

Taming A Billionaire

#Chapter 111 - One Hundred And Eleven : Who Did This To You? - Read Taming A Billionaire Chapter 111 - One Hundred And Eleven : Who Did This To You?

Chapter 111 - One Hundred And Eleven : Who Did This To You?

Maya's POV

My blood ran cold.

I was now a tabloid sensation.

But the news that made my blood boil was the fact they exposed I was an illegitimate daughter.

At first, I thought the press dug that information up, but when I saw the news of me being removed out of the family's register, I knew Kim's family had a hand in this.

It was most likely Kim since her mother would be too busy to do such a thing, but she would likely support her daughter once she gets an idea of what's going on.

Why did they hate me so much? I was her daughter too, right?

My name was number one on most search engines and at the moment, more famous than the president of the country.

I stopped dead in my tracks when I came across Nik and Tina's engagement news. As expected, the press claims the International playboy proposed to his ex-girlfriend on the gala night - a reignited flame.

I assured myself it was okay, but my heart still tightened painfully, I felt like dying but I didn't let it show on my face.

A picture of me standing beside him with the caption: Niklaus Spencer finally proposed to girlfriend Maya Octavia, was supposed to be on the front pages, not this!

I felt used, betrayed, disgusted, and angry! I wished our memories together would just vanish forever from my mind - If wishes were horses.

But some reporters doubted Nik's sincerity in this engagement, else why would he come with his nanny girlfriend as a companion in a party he allegedly proposed to his ex-girlfriend.

"WAS THIS ONE OF HIS MANY GAMES? "

"IS THE LEGENDARY PLAYBOY INCAPABLE OF BEING FAITHFUL? "

"WHO IS TRULY THE ONE? "

Appeared another headline that made me squeeze my eyes close, my mind was being overloaded. A photo was attached to this particular post: Niklaus was standing in the middle while Tina and I stood respectively on his right and left side.

Though I was bitter but inwardly, I praised whoever photoshopped that picture, he or she made sure to show off my striking side - I must be crazy, who cares how they look in this situation.

"Don't read all of the news and comments else you get depression " Eden told me when he discovered how fast I was absorbing everything. His phone had more information than the newspaper , so he had given it to me to glance through the news.

I put on a brave front " Some are nasty but the comments aren't so bad, just some vulgar gossip mongers finger-pointing into the life of someone they have no clue about " came my reply while going through the comments

"She is such a whore! " Someone commented and I rolled my eyes towards heaven in total disbelief.

It's funny how people think they have the supreme right to pry into someone's private life and judge them. They look at the splinter in my eye, but not notice the beam in their own eye?

I couldn't blame them anyway, the stories were published in such a way that made me seem like a relationship wrecker. Like I was the one who drove a wedge between Niklaus and Tina's happily ever after.

Oh please.

Their relationship was already falling apart before I came - that is if their arrangement could be regarded as a relationship.

Some of the posts which didn't portray me as a gold digger or relationship wrecker, subtly hinted while making caricatures of the youngest billionaire choosing his daughter's nanny over his rich ex-girlfriend.

My gaze was torn away from the cellphone when Eden snatched it away from me.

"I told you not to read too much into those comments " He scolded me with a disapproving look.

"I'm totally cool with it, " I told him but he didn't believe me

"Your face seems convincing but I don't trust your heart since I can't see it "

I looked away, afraid I would really burst into tears if he began those pep talks.

"Where is your cell phone?? You need to block unimportant calls and news. In a time like this, it's easy to develop depression and with a history of catatonia, I can't help but worry about you "

I looked up surprised, then asked him "Why should you be worried about me? I'm not your girlfriend neither are you my boyfriend. I don't owe you anything neither do you, if anything we're strangers now your cousin and I have broken up "

He quirked a brow at my comment "So I must be any of the above before worrying about you? "

The side of my lips twitched " I didn't mean it that way, but I don't need any of you worrying about me, especially not from a Spencer " I said to him straightforwardly.

But a smile touched his lips causing me to wonder what's amusing him.

"It seems you're forgetting something here," he said and my brows furrowed together

"What are you talking about? "

"Have you forgotten that you're signed under my company " he reminded me and my eyes went wild.

Crap, I totally forgot about that!

When Nik and I were still lovey-dovey with each other, he convinced me to sign into his company's subsidiary. An entertainment agency managed by Eden, in order to make my acting dream a reality.

At first, I was hesitant, but the terms and conditions were good and I had the chance to audition for a lead role in an upcoming movie. The audition was even next week, I guess the dramas lately made me forget about it.

The universe was seriously against me, I didn't want to get involved with the Spencers anymore. But there was nothing I could do, I couldn't afford to pay for breaching the contract.

"I lost my cell phone " I quickly changed the topic. Our eyes connected but thankfully he didn't quibble on the issue.

"Much better " Eden commented on my missing phone "I'll get you a new one "

"You don't need to bother yourself, I'll get it myself, " I told him with an irritated tone - I was financially capable of getting my own phone.

Thanks to the kidnap yesterday night, my cell phone got lost - I should've asked Sakuzi for compensation.

"Right now your face is all over the internet, magazine, and television. So unless you don't want what happened earlier to repeat itself, stay put and let me handle everything "

I hated this, I hated being helpless and unable to do anything. But why were people so biased? I simply wanted a relationship, wasn't I allowed to have one? Was it such a crime to date a rich shot?

"While it's true that the netizens are pointing fingers at you, you're thankfully still not the most hated 'yet- to -debut actress'? "

I gave him a dirty look, was that a compliment?

"You just need to go under the radar and the frenzy will dissipate in a few days, " He told me, causing me to release an exasperated sigh.

My freedom was snatched away from me just because of a few words someone typed on a keyboard and published to the whole world. Reality was really harsh.

"Fine, whatever "

I looked away through the window before remembering I had no clue where we were heading to.

"Where are you taking me? "

Eden took a deep breath, looked straight ahead as he answered "My place "

I froze, then turned around to face him with compressed lips

" Stop the car " I ordered.

"Why? What's wrong with my place" he asked.

"In case I haven't made it clear Eden, but I want nothing to do with you Spencer's from now on "

His eyes narrowed, "It's just temporal until the buzz dies off "

"Just drop me off at a hotel, Eden "

"The paparazzi would still track you down there, don't underestimate their prowess. You're most safe with me " He explained but those fell on deaf ears.

My eyes flashed "Don't you get it? You guys are the reason I'm in this shit in the first place. If the engagement wasn't interrupted, I wouldn't get chased down by the paparazzo. If you guys haven't used and seen me as a pawn in your game, I wouldn't end up in this state! "

I got so riled up that I forgot I was injured and poked myself in the stomach mistakenly while gesturing, drawing a soft gasp and grimace.

Eden was quick to catch my expression. And movement.

"What is wrong with you? " He asked, a look of suspicion on his face "Are you injured by chance? "

"It's nothing! "I snapped at him, hoping he would take that as a cue to leave me alone.

But Eden ignored me, instead, his gaze traveled below where I had one hand around my stomach.

Without asking for my permission, Eden abruptly tugged up my shirt exposing a purplish-red bruised stomach.

"Are you crazy! What do you think you're doing?!" I shouted at him and brought down my shirt.

"Who did this to you? "

I winced, "None of your business " while smoothing the rumbled edges on my shirt.

" Maya! "

I jumped out of the skin when he yelled at me.

He growled, " I asked you a question? "

I swallowed down my saliva when I saw the fire in his eyes, why was he getting so worked up on my case?

Chapter 112 - One Hundred And Twelve : Like An Asthmatic Camel

Maya's POV

Eden's gaze was really scary, he looked really angry. But why was he so concerned over it? I wasn't even his sister nor girlfriend.

"It's nothing "

He growled a warning, " Maya? " then his eyes narrowed together suspiciously as he asked an outrageous question

"Did Niklaus hit you by chance? "

My head jerked up just as my jaw dropped. "What rubbish are you talking about? Of course not! Why would he hit me? Why would you think that way? " I gave him a dirty look.

"Just because a lion cub is trained amongst human from birth doesn't mean he won't kill when it has its first taste of blood "

I sighed, " English please "

Eden pinned me with a look but explained anyway, "Just because you changed Niklaus for a few months doesn't mean he won't revert to his old ways. It's innate. So forgive me if I doubt he's incapable of hitting women "

I scowled at him, "Niklaus might be an asshole but he doesn't hit women, I can assure you of that "

Why was I even defending him? *sigh* Maya, you can't be salvaged seriously.

"Let's hope so, " said Eden.

I looked away and finally confessed, "A rabid dog kicked me in the stomach while I was butchering its gang "

There was a trace of confusion on his gaze before he understood what I was implying.

"Who won? "

I formed a fist and gave him a look, "Who do you think won? "

He picked up his newspaper and snapped it open as he said, "Good because I don't sit with losers "

I looked the other way and screwed my face in ridicule, was he boasting of his achievements? Wasn't it because he was born with a silver spoon that he could stand where he is today?

"That rabid dog " he brought up the topic again leaving me surprised. I thought the issue had died off already.

"There is no treatment for dogs with rabies, so should I put her in quarantine? "

Because we were communicating Ironically, I couldn't exactly gauge the extent of his "quarantine". Sometimes these Spencers are serious with their words. I had to be careful when dealing with them, so I don't wish for something I might come to reconsider or regret later.

I raised my hand " You don't need to worry about the dog, after all, rabid dog die within ten days "

His expression said he was unsatisfied with my reply but I'm good. The last thing I wanted was owing to a Spencer a favor; I would handle Tina my own way.

"Also, You don't need to worry about your reputation, my PR is already working on damage control. All you have to do is stay low for a while and revitalize your body and soul. Thankfully this scandal gave your popularity a tremendous soar, you're now one of the most followed personalities on Instagram - You should even thank Niklaus for that " Eden said to me before going back to the newspaper that had Niklaus's picture on it.

The picture seems to have been taken on the night of the Gala cause he was wearing that same blue dinner jacket.

Niklaus wasn't intimidated but looked straight at the camera while pasting a slight smile on that breathtaking face that makes women fall into a swoon and throw themselves on him.

My eyes welled up and I blinked, looking away before Eden would notice I was becoming emotional. I hated being a crybaby but I couldn't help it, the tears just fell without my permission.

I want to be strong, firm, and apathetic like Isabella - I must really be going crazy, looking up-to a ten-year-old smart-ass? Really Maya?

"Where are we even going? This is not the direction to your place? " I asked with a hint of panic, having noticed we were already out of the city.

I had already poised my body, ready to attack or swiftly jump out of the car - in my imagination - in case Eden was planning to try something stupid. I had to be ready for him.

Eden lowered his newspaper, looked outside the window, then back at me before answering concisely,

"I have a property in the countryside. It's quiet and relaxing, the reporters can't find you there ."

I pursed my lips, the countryside doesn't sound that bad, moreover, it would give me time to go through my thoughts and put myself in order.

"Will Annabelle be there? " I asked curiously.

"Do you want her to come? " He asked back.

I bite on my lips and shrugged,

"Maybe? I don't really know but I'll love her company. She's a nice kid"

And Isabella is a nice kid too, although misunderstood most times due to her attitude. But she belongs to Niklaus. I can't ask her over, I no longer have the right to do so.

"Alright " Eden acknowledged to my delight.

"You should have a rest, you look distraught," he told me and I quickly tilted forward and checked my appearance through the car's rearview mirror.

Due to the distance, the view wasn't excellent but I was able to makeout puffy skin around my eyes, probably from crying - but I didn't cry much, just a few drops or so? Ah, that time with Amanda.

There were three long bloody scratch marks on my left cheeks - that one should be from Tina and her fake claws, not nails.

My hair was disheveled thanks to the reporters - I can't believe they took pictures of me like this.

In summary, my appearance was a total mess, if I had walked down the streets in this state, I would be assumed mad.

"Take a short nap," He said but it was obviously an order.

I didn't question his command and simply sat back comfortably on my leather seat, resting my head against the window.

Truthfully, I needed sleep, my muscles were aching and I was emotionally exhausted.

Easier said than done, I had imagined it would be hard falling asleep, considering the number of thoughts whirling around in my head,? but the sleep overtook me the moment I shut my eyes close.

I must have slept for a long time because when I opened my eyes, it was evening and my head was lying on someone's shoulder.

"Oh my God " I awoke startled and jerked away from Eden's body as if I was electrocuted.

He cocked a brow " You're awake now? "

I wiped my face and the drool with my hand, "I'm so sorry " I apologized for his shoulder and looked around our surroundings.

"We're here? " I was surprised, the car was no longer moving and it was packed in front of a building.

"Yeah " came his curt reply.

"When did we arrive? "

" An hour again "

I gave him a baffled look, "Why didn't you wake me? "

Eden wrapped his arms across his chest and spoke with a straight face "Because you wrapped yourself around me like an octopus and was snoring loudly like a generator, I didn't know where to begin "

"That's outrageous! " I cried out with a look of disbelief, "I don't snore in my sleep...."

I was yet to finish my sentence when Eden picked up his phone suddenly and played a recording.

Loud and ragged breathing was heard through the speakers, the sound of someone bellowing from their throat almost like an asthmatic camel.

I refuse to believe this.

"This is a lie! " I quibbled on his claim "You must have downloaded the snoring sound online! I sleep like an angel"

Eden paused upon hearing my statement, then he told me "Think whatever you want thy who sleeps like an angel " he taunted me and stepped out of the car.

Chapter 113 - One Hundred And Thirteen : Back In Her Arms

The third point of view :

Tina was burning with fury, how dare she! How dare that illegitimate bastard from the slums mess with her?! She wanted to rip Maya apart, watch her plead for mercy on her knees..... albeit the time to bestow her wrath on her was drawing nigh.

Tina has achieved her first step of the plan: Keeping Niklaus away from Maya. Now she has achieved breaking both of them up, she has to make Nik forget that damn girl. And when he finally does, revenge would come at full force.

Without Niklaus's backing, she currently has the liberty to torment that little bitch slowly. And she would start with her career, being an actress? What a joke!

"Where is the sister of that wrench?" She muttered to herself, going through her contracts while rubbing the spot on her scalp where Maya had pulled so tight.

Finally stumbling upon Kim's number, she called her up at once

"How's everything going from your side? " Tina asked once the call was answered.

"Successful, the public is against her "gloated Kim from the other end

Tina's lips curled up, " Good, keep up the good work. At least this would teach that bitch where she belongs " She relished the feeling of wracking Maya's life.

Unfortunately, Tina's expression shifted when she heard Kim said,

" But... .we have a problem "

Her laughing tone changed to a less friendly one "What's wrong "

"No matter how much I dug, Maya's record is scrupulously clean so I can't feed the reporters any shit about her. Moreover, a few minutes ago, every negative post about Maya was forcefully brought down "

A sharp glint appeared in Tina's eyes and she began to work her jaw, deep in thoughts. Who is it this time?? Who's set on ruining her plans? It couldn't be Niklaus, he has enough trouble on his hands at the moment.

"Are you still there? "Kim asked.

Tina finally spoke into the phone," Withdraw for now and watch from the sidelines. Once there's an opportunity you strike "

" Alright," Kim agreed.

"Good. Now have a nice da- "

"Miss Tina, I need a bit of cash " Kim dropped before she could end the call.

A scowl made its presence known on Tina's face and her voice climbed up a notch, "What do you mean you need some cash? I sent thousands to you just two days ago, do you think I pluck money from a tree?!" she yelled at that bitch.

The whole family was the same, Gold diggers, they want to drain her pocket.

Just because she was rich and an heiress doesn't mean she spends like the world is ending. She had projects to fund - huge thanks to Niklaus - She shouldn't be wasting her resources like this.

"I know. But some of the reporters that helped me out are demanding more, " Kim complained.

Demand my ass, Tina sneered. She knew that little witch wanted to leech more money off her.

Tina wanted to scream at her but she calmed down, it was not the right time yet. She still needed Kim for a lot of things besides, Niklaus must never find out she has anything to do with Maya's current predicament.

Kim was the right choice, yes she was smart yet greedy, she would do anything for money and power; she clearly understood the risk.

The little witch knew Niklaus would never let her nor her family off again if he dared discover she messed with Maya yet she jumped right into the deal because of the cash involved.

Besides they worked together, She has to ensure Niklaus cares less and less about Maya until he eventually forgets her, while Kim deals with the little bitch in secret.

Niklaus would never imagine she and Kim were working together as far as she treads carefully, at least until she has him wrapped around her good-looking fingers.

Then she would have the full authority to deal with that girl called Maya the way she wants to, without Niklaus's interference.

"Fine, you would receive a package before the end of the day " She gave in reluctantly.

"Thanks so much, I'll work hard..." Kim was still saying when she disconnected the call and groaned in frustration.

"Ugh, those leeches! " She gripped her hair tightly, drawing a painful yelp from her lips.

"Goddammit! Where is that stupid housekeeper?! " Tina yelled, eyes darting around the room for her.

She had been waiting in Niklaus's room for a long time now, awaiting his return.

Her cheeks were red and swollen from Maya's slaps on her face. She left it that way on purpose: Once Niklaus returns and sees her face in that state, she would break down in tears and narrate to him what Maya did to him.

"I realized my mistakes and was just apologizing to Maya when she assaulted me physically " Tina went over the lines in her head, how perfect.

Tears weren't a problem for her, she had experienced and received a lot of lessons from a young age, so acting was as easy as ABC.

An evil smile graced her face, with her antics and body, she would have Niklaus back in her arms where he belongs in no time.

Her attention was attracted when the door was opened causing her expression to light up.

" Nikla- " Her face fell, it was the stupid housekeeper.

"I'm sorry " Amanda apologized and stretched the ice pack in her grip towards her.

"Why are you such a slowpoke, what took you so long?! " She yelled while snatching the ice pack from her.

"I'm sorry " Amanda bowed her head in apology, "I had to attend to Sir Niklaus "

"Are you giving me excus - wait, Niklaus is here?! " her eyes widened in surprise.

"Yeah, he came back about twenty minutes ago or so, I didn't exactly check the time "

"Why didn't you tell me?! "

"I just told you " Amanda sassed back but managed to keep her tone down. This rich brat was getting on her nerves, does she look like her personal servant?

Tina was tongue-tied, so she glared at her. She took a deep breath and faked a smile? " Where is he? "

" He's in Maya's room "

"Maya?! " Tina's eyes flashed red, anger surging through her veins. What was Niklaus doing in that girl's room? No! She had to do something.

She tossed the ice pack to Amanda with no care and started down the stairs.

Chapter 114 - One Hundred And Fourteen : Isabella Likes Her

Nik's? POV

Though I was slipping in and out of consciousness, I grabbed her hand the moment it went to my face, Maya.

"You came back? " I whispered, holding her hand so tight, afraid it would disappear once I let go.

Though the sight was blurry, I could still make out that charming yet shy smile of hers and those two dark orbs full of life.

" Niklaus " She whispered and cupped my face, tears fell from her eyes.

She gasped, "You're having a fever. " she withdrew her hands and tried to stand on her feet but I tugged her back to the edge of the bed.

"Don't go " I pleaded desperately, I just wanted her beside her. I can't tell why I was behaving this way but I felt? she would become a dream I made-up if I dare to let go.

There must have been a hesitant look on her face cause she chewed on her lips and said, "But your body is too hot - "

"Just stay with me, I don't care about my temperature. I'm good "

Her gaze rested on my bloodied appearance but I winced slightly when her hand touched my back.

"Why are you like this? Are you really a sucker for pain, why would you put yourself in danger for... for... "

Tears must have clogged her throat cause she found it out voicing out the rest of her words.

"I thought you were never coming back? You made it quite clear today. What changed your mind ? "

She hesitated for a while before answering with an emotion-filled voice, "What do you think? Niklaus, I love you. I love everything about you, but why do you care only for that... "

"For what? " I queried curiously.

She swallowed and I watched the way her lips moved and my groin tightened.

"Why do you care only about yourself? " Her question snapped my gaze away from her lips.

"Of course, I care about you "

"But you don't love me " there was a trace of sadness and disappointment in her eyes and it hurt my heart.

I didn't like the look on her, it doesn't fit her personality. My personal sunshine should never dim and so I decided to open up to her for once.

"Maya, I'm afraid to love you. I'm afraid if I love you, you would end up the way Kay did. The guilt still eats me and I don't think I would be able to take that same guilt a second time "My hands reached out to her hair and I gladly ran my hands through it.

But the light must have performed a trick on my eyes cause for a moment, I saw Maya's hair flash blonde but it reverted back to its brown color immediately .

I blinked and my brows furrowed together, " Did you cut your hair by chance? It seems shorter "

I have always loved playing around with Maya's hair because of its length and silkiness. So it came as a surprise to me when it became shorter than the last time I felt it, which was approximately last night.

She laughed, nervously "You're just having a fever Niklaus, there's nothing wrong with my hair "

I suddenly had a foreboding that something was not right and that was further confirmed when she lowered her head to kiss my lips.

My nose crinkled as she drew near. What was that nauseating smell?? Perfume? But Maya doesn't use perfume.

As if a veil was lifted off my face, my hazy vision cleared on-time to see Tina puckering her lips and drawing near, about to abuse my lips. How delirious was I with a fever that I would mistake her for Maya?

I shot up to my feet at once, pushed her back to the bed, and wedge my elbow against her neck in a stranglehold.

My eyes flashed, "What do you think you're doing?!" I boomed at her but Tina just kept struggling beneath me and hitting my arm.

"Answer me! " I roared.

"B-bre... .breath...cant "

Blinded by my anger, I didn't realize how lethal the chokehold could be. I pushed away from her at once while she gagged and started a coughing fit.

With her hand massaging her throat, she looked up at me with sheer fear mixed with disappointment.

"Do you want to kill me that much? "

I gave her a dirty look, " If it were that easy, I would have considered it right after the Gala yesternight "

An apparent look of disbelief crossed her features, "You must have really lost it Niklaus! "

"No, you lost it! " I spat back at her, " You lost your freaking mind the moment you started desiring what you knew would never be yours! "

Her mouth hung open but I wasn't done with her,

"You of all people Christina! You clearly knew what you were getting yourself into from the very start, it was a deal. And you know? I totally understand you falling for me, but what I won't permit, is you going behind my back and hurting the one I choose. Now get out of Maya's room! "

I pointed to the door while my chest was heaving from the anger boiling inside of me but Tina remained frozen on the bed.

For a moment, nothing was said between the both of us. We just regarded each other slowly until she decided to break the silence.

"So you're trying to say..." She rose up to her feet and approached me "That I can't have what I want? "

I scowled at her statement, was she playing games with me?

She arched a brow "You decided to have Maya and I decided to have you, what's the difference between the both of us? "

I worked my jaw, she was definitely trying to irk me.

"Niklaus, there's no difference between the both of us " Tina smiled and tried to touch my face but I sent her a warning glare.

"I'm sorry but opposites attract. Now make that door your friend " I ordered her? but she was set on proving our likeness.

"The both of us are strong and determined people, we both know what we want and we go fit it "

"Yeah thanks for saying that cause I know what I want and it's not you "

Her eyes darkened and she said in an outburst," What's so special about that b*tch! "

There was a sharp glint in my eyes "Oh, you want to know what's so special about her? "

I took a step forward and she stumbled backward out of fright upon realizing all smiles were gone from my face, replaced by a cold emotionless expression.

"She's trustworthy; I don't have to worry about her cheating behind my back "

I saw the way her expression shifted, she was definitely counting the number of affairs she thought I didn't know about in her head.

"Maya has a heart of gold and she is a queen every man wants by his side, but you? You want to be the king and unfortunately, two kings can't rule a kingdom. One has to forfeit his right and I'm sure as hell, I wouldn't be the one doing that "

I saw the way her fists clenched at her sides, fine keep in your anger as long as you want.

"And last but not least, Isabella likes her and this particular reason covers every other reason. So that's what makes her so special and different than you. Now get out of this room this instant ! "

A slap met my face and my gaze hardened.

"Wake up, I'm your fiancée !" She said through gritted teeth and furious bulging eyes.

I laughed then touched the place where she slapped me, "Sure fiancée? knock yourself out with the title " came my nonchalant comment, then grabbed her arm and began to tug her out of the room.

" Let me go " She struggled but her strength was no match for mine.

Opening the door, I pushed her out of the room and she fell to the ground and turned her head, giving me a hateful look.

"I don't hit women but if you ever step into this room, I wouldn't hesitate to do so. Go and live your life "

Then shut the door.

"You bastard, Open this damn door!" Tina began to pound on the door but I ignored her, instead called up my security to toss her out of there.

I finally realized where I had done it wrong: unlike the other girls I dated, I gave Tina too much liberty. I let her do whatever she wanted without bothering to look into it and that gave her the impression, she was the only one for me.

I took off the bloody sleeved shirt and tossed it to the ground while checking my body through the full-length standing mirror. My upper body was a purplish-red mess and though Amanda did a good work of treating my face, the bruises were still there - Adam was kind enough not to give me a black-eye.

I walked into Maya's bathroom but my sight fell on her strawberry shampoo resting on the vanity.

The perfume was what gave Tina away.

Maya never uses perfume unless she was going for an important occasion and it's applied subtly.

But Tina's was so overwhelming, I felt like throwing up but thanks to it, I snapped out of my reverie.

I wonder what Tina would have done to me in that state, she clearly knew I was not in my right state of mind yet, she manipulated that.

It seems I have to tighten my defenses from now on.

Chapter 115 - One Hundred And Fifteen : The Countryside

Maya's POV

Unlike my expectations, the adobe-style house was simple and of one storey and roofed with red Spanish tiles. The driveway connected right into the yard with a carefully mowed lawn. There was a tropical patio garden at the side which would be suitable for reading and relaxing, Eden obviously put much thought into building this place.

The housekeeper welcomed us the moment we rang the doorbell as if informed beforehand. Unlike the outside which betrayed Spencer's wealth, the inside of the house was state of the art and made my jaw drop.

From the living room to the bathroom, every part of the house was made using modern construction techniques, my God!.

The highly glossed medium brown mahogany wood floor was a dynamic blend with the blue-green walls while diverse paintings ornated the walls.

I was quite mystified, the inside of the house was spacious than what the outside implied. The living room was furnished with luxurious seating, air conditioner, large LCD flatscreen, a minibar with a 3D wall panel.

" Wow, this is more than expected, " I said in amazement.

His amused eyes searched my face, "What were you expecting? "

I laughed silly, "Well when you mentioned countryside, I was expecting to see cottages, cabin, and mud houses with thatched roofs or spend hours trudging through narrow, quiet, and bendy roads with one of a kind potholes just to get here "

He tilted his head to the side surprised, " How do you know all of this? You sound like someone who has lived in the countryside? "

Then he saw my knowing look, "You did huh? "

I pursed my lips and shrugged my shoulders, " Well, it's not a secret that I'm an illegitimate child but what people don't know is the fact that my mom was determined to abort me, had my grandma not pleaded and swore to take care of me.

"So the best mom of the year - note the sarcasm - comprised her decision and brought me out to the world, handing me over to granny at once; my mom never breastfed me. I was eight years old when I was eventually taken back to the city "

I looked up and frowned, "Don't give me that look, Eden, the countryside is not such a bad place to live. You've got cleaner air than the overpopulated and crowded cities, homes are far more affordable, nature everywhere and the foods are fresh and straight from the garden. It's more peaceful than the hectic and stressful city life "

There was a captivated gleam in Eden's face until he cocked a brow and said, " But? "

"I'm not going to say that "

" Come on, just say it " he urged me

" No "

"Please ?"

"Countryside is wonderful, why would you want to hear the negative aspect of it "

"I'll give you the room with the best view " he tempted me and I sadly gave in.

"Countryside is intriguing and comfortable but what I dislike about it the most is the lack of Wi-Fi, sometimes getting a single bar of signal on your phone is quite a hassle " I shook my head and sighed exasperatedly.

"Oh don't worry, " Eden said to me as he started up the stairs and I followed after him, " I made sure to feature strong and free Wi-Fi Internet throughout the property "

"No way, slap me! " I stopped, my eyes expressing shock.

"It's nothing, I provided it to the whole community " he explained to me nonchalantly as if that was something normal people do every day.

I swoon inwardly, how nice it is to be so rich. Imagine if I had so much money like the Spencer's, what I would do with it?

Make sure my properties are scattered across the globe, there must be my personal house accommodating me each time I travel out.

Then my first date would be on the moon, it would be such ease breaking the Genius record. Imagine having steak with your honey boo on a spaceship, the scene would be so -

"Maya! " Eden burst me out of my imagination

I glanced up, " Huh? "

"Where was your mind? " He asked.

I smiled at him sheepishly, "Sorry about that "

"Continue " he stated and continued up the stairs.

"Continue what? " I inquired.

Eden gave me a look, "The negative aspect of the countryside, remember? " he replied with a hint of ridicule.

"Oh " I cleared my throat, "Secondly, is the lack of an aesthetically looking building. Most houses are built for the functional purpose of shelter, no thought given to esthesis." I had to rack my brain for that one.

I tilted my head and looked up at Eden's face, awaiting an emotion called, "impression" but other than a slight nod of his head, his features were blank.

"Continue," he willed me again.

I frowned, does he think I'm telling a tale here? Nevertheless, I still continued.

"Unlike cities where you need an alarm, background music, rambunctious neighbors, or traffic to wake you up from bed, that is if you live quite close to the roads. In the countryside, the cockerel is sure to wake you as soon as the sun rises, not to talk of the chirping of the birds or bugs and insects "

This time my comment elicited a response from Eden. He stopped at a door and stated

"No wonder, you sometimes speak with a thick accent just like now. You really did live there " he pointed out joyfully

"Oh about that " I scratched my head awkwardly, "I've been trying to perfect my accent over the years but I guess, sometimes it slips from my tongue. My mom hates that accent a lot, she says it makes me sound like a country pumpkin "

"Don't stop speaking it," Eden said out of nowhere, taking me by surprise.

I lifted my head, our eyes met.

"Don't ever stop Maya, it sounds sexy "

My heart missed a beat.

I looked away breaking the contact and coughed awkwardly, my cheeks were burning, what the hell was that?

"We're here. " He said and ushered me into the room as if that weird moment never occurred.

I stepped into the room and stood rooted to the ground, someone should slap me!

My room was spacious and offers great views of the lush green farmlands and hills, the garden filled with flowers, and the beauty of the countryside through the balcony.

The room was attractively decorated in subtle hues and led lighting. It was well equipped with a king-size bed, deep and plush sofas, a coffee table, and a large LCD flatscreen.

I even had my own private bathroom equipped with a full-sized bathtub with shower, washbasin, and a water closet.

I kept on jumping and swooning over everything like a five-year-old taken to Disneyland for the first time, the room was equivalent to a super deluxe suite normally found in hotels - why shouldn't I jubilate?

"You will find the toiletries in your bathroom and bathrobe and slippers, it's being provided already. "? Eden explained as I went through the sparkling white WC and the sophisticated looking bathroom that I would be using - Oh heavens! I wouldn't mind dying now.

"Are you sure I'm the one using this room? " I questioned him again with narrowed eyes, just to be sure he wasn't pulling my legs.

"Yeah Maya " he answered before pointing to the telephone on the coffee table, "You can use those for now until the scandals over "

At the mention of scandal, my uplifted mood sank at once the way rain falls on the earth, it seems I've been carried away by luxury.

" Sure " I answered him moodily, there was nobody to call anyway so It might as well have been a decoration.

" I'll be back " Eden announced and left.

I looked out through the window, the sun had already gone down, soon darkness would cover the land.

With a deep sigh, I threw myself on my unbelievably soft bed and stared at the ceiling.

What do I do with my life?

Eden returned almost immediately and I sat up. He was holding a first-aid kit and took a seat beside me on the bed.

"Don't bother yourself, I can treat myself " I told him when his hands moved to open the kit.

For a moment I thought he was going to argue with me until he has his way like Niklaus does but he surprisingly respected my wishes.

"Be careful of the Channel you watch, the scandal might pop up on one of the programs you tune on, alright? "

My eyes rested on the flat-screen television and I gave him a wry smile, " Alright "

He rose to his feet.

"Are you going somewhere? " I asked curiously.

"Yeah, I need to get Annabelle. She's almost here " he tucked his hands into the pockets of his pants.

"Oh " I gave him a-go - ahead look

"Take a shower and look around the house if you want to, contact the housekeeper or the maids if you need anything "

"Alright "

His mouth slightly opened as if he wanted to say something else but atlas, he shut it close and walked out of the room.

Chapter 116 - One Hundred And Sixteen : Commit Suicide

Eden's POV

Why was I even doing this? She is just someone I want to use because she caught Niklaus's interest, so why was I suddenly protective of her?

Oh I know why, I was feeling sympathy for her because I could relate to her experience too.

I also grew up in the countryside but not as long as she did and not because I was an illegitimate child.

My parents were divorced because dad found out mom was cheating on him, not to forget the fact she married him for his money.

Thankfully I turned out to be his, but my father had me sent to the countryside because he didn't want me to be a hindrance to Niklaus's future or so I thought.

Truthfully speaking, my father Eric was supposed to be the family head instead of Adam, but an unfortunate accident made him unsuitable for the position.

On a day out with his elder brother Adam, there was an accident and he used his own body to shield Niklaus's father, getting injured in his stead.

As a result of that, he was paralyzed from the waist down and in the later years suffered from extreme thrombocytosis.

Because it was located on the side of his brain that was considered dominant, there weren't enough veins to circumvent blood flow, causing the clot to expand, block critical veins and build up venous pressure.

My father Eric must have been really destined to die cause no amount of treatment revived him, instead his condition deteriorated. It led to Ischemic strokes and he eventually died of a heart attack.

During those years of his suffering, I was being nurtured in the countryside and hated him, thinking he abandoned me because of my mother without knowing it was for my own safety.

It was no coincidence that such an incident happened in the period when the selection for the new family head was around the corner.

All hands pointed at Adam, but there was no concrete evidence to point him out as the culprit moreover, he was in the same car with Eric when everything happened.

After all which bastard would be willing to throw away his life, just to gain a position?

After my father's dad, I was taken back to the city and Adam trained me up for the rest of the years .

" I was now his responsibility " as he claims.

Initially, Nik and I weren't always enemies though the guy had always been a cold asshole, we got along fine unlike now.

At first, our relationship was just so-so until Kay came along and strengthened it.

Yes, she had always been Niklaus's pal from childhood but she never neglected me for once nor made me feel left out, she made sure to give me enough attention, as I believed.

Kay hung out with us both and we became the best of buddies for years ... until Niklaus betrayed me.

He always knew I liked Kay and even gave me tips on how to get her - all this time, he must have snickered behind my back for being such a fool - unfortunately for me, I was the kind of guy who couldn't muster enough courage to talk to a girl.

But one day I decided to do it, made up my mind to tell Kay how much she meant to me but instead, got the greatest shock of my life, both were getting married.

Though it was an underage marriage, they had the consent of both families and Kay was under the age of eighteen, so they were given authorization. But because of public opinion, they had to hide the news for quite a while.

I felt deceived and humiliated, was never embarrassed in my entire life until that very moment. I could still remember the look of disbelief on my face and the bouquet of

flowers slipping down from my grip as the couples received congratulations from family members.

Growing up in the Spencer's household, I never asked for much nor desired anyone other than Kay. I had always been a geek, cool, and collected boy; but that boy was lost forever.

My personality changed, everything about me changed from that night. I learned about life the hard way and it was time to make a change.

I began to go to parties, lived my life to the fullest, and in my drunken state, got a girl pregnant.

We were just teenagers and still in high school, but the Spencer's were loaded, so it was no problem taking care of her and the baby.

Coincidentally, Kay got pregnant in the same month with my baby mama Audrey and I thought, "Fate must be f*cking with the Spencers "

Anabelle was never abandoned when she was born, but Audrey claimed she was too young to become a mother. So I settled her off and she left while I took up the responsibilities of both parents.

At first, it was hard, and I actually thought of giving up but my grandfather was surprisingly there for me and provided help. Also, the smile on my daughter's face every morning as I cradled her in my arms kept me going.

Anabelle gave me hope, I could reclaim everything that was taken from me.

"Don't bother yourself, I can treat myself " Maya refused when I tried to help her with the wound on her face.

I wanted to insist but remembered she had gone through a lot today, I didn't want to stress her further. Maya needed rest.

I took a deep breath? "Be careful of the channel you watch, the scandal might pop up on one of the programs you tune on, alright? "

I watched her eyes move to the television with a tired smile, she probably wasn't going to watch any at all.

"Alright," She answered.

I rose to his feet.

"Are you going somewhere? "

"Yeah, I need to get Annabelle. She's almost here " I told her and slid my hands into the pocket of my pants.

"Oh "

"Take a shower and look around the house if you want to, contact the housekeeper or the maids if you need anything "

"Alright "

My gaze lingered on her more than intended, I wanted to ask if I could get her anything on my way back but I decided against it. What am I?? Her boyfriend? Nanny? - oh right, she's the nanny - ex-nanny.

I shut my mouth and left right away. Sometimes, some things were better left unsaid; just like Niklaus doesn't want to expose the fact that I was the one who leaked the deal.

The bad blood between Niklaus and Sakuzi had started that day. Hardly known to the public, Spencer Group has a subsidiary that manufactures ammunition for the military but that kind of business comes with its downside and lots of skeletons in the wardrobe.

Niklaus had a deal with Sakuzi and I leaked it, but unfortunately, Kay was the casualty loss instead of Niklaus as planned.

Nobody knows that truth except the both of us which is why I can't strike yet; the iron was still hot, it had to cool.

The Wilson family were still angry over Kay's death, one wrong move could turn my plans to smithereens and get me toasted in the process.

Niklaus knows I can't shake him off that position at the moment, but I was gathering enough dirt on him just as he was doing on me, but we will see who the Spencer elders? chooses in the end.

I checked my Patek Philippe watch, it was over seven o'clock pm and Annabelle wasn't here yet. I began to get worried, just when I thought of calling them up, their car arrived at the bus station.

I opened my door and climbed out of the car with a delightful smile on my face and outstretched hands

"Annabelle, my sweet.... "

The smile on my face froze the moment I saw Isabella came into view instead.

I frowned, what the f*ck was going on? Why was Isabella here? Where was my daughter?

The other backseat door opened,? instead of seeing my daughter, a pretty blond-haired boy stepped out. Where is this organism from? What the hell is going on?

Just when I was about to explode, a high-pitched shout halted me.

" Dad! " She screamed.

I let out a sigh of relief unknowingly.

" My lovely daughter "

She ran into my embrace and I hugged her so tight, I thought something happened to them.

"Dad, I'm sorry for bringing Izzy and brother Pedro without your permission " She apologized the moment she pulled away.

My brows furrowed in confusion and glanced at the boy "Brother Pedro? "

" He's my friend "

"Anabelle, this is not a school excursion " I chided her, causing her to lower her head dejectedly. Suddenly, she lifted up her head and displayed quivering lips and teary irresistible eyes.

God, Annabelle. How can I say no to you with that look?

"Fine, they can come along " I gave in finally and she began to leap up and down in celebration.

It's hard to believe but Niklaus's brat Isabella behaved herself and didn't cause any trouble till we got home.

I handed the children over to the housekeeper to take care of and went to check up on Maya since I couldn't find downstairs.

I knocked on her door but no reply came. I tried again and again but no answer, so I thought she was asleep and turned to climb down the stairs when I heard the sound of glass breaking.

This time, I didn't hesitate to open the door since my print was already installed on all the doors in the house.

I couldn't find Maya in her room nor balcony, but not the bathroom. I rushed into the bathroom and my first sight landed on the broken glass and the spilled red liquid and then.....

Maya submerged in the bathtub just as the last bubble escaped her mouth.

Did she just commit suicide?

Chapter 117 - One Hundred And Seventeen : The Guilt Trip

Maya's POV

My room felt oddly quiet and empty after Eden left, so I just tossed and dallied on the bed for a while before I decided to tour the house.

The housekeeper was there to serve me the moment I walked into the living room.

She bowed to me which was quite awkward considering the fact she was possibly the same age as my mother - scratch that - ex-mother.

"Do you need anything miss? " She asked with her head still lowered.

I scratched the back of my scalp, "You can't serve me with your head down, right? " I tried to make a joke out of this situation but she took it too seriously.

"My deepest apology Miss, forgive this subordinate for being disrespectful " She bowed again, this time lower than earlier.

I was quite taken aback, were Eden's people always this meticulous and professional in their service.

I shook my hand and head, " No, no, you don't need to help me, I'll find my way around "

She still persisted, "But miss - "

"No" I insisted firmly. "Go ahead with what you were doing, I would be fine by myself moreover, I'm not a kid "

"Alright then, if you say " She bowed her head once more and left.

While she left, I kept on watching her inquisitively - Tut,tuk, don't their waist hurt at all?

I took a tour of the house and was quite impressed with what he did here, it was wonderful.

My journey continued to the basement level where I found myself in a wine cellar.

"Wow " I gasped in amazement and excitement as my eyes took in the hundreds of collected wine resting on the shelves.

"Oh my God " I gasped with a fascinated delight and walked further into the cellar that was built like a cave and had little to no sunlight with a ceramic floor that looked like wood.

"Take a look at this pristine glass! " I cried out in joy and picked out a Chateau Léoville Poyferré 1990, feeling it against my cheeks.

"My baby " I cooed, placed it back on the shelf, and picked a Spanish Garnacha, held it to my chest, and twirled around, lost in my imagination.

How could someone have this much collection? I bet there were about six hundred bottles or so and he had a balanced collection; white, red, dessert, prestige bottles - you name it!

It was not a secret that I'm a wine lover, my eyes gleamed with excitement just viewing at the accumulation of bottles.

Tracing the rack, I pulled out a Chateauneuf-du-Pape and my lips curled up - Eden has many prohibitively expensive wines, it wouldn't hurt to taste this wine.

Wines were known to near their peak with age which was why I chose this one thanks to Eden's diversification; mature ones taste the best.

The housekeeper gave me a weird and suspicious gaze when I requested for a wine glass and corkscrew, but obeyed nevertheless.

"Ahh, life is good. This is what I'm talking about " I closed my eyes and moaned in satisfaction while the warm water relaxed my tensed muscles.

I was currently lounging in my bathtub with a glass of red wine by my side and surrounded by frothy bubbles - is there a better feeling than this?

The light was low and I was singing along with the music playing from the music channel on the television. I had opened the bathroom door a bit and increased the volume so I could hear the music playing.

"But even if the stars and moon collide

I never want you back into my life

You can take your words and all your lies

Oh oh oh I really don't care "

I grabbed the glass of wine balanced on the edge of my tub and took an occasional sip of it.

"Love doesn't last forever even for those who claim to be in love, but I can promise you that I'll remain faithful once I commit to you, moreover there are a million ways I can make our married life exciting but the question is,? will you let me? "

I remembered Nik's exact words the day I gave consent to our relationship.

"Liar " I murmured under my breath as tears slipped down my cheeks, my heart was hurting.

"You promised the world and I fell for it " A different song started to play from the television.

I lay apathetic, dull, and gazed up at the ceiling while the lyrics tugged at my heart and made me close my eyes tight, beginning to recall my time together with Niklaus.

"I saw the signs and I ignored it "

I always felt it from the very start, like we were never meant to be together, not a match made in heaven. I just wanted to savor our moments together, unfortunately , the memories hurt - so bad I felt like dying.

Lost in my memories, exhaustion washed over me and made my eyes begin to droop.

Whatever happened next, I couldn't exactly recall but all I knew was that I found myself in a sea. Flapping around, I tried? to breathe in to survive all to no avail, instead drank more water, there was no air.

I struggled and struggled until I had no strength anymore and just gave up. Death was so peaceful but not quiet - why was someone calling my name persistently.

" Maya! " I felt pain on my face as if someone was slapping my cheeks.

Something was pressing hard on my chest before I felt forced air rush down my lungs causing me to awake with a loud gasp.

I sat up coughing and vomiting a mouthful of lathered water while my eyes stung - I think I just got soap into my eyes.

"What happened? " I winced, rubbing my eyes.

"I should be asking you that?!" Eden yelled at me with a furious intensity that made me jump out of my skin.

I was speechless.

Though my eyes were shut, I could feel the anger coming off of him, he was definitely pissed at me.

Out of nowhere, I felt him drop something on my chest and this time, soap- in-my-eyes or not, I tore my eyes open.

I was naked!

Eden saw me naked!

I was naked all this while!

"Don't you think It's a little too late to hide your immodesty? I've already seen everything " he commented with no ounce of shame the moment he saw me wrapping the towel across my body.

I glared at him.

He glared back at me, " I don't think you're in a position to be angry at me, what the hell were you thinking?!"

Yeah, he yelled my head off.

"I was just relaxing in- "

"Yeah, relaxing with a glass of ten years old matured red wine?!" He scolded me, pointing to the shattered mess on the tiled bathroom floor.

"Don't you know the risk of chilling out with music in the bathtub while drunk? I almost lost you, Maya! "

This time the television now belting out old blues received its own fair share of the blame.

"You fell asleep while drunk and almost drowned Maya!" He reminded me again as if his boisterous words

weren't ringing in my head already.

"I'm really sorry, I didn't mean it to happen " I apologized but apparently, Eden wasn't done with his lectures.

"The next time you want to commit suicide, please do it in your place and convenient. Don't drag others into an undeserved guilt trip "

He stormed out of the room leaving me speechless. Guilt trip? His words unsettled me, had my unexpected drowning session trigger a bad experience or memory?

I felt guilty, I had not meant for any of this to happen; I just wanted to have a good time.

Dressing up I was disoriented, I couldn't concentrate, my thoughts were all over the place. But I couldn't continue this way , I was unintentionally hurting the people around me and myself.

I had to forget about Nik, push him to the uttermost back of my mind - if that was possible - and move on with my life - this heartbreak has to come to a stop.

I was so embarrassed I couldn't face Eden and decided to sleep the rest of the night but my stomach growled so loud I was frightened.

I bit into my pillow cover in frustration and groaned out loud, there was no other choice than to go downstairs in order to grab something to eat.

Eden was sure to be there...oh and Annabelle - perhaps the girl would be able to brighten the gloomy and tensed mood.

I made my way downstairs and as usual, the housekeeper who seems to always have her eyes on me came out of nowhere - now that's creepy.

"I was just about to inform you, Miss, Sir Eden wants you at the dining table " she bowed and told me politely as always - was she a robot? Doesn't her backache at all?

"This way " She directed me? when I took a wrong turn.

"Oh," I smiled bashfully and followed her lead.

"What's your name if I may ask please, " I asked curiously, I couldn't keep on calling her the housekeeper, it sounded a bit awkward.

"Mrs. El "

"Mrs. El? That's all? "

"We are here Miss," She said, drawing my attention to the dining room. But what I saw made my jaw drop?

Seriously?!

Chapter 118 - One Hundred And Eighteen : Way Worse Than Niklaus

Maya's POV

I must have brought a country to ruin in my past life to deserve this kind of fate. Was it really impossible to escape the Spencer's? It seems the more I run, the more I keep getting tangled with them.

Like a rose, they're beautiful and enticing but right now, they're choking me with their thorns.

I was more shocked to see Pedro than Isabella, what charm did Annabelle use on Cecil for her to release her precious son and allow him to journey with them without her supervision?

This unusual gathering was probably instigated by Annabelle - definitely not Isabella's normal mode of operation else, chaos would've broken out already.

Seeing Isabella made me a whole lot uncomfortable. It was nerve-wracking having a meal with a child that would've become my stepdaughter if things had gone according to as planned.

Thankfully, she just passed me a brief glance and focused her attention back on her food.

I felt like I failed her like I didn't fight enough for my relationship, but what could I do? Sometimes it was better to give up than fighting a losing war.

Love was not always enough to face all situations. Niklaus and I had too many opposers and oppressors. Also, a marriage hardly survives without the support of family members - household enemies were the most dangerous of all.

"Take a seat, " Eden said without looking at me.

Not a word was heard from my lips as I pulled out a dining chair and sat down, he was still angry at all.

I must have scared the hell out of Eden, now he must be thinking I have *Suicidal ideation - I couldn't exactly blame him anyway; catatonia in most cases comes with depression which in turn leads to suicide.

But I had to survive ..no, I must survive!. I still have a lot to achieve in this life also, I couldn't give Kim and her family the pleasure of knowing I turned out to become a failure as they predicted.

"Aunt Maya " Annabelle's energetic and high-pitched voice jerked me out of my thoughts

"Huh? " I was startled.

"What happened to your face? Did you fight with a cat? " She asked pointing to her own face as reference.

I blinked in confusion.

Oh, I haven't treated that scratch wound yet, that skipped out of my mind thanks to the drowning incident.

I felt Izzy's heated gaze on mine, my hand flew to my face, stroking the wounds that no longer hurt as before.

With no clue how to answer Annabelle's question, I decided to go along with the flow of her thought

"You're right pumpkin, your aunt Maya fought with a dangerous wild cat today "

"That witch touched you? " A cold voice resonated directly across from me at the table and caused me to look up, my calm gaze connecting with Isabella's heated orbs.

"We touched each other, " I clarified.

Tina is a b*tch, that I agree, but I'm not going to dump all of the blame on her. We fought each other period - though it was three against one.

"Touch? " Annabelle chimed in, albeit she couldn't decipher our cryptic conversation "A witch touched you? I thought witches don't exist, how did you find one? Is that possible? "

This was one big question - numerous at that - how could I explain everything to Annabelle in a simple and concise manner.

Still thinking hard on how to maneuver my way out of this situation without creating more loopholes, God helped me out by touching Eden's heart.

"No talking at the table, " He told Annabelle strictly who tried to protest.

"But still, I want to - "

"That's final, " His voice sounded a lot firmer.

Tears gathered in Annabelle's eye but Eden ignored her, it seems her charm wouldn't work this time; save Pedro who rubbed her back in a soothing manner.

"Don't cry" Pedro comforted her while I shook my head in disapproval - Eden spoilt her way too much or maybe, she's just a natural crybaby.

Still, the amount of tears she produces in such a short time amazes me, Anabelle would do exceptionally well in a crying scene. Especially when she lifts those beautiful blue orbs with glittery tears gathering at a corner of her eyes and looks straight at you - God, the scene would be so breathtaking!

Unlike Anabelle who is so natural at shedding liters of tears, I have to compose myself and remember a really emotional experience that hurt me badly before I'm able to act out a crying scene.

"Hope you won? " Isabella was the first to break the 'no -talking- at- the -table' rule and her question was obviously directed at me.

It indeed baffles me how every member of the Spencer household was obsessed with the winning mentality. Would it be a crime if they lost for once?

I watched Eden's reaction, he had a calm and neutral expression, nothing else as if he had expected it.

"Must I win? " I asked back.

"You lost to her in love, lose to her in a physical battle too? Then you're nothing but a coward "

My head jerked up, while the grip on my spoon was so tight I could already feel it deforming.

"Excuse me? "

Eden cleared his throat awkwardly, Annabelle who had been whimpering at the side even stopped and watched the both of us.

Isabella held my furious gaze, " You heard me right "

"That is not the way to talk to me young lady, I would not have you disrespect me! " I scolded her, the spoon in my grip finally bending to an awkward position.

Isabella snorted loudly, "Oh please, spare me the ' respect' lectures. You know exactly what I'm talking about here "

I was taken aback slightly, was I really beating about the bush?

"You did nothing and let your man get taken by another woman, instead you ran out bawling out your eyes like a chicken "

I retorted, " What do you expect me to do? Humiliate myself further? "

"That tiny witch of the century kissed your man for Christ f*cking sake! You were supposed to grab her hair off that stage and show her who the boss is, not run with your tails hidden between your legs! "

A loud bang was heard as my hand came down hard on the table, clattering some dishes

I deadpanned "Really? Really Isabella? You're suggesting to me physical harassment in front of hundreds of esteemed guests and live broadcast !"

"Alright ladies, this is the point where we should all calm down and reason diplomatically like a normal human -"

"Not now uncle! "

"Not now Eden! "

We both snapped at Eden who tried to play the role of a mediator at the same time. He quietly leaned back against his seat with his hands raised in surrender as if giving us the go-ahead sign.

"So you're trying to say Nik and I breaking up is my fault?! " I questioned her accusation, pointing to my chest.

"You just didn't put enough effort! "

"Or maybe you're just defending your father who can't dedicate his lips to one woman! " I retorted, anger surging through my veins.

"Then you should have thought of that before getting lovey-dovey with him! " Isabella sassied back.

Anabelle shot to her feet, "Hey! Don't talk to aunt Maya that way! "

Izzy passed her a deadly glare, " I don't remember inviting you to this discussion, you weensy weepy barbie! "

"Izzy !"

"Isabella! "

Eden and I cautioned her, but the damage had already been done

Anabelle gave a hateful look, 'You always ruin everything, I hate you!' She yelled at her niece and ran out of the dining table while Pedro went after her.

I snickered at her, "So much for being violent "

Isabella stood this time, gave me a long stare, and left for her room - I sincerely hope I'm not sharing a room with her, considering the fact I'm insanely mad at her.

Beside me, Eden clapped, " Bravo, you successfully defeated the legendary Isabella in an argument "

I glared at him and downed a glass of water, I let my anger have the best of me.

"Niklaus would be so delighted to hear this " he continued his taunts and I dropped my glass on the table with a thud.

"Seriously, what's your problem now?! " I asked him with a hint of irritation.

"You know deep down that there's an atom of truth in what Isabella just said " He began.

Can't these people cut me some slack tonight?

I rubbed my forehead," Perhaps if you and Tina hadn't been in cahoots with Adam, I would have had a fighting chance " I disclosed just as he brought a glass of water to his lips.

Eden froze.

Does he take me for a fool, that kissing incident was definitely orchestrated by them to chase me off and they succeeded - they must be full of happiness.

"I didn't have to lift a finger, you and Niklaus were never going to work out together - no matter how much he deludes you? " He sipped his water.

"And you think we both are the ones who would work out? "

There was a short silence, his eyes held mine.

"And if I said yes? "

I stared back, regarding him intently.

"Both of us can never work, " I told him straightforwardly.

" Why? "

"Because you are way worse than Niklaus "

*Suicidal ideation: also known as suicidal thoughts, is thinking about, considering, or planning suicide. The range of suicidal ideation varies from fleeting thoughts to extensive thoughts, to detailed planning.

Chapter 119 - One Hundred And Nineteen : You Love ME This Much

Maya's Pov

I stayed up all night thinking about what Izzy said and? came to a startling realization, I was at fault too.

Pushing all the blame on Niklaus was too cheap of me. This was his first relationship after his personality change and yet, I didn't give him a second chance.

Thinking about it, he hadn't seen that kiss coming on the Gala night else he would have countered it. Maybe I gave up too easily - but it was already too late.

Niklaus and I are worlds apart. He has a high status while I have nothing - no family support or background. It was better this way.

I didn't catch a wink at all, just kept turning and tossing until the morning came which I earnestly dreaded - I had to make up with Isabella.

I said - no, we said pretty harsh words to each other last night and it was lowly of me to hold a grudge against a child - who knows more than she should know.

Grunting, I climbed out of the bed and walked into the bathroom to freshen up. Staring into the mirror that morning scared the hell out of me considering the fact I had huge bags under my eyes because of staying up all night.

I covered up my hideous features with my cosmetics and headed to Izzy's room which was opposite mine.

I lingered at the door, my hand hung in the air, should I or should I not knock?

It was a known fact that Isabella has a knack for holding grudges, just like Niklaus - like father, like daughter.

Was I seeking death by waving the white flag first? Or should I allow her to flaunt her anger for a while before coming to seek for peace when she's eventually calm? Such thoughts occupied my head.

But when I eventually gathered enough courage to push through with my plan, something spectacular happened.

Just as my hand was about to sound on the door, it suddenly snapped open and Isabella ran out of the room with an incredible speed my eyes couldn't keep up with. Her hands were in the air and she was screaming like a lunatic.

My feet stayed glued to the floor, expression frozen from shock. What just happened? What did I just see? What was going on? What got the almighty Isabella scared out of her pants?

It was early morning so the kids were still asleep save Izzy, but Eden and his staff were already awake.

I immediately ran down the stairs in order to catch up with the girl who had already grabbed Eden's attention.

"It's a snake! " Isabella panicked while Eden tried his best to calm her down.

"What snake? There's no snake in my property " He told her but Isabella shook her head with apprehension.

"There's a snake in my water closet, moron! " She cursed her uncle in her agitated state, "I had to use the toilet this morning and opened it, only to find a snake poking its head out of the bowl! That creepy disgusting creature was staring straight at me"

I heard her explanation just as I covered the last flight of stairs, Eden's eyes and mine connected.

"If what she said is true, a snake must have slithered into her toilet " I acquiesced, walking towards him.

"I made sure my property is secured from such disturbances " He responded, glaring at the housekeeper who instinctively took a step back, refusing to meet Eden's angry gaze.

I followed his gaze and figured out what was going on. I pitied Mrs. El who's about to shoulder the whole blame.

"There's bound to be mistakes sometimes Eden, we are all humans not robots " I referred to him about his intention to hold Mrs. El accountable for this incident.

"Besides this is the countryside with lots of trees and there are tall trees close to the house, any snake could have entered the toilet from the plumbing system " I explained to him

It was no secret that snakes could come in through sewer or ventilation pipes especially in areas with lots of thick, tall bushes.

"Did you close the toilet lid and the bathroom door? " Eden asked Isabella.

If there was really a snake, it would likely climb out and hide if Isabella had run out without closing it.

"Yes, I did " Izzy answered this time with a calm expression, It seems the adrenaline has finally worn off. I really admired that girl, even in that moment of fear, she still had the sense to act accordingly.

"You did well " Eden praised her to my surprise and started heading upstairs.

"Where are you going? " I held him on the arm once he walked past me.

" I'm going to confirm " was all he said and sprinted up the stairs.

"Eden" I called, deciding to follow after him but before I could reach Isabella's room, he was done with his inspection .

"How is it? Is there a snake in the toilet? "

"Yeah, the girl is right," Eden remarked, " Caught it poking out its head the moment I slightly lifted the lid "

My heart picked up speed, I asked " Is it venomous? "

"Triangular-shaped head with two pits on its snout and a banded pattern of yellow and red? Definitely venomous. Isabella is one lucky girl "

My hands flew to my mouth in shock, heart pounding against my chest. If anything had happened to Isabella, the guilt would really eat me alive; we haven't even reconciled yet.

"We have to call animal-control or local police or fire departments to remove the snake, " I told him seriously but the person in question gave me a stupid look.

He tilted his head to the side and asked with a mocking tone, " Call the county's animal service to do what? That thing? "

I was flabbergasted, " Of Course! what do you want to do then... ." I trailed off as a sudden thought ended my head, I glanced up with a baffled face.

"You're not possibly thinking of removing that snake yourself right? "

There was no change in his expression.

You've got to be kidding me.

"That's a dangerous snake, not a toy Eden" I reminded him strictly in case he had forgotten.

" If I don't do it, who would? "

"We have animal control for a reason- "

Eden interrupted me.

"This place doesn't have an animal service department, Maya. Even if it does, they only take-up cat, dog cases, or animals causing problems for the general public, not domestic property. For this, you would have to call a snake removal agency which is miles and miles away from here "

" What about the police - "

"The police have a handful of cases to settle especially in a rural area like this one; I bet they are investigating a villager's stolen chicken right about now " he depicted the daily life of the local police humorously.

But I wasn't amused at all, we were dealing with a dangerous situation here. Why wasn't he bothered at all?

Eden placed his hand on my shoulder, " Calm down Maya, we are not called Spencers for no reason "

That being said, he hurried down the stairs and into his room.

Standing right outside isabella's door, I began to walk up and down, biting on my nails with a worried and anxious look on my face. Eden was really messing with his life.

Though both of us weren't that close, I wouldn't wish for anything bad to happen to him moreover, he's Annabelle's father - she can't be fatherless at such a young age.

My head jerked up when I heard approaching footsteps but frowned instead.

Eden was wearing a thick long-sleeved overall, gardening glove, a pair of goggles, and stick in his grip with a small bag slung over his shoulder.

He winked at me, " How do I look? "

Ridiculous.

I balled my fist and said through gritted teeth, "There is a reason why normal people leave snakes alone, especially venomous ones "

He cocked a brow, " You've forgotten I'm not normal! "

"Y-You " I choked.

"Stop being such a worrywart, I'm wearing protective clothing to prevent its fangs from getting through and goggles, in case it spits." He explained and gestured to all the items he had on his body.

His brows furrowed together when he saw the worried expression on my face, " I'm not not going to die Maya "

But his lips curled into a smile," I didn't know you loved me this much. It's relieving to know that someone indeed cares about me "

My anxious face expired and was replaced by an obvious scowl, "Stop saying nonsense" I rebuked him but he began to laugh

Folding my arms, I looked away with a huff, " Since you love death so much, I'm not going to stop you anymore. Knock yourself - "

The rest of my words were cut off when he abruptly turned me around, hugging me with a force that knocked the breath out of me.

"Thank you," He said and tightened his embrace.

But the strange thing was that my heart began to beat so fast. Must be because he took me unaware, I told myself.

I tried to pull away but he resisted, instead turned his face and pecked me on the cheek before walking into Isabella's room.

My feet were stuck to the ground. I blinked,what just happened? That bastard!

Chapter 120 - One Hundred And Twenty : Converting His Cousin's Woman

Isabella's POV

I knew it was a bad idea coming along with Anabelle, but anywhere other than this prison could suffice at the moment. It was even a surprise Adam let me go with Anabelle upon her request, I thought I would have to bust my way out.

I was just angry, everyone was irritating me, nothing was going the way I planned. It was obvious Grandfather and Tina had planned that kissing incident, Eden would probably watch from the sidelines.

I admit I liked Maya's kindness but her naivety was definitely an insult to the time she spent with me. All this while she stayed with me, had she not learned one or two tricks from me?.

How could she come to a Gala organized by the Spencer's without preparing for the worst-case scenario? Why haven't the short time with us taught her one thing: our family wasn't normal.

"I have to get Pedro " My head whipped around at Annabelle's statement, " Why do we need Pedro?"

"We made a deal, remember ?" She reminded me in a cocky manner.

"Get you out of the house and in exchange, I get to have Pedro all to myself for a weak "

Oh yeah, I did say that "Fine " I told her, "Goodluck getting Cecil to release her only child to you "

Anabelle flashed me a triumphant smile, " Don't worry, she would "

I rolled my eyes and looked away, there was no need for wasting my saliva on her. I already knew there was no way on earth, Cecil would release her son to that brat.

The only reason Cecil had let her son crash at our place was that she trusted Maya was a responsible adult and the fact Niklaus's manor was secured. But now, Maya was no longer there which equals " no more Pedro " - Maya was the only one she knew there by the way.

However, it seems Anabelle has more tricks than expected because to my utmost surprise, she managed to convince Cecil with her sweat and convincing words and tears.

And just like that, Pedro joined in the journey to the countryside. It seems I have been underestimating my cousin Anabelle lately, I had to be ultra-careful from now on.

But what I never expected last night was the fight with Maya, how could someone be so stubborn. Was it a crime if she just admits to her mistake for once?

Thanks to her weakness, I would have to face that witch called Tina from now on. If only Maya had fought a little harder, stood by my father's side much longer, I would have worked things out between them.

And so I woke up this morning with all those thoughts running amok in my head. I was mad at Maya and sincerely hopes she doesn't come into my room to ask for forgiveness, I had the urge to torture her a bit.

It seems the kindness I show to her is now being abused - I had to make her tough and cold-hearted a bit. If you're too kind, people take it for granted and step all over you - what which was currently Maya's weakness.

Maya doesn't have the heart to revenge properly but I'll teach her if she lets me - after I've revenged on her for last night.

I jumped out of bed this morning due to the pressing urge to go and urinate. Thankfully, everyone had separate rooms so I didn't have to share one with Anabelle and stay up all night listening to her endless chattering.

Perhaps due to my ever careful nature, I first took in my bathroom before the toilet but what I never expected to see was a snake poking out its head the moment I lifted up the lid.

Though petrified but instantly, I slammed down the toilet lid to keep it from escaping, then ran out of my bathroom screaming like a banshee.

Many might not know this fact about me, I hated snakes with passion. I always get the heebie-jeebies even when its name is mentioned.

That dry-skinned, slithery, crawling creature made goosebumps crawl up my skin the moment I sighted it.

I wasn't secured anymore, if one was in my toilet, there could be more in my room! So, I ran out of that place like the devil was on my heels.

I was surprised to see Maya the moment I opened the door to escape, sadly I had more pressing issues at hand so I couldn't stop and chitchat - my life mattered right now!

But the house was secured, how could a snake end up in my water closet? Someone must have planted it there, I thought at first.

Unfortunately, that was impossible, uncle Eden wouldn't dare hurt me!

I was the apple of Adam's eyes, he couldn't afford to offend both Adam and Niklaus at the same time - Eden wasn't that bold and capable yet.

Even if he wanted to hurt me, why do it in his own home? Directly pointing himself as the culprit? Eden was smart and tricky, he wouldn't carelessly shoot himself on the toe.

Moreover, the apparent shock on his face was sincere when I told him about the incident.

I could read people really well which was why I haven't been charmed by Niklaus's many, many, girlfriends over the years.

To me, it was a gift to be able to distinguish when someone truly cares for me or fakes it for their own selfish purposes and gratification.

Maya had been the first person to approach me without having an agenda in mind, maybe that was why I liked her - a bit, I still can't stand her weakness sometimes.

My hysterical scream earlier must have woke the others up cause Pedro, later followed by Anabelle walked into the hallway, each yawning and rubbing their eyes.

"I heard noises, " Pedro commented and looked around, probably searching for the source of the noise - that should be me.

"How was your night Izzy? " Anabelle grinned at me sheepishly which made me stare at her in wonder.

Wasn't she the one who was so angry at me last night that she said, and I quote, "You always ruin everything, I hate you! "

How could she now be so friendly and interactive with me as if the fight never happened? I shook my head, as gifted as I was at telling people's intentions, I couldn't tell if Anabelle was being real or plain stupid.

"It was fine " I mumbled a reply which must have satisfied her cause she didn't probe further.

"You kind of look good you know," Pedro remarked with a burst of stifled laughter but I was confused, what's he talking about?

"You're a cute fox " he finally exposed the source of his amusement.

A huge scowl on my face, I looked down in horror only to discover I was still wearing the red fox onesie pajamas and felt like banging my head against the wall closest to me.

Thanks to the urge to leave my grandfather's place, I didn't sort through my clothes carefully and left without grabbing a nightwear.

Realizing my error after I had prepared for bed, I asked madam El for help and she helped me with a pajama. But I never thought she would give me this childish and stupid costume which obviously belongs to Anabelle.

But I took it anyway and planned to change out of it the moment I awake from bed without anyone noticing in the morning. Who knew an annoying snake would disrupt my plan.

"Pedro is right, you look more human in this outfit." Annabelle giggled, she was probably mocking me in her head " I would give you more of those before you go to bed to - "

"Say a word more and I'll make sure your mouth is sewed up with a needle and a thread" I warned her through gritted teeth and turned to climb up the stairs leading to my room, only to remember Eden was still dealing with the snake issue.

I punched the air in frustration, the universe was definitely working against me today, what did I do to them?

Then I heard whispers, Anabelle and Pedro were talking about something but when they met my cold gaze, they hushed and straightened up.

I stared at Pedro in annoyance, when did he start being on Annabelle's side. I can't wait for the one week deal to be over.

Eden successfully captured the disgusting reptile without getting himself bitten in the process. To my sheer disappointment, it wasn't killed but instead relocated to another area since it was an extinct species.

We had breakfast afterward but I couldn't help but frown at Annabelle's closeness with Pedro. They were sitting close to each other and each time Pedro whispered something into her ears, she would giggle.

I huffed and looked away, did they think I was jealous? No way, I wasn't one bit. Who did they take me for?? That I would be dismayed with their childish interactions? Oh please, I had far better things to do like....like....well, I'll think about what to do later.

But it seems Anabelle and Pedro weren't the only ones behaving weirdly at the table; Eden and Maya were not left out.

Eden blatantly fixed his gaze on Maya while the female in question hid her face away from him with her hair.

Though Maya let her hair form a curtain around her face, her cheeks were flushed and she was acutely aware of Eden's intense gaze.

My mouth twitched while my brows quirked up, what the hell was going on between these two? And where is my stupid ass of a father? What was he doing while his cousin was busy converting his woman?!