hear me?"

"No more traps?" Eric laughed out loud. "Where is the fun in that?"

Crystal had a grave expression on her face. "If you cannot accept my condition, then there is no deal. Good men do not behave that way that you do, and I would not want my child to grow up in an environment full of hate."

"What about Nathan?"

"If you prove yourself to me, then I will put him out of my mind."

Eric was satisfied with her answer, and he said, "I can let go of the hatred, but will Nathan let go of his?"

"Are you really willing to put this behind you?" Crystal asked skeptically. She wanted to believe him, but she had her doubts. "If you do, then I will handle Nathan myself, and you will have to trust me."

"For your sake, I will let this grievance go," Eric lied. It was not in him to forgive and forget, but if he could placate her with false promises long enough to get her in a "Family Way," then she would be stuck with him, and he would be free to deal with Nathan in whatever manner pleased him. "Don't you believe me?"

"I don't know..."

He stood up. "Believe it or not, I would never think about killing him. I have been cruel to him in the past. That was because of what he did to Helen, but maybe he has been punished enough. By the end of the month, you will see that my word is good."

Crystal nodded absently and said, "We'll see..."

"Does this mean that you have finally decided to have a child with me?"

"I will tell you in three days," Crystal replied, "as per our agreement."

Eric scowled at her.. "I had hoped that you had forgotten about that," he grumbled.

Chapter 1797 - 315: What Are You Here For?

Crystal looked Eric in the eyes and said, "You have put me in a tight space, and my anxiety is through the roof. I cannot make a big decision in this environment. It would be best if you let me go. If you do, I will return in three days with my answer. Then, regardless of what I decide, I will stay for a month.

"You w-want to- I-leave...." Eric was taken aback. The thought of letting her go had never been a part of his plan. "How can I trust you to c -come back...?"

"You have Carlos," she replied, "and your arm is long. I know that if I crossed you, nobody in my life would be safe, and Noah would never get the antidote. If you let me go, I would have to return. You must see that...."

Eric's brow furrowed. "Crystal, no one has ever tried my patience or vexed me the way that you do. Do you know that?"

"I know it," Crystal replied meekly. "Will you let me go?"

"Besides thinking, what will you be doing while you are gone?" Eric asked.

"I will set my affairs in order," Crystal replied. "I cannot just disappear without a word. People will worry, and they will come looking for me."

"If you do not come back, I will kill Carlos. I will slit his throat myself, but his blood will be on your hands. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Crystal replied. "I will return." She glanced at the clock. By now, Nathan would have received word from the driver, and there was no doubt in her mind that he was on his way. "I need to go now."

"Why are you so anxious?"

"I have an appointment with Nathan. He will be suspicious if I don't return on time."

A thought occurred to Eric, and he frowned. He said, "Once you tell Nathan your plans, he is unlikely to let you leave..."

Crystal smirked and said, "He may try to keep me in, but I know how to get my way. Look at today, for example. There is no way that he would have approved of me meeting up with his mother."

"Okay." Eric nodded. "I believe you. You may go if that is what you need to do."

"Thank you." Crystal took out her mobile phone and asked her driver to pick her up.

Then, as she put it away, Eric put his hand on her shoulder, and she asked him if there was a problem?

"It's cold outside," he replied. "Put on my jacket. I will see you out."

"Don't bother. I don't want him to see you."

"That won't be a problem," Eric explained.

"My driver will take you where you want to go, so you may as well cancel your car."

"Alright." Crystal knew that it was pointless to argue, so she did as he said. "But what about the antidote... for Noah...?"

"Paul has it. I will bring it to you tomorrow."

"Do you know where I live?"

"Of course, I do." Eric laughed. "I know everything about you."

A chill ran down Crystal's back. That's creepy - she thought. "Alright," she said. "Tomorrow it is."

As she began to walk towards the door, Eric stopped her. "Where's my goodbye kiss?" Crystal smiled, gave him a kiss on his cheek, and hurried off in the direction of the car. The cold air hit her in the face, and a grin appeared on her face. Eric still had her in his grasp, but at that moment, she felt completely free. She looked back at the zoo and sighed. If it were not for Carlos and Noah, there is no way that she would even think about returning.

Crystal had the driver drop her off at the mall. She knew that she was about to upset Nathan, and she thought that a gift might pacify him. She had barely stepped out of the car, though, when her phone rang. When she saw that it was Nathan who was calling, her heart sank. With trembling hands, she accepted the call and brought it to the side of her head. "H- Hello..." she stuttered.

"Are you carrying a small black backpack?" Nathan asked.

She was. Crystal looked around, but she saw no one. The parking lot was nearly deserted.

"Are you wearing a blue jacket and black boots?" Nathan asked.

She was. "Can you see me?" Crystal began to feel scared. "Where are you?"

"Take a guess?"

"Stop playing around," Crystal cried. "Are you in the mall's parking lot? I don't see you!"

The line went dead, and Crystal began to look around frantically.

Suddenly, the entrance to the mall opened, and Nathan emerged. He had a wicked grin on his face, and several bodyguards walked behind him. Not knowing what else to do, she walked towards him, and they met in the middle of the lot.

"What are you here for?" Nathan asked.

"I wanted to buy you a gift," Crystal replied. Nathan's eyes lit up. "What were you going to get me?"

"I was thinking about gloves," Crystal replied, "I didn't know if you preferred black or brown, so it is a good thing that you are here!"

Nathan thought about it for a moment, and then he smiled. "Can I have them both?"

Crystal chuckled. He is like a kid in a candy store - she thought. But then her face turned white. "I'm sorry," she said, "But I don't have enough money for two pairs."

"Where is your card?" Nathan took out his wallet.

"I forgot to bring it."

Nathan rubbed her head. He "Boop'd" her! nose and said, "You are so cute. Anyway, it is the thought that counts, right? I will pay for the gloves, but they can still be a gift from you."

When Nathan brought the gloves to the counter, the clerk took one look at him, and her eyes lit up. It was the first time that she had seen a man with such a charming silhouette.

Crystal cleared her throat and said, "Wrap it up for us, please."

The clerk started to wrap the gloves, but Nathan stopped her.. He turned to Crystal and said, "Darling, please put them on for me."

Chapter 1798 - 316: Do I Need A Reason To Hug You?

The clerk let out a disappointed sigh. Sure enough, she thought all the good men in this world were taken...

Crystal smiled as she slipped the gloves over his fingers.

"They are perfect!" Nathan exclaimed. "What made you want to buy me a gift?"

"I suddenly remembered that I have never bought you a gift before," Crystal replied, "and I wanted to rectify the situation."

"But you have bought me a gift," Nathan said. "On my birthday. Don't you remember?" Crystal blushed, and she turned her head in embarrassment. On his birthday, she had given him herself to him as a gift. Nathan kissed her neck. "That was the best gift I have ever received," he whispered. "Of course, I also like these gloves."

Crystal smiled. "I am glad. Have you found Nancy yet?"

"I think that she is in the hospital," Nathan replied. "I am waiting for verification."

Crystal gave Nathan a hug and thanked him. Then, she said, "To show my appreciation, I will make you a tasty dinner. Can I make dumplings? What do you think? Clark also likes dumplings very much."

"Okay." Nathan shrugged. "Everything you make is delicious. But why are you being so kind to me today? First, you bought me a gift, and now you want to make dumplings for me?"

Crystal looked into Nathan's eyes and frowned. "Aren't I always kind to you?" she asked.

Nathan's brows furrowed. He thought about what she had said for a moment, and then he said, "Actually, you aren't. In fact, you have never made me a dumpling before. So, what gives? You either want something, or you are looking for forgiveness for something that you did...."

"Well..." Crystal sighed. "New Year's Eve is approaching, and I want to spend it with you. So, I bought you a gift. I am also going to make pizza, just the way that Clark likes it. So, what's the big deal?"

"I don't know," Nathan admitted. "Maybe nothing..."

"All right, then." Crystal clapped her hands together. "From now on, we will spend every New Year's Eve together." She gave Nathan a big hug.

"What's the matter with you?" Nathan wondered as he returned her hug.

Crystal shook her head. "Do I need a reason to hug you?"

Nathan smiled as he lifted her chin. He pressed his lips to hers, and he kissed her violently. Crystal shook all over, and she tried to push him away. His grip on her was too tight, though, and she was forced to accept his kiss.

The crowd surged. They were slightly surprised to see this couple boldly kissing in public, and they liked what they saw.

A long time passed before Nathan let go of her lips. "Why did you hug me?" he asked.

"Never mind," Crystal replied. "You overthink everything! It is so annoying..." She tried to pull away, but he would not let her go.

"Tell me why you hugged me!" Nathan shouted. More people turned their heads to stare at them, but he didn't care.

Crystal froze for a moment, and then she said, "I miss you."

"What did you say?" his eyes went wide. "Say it again!"

"I miss you, Nathan."

A look of surprise appeared on Nathan's face. He leaned forward and whispered in her ear: "I kissed you because I love you."

Crystal was surprised by his sudden declaration of love.

"Every time I kiss you, it is my way of telling you that I love you," Nathan continued. "You are mine. What is yours is mine, and I am the only one that you can kiss."

Crystal felt warmed by Nathan's heartfelt words. He did not ask for much. He looked so happy, and he danced with glee at the slightest bit of affection from her.

On the opposite side of the mall, there was a festival taking place in the parking lot.

Children were running about, and fireworks were being shot into the sky.

Nathan put his arm around Crystal's waist and asked her gently, "What are you looking for?"

"Well, nothing." Crystal's cheeks were red, and her heart was beating fast. She looked around, made sure that no one was near, and said, "Nathan, I love you."

Nathan's ear twitched. He thought he had misheard her.

Crystal lowered her head, and she avoided looking him in the eyes. Strangely, she was not afraid of death, but this simple confession seemed to have taken all of her strength.

Nathan stared at her closely as if he were probing a difficult question. "What did you say?"

"I said what I said," Crystal mumbled. "Please, don't be like this..."

"Say it again. I didn't catch what you said the first time."

"I won't repeat it!" Crystal exclaimed. "I never say my words twice."

"Hey, Crystal!" Nathan pulled her back. "I really didn't catch what you were saying. I am not playing around. It is too noisy here."

Crystal looked left and right to confirm that they were alone, and then she gave him a quick kiss on the lips. "Did you hear that?" she asked.

Nathan grinned from ear to ear. He felt like he had been electrocuted but in a good way. The last time Crystal had said that she loved him, he had been forced to stab himself in the chest to get her to say it. This time, all it had taken was him telling her first. He rubbed his palm against her cheek and said, "You do love me!"

Before Crystal could reply, a nearby firework exploded. It filled the air with excitement.

Nathan scooped her up in his arms and kissed her hard.

Crystal's heart began to beat hard, and her face turned red. Nathan gradually intensified the kiss, and as they walked through the crowd, they bumped into people without even knowing it.

Crystal wrapped her arms around his neck. Her whole body was hot, and her face was burning. He kissed her hard as he poured out his love for her. And to his delight, she seemed to be as into the kiss as he was.

Finally, Nathan pulled away and said, "We should head back to the car."

Chapter 1799 - 317: Does He Know Something?

The bodyguard opened the car door, and Crystal fell into the seat with Nathan, and as soon as they were alone, he tore her clothes off.

"No!" Crystal cried. "You don't have to be so eager. We can do it after we..."

Before she could finish her sentence, he pressed his lips against her mouth. As excited as he was, he was like a child that could not control himself. He buried his face in her arms and sniffed her.

Suddenly, he froze, and Crystal felt the tension in his body. "Is there anything wrong?" she asked. "You look like you've seen a ghost..."

"Where have you been?" Nathan raised his head and frowned. "And what have you been doing?"

Crystal's heart sank. He seemed extra sensitive today. Does he know something? - she wondered. "I haven't been anywhere," she replied. "I just wanted to buy you a present, so I came here... Is something wrong?"

"Were you with another man?" he asked. He had an expressionless look on his face.

"Why would you ask that?" Crystal grumbled. "Don't you trust me?"

"I thought that I could trust you," Nathan replied. "But I can smell smoke on you."

Crystal remembered that Eric had been smoking, and he had put his coat over her to keep her warm. "Smoke?" she replied skeptically. "Do I smell like smoke?" She looked down and smelled her sleeves. "I don't smell smoke. Maybe it is your imagination."

"It is not my imagination," Nathan snapped. "Men are very sensitive to the smell of smoke, so if I say that you smell like smoke, then you smell like smoke!"

Suddenly, Nathan realized that she had changed her clothes, and he asked her why.

Crystal's heart sank. She had changed her sweater after Carlos bit her. It had been covered in blood. "How do you know that I changed?" she asked. "I have so many sweaters."

"Oh, I know!" Nathan grinned. "I know all about your clothes, including your underwear. I know their size, color, and smell. There is nothing that I don't know about you!" He grabbed her arm, and she cried out in pain. By chance, he had grabbed the place where she had been bitten.

Nathan's brow furrowed as he let her go. "What's this?" he wondered.

Crystal froze, and her mind went blank. The color drained from her face, and her heart began to race. She looked at Nathan, and a nervous voice inside her head whispered, "Whatever you say, it had better be good."

Finally, she took his hand, gave it a gentle squeeze, and said, "Earlier this morning, I went to the hospital to see Nancy's father, but when I got there, a psycho rushed out of his room and bit me. I'm sorry that I didn't tell you. I just didn't want you to worry."

When Nathan heard this, he was furious. "Who did this?" he growled. "Who dared to bite my woman."

"He was a psychopath," Crystal replied. "That is why he is in the hospital. He is not right in the head, so don't be mad. Besides, the wound is superficial."

"Don't you know how dirty human saliva is?" Nathan was aghast. "I'm taking you to the hospital for an examination."

"Don't make a big deal out of this," Crystal argued. "I have already been to the hospital. I am fine. I promise."

Nathan shook his head. "Did they give you a rabies vaccine?"

"Come on." Crystal laughed. "I wasn't bitten by a dog."

"What if that patient has rabies?"

"Are you kidding?" Crystal smirked. "And besides, what would you do if he did have rabies?"

"I would tie you down," Nathan replied. "I would keep you by my side, and no one would be able to take you away from me."

"Anyway..." Crystal smiled. "The doctor said it wasn't rabies. The man is a psychopath, and psychopathy is not contagious. He probably just needs a medication adjustment."

Nathan had a serious expression on his face. He said, "If it were contagious, I would let you infect me. Then our brain waves would be in sync, and we would be able to communicate."

Crystal humphed. "You don't know what you're talking about."

"No matter." Nathan shrugged. "If you were sick, I would take care of you." He leaned forward and kissed her, and before long, the car was filled with the smell of their sweaty, entwined bodies.

The car moved steadily forward, and Crystal leaned into Nathan's arms. She felt both happy and sad.

"Why must men blackmail women into being with them?" she asked. "You do it. Paul and Eric do it. It is disgusting."

Nathan kissed her on the top of the head. "Do you really want to know why?"

"Well, yes." She looked up hopefully.

"If we don't do it, then we can't control you," Nathan explained. "In order to have full control of you, I have to have full control of the people around you. Then if you get out of line, I can use them to put you in your place."

Crystal nodded. His answer made complete sense to her. She looked out the window. "We're almost home...."

As they took off their shoes, Nathan noticed that Crystal's socks were wet. His brow furrowed. "What happened to your feet?" he asked, "Your socks are wet!"

"I stepped on a snowbank." Crystal shrugged. "What's the big deal?"

"What's the big deal?" Nathan was taken aback. "Do you want to get pneumonia? Quick! Take off your socks. We need to get your feet warmed up!"

Nathan bent over, took off her socks, and asked her, "Do you care about me?"

"I do," Crystal replied. Then she took her socks from him and went upstairs.

Nathan smiled and followed her. When he got upstairs, he found Crystal in the washroom. She was sitting on the toilet, and when she saw him, she shouted at him: "Hey! Do not come in! Go sit on the bed. I will not be long."

Nathan scowled. "What on earth are you doing?"

"Leave me alone," Crystal cried. "I'm almost done."

"What are you doing that is so shameful?" Nathan asked.

Chapter 1800 - 318: Something Is Not Right With Her

"I'm just going to the washroom," Crystal replied. "I don't understand why you want to watch me do my business..."

"Fine," Nathan grumbled. He went into the bedroom, and he saw an unfamiliar bag on the bed. Inside, he found sewing materials, and he thought - From this, Crystal will make my puppet! - and he was overjoyed.

A few minutes passed, and then Crystal emerged from the bathroom. She had a smile on her face, and she was carrying a water-filled foot massager. Nathan stood up and offered to help, but she stopped him. She said, "Stand still, with your back to me."

Nathan ignored her instructions. He held up the bag of materials and said, "I thought you forgot. But you remembered."

"How could I forget something that you said?"

"You can't forget what I said..." Nathan stared at her for a moment. "About what?"

"About anything," Crystal replied. "Be it good or bad, if you said it, then I remember it."

Nathan frowned. "Have I ever said anything bad to you?"

Crystal smirked. "Of course, you have. You have said more bad things than good things."

"That can't be true," Nathan argued. "Give me some examples of bad things that I do or have said or done."

"No thanks." Crystal sighed and said, "I don't want to play that game. That way lies madness. She shuddered at the thought of a back-and-forth war of grievances. "Just let it go. Put your feet in the tub, and I'll turn the massager on."

Nathan nodded, and he was about to put his foot in when Crystal said, "Wait a minute." She bent over and folded the bottom of his pant legs. Then she guided his feet into the water and turned the massager on.

Almost immediately, the water began to turn and bubble.

Crystal sat down beside him and kissed his cheek. "Does that feel better?"

"Much better." Nathan moaned to show his appreciation. He gave her a hug, and as they embraced, he noticed that her temperature was low. I can fix that - he thought, and he guided her feet into the tub. "Do you like it?" he asked. "It's nice, isn't it?"

"Mm-hmm."

"I'm comfortable, too," he whispered. "Crystal, we are inevitable. You know that, don't you?"

"What do you mean?" Crystal wondered.

"You have been so good to me," Nathan replied. "We are destined to be together."

"But what about all of the bad things that you said about me?"

Nathan's brows furrowed, and he seemed to be genuinely confused. "What do you mean?"

"You can't be serious!" Crystal exclaimed. "You have said many bad things about me. You said that I couldn't do anything and that I am no match for Helen."

Nathan was shocked by her words.

"I thought that you liked girls like Helen!" Crystal continued. "According to you, she knows everything, and she is good at taking care of people. Is that what you expect from me; to act like Helen? Because if that is what you are looking for, you're in for a rude awakening. I can't even cook!"

"Whatever you cook, I will like," Nathan argued. "It is the thought that counts. Besides, I like you the way you are. I don't care about Helen. She was a phony, but you are the real deal."

Crystal sighed. "But that's not what you said."

"Every bad word that I've said to you has been false," Nathan said. "They were said out of anger, pain, and jealousy..."

"Is that so?"

"It is," he replied. "You can only trust the good things that I say and do. So forget the bad, okay?"

Crystal nodded. She gave him a big hug and said, "I'm glad that we have worked this out."

Crystal kissed Nathan again - this time on the lips, and then she said, "I am afraid that one day I will do something so bad that you will not be able to forgive me..."

"That could never happen." Nathan kissed her ear and whispered, "I have certain rules that I never break."

"Is that so?"

"It is," Nathan replied. "Rule Number One: My wife is always right. Rule Number Two: If my wife is wrong, refer to Rule Number One."

Easier said than done - thought Crystal. She did not believe that he would forgive her for the agreement that she had made with Eric. Nathan hugged her and asked, "So, what did you do wrong?"

"I didn't do anything," Crystal replied. "I was just asking."

Nathan sighed. "Just tell me. I promise I won't be angry."

"I really didn't do anything."

Nathan did not believe her. Crystal had been nice to him today, so he knew that something was up.

Crystal got a towel to help Nathan wipe his feet when the water began to cool, but he stopped her right away. "Never touch my feet again," he hissed.

"Why?" Crystal was taken aback by his tone. "What's the problem?"

"You know what?" Nathan shook his head mournfully. "I can wash your feet, but you will never again wash mine!"

Crystal said nothing. She put on her shoes and went back into the bathroom.

Nathan heard the water running, and he thought that she was taking a bath, but when he went inside, he saw that she was washing his socks. He squinted his eyes and asked her, "Why are you washing my socks?"

"They are dirty," Crystal replied. "It is not a big deal."

Nathan frowned. "Don't we have servants?" Crystal smiled meekly and said, "Please allow me to show my love to you occasionally. As I said, I will be doing your laundry and cooking, shaving, and ironing and tying your ties."

"Whatever." Nathan sighed and walked away.

Once he was gone, Crystal insisted on ironing his clothes, and occasionally he checked on her. Something is not right with her - thought Nathan, and the more convinced of it he became, the more anxious he was.

While he was checking on Crystal, she held a coat out and asked him, "Will you wear this coat when you go out tomorrow?"

Nathan stared at her and asked, "Why?"

"I think you look great in this coat."

"Don't I look great in all of my clothes?"

"Of course," Crystal replied. "It would be cool if you wore this one, though. I will iron it out, and you will look just dashing. What do you say?"

"I would prefer it if you took care of your hands," Nathan replied.

"I will do both." Crystal sighed and said, "You worry too much."

Since Crystal was determined to be a housewife, Nathan did not object.

Chapter 1801 - 319: Suit Yourself

That evening, Crystal let Clark help her make the pizza dough, and he was ecstatic. But he still missed his mother. "Auntie Crystal," he said. "I really miss my Mommy. When will she come back."

Crystal smiled and said, "If you make her a pizza, maybe she'll come back for it."

Clark smiled and said, "Alright! Let's do it!"

Crystal smiled and looked up at Nathan, who was sitting opposite her. "Why are you staring at me?" she asked.

"You are my wife. I can look at you for as long as I want."

"Suit yourself." Crystal shrugged.

Suddenly, Clark lifted a wad of dough into the air. "Is this good?" he asked.

"It's getting there," Crystal replied. "But it needs to be kneaded more."

"Thanks, Auntie." Clark pounded the dough on the table and said, "When this is done, Mommy is going to come home for sure!"

"I'm sure she will love your pizza," Crystal agreed.

Nathan gave the kid a dirty look. Then he looked at Crystal and said, "Forget Clark. Instead, teach me how to make pizza!"

"No!" Clark cried. "I need to make it so that my Mommy will come back."

"Too bad!" Nathan hissed. "She is going to teach me!"

Crystal stood akimbo and glared at Nathan. "Why must you fight with children?"

Outside, a series of fireworks lit up the sky; Nathan, Crystal, and Clark watched the spectacle from the table on the deck while they waited for the pizza to be done.

Finally, the timer went off, and they all went back into the kitchen.

Nathan smiled and said, "It smells delicious. That must be the one that I made."

Crystal humphed and said nothing. Beside her, Clark was practically vibrating with excitement, and she hoped that the pizza would distract him from thinking about his mother. She should have known better, though. Once he had his plate in front of him, he frowned and asked, "Why isn't Mommy back yet? I miss Mommy. My little heart hurts."

"What do you know about heartache?" Crystal scoffed. "Do you even know where your heart is?"

Clark's stomach growled. He pointed to it and said, "That's my heart."

"Oh, sweetie. That's not your heart. That is your stomach. You are hungry. Go ahead and eat."

Clark nodded and one of the slices on his plate.

Crystal smiled. "Was that good?"

Clark nodded vigorously and said, "Wow! This was yummy!"

"Congratulations!" Crystal exclaimed. "You did a great job!"

"Auntie, why don't you try mine..." Clark picked up a piece and fed Crystal.

"You are a good boy." Crystal ate the pizza.

Although it looked ugly, it tasted good.

Nathan picked out a piece from his pizza, and he put it in front of her face. "Try mine."

"Okay." Crystal took a bite.

Nathan waited for a moment. "Well?" he asked. "Is it good?"

"It's delicious."

"Take another bite." Nathan fed her again. Clark did not want to be left behind. He picked up a piece, smiled, and said, "Auntie, eat this one." Since his mother was gone, he looked to Crystal for positive affirmation.

"Don't worry." Crystal laughed as she rubbed Clark's hair. "I will eat whatever you put in front of me." She opened her mouth to show that she meant it.

When Nathan saw this, he began to get angry. "What the Hell?" he grumbled. "Why are you putting him before me?"

Crystal rolled her eyes and said, "Don't be like that. I am very hungry. I will also eat whatever you put in front of me, the same as him."

Crystal took a bite from Nathan, then one from Clark, then one from Nathan, and it went back and forth like this for quite some time. Every time Nathan fed her, he grinned triumphantly, and every time Clark fed her, he glared at the boy as if he wanted to kill him. Finally, it got to be too much, and Clark began to cry.

Crystal gave Clark a hug. "There, there," she said. "What's wrong?"

"I'm scared," Clark replied. He grabbed Crystal's clothes. "Why is Uncle staring at me? He is like Auntie Michelle. He is going to hurt me... I just know it..."

Crystal frowned. She looked at Nathan and said, "He hasn't done anything wrong. Why are you looking at him so fiercely?"

"I am doing no such thing," Nathan argued. "It is all in his imagination. The kid misses his Mommy, and he is lashing out. This is Child Psychology 101, babe!"

"That's bullshit!" Crystal exclaimed. "What do you know about Child Psychology? Besides, you still have a fierce look in your eyes. It is no wonder that he is afraid of you."

Nathan's face turned red, and he looked away unhappily.

Crystal wiped Clark's tears away. "Are you ready for your Lucky Money?"

"What is Lucky Money?"

"If you say 'Happy New Year' to me, then I will give you Lucky Money," Crystal explained. She showed him a small red envelope. "But I don't want money. I want my Mommy."

Suddenly, Nathan reached out and grabbed the envelope. He chuckled and said, "If he doesn't want it, then I'll take it." He tested the envelope's weight and smirked. "There's not much money here. It is not even enough for you to buy me for the night. But, since you are a regular customer, I will give you a New Year's Eve discount."

"Nathan!" Crystal was shocked. She grabbed the red packet and said, "The Lucky Money becomes unlucky when you say things like that!"

Then, without saying another word, she went into the kitchen to clean up.

Clark was still on the porch watching the fireworks when Crystal returned. Nathan had moved back inside, and he was watching the news in the living room. He patted the seat beside him and invited her to sit with him, but she ignored him and went outside to watch the fireworks with the boy.

It was not long before the display was over, and Crystal turned to Clark. She had a grin on her face that stretched from ear to ear. "I have a surprise for you," she said. "I bought some fairy fireworks at the mall today. Would you like to set them off with me?"

Clark's eyes brightened. "Really?" he asked.

"Really!!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" Clark danced with excitement. "Will they be BIG?!?!"

"We won't let off any super big ones, like the ones the city sets off," Crystal explained. "It would be too dangerous. We can try the small ones, though. One of the servants will join us and take some pictures. It will be fun. I promise."

Clark nodded.. He understood.

Chapter 1802 - 320: I Am Yours

Crystal had the fireworks stashed under the porch, and they took them to the middle of the yard. Once they were settled, she began to set off the fireworks, and she danced with Clark on the lawn.

Occasionally, Crystal thought about Nancy. She had no idea what could have been so important that she would abandon her son. If she did not return soon, Crystal would have to take Clark with her when she went to live with Eric. The alternative was to leave him with Nathan, but she was afraid that he would abuse the child.

And then there was Noah to worry about. If she was loyal to Eric, then he would give Noah the antidote. Perhaps then, Noah could raise Clark until Nancy returned. It was just a thought... At least with Noah, the boy would be safe, and they already acted like a Father and son when they were together.

Crystal hugged Clark and gave him several kisses on his forehead. The poor child was young, and he was practically an orphan. She thought of Little Orphan Annie and her sad song - The sun will come out tomorrow. Tomorrow, I love you...

Suddenly, Nathan barged out of the house. As usual, he had two bodyguards with him. "What are you doing out here?" he growled.

"We are setting off fireworks, dancing, and taking pictures," Crystal replied. "The fireworks are so beautiful. Would you like to take a picture with us?"

Without saying a word, Nathan came over and put his arms around Crystal.

The servant adjusted the camera and shouted, "Cheers!"

Clark immediately reached out his hand. He made rabbit ears on top of his head, and his fingers blocked Nathan's face. The servant looked at the picture, frowned, and said, "Mr. Davis, your face is blocked. Let's try again."

The servant counted down again - "One, two, three, Cheers!" - and at the last minute, up went Clark's hand.

Nathan's face began to turn red. He thought there was only so much aggravation that I could handle from this brat. First, he ruins dinner, and now he is trying to ruin these pictures!

Crystal could see that Nathan was getting angry, so she picked Clark up and said, "Let's take one more picture. This time, put your arms around my neck."

"But my Mommy says it's cute when I take pictures like this." He showed her his rabbit ears.

"That move is corny," Crystal argued. "Let's try something different, okay? At the last minute, why don't you give me a kiss on the cheek?"

Nathan was furious when he heard this. "What did I tell you about other men kissing you?" he shouted. He turned to one of his bodyguards and ordered him to take Clark away. Once the boy was gone, he put his arm around Crystal's shoulder and told the servant to take a picture."

The servant looked at the camera, and his face turned white.

"What now?" Nathan hissed.

"The battery is dead..."

"Well, this day sucks," Nathan whined. He sat down on the ground and stuck out his lower lip. He looked so pathetic that Crystal could barely contain her laughter. "Don't make such a big deal out of this," she said. "It is nothing. You can have your picture taken anytime you want.

Let's go inside and get our phones. Then we can come back and take as many pictures as we want."

"Fine." Nathan sniffed. "Just keep that kid away from me."

Crystal nodded. Suddenly, a thought occurred to her, and she said, "I'm surprised it took you so long to come outside. Were you watching the news the whole time?"

"I was taking care of something," Nathan replied. "Would you like something to drink?"

"Sounds great." Crystal smiled, but then she realized that he had dodged the question, and her grin disappeared. What is he up to? - she wondered. The thought that he was up to his usual shenanigans made her uneasy.

Nathan snapped his fingers, and a servant appeared. She had a tray balanced on her right hand. On it, there was a bottle of red wine and two goblets. He poured her a glass first, and when she took it, she took a sip.

The minute the glass touched her lips, Nathan began to watch at her intently, but she did not notice. It was not until she had finished the glass that she realized that he had not touched his.

"Why aren't you drinking?" Crystal asked.

"I was distracted by your beauty," Nathan replied. He poured her a second glass and smiled. "I could watch you all day..."

Crystal laughed and put her arm around his neck. Her whole body felt warm, but as her body moved, something strange happened. Her head began to spin, and her eyes went blurry.

"What's wrong," she murmured. "I only had one g-glass, but I feel like... like I've h-had a whole b bottle...Did you p-put s-something in the wine?"

Nathan put his arm around her waist and said nothing.

"You d-dr*ggged m-me..." Crystal was shocked, but she was also helpless. She tried to push him away, but her body did not respond. A second passed, and she lost consciousness.

The song came to an end, and Nathan turned to look at Crystal. She was wearing a lace nightgown. Her face was delicate, and her hair hung down over her shoulders. He thought - She is like an elegant, holy goddess. "Don't move," he said.

Crystal froze as Nathan knelt in front of her. He kissed her toes, her instep, her ankles, and all the way to the hem of her nightgown. He took a cheeky peek to see if she was wearing panties. Then he kissed her knees and inner thighs.

He moaned her name, and her eyes blurred as he kissed her provocatively. Just before he reached her panty line, though, he stood up and kissed her on the lips.

Crystal's mind went blank, and when she closed her eyes, she imagined that Nathan was a noble God. When she had first met him, he was arrogant, conceited, and sarcastic. Now, though, he was different.

"I am yours." Nathan kissed her earlobe, and he whispered her name repeatedly as if it were a mantra.

Crystal smiled shyly as she opened her nightgown. "And I am yours."

It was the first time that they had made love in the living room. Normally, they were more private, but their lust had been so intense that it had not allowed them the time to move their lovemaking to Nathan's bedroom.

Now that they were done, they lied face-to

face on the sofa, with only a small blanket to cover their nudity. Nathan ran his fingers through Crystal's hair. She touched his cheek and whispered his name. She ran her fingernails against the short stubble on his face. "Are you tired?" she asked.

"Not really. Maybe a little bit." Nathan shrugged. "Are you?"

"I'm exhausted, but I don't think that I could sleep.. I'm too wound up. Why don't you tell me a story?"