

## To Us

Strolling through the walk way of her garden, Sophia couldn't help but notice the setting sun in the distance over the waves of the ocean. It really was a sight that brought a sense of calmness to her. Today had been a very trying day. Not only did she have issues at her office, but she had also had a disagreement with CC over lunch. The office issues were not troubling her, but the argument with CC was. He could be so demanding and as much as this sometimes infuriated her it was one of the things that she loved about him. She loved how he was always so sure of himself and sure of his decisions. Now, the more she thought about the argument, the more she got mad at herself. Why did she get so angry at him? Why did she storm out of lunch? It wasn't like they were talking about a life or death decision. It was a discussion that most people would be happy to have. They were talking about retiring from their work and completely handing the company over to their children. They would then be free to do as they pleased without corporate worries.

Sophia grabbed one of the burgundy Asiatic lilies that was along the walkway and cut it from the main plant. The color was so vibrant and the smell so aromatic. She held it in her hands and just started at its beauty. Her thoughts drifted back to CC and the argument. CC would like to start the procedures to hand over the company now. When he said this to her, that is when Sophia became argumentative. Now, for the life of her, she could not figure out why this bothered her so much and why she created the argument and stormed out of lunch. Anyone would be ecstatic to not have to work and to travel the world with the man she loved so deeply. They could spend as much time together as they wanted. What was she afraid of?

Coming out of her thoughts, Sophia noticed the setting sun again. More than half of it was still visible over the horizon. It seemed that it had magical powers that were drawing her to it. She decided to go down to their private beach and watch the lasting light of the sun before it went down for the night. She was still trying to figure out why she was so angry. Or was she scared? She really wanted to figure this all out. She loved this man so deeply and they fought so hard to be together. How could spending more time together have her so troubled?

As Sophia approached the shore she placed the lily that she had cut on large boulder. She then walked down closer to the water. Looking down at the sand to make sure that nothing was there she found a clean spot and sat down to watch the sun set fixing her dress skirt beneath her. She sat there for quite some time and just stared at the sun. Her mind was now consumed by the setting sun and the lapping sound of the waves on the shore and time was of no concern. She really didn't care how long she was there.

Meanwhile, CC had finished what he needed to do at the office. He had important appointments that would last the entire afternoon. Through all of these appointments he tried to focus but could not help but think of Sophia. He could not figure out why she acted the way she did. He needed to see her. He needed to talk to her and he needed to touch her.

It was now around 8:30 and he was just getting home. Her car was in driveway. He thought to himself, 'Oh, good, she is home.' He gathered all of his things out of his car and went into the house. "Sophia, darling, where are you?" he yelled. No answer. He waited a few seconds and called for her again. No answer. He thought 'Maybe she

isn't here. Or maybe she is still so mad that she won't answer.' He put his things down and went to fix himself a drink. As he did this, Janie, one of the servants came to greet him. He asked her where Mrs. Capwell was and she replied that she had last seen her in the garden. CC walked over to the glass doors that lead to the patio that lead to the garden. He didn't see her there so he stepped out onto the patio and walked closer to the garden. He didn't see her in the garden, but he caught a glimpse of her through the tall grass on the beach. She was sitting there alone on the sand.

He walked back into the house and called for Janie. She came to him quickly. "Janie, I need two blankets. A bottle of champagne, and two glasses" he told her. As she turned to go he said "Hold on. You go up and get me the blankets and I will take care of the other things." He ran into the kitchen and found a bottle of champagne in the wine cooler and then he found two champagne flutes in the cupboard. He grabbed them and placed them gingerly in a wicker picnic bag that he found in the pantry. Quickly he thought, 'I need something else.' He walked over to the refrigerator and opened the door. There in front of him was his answer...strawberries and whipped cream! He grabbed the bowl of strawberries and the bowl of whipped cream. Carefully, CC placed the bowl of strawberries into the bag and then placed the bowl of whipped cream on top. All the while he was doing this he could not help but smile to himself and think of what was to come. That is if Sophia wasn't still so angry. Now he was ready to go meet Sophia. He walked out into the living room to find the two blankets that Janie had left on the chair for him. He realized at the moment that he was still in his suit and had his socks and shoes on. Quickly he removed the jacket and threw it on the back of the chair. Then he took off his shoes and socks and left them right where he had taken them off. He then realized that he would need matches, too, to start a fire. So on his way past the fireplace, he grabbed a couple of the fireplace matches and threw them in the bag. No time to waste! He grabbed the blankets and the bag and headed out to the beach. As he approached the garden walk way he could see that she was still there. What a relief! He would be able to surprise her. He hoped that she had cooled down. He hoped that she would be happy to see him.

As he got closer to Sophia he realized how truly beautiful she still was. The light off shore wind tussled her hair and the weak sunlight still shone on her skin. The setting sun reflected off of her skin. The sight of her still made him weak in the knees. She still sent shivers through him. He approached the boulder where Sophia had placed the lily. He picked it up in his hand and couldn't help notice how pretty it was. Sophia still had not turned around. She seemed so deep in her thoughts that she did not sense him or hear him. He placed the blankets and the picnic bag on the sand next to the boulder and with the lily in hand walked up to her and knelt behind her. He took the lily and gently ran it across the part of her back that was bare and not covered by her halter dress. Sophia was startled but was pleasantly surprised when CC leaned into her and placed a gentle kiss on her cheek saying "Hello, darling. I'm sorry. I've missed you and could not stop thinking about you today. I have a sweet surprise for you that I think you will truly enjoy. That is if you are not still angry with me! I hope that you are happy to see me." As he did this he then placed his arms around her shoulders and with the lily that was still in his hand he ran it under her chin. This tickled her slightly and brought a smile to her face and goose bumps to her body. She leaned into his arms and fell against his body.

"Oh, CC, I am so sorry. I don't know why I acted the way I did today. I really didn't mean to get so angry and stomp off" Sophia said as she turned her head to

accept another kiss on the cheek from CC. She continued "I really don't understand what happened to me at lunch today." CC was still on his knees behind her. He placed the lily on the sand next to Sophia and then sat himself down in the sand pulling her into him.

"This is an incredible view" he said. "And I am not talking about the ocean or the sunset" he smiled as he reached his arm under her to cradle her in it. "You say the sweetest things when you want to cheer me up. I love you, darling" Sophia said as she reached her hands up to his face and placed one on each cheek and pulled him into a gentle, adoring kiss. CC broke away from the kiss saying "Hold that thought for one minute, my dear. I told you that I have a surprise for you. Let me get up and I will get it and be right back." Sophia sat herself up and freed CC to get up and get his surprise. "What kind of surprise do you have for me out here? What could you possibly have?" she asked him. "Hold on just a minute I said. Be patient and I will get it" CC said to her as he walked up to the boulder to grab the blankets and the picnic bag.

Sophia could see the blankets that were in his arms as he came closer to her. She smiled at him and said "Oh, CC, you are such a romantic. What's in the bag?" "Hold on a minute and give me a chance and I will show you" he replied "But before I do that, I need to get some driftwood to start a little fire for us. Why don't you spread out one of the blankets while I do that and then I will show you your surprise?" Grabbing the blankets from him she said "OK, but why do we need two blankets?" CC looked at her with a big smile on his face and raised his eyebrows saying "Well, my dear, you just have to wait for that answer. It is part of the surprise, but I will tell you that one is for the top and one is for the bottom." Sophia grinning right back at him said "Oh, now I think I know what part of it is! It is something that I have always wanted!"

Sophia spread the blanket out on the sand while CC gathered driftwood. He placed the wood near the blanket on the sand and began to light a fire. The sun light was almost gone and it was almost dark. Sophia sat on the blanket's edge and watched the man of her dreams play with the fire. The firelight sparkled in his eyes and its glow reflected on his face. He was beautiful! She was just about to move and go to him when he said "Don't move!" He reached into the bag and pulled out the glasses and the champagne and showed them to her. "Surprise number one." Then he reached into the bag and pulled out the strawberries and whipped cream and showed them to her. "Your favorites, my dear. Surprise number two." CC then opened the bottle of champagne and poured a glass for Sophia and handed it to her. Then he poured himself a glass and placed the champagne bottle on a flat stone next to the blanket. "And now my beautiful wife, surprise number three, ME!" he said as clinked her glass and gently placed a kiss upon her lips. "Baby, this is so romantic. It is just the surprise I was hoping for. The strawberries and whipped cream are a bonus!" Sophia said between the kisses.

"Close your eyes" CC said as he took her glass out her hand. He placed both glasses down next to the bottle of champagne. Sophia closed her eyes as she said laughingly said, "You always make me close my eyes." He grabbed a strawberry and dipped it into the whipped cream. Without saying a word, he brought the strawberry to Sophia's mouth and playfully touched the whipped cream to her lips. Instinctively, she opened her mouth more and CC placed the tip of the strawberry in her mouth. With her eyes still closed she took a tender bite. He pulled the strawberry away and just as she was about to lick her lips he said "Don't!" and he leaned in and placed his lips on hers

and gently sucked the whipped cream away. Sophia's insides melted. "Do you like your surprises so far?" CC asked as he pulled away from the kiss and brought the strawberry back to her mouth so she could finish it.

"You know that I do. I can't wait for the next one but I think that you are a little over dressed for it" she said as she started to unbutton his shirt. With each button that she undid, Sophia placed a kiss on his chest. When she had finished unbuttoning it, she placed her hands on his shoulders underneath the shirt. Tenderly, her hands pushed the shirt down CC's arms until it fell to the blanket. CC now placed a hand on either side of Sophia's face and looking into her eyes said "You have no idea how you make me feel." "Oh, darling, I think that I do!" she replied and kissed him passionately while wrapping her arms tightly around his neck. Still holding onto her face he lovingly pushed her away from the kiss and told her to turn around. "It's my turn" he told her.

Sophia let go of CC and turned around. He placed a hand on each shoulder and began trailing kisses across the top of her bare shoulders. Sophia tilted her head to one side and then he trailed the kisses up her neck to her ear. "I love you so much. I need you. I want you" he whispered in her ear. Sophia didn't say anything back. She was lost in his words and affection. CC then undid the button that held the top of her halter dress up and let it fall. They took turns helping each other out of the rest of their clothes and fell to the blanket lost in each others love and gave into their desires.

The fire was close enough to the blanket that CC could use his free hand to place the driftwood that he had collected on it to keep it going. Sophia was wrapped in the other arm. Her head was snuggled in the crook of his shoulder. "After all these years it still amazes me that you always know what I need" she said to him as she reached over him to get a strawberry with whipped cream. She brought the strawberry to his mouth and he took a bite of it. She watched him chew until he was done and then she gave him the rest. He looked lovingly into her eyes again. "After all these years you still make me feel like every time is the first time" he said. Sophia snuggled back into his shoulder. "Look at all the stars that are out tonight. Isn't it amazing?" Sophia asked him. "I know that this it is amazing, but I find you even more amazing" he replied as he rolled over to face her and kissed her on the nose. She responded with a kiss on his nose. He trailed kisses down the side of her cheek to her ear where he stopped to take a nibble. Sophia let out a little sigh and pulled herself closer into him. As she did this she could see the bowl of whipped cream behind him. She had an idea.

She dipped her finger into the bowl and scooped up some of the whipped cream. She brought her finger first to tip of his nose where she left a little white dot. Then she brought her finger to his lips where she tenderly wiped it across them. As she was doing this CC was able to grab her finger between his lips and lovingly sucked the remaining whipped cream from it. All the while they stared into each other's eyes. Sophia pulled her hand away and pushed CC down on the blanket and climbed on top of him. First, she went for the dot on his nose. Then she went for his mouth and gently sucked away the remaining whipped cream from his lips. "You taste wonderful. Three of my favorite flavors, whipped cream and strawberries and you! I love you with my whole heart and soul" she told him as she ran her fingers through his hair repeatedly continuing to look deep into his eyes. He took the sides of her face in his hands and brought her into a devouring kiss. Sophia then trailed butterfly kisses down CC's chin to his neck and then to his chest. She then came up with another idea. She scoop up more whipped cream and proceeded to make a smiley face on his chest. With a twinkle in her eye she looked at him and then began to gently lick and kiss the whipped cream

away. She was driving him crazy! He couldn't take it anymore. CC pulled her up under her arms to another intense kiss while rolling her back onto the blanket. Their love poured from their souls and their hearts and they made love again under nature's twinkling lights with the sound of the ocean lapping in the background and the crackling of the fire.

They had fallen asleep where they lay wrapped in each other's arms facing the fire. As usual, CC was spooning Sophia. His arm was draped over her body pulling her in tight to his. Sophia was the first to open her eyes but she didn't move. This was her favorite place to be, wrapped in her husband's grasp. The heaviness of CC's arm felt so comfortable to her. She lay there and looked at the fire. She thought to herself 'CC must have put more wood on the fire. It's a good thing because the night air was kind of chilly'. Thinking about the night air made her move and push back into CC's body more, but in fact, she was not chilly because she was sandwiched between her lover and the fire. This made him stir and his grasp on her got a little tighter. He nuzzled into her neck and placed a light kiss there. "Darling, are you awake?" he asked her. "Yes, I am but I didn't want to move because I like where I am and I like how it makes me feel. I am just taking it all in. The warmth of your body, the firelight, the sound of the waves, everything" she answered. "I like where I am, too" he whispered in her ear as he kissed her again and again. Sophia then rolled over to face CC. "Baby, I am sorry about lunch and storming out. I really didn't mean to do that. I was just taken aback and a little overwhelmed. I really am fine with whatever you want to do. Maybe this decision made me face my mortality just a little quicker than I wanted to. Really, I am in support of this. I actually look forward to all the time we will be together. You might even get sick of me! I'm sorry. Do you forgive me?" she asked him. He replied, "Darling, first, I will never get sick of you and secondly, I think that you should know by what happened here tonight that I hold no grudges. I love you. You hold my heart forever. I cannot stay mad at you no matter how hard I try." He placed a kiss on the tip of her nose. Sophia stroked the side of his face gently and kissed him back. "If you are not careful, my darling, the events of this evening may repeat themselves" he said raising his eyebrows with a little smirk on his face.

Sophia smiled back at him. "How about we change things up a little bit and go for a swim? The water is so calm tonight." He answered, "Won't you be cold?" "Not if I have you to keep me warm!" and with that she kicked the blanket off of them and grabbed his hand and pulled him. "Hold on a minute. You're going to hurt yourself" he told her. Then he said "You look absolutely beautiful standing there naked in the moonlight. I like the view from here." Sophia replied "You're not so bad yourself!" Sophia turned towards the water and quickly ran to it. The moonlight lit up her way. CC lay there for a few seconds and watched the love of his life. He thought to himself how amazing she truly was. He got up from the blanket and ran to her. Sophia was wading in the water up to her knees. There were hardly any waves. He grabbed her hand as he was walking by her and pulled her into the deeper water. He let go of her hand when the water was up to their waists. CC then started to swim away from her as he said "This was a great idea. The water feels great!". "Darling, please be careful. It's dark and you are making me nervous" she yelled to him. "Don't worry I won't go far away from you" he answered back as he dove under the water. Sophia watched where he went under as she walked out in the water up to her underarms. He wasn't coming up!

"CC, don't do this to me! Don't play games with me out here!" she yelled. She suddenly felt the water move around her feet under water. Panic quickly came over her. All at once she went under water in the grasp of her playful husband. They both came up for air. Sophia was so angry with him until she looked at CC's face and saw him smile. "You know, you really scared me. You shouldn't have done that" she scolded him wiping her hair back and with her fingers wiped the water from her eyes. "I'm sorry, darling. I am just having some fun" he replied to her as he shook his head to get rid of some of the water. He put a hand on either side of her face and kissed her. She accepted his apology by wrapping her arms around his neck. The water made this easy for her because she actually floated up to him. She trailed kisses from his mouth, to his cheek and to his earlobe where she whispered "I just love you so very much." CC didn't answer her. Instead, he took his arms and wrapped them around her body so that he was now holding her completely. The sensation of the water and the touch of her skin were driving him mad.

The wind picked up a little so the waves were getting a little bigger so he started walking them both to shore. All the while they were caressing and kissing each other on their faces and shoulders. As they got closer to shore still holding her, CC went down on his knees to keep their bodies out of the light wind. He then set Sophia down so that she was kneeling with her back to him. He placed his hands on her shoulders and gently massaged them while kissing the back of her neck. "Darling, the sight of you here in the moonlight and the feel of your body is incredible" he whispered through the kisses. Still facing backwards Sophia threw her arms backwards and wrapped them around his neck. CC then wrapped his arms around her stomach pulling her back into him. Sophia then twisted herself around while still in his hold and sat down in the half a foot of water they were now in. The cool air didn't seem to matter at all. The heat that they were generating kept them warm! She took her hands and placed them on his shoulders to pull him back with her as she leaned back to lie down in the water. He trailed kisses from her forehead to her nose and stopped at her mouth where he led her into a devouring kiss. Lying together wrapped up in each other they gave in completely to their desires. The water lapping at their bodies and the gentle wind just added to the sensations that they were feeling.

When they were finished making love for the third time, CC looked into the eyes of his wife and jokingly said "Not bad for an old couple, huh?" Sophia smiled back at him and said "You may be old, my darling, but I am young at heart! You make me feel like I am a spring chick!" "That you are, my dear. That you are" he said as he was standing up over her reaching for her hands to help her up. "Now can we go for a swim to get rid of all this sand?" he then said pulling into the deeper water with him. "I'll race you" Sophia said as she dove into a wave. They swam for a short time and then headed back to the beach and their blankets.

When they got to the blanket and sat down, CC threw one last piece of wood on the fire to help them get a little warmer and dry off. They sat together, Sophia resting back on CC's chest, wrapped together in the blanket. "Darling, once we dry off a little, as much as I have enjoyed making up with you, we should get dressed and head up to the house. It is almost three in the morning" he told her. "Funny, I am not even tired" she said to him turning so that she could see his face. "I hope you know how truly sorry I am. We can discuss everything again once we get some sleep. I promise to be more perceptive to the idea. I am sorry though, but I guess it was worth it, right?" she finished. "Three times, my dear, not that I am counting! We certainly are made for

each other. I would love to see what happens when we really get mad at each other” he said holding her tightly. CC then saw the bowl of strawberries and whipped cream and the two glasses of champagne. He reached for the glasses and handed Sophia one. Then he reached for the bowl of strawberries and the whipped cream. “Darling, are you hungry?” he asked as he put the bowls in front of them. “You know me. I’m starved” she replied. “We can have something else back at the house, but let’s have some of these first” he said. “Sounds great” Sophia replied reaching for a strawberry and dipped it in the whipped cream. Then they clanked their glasses together and at the same time they both said “To us!”

The two just smiled and stared at the flames in the fire sipping champagne and eating strawberries. They were each thinking about the other and how their lives had come full circle. Although the day did not start off great it certainly did finish in fine fashion.