

Midnight III 321

Chapter 1803 - 321: Are You Happy That I'm Sick?

Nathan gave her a curious look. "You want me to tell you a story?"

"Well, yes." Crystal smiled nervously. "We can move to the bedroom, and when you're done, we should be able to fall asleep."

Nathan smiled, gave her a quick kiss on the lips, and said, "If it is a story that you want, then a story it shall be."

The couple moved to the bedroom, and once they were comfortable, Nathan began his story: "When I was sixteen, I had a cat that I liked very much. One winter day, the cat fell into the water. We thought that the cat was dead, but then a little girl jumped in to save it. Unfortunately, the cat still died. It froze to death."

"That's a sad story." There were tears in Crystal's eyes. "I guess cats don't have nine lives after all. What was its name?"

"We called her 'I love you,'" Nathan replied.

"You lie." Crystal rolled her eyes and said, "Nobody names their cat 'I love you.'"

Nathan chuckled. He pressed a button on his watch, and Crystal knew immediately what he was up to. He had tricked her into saying, 'I love you so that he could record it. She groaned and said, "You are such a scoundrel!"

"I am not." Nathan looked like he had been hurt by her words, but Crystal could not tell if he was playing possum. "I just wanted to do something nice. I already put a recording of me saying that on your watch, and now I will have a recording of you for mine. It was supposed to be a surprise. That is why I was being so sneaky. But you caught me in the act..."

Crystal's brows furrowed, and she asked him, "Who taught you to be such a romantic?"

"I'm just improvising. I swear."

"Alright." Crystal nestled in his arms and listened to his heartbeat. After a while, she looked up and said, "No more games, though, okay?"

"No more games." Nathan kissed her eyes and told her to go to sleep.

Unfortunately, whenever she closed her eyes, an image of Carlos appeared in her mind's eyes. Most likely, he was still being tortured, and it would not stop until she returned. Eris had been right, though. Nathan would not let her go. And as far as Carlos went, he was her ex-boyfriend. Thus, she did not owe him anything.

A voice in her mind scolded her for such thoughts. It said, "But it is your fault that he is in this mess!" The voice was, of course, correct, and the more Crystal thought about it, the sadder she became. The way that Nathan was treating her complicated everything. Now, no matter what she did, she would be burdened

by guilt. She felt like the woman from Sophie's Choice, except instead of choosing which of her children would live, she had to decide which man she would be loyal to.

Crystal opened her eyes and ran her fingers up and down his arm. A tear slipped from the corner of her eye, and she quickly bit her lip to stop her crying. If she cried, her eyes would be swollen the next day, and he would notice it immediately. He was so attentive to her.

Suddenly, Crystal noticed that Nathan was abnormally warm. She put her hand to his forehead. Most likely, he had caught a cold while lighting the candles on the beach, and already he was feverish.

Crystal placed a fresh cloth on Nathan's forehead. She had been taking care of him through the night. He had just woken up, and he seemed to be disoriented. He looked at her and frowned. He asked, "Am I awake?"

"You're awake." Crystal sighed. She stroked his forehead and said, "And you're still running a fever."

Nathan chuckled feebly. "Are you happy that I'm sick?" He seemed to think that his situation was amusing, but Crystal was not amused.

"Since you are sick, I am glad that I am here to take care of you. But no, I am not happy that you are sick. I had hoped that I would be able to do something for you, though..."

Nathan rolled his eyes and said, "You've done enough for me."

"Be that as it may..." Crystal let the sentence hang for a moment, and then she asked him what he wanted for breakfast.

"Can I have anything I want?" he asked. He grabbed her arms and held them tightly. He had a wolfish gleam in his eyes. "Because what I want to have is you."

Crystal was appalled. "How can you have the energy to be so naughty when you are sick?" She had a book under her arm, and as she struggled, it fell onto the bed. Nathan let her go immediately so that he could grab the book. "Don't open it!" Crystal's face turned white.

"Please..." she begged.

Nathan looked at the cover. "What's in here?"

"It's just a book," Crystal replied.

"Do you think I'm stupid?" Nathan's ire was beginning to rise, and Crystal could see from the look on his face that she would have to give a little.

She said, "I sketched you while you were sleeping." She took back her sketchbook.

"There's nothing to see."

"Can I see what I look like in your eyes?" Crystal shook her head and said, "No, not yet."

"When will I see it?" Nathan was not a patient man.

"Just wait until I finish it," Crystal replied. "It is for you, and I don't want to ruin the surprise."

Nathan thought about it for a minute, and then he said, "Fine." It was clear, though, that he was not happy.

Crystal placed the book in a drawer, locked it, and put the key in her pocket.

"I'm not a criminal," Nathan grumbled. "You don't need to keep it under lock and key..."

Crystal smiled sweetly and said, "No offense, but I was worried that the temptation would be too much for you to handle. Now get some rest while I get you something to eat."

As Crystal reached the kitchen, she got a feeling that something was wrong. She went back upstairs, and when she went into Nathan's room, she found him attempting to jimmy the locked drawer.

Crystal stood akimbo over him. "I thought you said that you weren't a criminal. What do you have to say for yourself now?"

Nathan's face turned red, and he stuttered an apology. He looked like a child that had been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, and she could not stay angry at him for long. "Alright," she sighed. "Back to bed with you. And no more getting up. Do you hear me?"

Nathan nodded sheepishly, and he did not say anything.

Before she left, Crystal retrieved the book, and she took it with her.

Chapter 1804 - 322: If Only I Could Hold On To This Moment

Not only did the book contain a sketch of Nathan, but it also contained some of Crystal's most intimate thoughts. If Nathan read them, there was no telling what he would do.

Crystal knew that it had been foolish to write all of her intimate thoughts down, but journaling had always helped her think. It had been a close call, though, and as much as she hated the thought of it, she knew that it would be best if she destroyed the book. She brought it outside and threw it in the fire pit. She stood over it for a long time, but she could not bear the thought of destroying it.

Finally, she took the book and a shovel out to the beach. She found the spot where Nathan had set up the heart-shaped candle display, and she looked around. Nearby, there was a beautiful lilac tree, and its rich scent drew her to it. This is the place - she thought.

The sand was so soft that the hole practically dug itself, and the book was safely underground in no time at all.

Crystal raised her head slightly and watched the tide come in. The sun reflected off the water, and she thought - If only I could hold on to this moment... If I could, I would never let it go.

She knew that she had to tell Nathan about Eric, but she was afraid of what he would do and what Eric would do if she didn't follow him. It was a lose-lose-lose situation, and her hands were tied.

When Crystal got back to the kitchen, she picked up her cell phone and called Eric. He was surprised to hear from her, and he was ecstatic. "Honey," he said. "It hasn't been three days yet. What? Did you miss me?" He sounded like he had just woken up.

Crystal asked, "Did I wake you up?"

"You did," Eric replied. "But I'm glad to have been woken up by you."

"Have you been drinking?"

"I had some drinks with my friends last night," Eric admitted. "But I'm not drunk. Don't worry me. I'm staying out of trouble."

"Are you clear-headed?" Crystal asked him.

"I'm quite sober."

"Good." Crystal cleared her throat and said, "Tomorrow afternoon at five o'clock, I will be at the mall. Send someone to pick me up."

"No problem." After a pause, Eric chuckled. "Why did you call me in advance? Is there something wrong?"

"I need your help," Crystal replied. "Is there any medicine that can make someone lose their short-term memory?"

"Hmmm... Amnesia..." Eric thought about it for a moment. "Is this for Nathan? Because, if it is, I will not provide it." He wanted Nathan to feel the same kind of pain that he had forced Crystal to endure. If Nathan lost his memory, all bets would be off.

"I think that it's for the best," Crystal argued. "If his memory is intact, he will never stop coming for me!"

"Just let him try!" Eric hissed. "I'll be here waiting for him!"

"Please, don't be like that," Crystal cried. "You said that if I promised to be your Baby Momma, that you would end your grudge with Nathan. I'm tired. I don't want to be sandwiched between the two of you anymore. What I want are a stable life and a warm home. I wish Nathan could forget everything. If that happened, then the three of us - you, me, and the baby - could start our new lives together. Isn't that what you want?"

"It is." Eric sighed and said, "But I really do not have such medicine. If I had it, I would be the first to take it."

Crystal was shocked. "Why do you want to take it?"

"Do you think it feels good to hate someone? It doesn't! My heart aches! It is as if I am in a state of constant torment. If I could escape my past, I would! I will do it in a second!"

Crystal took a deep breath and said, "Well, just forget it." She understood the pain that he was suffering. "You need to let go of your past."

"Could you forget your past?" Eric asked. "If there were such a medicine, and Nathan were to take it, what about your feelings for him?"

"I wouldn't need the medicine," Crystal replied. "I would turn my feelings off."

The line went silent for a moment, and then Eric sighed. He said, "I did not realize that you were so cold-blooded."

"Whatever." Crystal shrugged. "I really must hang up. If I am on the phone for too long, Nathan will find out."

Eric giggled and said, "Give me a kiss before you go."

"This is not a good time," Crystal hissed. "Now stop acting like such a child."

"But I ju-"

Crystal ended the call before Eric could finish his sentence. She did not need to hear what he was trying to say to know what he was getting at. She thought - All men are so predictable, but why do they have to be so damn needy...?

Suddenly, she felt a rash of gooseflesh all over her body. She was not typically the kind of person that liked to show affection. Over the last twenty-four hours, though, her heart had softened, and she looked forward to cozying up to Nathan. The thought of giving that up - of throwing him away - made her want to cry. She stared at the phone for a moment, and then she put it away and opened the fridge. She wanted to make some chicken noodle soup for Nathan.

When the soup was done, Crystal took a sip from the ladle. "It's quite good," she said. "Yummy, yummy." Her cooking was getting better, and she was proud of herself. She had been practicing for Nathan, and she hoped that he appreciated her effort.

Crystal smiled as she filled two bowls. She put them on a tray so that she could serve them to Nathan in person. She knew that chicken noodle soup was good for people with fevers, and she hoped that he was hungry.

Crystal had barely reached the first step when she heard a loud sound from Nathan's room. It sounded like something had hit the wall. There were two more crashes, and she took several hesitant steps forward.

What is Sam Hall going on? - she worried. Apart from her wanting to rush up the stairs, another part of her wanted to flee. That part of her was saying, "Whatever is going on up there; it is none of your business!" She had a bad feeling in her gut.

Crystal was about to turn around and go back downstairs when, suddenly, the bedroom door opened. A servant rushed out, and she almost hit Crystal on her way down the stairs.

"Hey!" Crystal exclaimed. "Watch where you're going!"

The servant stopped and turned around.

She had a terrified expression on her face. She said, "Miss Smith, Master Davis is out of his mind! I quit! I'm out of here!" Then she turned and ran in the direction of the servants' quarters.

Crystal looked up. Nathan's door was half-open, and the room was quiet. She wondered what could have gotten him so riled up. "Did he overhear your phone call?" a voice in her head wondered.

No.... - she thought That was impossible. Isn't it...?

Chapter 1805 - 323: She Does Not Deserve My Compassion

Crystal peeked into Nathan's room. She was hunkered down so that he could not see her. The room looked like a tornado had passed through it. The dresser had been pushed to the ground. The vases were smashed, and there was glass everywhere. The pictures had been taken down and destroyed, and there was clothing everywhere.

Again, Crystal thought of her conversation with Eric.

Not knowing what else to do, she picked up the tray with the two bowls of soup, stood up, and went into the room.

Nathan was sitting on the bed. He was naked, but there was a blanket covering his private parts. His hands rested on his knees, and they were covered with blood.

"No!" Crystal put down the tray and rushed to his side. "What happened to you?" She suddenly realized that one of the servants was standing in the doorway. "What are you waiting for?" she shouted at her. "Go and find some medicine to stop the bleeding!"

The servant took off down the stairs, and Crystal went into the bathroom to grab a towel. When she returned, she asked Nathan to show her where he was injured. Much to her dismay, though, he waved her away dismissively. Then, after she refused to go, he grabbed her by the neck and began to squeeze.

Crystal's face turned red, and her eyes bulged. She could barely breathe. This is the end - she thought wildly. She could see murder in his eyes, and moments of her life flashed before her eyes.

"I knew that there had to be a reason why you were being nice to me!" Nathan growled. "And what about last night? What was that? A Mercy fuck?" He spat in her face. Then he took a moment to calm down, and he said, "I bet you were laughing at me behind my back the entire time!"

Crystal felt the pressure on her neck lessen slightly, and she was able to breathe. It was clear, though, that her life was in his hands.

"What you have done is unforgivable," Nathan continued. "But maybe if you tell me why you did this, I might let you live."

"I have never laughed at you." Her voice was so dry, and her throat was in so much pain that she could barely speak.

"Be that as it may..." Nathan's brows furrowed. "I want to know what you are up to."

What is the point of all of this? - Crystal asked herself. She was stuck in this lose-lose-lose situation, but Nathan was offering her a way out. "Just kill me," she croaked. "I deserve it."

"Fuck off!" Nathan let go of Crystal's neck, placed his palm against her face, and he pushed her so hard that she fell backward. The back of her head hit the ground, and she cried out in pain. Then he snapped at her: "You're not getting off that easy!"

As Crystal tried to get up, she accidentally bumped her watch, and it beeped. This means something - she thought. She looked at it for a long time, and Nathan watched her. He is like a teacher - she realized -? he is waiting for me to solve a particularly difficult problem.

At the top of the watch, she could see a battery. Next to that, she saw the Bluetooth symbol. Then the Wi-fi and Data. At the very end, there was a symbol that she did not recognize. She pressed it, and when she saw what it was, the pieces fell into place. It was a Baby Monitor.

Nathan had been using it to listen in on her private conversations.

The cat was out of the bag. He had heard every word that she had said to Eric. He knew that she was planning on meeting up with him. He knew about the amnesia medicine, and he knew that she was planning on leaving him. She had only wanted the medicine to spare his feelings, but she doubted that he would see it that way.

Nathan stared at her. He knew that she knew that he knew, and there was a look of hurt disgust on his face. With a tone of voice that was more sad than angry, he said, "You are like a worm-infested apple. You look and smell so delicious. You feel firm and ripe and full of potential, but it only takes one bite to discover that you are rotten to the core..."

Crystal felt her throat tighten. She thought - this was worse than being strangled. At least with strangulation, there was a hope of death's sweet release. She did not know how to explain to Nathan why she had turned on him or if she should even try.

Nathan was still looking at her again. He said, "I feel so dirty, and just looking at you makes me feel sick."

"I have always been this way." Crystal sighed. She stood up, crossed her arms beneath her breasts, and in a callous tone of voice, said, "Think of the tale of the Farmer and the Snake. You are the farmer, and I am the snake. The farmer took pity on a frozen snake and brought it home. He nursed it back to health, and in return for his kindness, the snake bit him. As the farmer lay dying, he asked the snake, 'Why did you bite me? I took you in. I brought you back to life.' The snake replied, 'You knew I was a snake..'"

Crystal laughed, and a cold chill ran down Nathan's back.

"Do you get it?" Crystal hissed. "I am the snake! I am poison to you! I am no good to anybody!" Tears were streaming down her face. "Do you get it?!?!"

Nathan hung his head, "I get it..." He was growing more and more despondent by the second. He said, "I used to think that I was the problem. I thought that you would have me if I changed my behavior, and I did change - for you!

Crystal wanted to flee, but it felt like her legs were planted into the ground. She was frozen in place. She did not know what to say, but even if she did, she doubted she could speak. She was so overwhelmed that she could not move her muscles.

"I didn't know that a person could be as selfish as you are," Nathan continued. His heart was broken, and he doubted that it could ever be repaired. "You are a heartless, vicious, cold-blooded, blood-sucking bitch!"

Crystal was weeping now, and she was struggling to catch her breath.

"Loving you was a waste of my time!" Nathan exclaimed. "It will be the greatest regret of my life!"

Crystal flinched. She felt like she had been slapped in the face.

Nathan could see that he was hurting her, and even now, his heart said that he should go to her and comfort her.. No!- he thought angrily - She does not deserve my compassion.

Chapter 1806 - 324: You Think You Are Special?

Finally, Crystal wiped the tears from her eyes. She stood up straight, looked Nathan in the eyes, and said, "You said that I am selfish... but you're just as bad... You said that you loved me, and you forced me to love you back. But that is not how love works. You cannot force love! If you try, the best you can hope for is compliance - bitter compliance!"

Nathan frowned and said, "I may be ruthless, but I have done everything that I can think of to show you that I love you and to win your love. I would dig out my heart to prove my love. Is that what you want? Crystal, I loved you so much beyond what you could imagine, but you hurt me!"

For an instant, Crystal felt a lump in her throat, and she turned her face away from his. She could not bear the pain of seeing him being hurt. "I don't need that," she muttered. "Please, please, please, forget me. I don't deserve your love."

A cold light flashed over Nathan's eyes.

"There are countless women better than me," Crystal continued. "Why did you have to choose me?"

"The heart wants what the heart wants." Nathan took a deep breath. "You don't choose who you fall in love with. You may not be perfect, but I was never looking for perfection. I was never looking for someone that was better than you. It's only you and always be you, Crystal. How could I tell myself to stop loving you? Do you understand?" Tears welled up in his eyes, and Crystal could tell that he was in pain.

"You need to move on," she insisted.

"There is someone out there that is better for you. I promise!"

"You don't understand!" Nathan shouted. "How could you understand!? My love is limited, and I gave it all to you! My heart is ruined, and my capacity to love is exhausted."

Crystal opened her mouth, and a sob escaped. Tears began to fall down her cheeks. "Oh, Nathan," she cried. "Poor Nathan.... What have I done to you?" Her heart was beating rapidly, and she began to hyperventilate.

Nathan looked at Crystal, and he frowned. He wiped his tears away. "What are you crying about?" he snarled. "You can no longer manipulate me with your tears. Those days are over!"

Crystal nodded unhappily. "No matter what you think of me, I just hope... I just hope that you can find a way to be happy... I hope that you meet a better woman, one who loves you and is worthy of your love."

Nathan froze for a second. His brows furrowed, and he gave her a suspicious look. "Is that what you wanted all along?" he asked. "For me to be happy? Is that why you wanted me to lose my memory?"

"Yes..." Crystal nodded. "I have to go to Eric. I have no choice. But I had hoped that if I could erase your memory, then you could be happy without me."

"You had to?" Nathan was skeptical. "No one can make anyone do anything that they don't want to do! Be honest, now. Did you want me to forget so that I could be happy, or so that you and Eric could be happy and live a life without my constant interruptions?"

Crystal put her hand under his chin and lifted his head so that she could look him in the eyes. "It doesn't matter if I'm happy or not," she said. "It is your happiness that concerns me..."

Nathan rolled his eyes and said, "Your bullshit is getting exhausting. Is there no end to your lies?"

Big tears rolled down Crystal's cheeks. She was desperate to explain, but she could not. "Please," she whined. "I'm not lying..."

"Whatever." Nathan stood up slowly. He was like a defeated general to Crystal, and her heart ached to see him this way. A voice spoke up in her head, though. It said, "This is for the best; one big hurt, like a band-aid being torn off. He may not think so now, but he will recover, and he will move on." The alternative would have been for him to continue to fight for her for who knows how long.

"We were never meant to be together," Crystal muttered.

When Nathan heard that, he was filled with rage. He grabbed the bed with trembling hands, lifted it, and threw it across the room. The bed hit the floor and then the ground, and the sound echoed off the walls. He shoved his finger in Crystal's face and shouted at her: "You! Shut up! Haven't you done enough? Will you not stop until I am dead? Don't push me, Crystal..."

"It's you two who keeps pushing me!" Crystal argued. "You are the one that keeps pestering me. Once you let me go, I will go!"

"You think you are so special!" Nathan laughed like a maniac, and Crystal flinched. "Get a clue, Crystal Smith. You are not special. If you had married me, being my wife would have been the only thing special about you that would have been special. And you were right. It will be easy to replace you. So, go already. Do you hear me?"

"I heard you..." Crystal murmured. "And don't worry about erasing my memory!" Nathan continued. "I am already over you!"

Crystal looked around nervously. She felt like she had fallen into a deep pool. She felt helpless and desperate. This situation seemed surreal, and she felt like she was being set up. It seemed, though, that he was letting her go. Unlike before, his eyes, expressions, movements, and tones were serious and determined. He had made up his mind.

Crystal knew Nathan very well. He was paranoid. Once he decided on something, he would not change his mind. He had been that way with his love. Once he decided to love her, no matter what the difficulties he had had to face, he had determined to face them and actualize their relationship. Now that he had decided not to love her anymore, she believed that he would do as he had said: Forget her and move on. She took a deep breath and bit her lower lip.

What is wrong with me? - she wondered - Why am I mourning this relationship? Isn't this what I wanted? I should be happy. It is a better ending than I expected... She had never expected that Nathan would let go of her, though, and now that he had, her feelings surprised her.

Am I not worthy of being loved? - she wondered. "Are you s-serious?" she stammered. "N-No regrets?"

Nathan did not answer. He snorted coldly, picked up his trousers, and put them on. He turned, looked her up and down, and said, "In my eyes, you are no different from the prostitutes on the street. You come with a hefty price tag, but you are dirty and cheap!"

Crystal frowned. She said, "Say what you want. You may even be right on some accounts. I still wish you a happy life...."

Chapter 1807 - 325: I Told You To Kneel

There was a knock at the door. They both turned, and Crystal smiled when she saw that the servant had finally returned with the First Aid Kit.

Crystal nodded and said, "I was just about to leave. Please take proper care of his injuries. I do not want them to get infected."

Nathan frowned, and he stopped Crystal with a word. He said, "Wait," and she turned back to face him. He was confused. He wondered why she cared if he received proper treatment or not. He said, "Didn't you say that you would be staying here for three days? There are still one, and a half-days left. Why are you leaving early?"

"Why?" Crystal was confused, "You just told me to leave! What is wrong with you? Now that everything's out in the open, what would be the point of my staying?"

"What is the point?" Nathan could not believe his ears. "Don't you think you owe me that? You have never treated me nice, except for the last day and a half. I want my full three days of you treating me nice! And to be clear, I ordered you out of my room, not out of my house. You have always been such a drama queen!"

Crystal's face was pale, and she was trembling. She did not know what to say. In the past, she had treated him badly because he had treated her badly. He had changed, though - for her, and she had changed for him. There had been nothing hypocritical about her actions. Her love for him was real, but it could not grow, so she would rather go. Of course, she could not say that to him, so she agreed to stay.

Crystal turned back to the servant and said, "Bring over the First Aid Kit. I will get him cleaned up." She walked over to Nathan, but when she got to him, he ordered her to kneel in front of him instead of showing her his wound.

"Kneel." Crystal frowned. "But why?"

"Are you, or are you not willing to do everything for me?" Nathan smiled and said, "I told you to kneel, so fucking kneel!"

At this point, kneeling in front of him felt like no big deal to Crystal. She had even knelt in front of Eric. So, without any further hesitation, she dropped to her knees in front of Nathan.

Nathan looked down on Crystal with a look of disgust on his face. He could not believe how easy it had been to make her degrade herself in this way. It is as if she gets off on it - he thought rudely. His parted lips were stiff. He had thought that torturing her would make him less angry, but he was wrong. He was angrier than ever.

Crystal's heart was beating fast. Her stomach was in knots, and she felt like she was going to be sick. Unlike that time when she had knelt in front of Eric when she had begged for Carlos's life, she felt her self-esteem disintegrating. The difference was that she loved Nathan, and she hated for him to see her like this, and she hated that he had made her do this!

Nathan nudged her with his foot. "Crystal Smith, where's your dignity?" He grabbed her hair and pulled it hard.

Crystal was forced to look at him. "My dignity is dead," she replied. "It died a long time ago. You killed it - you and other men just like you!"

"Is that so?" Nathan smiled. "If I ordered you to kiss my foot, would you do it? Would you do that for me?"

Crystal drew in a deep breath and said, "Sure. Which one do you want me to kiss? The right one or the left?" As she spoke, she bent slightly and kissed the instep of his right foot.

The moment her lips touched his foot, his c**k responded. A second later, it was as hard as a rock. He watched her, and as her tongue slipped between his toes, he chuckled.

The sound of Nathan's creepy laughter sent a cold chill down Crystal's back. He sounded psychotic, and he frightened her. She was reminded of his alter-ego, Gerald Davis, and the love she had felt for him turned to hate. He had said that he would let her go, but she no longer believed him.

Nathan leaned forward and pulled her hair again. Her head jerked up, and he said, "I want you to remember this moment for the rest of your life. When you get old, and you think about the olden days, you should remember the taste of my feet and feel a sense of honor to have served me."

No matter what Nathan said, Crystal did not reply.

"Of course, you will regret betraying me," Nathan continued. "Unfortunately, time cannot be reversed. You cannot undo the things that you have done, and for the rest of your life, you will be miserable." Crystal remained silent and expressionless, and her indifferent attitude made him extremely angry. "You will regret this, won't you?"

"Yes." Crystal smiled meekly and said, "I will regret it very much." It was the truth, but she hid her pain as best she could.

"Damn it!" Nathan cursed. He knew that she would go straight to Eric once she left him, and he thought that she would forget about him. Thus, he did not think that she was telling the truth.

Nathan thought - I will not let you forget me so easily! I want you to feel guilty forever! I am going to be a relentless thorn in your side, and no matter how often you cry out to God for relief, He will turn His face from you! His hate was as strong as his love had been. Hate gnawed at his reason. It made him crazy, and he was desperate to retaliate against Crystal.

Suddenly, he put his right foot flush against Crystal's face, and he pushed her so hard that she fell backward. Then he stood up, put on his shirt, and walked past Crystal without saying another word.

For a while, Crystal remained on the ground. She worried that Gerald had taken control of Nathan's body. If he had, she knew that there was nothing that she could do. Eventually, she sat up and looked around.. The room was a disaster, and since she had nothing better to do, she began to clean it up.

Chapter 1808 - 326: What I Have Done?

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

As Crystal swept the rest of the broken glass into a dustpan, she thought about Carlos. It would be so easy to abandon him. She wished she could run away and leave all of the men in her life in her past, but she refused to do that to Carlos. If not for her, he would not be in the trouble that he was in. He was innocent. If she did not save him, he would die. If that happened, she knew that her conscience would never let her rest.

As she was lifting the dustpan, a shard of glass slipped past the guard and sliced the back of her hand. For some reason, though, she did not notice. It was as if her mind was so preoccupied with her predicament that her body was on autopilot.

When Nathan returned to the bedroom, he did not announce that he was there. He was surprised to find her cleaning the bedroom. It was a task that was usually delegated to the servants. There was something sexual about a woman cleaning, though, so for a while, he just stood in the doorway and observed her.

Her attention to detail aroused him, but when she cut her hand, his heart bled as surely as the back of her hand did. There was a sad expression on her face, though, and he found it odd that she had not cried out in pain.

Suddenly, it occurred to Nathan that Crystal was pretending. He had always known that she was a good actress. He folded his arms across his chest and stepped boldly into the room. When she saw him, she flinched. He sneered and said, "I'm on to you. No matter how pathetically you act, I'm going to punish you today!"

"Fine." Crystal nodded. "How are you going to punish me? I look forward to it. It will be our final transaction."

There was a knock on the door, and Nathan scowled. Without turning to see who the intruder was, he shouted, "WHAT?!?!"

There was a servant at the door, and she looked frightened. "M-M-Master D-Davis..." Her voice trembled.

"WHAT?!?!!" There was a hot fire burning in Nathan's eyes.

"I've g-got the stove," the servant stammered.

Finally, Nathan turned to face the servant.

He said, "Well, what are you waiting for?"

The servant nodded. She left the room, and when she returned, she had a stove with her. She set it up, turned one of the elements on, put a ring on it, and left the room.

Crystal was terrified. At this point, there was little doubt in her mind which was in control. She did not think that Nathan was capable of doing whatever he was about to do. She thought - This must be the work of Gerald!

Nathan picked up a small pair of iron tongs and used them to pick up the ring. The ring was made of gold, and there was a rose where there would normally be a gem. He glared at Crystal, and she saw a trace of hesitation and pity in his eyes as if the real Nathan were trying to fight his way to the surface.

Almost immediately, the look was snuffed out of existence, and it was replaced by rage. He brought the ring up to her face, and her whole body trembled. She clenched her fists in anticipation. She was ready,

but the anticipation was killing her. "Do it already," she hissed. She spat in his face and told him not to be such a p***y.

Nathan pressed the ring against Crystal's forehead, and she sent her mind away. She could smell her flesh cooking as he branded the rose into her forehead, but she refused to feel the pain. She would not give him the satisfaction of hearing her cry out.

Nathan applied more and more pressure to the ring, and she began to feel faint. In a disconnected sort of way, she thought it would be funny if she did pass out. It would rob Nathan of his moment - Ha! Ha! She smiled.

"You bitch!" Nathan roared. "Why are you smiling? Do you think that this is funny? I guarantee you that you will not be laughing once you look in the mirror. There is no way that you can forget me now!"

The ring had begun to cool off, and Nathan finally set it aside. Crystal immediately lifted her hand to touch it, but he grabbed her wrist and stopped her. "Don't touch!" he snapped.

"It still burns," she murmured. "Even now... it still burns..."

"Your flesh is still cooking," Nathan explained.

"How l-long?" Crystal whispered. Her lips were pale, and her vision was blurry. The searing pain seemed to be seeping into her blood vessels. The misery spread to her limbs until her whole body was suffering.

"Not long," he replied. "But seconds likely feel like hours to you right now." There was compassion in his eyes, and it seemed that Nathan was in control again. He frowned and shouted for a servant to bring a cloth and a bucket of ice water.

A moment later, a servant appeared. He had a cloth and a bucket of ice water. Nathan dipped the cloth in the water and wrung it out. Then he put three chunks of ice in the middle and folded it up to create a cold compress, which he pressed against Crystal's forehead.

For the first time since he had pressed the ring to her forehead, Crystal cried out. The pain was too much, and she tried to push him away.

Nathan sighed. "Let it be. It hurts now, but it will be soothing before you know it." He lifted the cloth for a moment so that he could see the brand. He smiled and said, "Now you will never forget me. I will forget you, though."

Crystal looked up at him with empty eyes. She thought - You win. But who cares...? He hadn't really accomplished anything. She would be out of his life in a day and a half, and that would be that.

Nathan glared at her. "Do you think Eric Bush really loves you?" His brows furrowed. "Or is he just trying to torture me by snatching my love away from me? Now that I do not love you, do you honestly think that he will still want you?"

"Maybe not..." Crystal shrugged. "If that is the case, then I will finally be free!" She smiled bitterly, "I would live the life I wanted. Away from men who tortured and ruined my life!"

"You miserable cunt!" Nathan roared. Nothing she had ever said to him had ever made him as angry as what she had just said. If she was speaking the truth, then his revenge was ruined, and she had played him like a fiddle. "You selfish woman! You are going to die cold and alone!"

"Maybe so." Crystal shrugged again. "But that is my business. You need not concern yourself. As they say, I have made my bed... I must lay in it"

Nathan was so angry that he could not speak. He wanted to hit Crystal. He knew, though, that if he started hitting her, he would not stop until she was dead. For a while, he just stared at her without saying a word. Finally, it seemed that she was going to break the silence. She opened her mouth, but before she could say anything, her face turned white, and she slipped into unconsciousness. He caught her out of reflex, and as he looked at her face, he felt a stab of pain in his heart. "Oh, my God," he muttered. "What have I done....?"

Chapter 1809 - 327: Seeing You Suffer Makes Me Happy

Nathan held Crystal in his arms, and he wept for what he had done and for what he had lost. He had crossed a line with Crystal, and he knew that there was no going back.

Gently, he picked her up, carried her into the next room, and placed her on the bed. He tucked her hair behind her ears and forced himself to look at the brand. Never in his life had he felt such great regret. He did not know what had come over him. It was almost as if a psychopath had possessed him. He stayed with her for as long as he could, but eventually, his grief consumed him, and he fled.

Crystal did not regain consciousness until later that evening. She sat up and looked around. She was surprised to find that she had been moved, but she was grateful for the privacy.

Next to the bed, there was a full-length mirror, and she stood up so that she could get a good look at what Nathan had done to her. And when she did, she cried out in anguish.

At the center of her forehead, a rose had been seared into her skin, and she gasped when she saw it. It was the symbol that Nathan used to seal his letters. The logo could also be seen on his private helicopters, luxury cars, and yachts. The servants and guards wore the symbol on their uniforms.

As surely as a dog marks his territory by pissing on a fire hydrant, he had claimed her for himself.

Suddenly, Crystal was sick. She bent over and puked into the wastebasket that sat by the door. There was no way that she could have made it to the washroom.

Crystal wiped the vomit from her mouth with a shirt she found on the floor, and then she returned to the mirror. She stood up straight and touched the rose. This will never fade away - she realized, and she punched the mirror with both of her hands in rage. "No!" she shouted. "My life is over..."

Where is that bastard? -she wondered. She was surprised that Nathan was not there to gloat over what he had done. She began to cry, and she was glad that he was not there to see her breakdown. Not knowing what else to do, she went back to bed, curled into a ball, and cried herself to sleep.

It was not long before Crystal woke up again, and she was happy to discover that the need to cry had passed. She got up and went to look out the window. From where she stood, she could see Nathan. He was on the beach, and he was digging holes, looking for her sketchbook. Already, there were over a dozen holes, and it looked like he was not about to stop until he found what he was looking for.

Oh, fuck - she thought - I should have burnt my book! But how could Nathan know that this is where I hid it, though...? It makes no sense...

Nathan shivered as he dug. He had a high fever, and his servants had been begging him for the past hour to return, but he would not. He ignored their words, and he kept on digging.

He was like a machine that was breaking down, though, and with each hole that he dug, he grew weaker.

One of the servants stepped forward and said, "Master Davis, please stop. Let us help you...."

"Piss off." Nathan waved his hand dismissively. "All of you, piss off."

Crystal slipped to the ground, wrapped her arms around her legs, and began to cry. She had never felt so alone or so helpless in her life. "I wish I was dead!" she shouted.

Of course, there was nobody there to hear her.

The servants were afraid that Nathan would overexert himself, but it still came as a shock to them when he finally keeled over. They shouted his name as they ran over to help him, and it took four people to carry him inside.

When Crystal heard the commotion, she crept downstairs to see what was going on. Then, when she discovered that Nathan had passed out, she stopped one of the servants and said, "I'm leaving the island now. What should I do?"

The servant raised one eyebrow and said, "You know that we can't tell you. You should ask Master Davis when he wakes up."

Crystal frowned. Nathan was on the couch. He was still wet, but they had thrown two comforters over him, knowing that it would warm him up in no time. He looked like an angel asleep as he was, but she knew that he was a demon from Hell.

Crystal did not want to be there when Nathan woke up. Unfortunately, his subconscious must have heard her voice because his eyes opened almost immediately after she spoke. And apparently, he had heard everything....

I have trusted her over and over again - Nathan thought - And every time, she has played me for a fool! When will I ever learn? He threw the blankets off and sat up. There was a rush of blood to his head, and for a minute, he felt dizzy, but the dizziness quickly passed.

One of the servants gave Nathan a nervous look. "Master Davis," she said. "You're wet all over. You need to keep warm, and you need to rest."

"Soon." Nathan smiled at the servant and said, "I have some business to attend to first."

Crystal began to tremble. She knew that she was the business that Nathan was talking about. He glanced at her. "Do you want to leave?" he asked. "Sure, you do, of course! But did you actually think that you could leave without my consent?"

"You promised to let me go..." Crystal muttered. Her eyes were swollen from crying. "And I wasn't expecting you to wake up so soon..."

"I did promise," Nathan agreed. "But I did wake up, and your three days are not up. You may leave at 5 pm tomorrow. Until then, you are mine to torture - And we have just gotten started!"

"Why are you doing this?" Crystal groaned.

"Seeing you suffer makes me happy," Nathan replied. He tried to stand, but his legs gave out. Luckily, two of his servants were able to catch him before he landed on the ground. Once he was upright, he smirked at Crystal, and he said, "Come and help me to my room."

Crystal walked over, put his arm around her neck, and tried to lift him without answering. He was much too heavy, though, and they both fell to the ground with him on top.

They were face-to-face, and he was drooling at her. After a moment, he slurped his spit, grinned, and said, "You are so full of shit! Can you not hold me up? Yeah, right! Now quit playing your stupid little games and get me upstairs!"

Chapter 1810 - 328: I Will Carry You Up

Crystal gasped. She thought - How could I ever carry Nathan up a flight of stairs? He was nearly two hundred pounds, and it had taken four servants to carry him inside. "I c-can't d-do it," she stammered.

"Can't or won't?" Nathan hissed. "I have done so much for you. What have you done for me?" His cold fingers pinched her chin. "Crystal, what have you done for me except hurt me?"

"Be reasonable." Crystal sighed and said, "You are too heavy. I am afraid of dropping you."

"Do you honestly think that I care about being dropped?" Nathan asked, "You have broken my heart thousands of times. What is one more injury?"

Crystal raised her head and looked directly into his eyes. Then she gritted her teeth and said, "Fine. I'll give it a try. Don't blame me, though, if you crack your skull!"

"Well..." Nathan smiled. "What are you waiting for?"

Crystal nodded, turned around, and bent her knees slightly so that he could climb on her back. The second that she felt his weight on her, her breathing became labored, and she felt her knees buckle. "You can't do this..." a voice in her head whispered. "You're going to kill yourself trying."

She tried to force the voice to shut up, but it was hard. She felt like she had the weight of the world on her shoulders. She hooked his legs with her arms and took her first step, and as she moved, his chest rubbed against the wounds on her back. She took another step, and she began to whimper. She could not help it.

"What's wrong?" Nathan asked skeptically. "Am I too heavy?"

Crystal ignored his questions and concentrated on her third step.

The servants could see how hard this was for Crystal, and they lined up on either side of her. One of them said, "If anything happens, we will catch you."

Crystal nodded and took the final three steps to the stairs. Then she looked up in horror. With Nathan on her back, the landing at the top looked like it was a million miles away. She lifted her right leg, and as the weight shifted to her left leg, she stumbled. Nathan's foot touched the ground briefly, and he hissed into her ear: "Crystal, is this what you call 'carrying me'?"

"You are too heavy...." She gasped and said, "I told you not to blame me..."

"You can give up at any time," he said in a gloomy voice. "I will give you time to practice, but you cannot leave until you have carried me to my bed."

"F**k you!" Crystal growled. "You are a masochist. Do you know that?"

"Are you going to carry me to my room or not?"

"I will carry you up," Crystal replied. "If I fall, it is your own fault." She let go of Nathan's legs so that they were dragging on the ground. Then she grasped the handrails on either side of her and hauled herself up the first four steps. Then she had to stop and catch her breath. Sweat dripped from her forehead. Her back was slick, and she was in agony. Not only was the weight killing her, but her wounds felt like they were on fire.

Crystal bit her lower lip to keep from crying out, and the coppery taste of blood in her mouth somehow distracted her from the pain. She put her hands back on the handrails and found the inner strength to make it to the top.

"Almost there." Nathan chuckled and told her to keep going.

Crystal frowned, and then she smiled as a thought occurred to her: If she leaned backward, they would both be thrown down the stairs. Not even the servants would be able to save them. They would break their necks, which would be the end of their story. That would be nice - she thought - It is a pity that I

still have so many unfinished tasks. If she completed suicide, she knew that Eric would kill Carlos and that he would not help Noah. Thus, she had an obligation to live.

"Yes," Crystal muttered. "Almost there..." She took two more steps, and as she put her weight on her right foot, it buckled, and she collapsed. She fell forward, and he landed on top of her, and his body was so heavy that she could not move a muscle. Now, more than ever, Crystal wished that she were dead. She wished that she had leaned backward, and not even the thought of Noah and Carlos could convince her that her life was worth living.

For a long while, Crystal just lay there. Finally, she felt like she had enough energy to get up. She bent her arms and put her hands flush against the floor, and she tried to do a 'Girl's push-up.' From there, she hoped to get herself into an upright position. Unfortunately, she only made it about four inches off the floor before her body gave out again. "f**k a duck," she grumbled. "I don't know what I am going to do with you, Nathan..."

"Damnit!" Nathan hissed. While Crystal had been trying to get up, he had been getting angrier by the second. "If you cannot stand up and carry me, then crawl. You can be my horse!" He bit into her shoulder, and she yelped. He was so angry that he thought that he was about to vomit blood! A second later, he coughed, and he actually did vomit blood. It went all over Crystal, and some of it splashed back into his face. Disgusting - he thought.

A servant rushed over. She said, "Master... You... you are v-vomiting blood..." Her face was a pale shade of green. All of the servants wanted to help him, but no one dared to intervene on his behalf without his say-so.

Finally, Nathan rolled off of Crystal. He stood up, nudged her with his foot, and grimaced. "Crystal..." he grumbled. "You are such a ruthless woman. I hope you know that I hate you! I wish you were dead. I have asked so little of you, but you couldn't even help me to my bed when I was sick." Crystal remained silent, and her silence exacerbated his rage.

Nathan thought- No matter how much I hate her, she remains indifferent. The hate that he now felt for her was as extreme as his love had been.

Finally, he turned to his servants.. "Well?" he shouted. "What are you waiting for? Get me to my room!"

Chapter 1811 - 329: What Is She Trying To Say?

Crystal had passed out in the hallway, and by the time she was awake, it was late in the evening. She was surprised to see that someone had put a blanket over her, and there was a bottle of water within reach of her arm. She smiled when she realized that someone had taken the time to care for her. It was not until she saw the bottle that she realized how thirsty she was. She was hungry too, but she knew that her stomach would have to wait until after she had checked on Nathan.

The water was divine, and she drank it much faster than she meant to, and when she tried to stand, she realized that she would be sick if she moved too soon. While she waited, she did a quick body scan. Everything hurts. Her back had been ravaged, and she thought that she would need surgery, but nothing was broken, and she thanked God for minor miracles.

Finally, she got on her hands and knees and crawled into Nathan's room. He was lying on his side, and he saw her right away. She made her way over and collapsed in front of him. I need to get out of here - she thought. She looked up at him and pleaded her case with her eyes. "There," she cried. "Please tell me that our score is finally settled."

Nathan's brows furrowed, and he said, "I am sick. You need to take care of me."

Crystal took the thermometer out of Nathan's mouth and checked the reading. His temperature was 39.6 degrees, which meant he had a serious fever. Thankfully, they had everything they needed to give an infusion, and some of the servants were trained nurses. Once she told them what his temperature was, they rushed off to get everything prepared.

While Crystal was waiting, she helped Nathan take off his wet clothes. Then she brought out a cloth and a bucket of warm soapy water so that she could clean his body. He accepted all of this without complaint, but he flinched when she touched the area around where he had been shot. "I think that it's infected," she muttered, and she applied Polysporin to it. Once that was done, she bandaged it up. Just looking at it had made her feel guilty.

The servant returned with the infusion, and before she could get to work, Crystal said, "Give it to me. I will do it."

The servant gave her a skeptical look. "Are you sure?" she asked. "I am a trained nurse."

Crystal nodded and said, "Leave it to me."

The servant nodded. She handed the infusion to Crystal and took a step back. She knew her place in the house, but she was obviously wary. The look on her face said, "Do your worst. I will be here to clean up your mess."

Crystal straightened Nathan's left arm, wrapped a rubber band around his triceps, and inserted a needle into his forearm. Then she attached the needle to the IV, put a butterfly on the IV to keep it attached to his arm, and removed the elastic. Finally, she gave the nurse a dirty look and said, "Mission accomplished, bitch!"

The servant frowned and left the room without saying another word - and just like that, Nathan and Crystal were alone again. She turned to look at him and smiled. The expression on his face made him look like a naughty boy who had played on the beach for a long time, and she could not help but laugh.

Suddenly, Crystal remembered her sketchbook, and her laughter died in her throat, and her face turned white. She knew that he would never stop looking for it, and when he found it, he would use it against her. She looked at him again, and in that instant, she hated him more than ever. She thought - A man who would do this to a woman is no man at all!

There was morphine in the IV solution, and Nathan fell asleep immediately. Crystal threw a quilt over his body, and then she went back downstairs. Now that he had passed out, her first instinct was to run, but she thought better of it. There was nowhere to go, and even if she had a place to go, she had no way of getting there. Without Nathan's consent, she was stuck.

What to do? What to do? - thought Crystal.

Ideally, she would be asleep, but she was too wound up for sleep. Suddenly, she remembered that she had a spare sketchbook in the living room. Drawing would be a good way to kill time, and it would help her relax.

Crystal smiled as she went into the living room. She sat on the couch, pulled out her book and a pen from the coffee table's drawer, and began to draw. She had only been drawing for a short while, though, before the cut on the back of her hand split open. She bit her lower lip as searing pain ran up her brain. Luckily, the wound was covered, so she did not bleed on her book, but red roses pressed through the cotton. Fu*k it! - she thought, and she kept on drawing.

An hour went by, and Crystal had completely forgotten about her wound, that is until a drop of blood dripped down the side of her hand and splattered in the upper-right corner of her page.

Crystal felt extremely disappointed when she saw that, but she refused to let it get her down. The drawing had helped her relax, and it would still serve its purpose, so there was no point in getting all riled up again. She went into the washroom, took off the old Band-Aid, cleaned and treated the wound, and put a new Band-Aid on it. This time, she put a second wrapping over it to ensure that this did not happen again. Then she went back to the living room and cleaned up. She looked at the paper, tucked the sketchbook under her arm, and smiled. Even with the bloodstain, it would do.

She was tired now, and she was ready to sleep.

When Nathan woke up the following day, he could not believe his eyes, and at first, he thought he had another Fever Dream. Just in case, he pinched himself. When nothing changed, he knew that he was awake and what he was seeing was real.

Crystal was lying on the bed next to him, asleep. Her eyes were blotchy, and he could see that she had been crying, but that didn't matter to him, not when she was sleeping right beside him!

Crystal stirred and opened her eyes. "You're awake," she said as if there was nothing out of the ordinary here. She rubbed her eyes and looked at the clock. "You have had a high fever. How do you feel?"

Nathan raised his head, and he saw that there was a book between them. "What is this?" he asked.

"It is my sketchbook," Crystal replied. "The one with your portrait. I hope that you like it!"

Chapter 1812 - 330: Don't Pretend To Be Devastated

Nathan stared at the drawing for a few minutes. Then he looked up at Crystal, grabbed her by the collar, and shook her. "What is the meaning of this?" he shouted. "Is this because you are afraid that I won't let you go?!?!"

Crystal frowned. "Why do you always have to assume the worst?"

"Why wouldn't I?" Nathan shouted. "You have given me a portrait of myself with blood on it! What am I supposed to think? Is this some sort of threat? Are you trying to frighten me?"

Crystal flinched as Nathan tore the page out of the book and ripped it in half. Then he crumpled the two pieces into balls and threw them into her face. One hit her just above her right eye, and the other bounced off her forehead.

Crystal sat there numbly. It made her sad to see her work destroyed. She had put so much effort into it, and she had captured his beauty perfectly. She had hoped that he would frame it and that it could remind him of their better days. She would never have expected him to make such a big deal about a little bit of blood. Suddenly, she was overwhelmed with grief, and she began to weep.

"What are you doing?" Nathan grumbled. "Do you feel aggrieved?" he stared at her sullenly and said, "Don't pretend to be devastated!"

"I'm okay," Crystal lied. She regained her composure and got off the bed. "Have a good rest. I'll ask a servant to bring you some food."

When Nathan heard this, he slammed his fist on the bed and shouted, "Sit back down!"

Crystal stared at him skeptically and took two cautious steps away from him.

Nathan glared at him. "Crystal Smith, don't you dare ignore me! Do you hear me?"

"Okay." Crystal pretended that she had not heard him. "I'll tell the servants to bring you up for some breakfast." She took another step towards the door, waved, and said, "Goodbye."

Nathan tried to stand up so that he could go after her, but he fell back into his bed. His body was too weak, and now his brain was foggy. It seemed like he was being drawn into a coma, and he fought it off with what little strength he had. If he fell into a coma, he did not think that she would be there when he woke up. Wordlessly, he watched her watching him, and he was in agony. She was so close to him, but she seemed like she was a world away.

He thought that all that she wanted to do was get as far away from him as possible.

Crystal walked out the door, but she returned momentarily with his medicine and a bottle of water. She put the items on the bedside table and said, "Here is your medicine. Make sure you drink all of the water. If you don't, you will be dehydrated." Then she picked up the two crumpled-up papers and threw them into the trash. She felt his eyes on her all the while, and she noticed that he had not touched his medicine.

Crystal went back to the side of Nathan's bed. She poured a few pills into her palm and offered them to him, saying, "You should take your medicine."

Nathan dry-swallowed the medicine, but he did not say anything.

Crystal smiled and offered him the water. Nathan nodded, and he drank the entire bottle in a matter of seconds. She offered to get him more, and he nodded again. When she returned with another bottle, he asked for it in a glass. She poured it into a cup that was sitting on the night table, and the second he had it in his hand, he splashed the water on her face.

Crystal's face turned red as her ire began to rise. "What was that for?" she shouted. "You are sick, and I have done nothing except take care of you!"

"Cut the crap!" Nathan hissed. "Take off your hypocritical mask. We both know that you don't do anything nice unless you have an ulterior motive!"

Crystal's mouth dropped open. Even though she already knew that this was what he believed, it still stung to hear it. After everything that he had put her through, she felt that she deserved better. She wiped her face quickly and said nothing.

"Why don't you speak?" He sneered. "Curse me!"

Crystal felt that Nathan had been more terrifying over the last twenty-four hours than ever before. And she was terrified.

"Or are you going to pour water over me to get revenge?" Nathan continued. "You are such a conniving bitch!"

Crystal sighed. He was being ridiculous, and she knew that nothing she could say would help him see things clearly. At best, she could appease him until it was time to go. He was all over the map, though, and he was determined to see everything she did in the wrong light. Luckily, she was saved from having to reply by a knock on the door. There was a servant in the doorway, and she had a bowl of chicken noodle soup in her hands.

The servant placed the soup on the bed stand, and Crystal took a few backward steps. She was worried that Nathan would splash her with it. He gave her a curious look, though, and ordered her to feed him.

Crystal rolled her eyes as she returned to his side. She filled the spoon with soup and brought it to him, but he refused to open his mouth.

Crystal's brows furrowed. "What's the problem now?" she asked impatiently.

"I want mouth-to-mouth service," he replied. "I used to do it for you, so you owe me."

Crystal shrugged and said, "Fine. Whatever makes you happy." She brought the spoon to her mouth and slurped it up. Then she leaned over him and let it drizzle into his open mouth. She wasn't expecting anything untoward to happen when he startled her by putting his hands on top of her head and pulling her face to his. Then he kissed her hard and shoved his tongue into her mouth. And while he kissed her, he bit her lips.

Once she was free, she grabbed the bottle of water, rinsed it out her mouth, and spat it into the wastebasket.

Nathan frowned. "Was kissing me really that bad?" he asked.

"It's not that," Crystal muttered.. And to prove that she had no problem with kissing him, she leaned over and kissed him again.