

Taming A Billionaire

#Chapter 371 - Three Hundred And Seventy-one: Draw The Line - Read Taming A Billionaire Chapter 371 - Three Hundred And Seventy-one: Draw The Line

Chapter 371 - Three Hundred And Seventy-one: Draw The Line

The third point of view:

Have you ever been caught by your mother stealing meat from the pot of soup? That was how Cecil felt that moment as she stared at the half-naked man. It was as if she had been caught doing a very, very, bad thing.

The worst part of it all was that she couldn't take her eyes off - off his hard abdomen. She gulped, her throat becoming dry all of a sudden. How could someone be that toned?

In one word, Emerald was a macho man. His weight was evenly distributed by the help of his height and she couldn't understand why her hands were inching to touch those six-packs of his. Gosh! Keep yourself under control, Cecil! You're not that love-starved teenager anymore!

Her attention was suddenly brought back around when Emerald pulled down the shirt that had been in the process of being taken off.

"What are you doing here?" He asked in a tone that she couldn't exactly classify as annoyed or angered for the disruption.

"So...." She was at a loss for words. Everything she had intended to tell him had fled out of her brain the minute she saw his chest.

"As you can see I need to change so unless you're here for a good show, I'll advise you to leave and wait until I'm finished," Emerald said to her politely.

He couldn't take it anymore with her staring at him that way; it was almost as if she wanted him. But that was his wishful thinking - she had made it clear to him he was the last person she would be with. Yes, he hurt her, and she hates me.

"Ah... right," her senses returned and Cecil was about to turn her back and leave the room when her eyes caught sight of something, she froze. It was blood.

Emerald sensed the change in her and followed her gaze only for it to rest on his stained shirt.

"I-is that blood -"

"Don't worry, it's not Fernandez's. I didn't kill him," he explained, knowing that was what she was about to ask.

Compared to him, Fernandez was the father of her son and the man she had previously fallen in love with. When it comes to affection, he would probably be placed last - that is if she even had a single drop of affection for him.

"I meant, is that your blood?" Cecil asked with a trace of anger breath her tone and when she didn't get an answer from him, knew she was right.

She walked over to him and lifted his shirt before he could tell what was on her mind.

"I told you not to get hurt!" She scowled at Emerald, leaving him shocked. Was she by chance worried about him?

"It's nothing," He said, trying to pull down his shirt. It was uncomfortable for him with her holding his shirt up.

"What do you mean it's nothing?!" She increased her volume as if his comment infuriated her the more, "You're bleeding and why are there so many scars on your body?!"

Emerald didn't respond, knowing anything he says now would do nothing but piss her. When the anger disperses, she would chill out.

But to his surprise, she simply let go and turned to leave. Stunned, he was about to ask where she was heading to?when she glared at him, "Don't you dare make a move, I'll be back,"

"Alright, your majesty," He teased her, hoping to see if that would brighten up her mood but all it did was intensify the glare. Well, he better shut it.

Emerald sat on the bed, however, there was a giddy expression on his face. She was worried about him? He was so happy. Maybe he should have let that asshole stab him deeper and get admitted to the hospital so she could care a bit more for him?

So, he kept thinking until Cecil returned with a maid carrying a bowl of water and a first aid box.

"Yes, place it over there please," She directed the woman who followed and left the room hurriedly after her eyes met with the giant.

The truth was that everyone feared this giant more than Sakuzi himself - but they wouldn't say that out loud before that old mad man devised a?punishment for them. But

then, here was this woman commanding Emerald like he was her servant - he would kill them if they dared that.

"Move in a bit more and sit up," She instructed him, "And would you take that damn shirt off!" She bossed him around and the great giant obeyed without hesitation.

Satisfied, "Momentarily", Cecil stopped the bleeding by applying pressure before cleaning the wound. She applied a thin layer of antibiotic ointment and began to dress the wound.

"This is just basic and all I can do for you. You should seek the doctor," Cecil informed him, refusing to meet his gaze because she could feel his hot gaze on her.

Emerald was highly surprised by her action. She was the main reason he had hurried over to wash up and hide his wound, knowing she detested violence and all. Who knew she could stomach this? She kept intriguing him and he wished to know her more, sadly, he couldn't cross that line.

"Don't think much about this," Cecil drew the line, "I'm only helping you because you helped me with Fernandez," she said, mentally fighting her fingers from straying away from the injured area. She didn't know what the hell was wrong with her today? Why was she so affected by his presence? It was so strange.

"Did you hear me?" Cecil glanced up at him when she didn't hear a response, but that move was clearly a mistake.

Emerald had leaned so close to her that she could point out the pores on his face. Cecil let out a shaky breath when her gaze flickered down to his lips. Oh no, that was a danger zone.

Her eyes climbed back up and they connected with Emerald's dark ones instantly. A shivery sensation went down her back as she forgot how to breathe. His eyes had darkened, not to mention that they were hypnotic because the next she knew, they were kissing each other. Who had leaned in first? She couldn't exactly tell.

Chapter 372 - Three Hundred And Seventy-two: Find That Woman

The third point of view:

"Wow," Akim's eyes widened to the size of saucers as he watched his mother carry a live cub in her arms.

"Take a look at this Akim, isn't he so cute?" Emily took a closer video for him.

"He's cute but mom, aren't lions dangerous?" the boy asked with a sense of fear.

Though the lion cub his mother held in her grasp was so adorable he wanted to reach out and touch him, Akim had watched how scary the adult lions were on television and he didn't want his mother to get hurt.

" Yes, you're right Akim. Lions are very, very scary, but they can be tamed! However, they need to be trained during their cub years. It is almost impossible to train a grown-up lion to be tamed. Although lions can be tamed, I still have to be cautious and careful around them. However, the cubs are harmless, so you don't have to be scared son, " she laughed at his skepticism.

"You look happy, mother,"

"Really?" Emily was surprised.

After she had left Lincolnshire, she had taken the next plane to Africa. There she found fellow tourists and animal lovers who were part of an organization for the protection of wildlife. From there, the fun began.

She could have gone back to the city but Emily needed space away from the people she knew and the ones that might try to find her. Right now, she needed the time to organize her thoughts and pick up her life from the point where it had been shattered.

"Don't worry, I'll smile more for you from now on," Emily said to him.

"Why are you up by this time?"

Akim slammed down the lid of his laptop, his heart slamming hard against his chest as soon as he met his father's furious gaze.

"D-dad," He said nervously.

Judy stepped into the room, scrutinizing the laptop suspiciously. Without checking the PC, he already had a faint notion of who he had been chatting with.

"What did the doctor tell you about staying up late at night?" He asked, appearing more intimidating now he was standing straight and tall with his head raised high. As royals, they were taught never to slouch nor walk with a hunch.

"I'm sorry, father," He dropped his head in shame.

"Go to bed immediately or I would be forced to cut off the Wi-Fi connection to this room," He ordered.

"Yes, father," Akim eased out of his study chair and made his way over to the bed.

With a sigh, Judy squeezed his eyes shut and let go of his frustration. He then walked over to his son and helped tuck him in bed. Just because he was having a bad time, doesn't mean he should take it out on his son -?it was not his fault.

"You should adhere strictly to your routine. Just because the operation was successful doesn't mean you're completely healed. You might suffer a relapse in the future if you don't take good care of your health," He lectured him.

"You're not angry at me?" The boy blinked surprised.

"Why should I be angry at you?" Judy asked, pretending to be completely oblivious to the reason the boy was asking the question in the first place.

"You have a brooding temper lately," The boy pointed out.

"Adults experience that phase in that life," was his answer and thankfully that shut the boy up or so he thought.

"I spoke with mommy,"

Judy froze.

Well, for a while, because in the next minute, he resumed his duties unaffected.

"So?" his brow raised questioningly.

"She was petting Lions,"

"What?!"

His shout almost made Akim jump out of his skin.

"That crazy woman!" He cursed, already calling her line in a flash. However, no matter how long he called, she refused.

"Oh, she's avoiding me now!" Judy went red with anger, pacing up and down the boy's room who watched the drama with interest.

"Fine, since you won't speak, I pray you receive this," He raved as he went ahead to drop a voice note and it is as follows,

"You psycho! Hope you're having a good time with the lions? Do you think I care about the fact that any one of them could tear you up any minute and turn you into their food? No? Because guess what, the moment you die, I'll take in a wife who would take your place and care for our son while giving me more children. So have a good time with the Lions!" He pressed "send" while heaving as if he ran a marathon.

What the hell is wrong with his father? Akim wondered.

"Go to bed!" Judy ordered the boy peeping at him.

At once, Akim pulled the sheet over his head and forced his eyes shut just as his father turned off the light and left the room in strides.

Judy was boiling with anger. Just because he let her leave, doesn't mean he permitted her to fool around with her life? Playing with lions? Was she kidding him?! Was she trying to drive him crazy with worry?

Since she left, Judy had respected the space she wanted by not calling nor going after her - as hard as it was. He only broke that rule today and God knows there was a chance of him breaking that promise if she drove him to the edge once more. She can hate him for that, but he'd rather have her alive and by his side, than death and in a lion's stomach just to fulfill some promise.

Going into the room, he was just about to change out of his clothes when someone walked into his room without knocking. And of course, he knew the only person that could do that and go scot-free.

"What do you want?" Judy asked, his tone so icy and distant that his mother felt no different than a stranger. That has been his mannerism towards her for days now.

"Is that how you talk to your mother who hasn't set her eyes on you for days now?"

And yes, he has been avoiding her too.

However, Judy ignored her, going ahead to take off his tie which was kind of suffocating him at the moment when added to the presence of his mother. He just returned from a conference and the nagging was the last thing he wanted from her right now.

"Am talking to you, Kai!"

However, the glare Judy sent her way shut her up. Roselle knew her son was hard-headed but she never knew it was to this extent. It was as if she was nothing but mere dirt in his sight and that thought made her uncomfortable. A mother was supposed to be respected and adored, not this.

"Fine, I'm sorry for everything that's happened. What I did to Emily was not right and for that, I'm truly sorry," She apologized, hoping it would elicit some sort of reaction from Kai, and yes it did, but it was not the emotion she had been hoping for.

"Are you done?" Judy asked apathetically, looking as if the woman had been giving a history speech all this while.

"Kai... ?" she could not believe his response.

"I need to wash up, so unless you're ready to see your grown-up son undress right in front of you, I'll suggest you leave my room," He said without as much emotion.

"Kai! I'm your mother! How dare you treat me this way!" She stomped her feet complaining bitterly.

Suddenly, there came a knock on the door and Judy said, "Come in"

Then came in Archie, his royal advisor, assistant, butler, trusted subordinate aka his all in all.

"Ah, thank God you're here," Judy was visibly relieved while Archie was distressed by the prince's ceremonial welcome. What was he welcome.

"It seems my mother has come of age and her senses deteriorated so badly she's forgotten the way out of my room. Please, show her the out," He gestured to the door.

"Kai!"

"Your majesty, please leave now," Archie got in her way politely while Judy in question left for the bathroom.

There was nothing to fight for any longer, the queen realized and had no choice but to leave respectfully. Kai was doing his best to give her the respect as a mother and as the queen dowager - she wasn't ready to push that luck.

Where had she gone wrong? The queen was in deep contemplation as she left for her quarters. Everything she had done was for the wellbeing of her son and the progress of their kingdom.

She had been pragmatic, following the steps of her ancestors that were familiar to her and positive. What had gone wrong? Now, she lost both her son and grandson neither could she continue this way.

As soon as the queen reached her domain, she called onto her trusted handmaid.

"Your majesty?" the girl courtesied as usual

"I need you to do something for me," The queen said, thinking hard.

"What is it, your highness?"

"Search up that woman called Emily, I need to know her location right now,"

Chapter 373 - Three Hundred And Seventy-three: Afraid Of A Man's Touch

The third point of view:

It was nothing like she imagined - oh, she has imagined kissing him??Shit, what was she thinking at a time like this?

Cecil felt a pleasant sensation course through her vein which caused her to kiss him harder. She couldn't even explain what happened. All she knew was that when their eyes had met, she felt the rest of her breath leave her body. There was something alluring and yet intense about the way he stared at her.

She forgot how to breathe and then curiosity filled her as her gaze flickered down to his lips? As crazy as it sounds, she had thought, what would it feel like to kiss those lips? And then, the next thing she knew he had leaned in and she had joined in halfway.

It was unbelievable, Emerald thought. There was no way he had mistaken that desire in her eye for him. She desired him? Even though it wasn't love, she was attracted to him and desire was a very strong emotion.

His hands went around her back and pressed her flush against his chest while she threads her hand through his hair, pulling his root with passion. His lips were incredibly soft and tasted right for her.

They came up for air, their chest heaving as they inhaled a lungful of oxygen. But hardly had they caught their breath, both dived in once more as they smash their lips against one another. This time, the fire burned so much brighter and Cecil found herself tracing the hard lines of his abdomen as he took possession of her lips.

A yelp left her lips when he suddenly lifted her as if she weighed nothing and pushed her back against the bed, resuming the kiss as he settled on top of her.

It was amazing, Cecil had thought several times how crushing his weight would be if Emerald were to settle on top of his unknown partner - trust her, she didn't conjure herself as his partner. Yeah, or maybe not.

Shame filled Cecil when she heard herself moan. What the hell? This was crazy and she tried to pull away but the man in question gripped her hands and pinned them against the bed.

Cecil tried to speak but he slid his tongue into her mouth with that opportunity and she forgot her intention immediately.

This was better than she thought - even better than what she and Fernandez had shared. Though the memory was hazy and the sensation forgotten, Cecil could still make a good judgment that Emerald was a better lover.

Another moan left her throat when his lips left her mouth to attack her neck. God! Was that amorous sound coming from her? She had forgotten how sensitive her neck was.

"Emerald...." Cecil was finding it hard to concentrate with the way that man was kissing her neck. She felt a heat down there and didn't even know when she wrapped her legs around his waist, grinding softly against him.

The moment Cecil realized what she was doing, a wave of embarrassment washed over her, as she became suddenly hot, and red in the face.

"Emerald stop," She began to protest, struggling against his huge hands still holding down her much smaller ones.

However, it was as if that moment the passion in him was ignited and he buried his face into her neck, sucking on her sweet spot and eliciting more pressure.

Cecil gasped, it was too much pleasure to handle and she was beginning to fear she would lose control and do something she was going to regret.

"No," the woman protested, she had to stop now before it was too late. However, the man simply growled, continuing to please her, or was it himself this time?

Emerald let go of one hand, but before she could push him away, he had already slipped it into her blouse, caressing her stomach which sent shivers down her spine while nibbling on her neck. It was almost as if his hands were magic and everywhere he touched on her body was meant to be pleasurable.

"No... Emerald stop," Cecil pleaded in between a moan and an outcry. He has to stop. She wasn't ready for this now.

However, the man was deaf to her request, he continued to do as he wanted and it was when his hand rested on her breast, she knew this wasn't a simple matter anymore.

"Emerald stop!" her tone was firmer this time. She pushed against his chest with her free hand, "I said, stop!"

Instantly, Emerald stilled like someone who just came out from a nightmare. Breath heavy, both stared at each other, gauging each other's reaction.

"Stop.... please," Cecil whispered as if the man would continue from where he stopped if she didn't make her stand clear.

"My God," Shame like no other enveloped him and he released her at once like someone electrocuted. What has he done?

He thought she wanted it? Somewhere along the line while they had been making out, Emerald had been teleported to the past. It was safe to say that his reality had somehow overlapped with that night eighteen years ago.

The way she had been with him, the fire in her, and how they had been passionate with each other that night. It was almost real. Who knew it wasn't and he had almost hurt her because of his crazy nostalgia.

"I'm so sorry," He quickly apologized to the woman who escaped his bed with a look of panic on her face.

But then, he had seen it, or had he been wrong? He thought she had wanted him? He had seen in the way she stared at him; the way she responded to his kisses; the way she had touched him. Then why does she look horrified, as if this was a mistake? His eyes narrowed. By chance, could it be.....

Cecil was highly relieved to be away from him however, she felt his intense gaze on her. Neither did she ever expect him to ask,

"You're afraid of a man's touch, aren't you?"

Chapter 374 - Three Hundred And Seventy-four: We Are Nothing

The third point of view:

We all have inner demons inside us to fight. They are nothing but our DEMONS who prevent us from seeing the goodness of ours as well as others.

"The fear of the unknown is worse than reality."

We all have these demons, as parts of ourselves that we don't like to acknowledge but we see them lurking inside us. They dominate us every day, every moment.

No matter how hard we try to ignore our demons, they are always there constantly pulling us from positivity to negativity.

But the question is, are we going to ignore it or are we going to face it and make peace with it?

The choice will always be there, but Cecile wasn't sure she was ready to make that choice yet. She has been doing well with it over the years, why change now?

"You're afraid of a man's touch, aren't you?" That question played in a loop in her mind. However, the moment realization set in, her face lost all color.

How did he know that? That was the one secret no one knew about, not even her son, Pedro, or even Reina. Hence having someone, not just someone but one of them who had contributed to the phobia in the first place know about it, wasn't exactly pleasing.

Without a word, Cecil made a course for the door, but Emerald, who had sensed her intention, went after her. Just as she opened the door, he snapped it shut.

"Answer me," He demanded.

"Get out of my way," She growled at him, fighting against the urge to submit to him.

With Emerald standing so close to her, he towered over her greatly, not to mention that he was invading her personal space.

"I did this to you, didn't I?" he asked, preventing her from escaping his querying

"Let me go," She tried to slip around him but he wouldn't let her.

"Seriously, speak to me!" he yelled.

"What do you want me to say!" She shouted back at him, "Congratulations, you, my father, and Fernandez messed up a young girl real bad? What? Is that it?!" she spat at him.

"Yes, so that I can help you!"

"I don't need your help and don't you dare to look at me like I'm some fragile damsel in distress!" She screamed, poking him on the chest, and God, it felt good - almost therapeutic.

"You need help, Cecil, can't you see it! You can't even have a good time with a man without breaking out in a panic. Let me help you," He pleaded even though his voice was at the same furious range as hers.

If he was the cause of her illness, he had to remedy this. If he had kept his dick in his pants, all of this wouldn't have happened; it was his fault.

"I don't need a man in my life neither do I need your help!" She retorted.

"What?" His expression changed.

"Yes, you heard me right," She told him right in the face, "And don't you think that just because we made out a few minutes ago that we are something special because we are not! We are nothing and you would never be something to me!"

It was too late, Cecil realized as soon as the words were out of her mouth; she didn't mean to say it that way.

Emerald flexed his jaw, "Is that so?" he said, disappointment flashing across his features.

"Emerald..." she tried to explain but the hardened look on his face shut her up.

"The job is done, Fernandez would never bother you. You can leave now," he opened the door for her this time.

Cecil stepped out of the room with the words she wanted to say stuck in her throat.

"Eme...." she turned to say only for the door to be shut at her face. Wonderful! This is how you thank the guy who saved you from your crazy ex, really smooth Cecil, she chided herself.

Cecil banged her head on the wall, what the hell was wrong with her? She really didn't mean that - at the least half of it.

Men were not meant for her. Some women were lucky enough to meet the love of their life who loved them back on the first try. It was true that all men were not the same, but her heart was not strong enough to handle another betrayal.

She didn't know what Emerald want from her, there was no way he loved her, he just needed a good fuck, which she dreaded. Intimacy with the opposite sex was a work in progress. Yeah, so much, progress - note the sarcasm.

Knowing she had hurt his pride, Cecil headed back to her room and began to pack up. Everything was resolved, there was no need to linger here any longer. It was one hell of uncomfortable.

Cecil began to pack up, more like organizing the room since she had come with literally nothing - Emerald had provided everything. She felt a tightening sensation in her chest at the thought of Emerald, he has done so much for her than she thought.

Wasn't she being selfish by thinking of leaving without thanking him properly? He had rescued her from Fernandez - well that was Reina's order; gave her and Pedro a roof over their head and provided them basic amenities - well, this was still Sakuzi's place aka Reina's father; he warned Fernandez off for her sake - that was him atoning for his sins.

Fine, she'd stay behind and at least thank him for what he has done - she wasn't an ungrateful bitch. Cecil decided, flopping down on her bed. Deep in thought, she just closed her eyes a bit and the next she knew, went into dreamland.

When she woke up and decided to take a walk around, as usual, Cecil discovered there were some slight changes to the house. The men were decorating the house amid their quips and playful scuffle.

"What's going on?" she stopped one of the men she had acquainted with over the days.

"Oh, you don't know," The young man was excited, "It's Emerald's birthday today. That big hulk - don't tell him I called him that - doesn't like to celebrate it but Sakuzi always organizes a party for him at the least. Left alone, Emerald wouldn't even accept a birthday wish, talk more of a party," He explained.

"Thank you for the information," She flashed him a grateful smile.

"You're welcome," He winked at her playfully and went to join the other men while Cecil inhaled a shaky breath.

What has she done?

Chapter 375 - Three Hundred And Seventy-five: Tarzan And Jane

The third point of view :

"Okay, where are we going?" Pedro asked his girlfriend Isabella unsure. All he knew was that she had come out of nowhere and whisked him from his mother.

Isabella smiled up at him, "You'd see when we get there," She continued to lead him to the unknown destination.

Pedro was confused, all he kept seeing were bushes, they were going deeper into the woods that provided good camouflage for the base.

The large arc of lands seemed to stretch on forever and it was private and restricted from the very entrance, hence people unfamiliar with the terrain could get lost if they dared to get in. Even with that, there was enough hidden surveillance up among the trees that one couldn't see no matter what. That way, Sakuzi has been able to monitor the activities of trespassers - and enemies.

"Isabella, are you sure you know the way?" Pedro was beginning to fear for his safety. He had forgotten his cellphone back at the base and they had walked so deep enough into the woods he swore he couldn't find his way back.

"Don't worry, I have toured this area once," she told him but Pedro was far from being assured.

"Just once?!" He cried out, unbelieving what he just heard. Isabella was taking him to the heart of this forest after touring it just once? Once!

"I have a photographic memory, you're in safe hands," She winked at him, continuing their journey.

"Babe," Pedro stopped, drawing her back as he began, "Is not that I don't trust you, but we're in the middle of a forest. What if you mistakenly forget your way back?"

"I have my phone," She waved it at his face smugly.

"What if there's no network and you're unable to place a call? Or even worse, the battery dies?" he pointed out everything that could go wrong.

Isabella pursed her lips, reasoning it, "I guess we'd get lost then,"

"It's not funny," Pedro tried not to laugh - she was tempting him, "There could be wild animals in here who wouldn't hesitate to use us as their meal,"

"Baby," Isabella stepped closer and then wrapped her hands around his neck, "Don't be afraid, I'll protect you,"

"I'm the one supposed to protect you," Pedro corrected her.

"What a man can do, a woman can do better," She grinned at him.

"You're unbelievable," He laughed.

"Well, even if we get lost, this doesn't seem like a bad place to start our future together," she looked around at the tall canopies of trees, "We could be like Tarzan and Jane, build a local hut there," she pointed.

"We'd live a simple life different from the frenzied everyday urban lifestyle," Isabella continued speaking with dreamlike fascination, "We'd make clothes out of plants and animal skins and I'm sure we'd stumble upon a waterfall somewhere if we search well. Then we'd have children - a boy and a girl - she would take after you while the boy takes after me. Together, we'd live happily until civilization finds us. How does that sound? "

Pedro stared at her emotionlessly at first before a smile broke out on his face, "You have quite an active imagination,"

She looked him straight in the eyes saying, "It means planning for the future. Our life is dynamic and unpredictable, we have to be prepared if push comes to shove,"

"Have I told you I love you before," Pedro asked out of nowhere.

"Nope, kind of been waiting for that," She answered truthfully.

Pedro leaned his forehead on hers, "I love you, Isabella,"

"Forever and ever kind of love?"

"Nope,"

Stunned by his answer, she glanced up at him questioningly.

"Forever and ever is a fairytale, ours would be real - the kind of love I would wake up to fighting for every day," He confessed and then kissed her on the lips.

It was gentle and tentative at first but it gained passion and she drew him closer, burying and pulling the locks of his hair while his hand pressed her closer as if he wanted to merge their body as one.

"We should go," Isabella broke away.

"Yes, we should," He agreed and let her take his hand, leading him onward once again.

They walked on until she suddenly said, "Stop,"

He did.

"Do you trust me?" She asked him out of nowhere.

"Of course, I do,"

"Then close your eyes,"

His brows quirked up

"Just do it," She groaned.

"Fine," Pedro obeyed and closed his eyes. However, not less than a second, he tried to see through peered eyes.

"No peeping!" Isabella scolded him.

"Fine," He squeezed them shut.

"Alright, now follow my lead," She began to lead him carefully over the shrubs and uneven ground.

"Stop," Was the order Pedro heard and he halted instantly, knowing better than to disobey her order.

He felt Isabella draw him closer and then came to his side to announce, "You can open your eyes now,"

Slowly, Pedro peeled his eyes open, having a high expectation for whatever surprise she has in store for him.

"Wow," Pedro gasped when he saw the small clearing in front of them. The small bush around the clearing was filled with rose flowers as if someone had intentionally cultivated them there.

"I sat down and learned we haven't gotten to spent time together as a real couple without conflict, interference from our parents and 'siblings'..." she said that one a little too hard.

"So I decided to prepare this little picnic. How is it?" she glanced up with anticipation of a positive reply.

"Wow," Pedro laughed, "This is unbelievable. How did you even find it here? It's something out of this world," He admired the wildflowers.

"Well, while I was looking around, I heard the men talking about some romantic spot in the forest where they could take their girlfriend for a fun time," She whispered, "So I decided to lay claim to it first,"

"You're amazing," He pecked her on the lips.

At that moment, Isabella felt joy in her heart like never before. The smile on his face made her contented - she was proud to know she was the one responsible for that smile.

"We should start the picnic before the food gets cold," she informed him, going ahead to remove the material she had draped over the basket to prevent those annoying rodents and insects from getting in.

The large basket contained food flasks which she had used to store the foods, flask mug and water, and of course, cutlery.

"You cooked?" Pedro asked, unsure.

He could have asked if she had the workers make the food but the way Isabella was so meticulous with the arrangement, he had an inkling she might have cooked even though he has never seen her in the kitchen. And for that reason alone, Pedro wished she would say no?- he doesn't want to die from food poisoning.

"Yes, I did," Isabella announced excitedly.

"Yeah?" Pedro was stunned yet struggled to show appreciation for her even attempting to cook. He was torn.

"Crazy, right?" Isabella grinned. This was her first experimental cooking and she hoped he likes it.

"Yea," He forced a smile on his face even though he was nervous inside.

Well, what could happen? Isabella wouldn't hurt him - intentionally. Pedro watched his girlfriend begin to set up the dishes and in no time it was time to eat.

Pedro stabbed his fork into the elegant-looking fish and brought it to his face, "What is this?"

"Salsa-verde-slather salmon," Isabella said.

His brow raised questioningly, "What?"

"I saw it on the internet, it should taste good, I suppose," Isabella shrug.

She suppose? Pedro felt like crying - she wasn't even sure. Didn't she care for his life? He stared at the golden brown, luscious, pan-seared salmon and gulped. Well, the fish didn't look that bad and this was all for love.

With determination, Pedro took a bite and chewed with uncertainty. At first, it tasted tangy until the rich taste exploded in his mouth.

"Umm," his eyes widened with surprise as he turned to Isabella, "This tastes so good. It's so delicious," He complimented her.

A smile flashed across Isabella's face and she began to feed him, motivated by his comment.

"Thank you," Pedro accepted the food and when he had chewed enough, said to her, "You're incredible,"

"How so?" Isabella asked, still feeding him.

"You're smart and beautiful and -"

"You're a sweet talker," she concluded, feeding him another bite.

"It just amazes me how you make things that seem difficult to others easy," He confessed, "I kind of envy you,"

Isabella paused, they stared at each other for a while and he said, "I'm not perfect. I got flaws too,"

"Beautiful flaws," He smiled at her.

Isabella looked away, a blush creeping up her face.

"I just love the fact...." Pedro suddenly paused, an uneasy feeling in his stomach.

"What is it?" Isabella noticed the change in his demeanor.

"I feel weird," Pedro said with a crease on his face, rubbing his stomach.

"Weird?"

"What did you put in the food," He suddenly asked.

"Everything as described on the recipe,"

"Ugh," Pedro groaned, realization dawning on him. "It's the spice," he revealed, clutching his stomach, "I think I need the toilet,"

"Toilet?" Isabella panicked, "But there's no toilet around here," She searched the forest.

Without as much word to her, Pedro sprinted into the forest before he does the first in his pants.

Isabella stood baffled. The picnic wasn't supposed to end this way. So much for trying to be romantic.

Chapter 376 - Three Hundred And Seventy-Six: A Common Enemy

The third point of view:

"Ahhh!" An anguished scream left Fernandez's mouth as he grabbed anything he could get his hands on?- scratch that, his hand, since the other one was bandaged, fling them against the wall.

The pain he was feeling in his heart was more than the pain he was receiving from his crushed hand. Though he had a few fractures, it seemed Emerald had intentionally gone easy on him since he could have crushed all the bones of his fingers in one stomp. The surgery went successfully but he could literally do anything with that hand until it's fully healed.

"Sir?" a concerned nurse walked in. She had heard the noise in the room and came to investigate what was going on.

"Sir, you have to calm down," She tried to walk over to him but Fernandez turned around and pinned her at that spot with a glare.

"Who are you?!" He roared, "How dare you?! Do you look down on me too?!" He yelled as he grabbed the nearest pillow on his bed and hurled it at her.

The nurse screamed as the pillow hit her right in the face, "Sir?!" She screamed with a look of horror. The nurse was still trying to make sense of what was going on when she watched with wide eyes as Fernandez grabbed a flower vase.

"Get out!" Anger took the very best of Fernandez as he hurled the vase at her without second thoughts - he gave no damn about her life.

Adrenaline pumped in her blood and like a stunt person in a movie, the nurse didn't know how she dodged with fast reflexes, the vase missing her narrowly in a space of two seconds. For a moment there, the nurse stood transfixed until the smashing sound of the vase as it hit the wall roused her back to reality. That would have been her, she slowly realized.

She glanced up at the furious boar called Fernandez and admitted that this patient was a mad man. Without a second thought, she scampered out of the room.

As much as she wanted to lay down a complaint, this man was a VIP that could crush her with just a word. If that vase had hit her, he would simply seal her mouth with compensation money and the case would be buried forever - that is if she survived.

The hospital director wouldn't afford to be on the man's bad side hence it was likely she would get fired if she dared open her mouth. Those that had money and power ruled the world, who would give ear to the powerless one who was assaulted physically? Nobody. So she ran without looking back.

Anger was his greatest weakness, Fernandez knew that yet he made no effort to control it - hot-temperedness cannot be put to a stop.

They had pissed him off; this was the most embarrassing day of his life. He had come to the Falcon Gang for help and what did they do? Humiliate him!

Remembering about the event intensified the rage he was feeling and he picked his phone to call a certain person. As soon as the call went through, Fernandez yelled,

"Is this how you trained your daughters?!"

"What are you talking about?" asked the other voice from the line.

"I must be cursed to have associated with your daughter!"

"Fernandez, you are not making any sense right now, do you know that? Not to mention the fact you lack respect. You haven't called me for the first time in a long time and the first thing you do after so many years is to rain down insults on me?" Said Vincent, Cecil's father.

"I would have minded my manners if your daughter hadn't humiliated me beyond measure today!"

"Which of my daughters are you talking about?"

"Of course, your whore of a daughter called Cecil, who were you expecting?" Fernandez sneered.

There was a pause from the other line. It was obvious that the old man was digesting the unexpected news. Ever since Cecil brought shame on the family name, he had canceled everything about her. He removed her from the family's registry, cut her off from the rest of the family, and prevented anyone from making communication with her.

According to him, Cecil was a disgrace to them and from thenceforth, he had sworn she was no more than a stranger to him, her mother, her siblings, her whole family. So hearing this ugly news about her after so many years was a huge shocker.

"I don't have a daughter called Cecil," the man's voice was taut and decisive.

"Even if you claim she's not your daughter, your blood runs in her vein, and this time she has awoken a sleeping lion,"

"What did she do this time?"

"Your whore daughter has been hiding my son for the past eighteen years,"

"What?!" Vincent was shocked.

"Yes, you heard me right. Cecil has been keeping my son for that long,"

"H-how's that possible? It doesn't make any sense? Are you sure you know what you're talking about?" he asked Fernandez just to be certain.

"I've seen him in flesh and blood - he's my copy. To be sure, I had a test conducted in secret and the result came out ninety-nine percent positive," Fernandez revealed the news and heard a gasp of disbelief from the man.

"H-how....?" the man was speechless, " However something stuck in his head, "But then, if that's the case, doesn't it mean that Cecil had been carrying your child all along - the child you claimed wasn't yours," he pointed out.

"That doesn't change the fact she whored around!" he boomed into the cell phone.

"So now you want the child?" the man figured out.

"Of course, I want the child back and I made it clear to her when we met, but guess what your daughter did..... " there was laughter from his lips - a burst of laughter that didn't come from his heart.

"She called her latest mafia lover after me, he beat me and almost crippled my hand!" Fernandez relayed while staring at his injured hand. He winced as if he was reliving that terrible experience.

"Cecil did that? Are you sure?" the man sounded shocked yet there was a trace of disbelief in his tone.

Fernandez snorted, here was the old man still believing in the daughter he claimed he no longer had.

"Why would I lie to you? I'm in the hospital right now and I'm only telling you this because I'm out for blood. Your daughter has touched the tail of the lion and for that, she would pay dearly,"

"Fernandez!" Vincent called his attention, "Do not do anything reckless, I'll resolve the issue,"

"You better," He warned him, "Else you would have to bury a daughter early,"

With that being said, Fernandez hung up on the old man. He had no regard for anyone, not even Vincent even though he had appeared to do in the earliest - It was all pretense. But then, his plan of marrying Cecil failed so Fernandez saw no need to continue with the act. All he needed right now was his son and he hoped Vincent would keep to his word else he would be forced to do something.

Cecil might be in the protection of the Falcon gang but he didn't believe that was the same case for Pedro. What man would care for a boy that wasn't his? If he can't get Cecil to give him his son, he would have to convince Pedro to come to him.

He was not named "stubborn Bull" for no reason. Yes, the Falcon Gang was powerful but everyone had a weakness and he would find out theirs. He never gives up!

Now the adrenaline was gone, Fernandez calmed down and took in the spectacle he had made of his room. Damn it! There was a lot of damage.

He could replace the ruined property but he hated a dirty environment, so he picked his phone to make a call when he noticed someone walk into his room, more like the stranger strolled into his room casually as if it was his garden.

"The information wasn't wrong, you do have a nasty temper," the man said with a chuckle.

"Who are you?" Fernandez asked, his heart almost leaping out of his throat. The first thought that came to his mind was the Falcon Gang. Had they come to finish him off - he escaped during that fight.

"Relax," The man said clearing the dust off the sofa in the luxurious hospital room and plopped down, crossing one leg over the other, "I'm a friend,"

Fernandez didn't believe him at first and was about to call on his men when he decided to reason it out. An assassin sent to finish him off would not come for talks and he hadn't sensed any malevolent intent from him.

"What do you want?" He asked cautiously. No matter what, he still had to be careful since he had no idea who this man was.

"I believe we have a common enemy," the man said.

"Enemy?"

"Valentino Armani aka Sakuzi," He revealed.

At the mention of that name, a smirk slowly emerged and curved Fernandez's lips to the side. It seems the heavens have finally heard his prayers. Sensing a deal that was about to favor his life, he walked over and sat across from the man,

"What did Sakuzi do to you?" Fernandez asked, staring him straight in the eyes. For this man to come to him, something great must have happened.

"Your question should be, what did he take from me?"

"What did Sakuzi take from you?" Fernandez rephrased his question.

"My brother," the man said.

"Your brother?" His brow raised questioningly.

"Gerald,"

Chapter 377 - Three Hundred And Seventy-seven: Friends, Are We?

The third point of view:

"How do you feel babe?" Isabella asked, leaning against the restroom door with a concerned look. She didn't mean to upset his stomach, she had wanted him to enjoy her food cooked with love.

"Like my anus is on fire," He groaned in response from the toilet.

"Take it easy please," Isabella pleaded, wishing there was a way she could wave a magic wand and end the misery - she put him in.

Her heart felt like someone had squeezed it tight, this was the first time she was this worried about someone.

She checked her phone, it was almost an hour since he went in. It had been quite an effort getting him back to the base since he literally stools almost every five minutes.

"I'm so sorry," Isabella told him sincerely. If only there was a way she could somehow take his place.

"It's alright," Pedro said from inside, "I know it's not your fault nor did you want it to end this way. You just wanted a romantic date,"

Isabella smiled, of course, Pedro was always warm and understanding - he was the opposite of her. That was what attracted her to him; she was curious about his innocence. How could someone be so grown and yet so gullible - she had thought.

Pedro was tall, handsome, and well-built. To be honest, he looked like your everyday attractive high-school sweetheart as described in teen novels yet turns out to be nothing but a jock. With seven years gone, Isabella had thought he would change and become a bully like the popular kids at school do, who knew he grew up more compassionate and sweet - Cecil did a good job with him.

"I'm not cooking after this," Isabella promised him

"ThankGod," He sounded relieved but somehow that comment hurt Isabella because she had been hoping to do something different for him.

But it seems Pedro was not through with his words.

"I would have said so but you've shown interest in cooking already, it would be a shame to stop halfway,"

A glimmer of hope erupted in Isabella's heart, what could he be suggesting.

"So I'll simply teach you how to cook. We'd make it our date and have so much fun together," He told her.

"Really?"

"Of course," He quickly added, "But that would be after extinguishing the fire in my anus,"

The both of them chuckled and after that, silence reigned. Although her legs ached, Isabella refused to sit and waited patiently. Moments later, she heard a click and the door opened to reveal Pedro.

She stood to her full height abruptly, "Are you okay now?"

"I think I can sit now without returning to the toilet a second later," He tried not to amuse Isabella but the whole thing was funny hence he couldn't stop the soft chuckle that escaped her lips - a peal of laughter that blessed his heart.

"You should rest," Isabella helped him to the bed and began to tuck him in.

"You're treating me like a baby," Pedro claimed, with her whole gentle demeanor.

This was not her and Pedro couldn't believe he was asking for her old self back when he had asked for this side for a long time. He means, seeing this soft side of hers was refreshing, but it feels misfit. He was now accustomed to the fierce Isabella.

And yes, Isabella gave him a flirty answer, "Because you're my baby," she looked him straight in the eyes asking, "Aren't you my baby?"

"A-hem!" Pedro coughed and looked away as his face heated up, this was so embarrassing. Even without saying it out loud, Isabella was the dominant person in this relationship and no matter how he tries, he feels like he's being treated as her girlfriend.

Suddenly there came a knock on the door and Isabella thinking it was his Mother Cecil who had come to see her son, said, "Come in,"

However, her face distorted the instant she saw it was none other than Olivia, "What are you doing here?" She faced her immediately.

"I heard about what happened," Olivia said.

"So?" Isabella wrapped her arm against her chest, "Are you here to laugh at me or to argue how much better you would be as his girlfriend?"

"If it was possible, I would have done that, but then I have my pride," Olivia frowned, seeming offended by her comment, "And look, I'm sorry for what happened between us, can we please start over,"

"Start over as what?"

"Friends,"

Isabella chuckled mockingly when she heard that, her hand went to her mouth stifling the laughter, "I'm sorry but I don't become friends with people who almost stole my boyfriend. I don't trust you,"

"Neither do I trust you either," She said to Isabella's surprise.

"What?"

"You look like the type who would kill one for just looking his way," She gestured to Pedro with a dip of her head.

"But then," Olivia went on, "That's what would make us great friends, we know the limitations and lines each of us shouldn't cross, what did you say then?"

Isabella was in deep thought, what Olivia says does make sense, but then, she wasn't big on making friends. It seems Pedro must have sensed her intention because the moment she tried to open her mouth to tell the girl she wasn't interested in friendship - she was better off without her - Pedro tugged her hand and looked at her with those big puppy eyes.

"Ugh," She groaned, running her hand through her hair, "I hate you, do you know that?"

Pedro grinned at her, "I know," yet she leaned down to kiss him on the lips as Olivia turned the other way scratching the back of her head, this was awkward.

"I'll leave you so you could have some rest," Isabella patted him on the chest, he nodded and she rose to her feet.

"What?" Olivia asked with the kind of look she was giving her.

"Lead the way, do you think I'm about to leave you with my boyfriend," Isabella told her straight-faced.

Olivia rolled her eyes, mumbling under her breath, "So much for trusting her," Fine she couldn't blame her anyway, she had tried to snatch her boyfriend once. However, no matter how insane she was, she would not force herself on a guy head over heels in love with another girl - she had thought Pedro had been bluffing then to avoid her.

"So, what do you want me to get for you as the first sign of our friendship?" Isabella asked the girl as soon as they were out.

Olivia looked at Isabella as if she was an alien, "Get me something? As in a gift? Why would you buy me a gift?"

"Don't friends buy each other stuff?" Isabella asked, perplexed.

"Of course, they do but that shouldn't be the first step in their relationship...." Olivia paused, realizing something. She turned to Isabella questioningly, "Have you had friends before?"

"Of course," Isabella proudly announced.

"Who?"

"My cousin, Anabelle, and Pedro,"

"No, I mean, aside from family members,"

This time, the proud look was gone from Isabella's face, now relaxed by a nervous one, "No?"

Olivia burst into laughter, "You can't be serious!"

"Are you done?" Isabella's expression changed. What was so funny about her not having friends? Not that one of the so-called friends dared to approach her anyway. The few who bravely tried lasted just a few hours after she sorted out their intention in being friends with her, they had run off with their tails between their legs afterward.

"Don't worry," Olivia wrapped her arm around her shoulder, "I'll educate you adequately," She began to lead her away until they came into the foyer to see a slight commotion.

"Did someone come?" Olivia pulled away from Isabella, going to investigate the reason for the sudden crowd.

"Who's that woman?" Isabella pointed at the unfamiliar lady.

"Who?" Olivia inched her head to get a look, but her face changed afterward when she caught a glimpse of the woman.

"Who's that?" Isabella asked her after the change in her expression.

"My mother,"

Chapter 378 - Three Hundred And Seventy-eight: Matchmaker

The third point of view:

What was he expecting? That she would feel an ounce of emotion after helping her with Fernandez? Though Emerald had helped her sincerely, the truth was that he had hoped deep down that she would somehow feel something for him.

Even if she doesn't like him now, at the least her forgiveness would go a long way in cleansing his guilty heart. But then, he got no forgiveness nor her heart.

The man lay in his bed refusing to go out. He would make things awkward for her - it was already awkward for him - if we went out even though he doubted she was still around. Fernandez was the reason she came here, now the problem was settled, there was nothing to hold her back again; leaving was inevitable. But just to be sure, he remained in his room - not that he felt the urge to leave anyway.

Emerald tossed and turned in bed, he couldn't sleep a wink. Deep down, he wanted to find her and press for the truth, does she really feel nothing for him? He had seen the way she looked at him... Damn! Just give up on it, man.

Just as he was contemplating his next move, the door snapped open and somewhere in his heart, he wished for some sort of miracle, that it was Cecil coming back to say something, anything. As pathetic as he was, he would accept her wishes.

However, Emerald's face fell when he recognized that high shrill face. Fuck!

"Emerald darling!" Juliet sashayed over to him, her voice echoing in his head.

He scratched the back of his head, cursing his luck. Never did he think she would really come. This woman was none other than Olivia's mother and a cousin to Sakuzi.

After the kids had fought days ago, he had called her to put her kid to order. Olivia was stubborn and hardly listened to others except for her mother and Sakuzi. Who knew that when she said she would be coming over, she really meant it.

Don't get him wrong, Juliet was a good woman but she was an attention seeker and the fact she had eyes on him.

"Juliet," Emerald inhaled the already thinning air in the room.

"Did you miss me?" She threw herself at him, wrapping her hands around his waist.

"Aww, you smell so good," She breathed in his scent which was kind of creepy to Emerald and that was when he decided it was enough.

"You can let go now," He ordered.

"No," The woman shook her head stubbornly, "I haven't seen you for long now and have to savor all I have missed," She clung to him tighter.

Emerald threw his head back and sighed, he hated clingy women.

"I'll give you the count of three, let go or I'll throw you out of my room,"

"Why are you being so uptight?" She stared up to his unsmiling face, "You just have to accept me, that's all,"

"One," He began his countdown

"I'm not even playing hard to get,"

"Two," He continued to count indifferently.

"We would make a nice couple,"

"Three,"

"Fine," Juliet lifted her hand in surrender. She was the only person who could tease Emerald to this extent, but she knew her limit.

Emerald gave her a hard stare and returned to his bed.

"Tsk tsk," Juliet clicked her tongue as she looked around, "You have quite a spacious room and yet you don't even decorate it with all the money you have," she took in the few items of furniture he had.

"If you're done, you can leave my room," He showed her the way to the door.

"Well, you hardly stay at a place anyway," she figured.

"Can you be quiet I'm trying to sleep,"

"We can sleep together," She tactically offered.

Emerald glared at her.

"It could be your birthday gift,"

"Birthday what?"

"Your birthday gift of course...." it clicked in her head, "You forgot your birthday again, didn't you?"

Emerald pressed the space between the bridge of his nose, "Don't tell me they're organizing a party for me?"

She gave him a stupid look, "Why do you think I'm here?"

"Seriously!" he hissed, forcing himself to his feet since he knew who was responsible for this.

However, Juliet got in his way, "Sakuzi said not to disturb him and that he won't send you in missions if you fail to show up for the party well-groomed and on time," She relayed the message and finally added, "Also, no tricks this time,"

Emerald knew he was in a dilemma. Last year's birthday, he had disappeared two minutes into the party and no matter how much they searched for him, they couldn't find him until the party was over. Only then did he come out from his hiding place and stuttered back to his room for a good rest. But this time, it seems Sakuzi is well prepared.

"Fine," He gave in knowing he had no choice. He has spent most of his life here and on missions, staying without one for a long time would be hell. Not to take about the fact he would lose the respect given to him.

Though he was higher in the hierarchy, second after Sakuzi himself - even Sakuzi's sons were below him - he was most respected because of his proficiency in clearing out difficult and high-tier missions. If he stayed back on the base, someone in the gang would beat his record and he would lose his place. Though the Falcon Gang operated as one family, it was still a dog eat dog world.

"Yeah!" Juliet clapped her hand excitedly, it was rare to see Emerald this obedient - Sakuzi got him real bad.

"And guess what?" she asked.

"What?" The glint in her eyes told Emerald he was going to hate this.

"I got her suit and make-up artist,"

"Whatever," He waved it away, however his head whipped back around when he realized what she just said, "What makeup artist?"

"You'd see," The woman simpered, already making her exits slowly.

"Come here," Emerald told her, "Don't worry, I won't hurt you," He promised her yet she looks it was a lie.

"Be good!" She instructed and made it out of his room before he could lay his hands on her.

Whistling, the woman made her way over to Sakuzi's office.

"How's it?" the man looked up from his desk.

"Mission accomplished," she reported, "Though, why did you have to send me of all people?"

"Because you're the only person who can relay the message without losing her head," He said, without taking his eyes off the pile of papers on his desk. Gosh, the holiday he gave himself had eaten deep into his work.

"You've changed," Juliet said, taking a seat across from him.

"Really?" he glanced up, surprised.

"Yeah, you seem more human," she noticed.

"What about you?" Sakuzi was now the one asking, "Didn't you claim you love him, why are you giving him away?"

Juliet sighed, leaning into her seat, "Well, there are many fishes in the river. Moreover, Emerald deserves some happiness,"

Sakuzi smiled at her comment.

"But don't get me wrong," her tone changed, "If that woman doesn't take him, I'll snatch him right under her nose,"

"Why don't you help them then? Play matchmaker on a low key"

"What are you suggesting?"

Sakuzi took off his reading glasses and looked her straight in the eyes, "What makes women go green the most,"

Suddenly, Juliet got the message and both of them exchanged knowing evil grins. This would be fun.

Chapter 379 - Three Hundred And Seventy-Nine: The Birthday

The third point of view:

"Don't you think this is too much?" Cecil asked as the girls helped dress her up.

She had been in her room, unable to come out outside in fear of bumping into Emerald when Sakuzi sent a package to her room. A dress she had to wear to Emerald's birthday party tonight.

Although she had turned down the offer by lying through her teeth that she was not feeling fine and would be unable to attend the party tonight, Sakuzi was one stubborn old man - he saw through her pathetic lie.

"Don't worry, I'll send medicine to you, but you have to come to the party even if it means sitting through the rest of it - your presence is all I need," was his response.

There was nothing Cecil could do, Sakuzi had housed for the past days she was hiding from Fernandez and it would be a huge disrespect if she dishonored his invitation. So here she was.

"What do you mean it's too much?" Isabella asked, taking her in.

"I kind of feel overdressed," She said pointing to the red spaghetti strap v neck dress that showed off quite a cleavage, stopping just above her knees. The dress had an intricately beaded bodice and fringes at the hem. As a designer herself, she knew this dress cost quite a lot.

"Trust me," Olivia told her, "You're not overdressed at all, a lot of our family members would be coming,"

Initially, Cecil had been cautious about this girl but it seems she had a bit too judgmental. She was highly surprised when Isabella walked in with Olivia - didn't both of them hate each other's gut? - and have been trying to inquire what was going on, but from the look of things, both girls seem to have made up and become friends. Well, she trusted Isabella was smart and careful enough to know who she kept as friends.

"Your family members are coming?" Cecil asked, amazed. She was expecting this to be some low-key party.

Olivia explained, "Emerald might not be family by blood but he's quite dear to us, not to mention one of the most eligible bachelors around here. What more can a lady want in a man... " She began to count with her fingers, "He's tall, handsome in a rugged way, intelligent, loyal, rich - even though he doesn't show it, and loves for life,"

If he was the most eligible male out there, doesn't that mean ladies would flock to him like pigeons? Cecil presumed and strangely, she felt uncomfortable with that thought.

"Well," Cecil cleared her throat and began, "Emerald might have all those lovely characteristics, but some ladies prefer a man with a steady job; a man always around for the family; a man who doesn't have to kill to survive," she said.

"Kill to survive?" Olivia chuckled, "I think you're getting us wrong here? The Falcon clan are not cold-blooded killers as you imagine us to be. We have legitimate businesses and also illegitimate businesses out there - rules are meant to be broken. However, the

world is a nasty place and even if you don't want trouble, it will always come knocking on your door.

"We have to protect ourselves and Of course, protect others who hired us too. Yes, we are a mercenary group but there's more to us, we have our own code of morals. Moreover, we also contribute to the law and order in the society indirectly: your government employs us to get rid of 'problems' they can't fix without causing havoc on the nation. So, I don't know what belief you have of the gang but we only hunt those who hunt us.

"Also, if you don't feel comfortable with Emerald's job, you can always tell him, if he loves you enough, he might make some adjustments. And who knows, he might be tired of this occupation already,"

"Whoah, whoah, whoah, stop right there," Cecil raised her hand, mystified. What was this little girl thinking? "I'm not in a relationship with Emerald,"

Isabella and Olivia exchanged knowing looks which Cecil noticed.

"You two," Cecil pointed at the both of them, "What are you both communicating?"

"Ahh, done," Isabella let go of her hair she had styled with the curling wand.

"Your lips," Olivia began to rub lipstick on her lips, shutting her up in the process.

Those kids! They were doing this on purpose. However, she had no choice but to endure till they were done. But to her utmost surprise, Isabella and Olivia escaped before she could even blink as soon as they were finished with her.

"I'll see you later, aunty, got to dress up!"

"See you at the party, Pedro's mom!"

Both said respectively and escaped through the door with lightning speed. She shook her head, children of nowadays.

The party was scheduled to begin at eight in the night and looking at her wristwatch, she still had thirty minutes to go. The woman decided to use the few minutes and prepare herself mentally.

She was going to face him again after what happened today and God, she was so embarrassed. To make it worse, she had no gift for him.

But what could she do? She was stuck in here and unable to go out and the birthday news came so suddenly it threw her off. Fine, she'd owe him and give him his gift later.

Yea, more chances to meet - she dreaded it.

Finally, Cecil made her way to the garden where the birthday was being held, and damn, Olivia was not lying. Most people were dressed in suits and evening gowns, it was a grand birthday party.

It was shocking to know how a good dress could change someone because she recognized some of the gang members and they look so good. At that moment, it was hard to acknowledge that these people were professional mercenaries. Cecil felt she was starring in some spy movie.

Just as Olivia said earlier, she couldn't recognize a few of the people and they looked so high profile she felt outdated. So Cecil moved around, associating and schmoozing with the few she knew and was comfortable with.

However, her heart almost escaped her throat as soon as the MC announced it was time to welcome the celebrant. Everyone stared at the entrance which had been decorated with red carpet for him to pass through with anticipation. Nerves knotted her stomach and Cecil felt the need to run away but she willed herself to stay strong. She didn't want to be a coward who runs from her problem.

But then, the instant Emerald stepped out, all the breath was knocked out of her lungs. Holy mother of God.

Chapter 380 - Three Hundred And Eighty: Jealousy

The third point of view:

Who said a man wasn't sexy in a suit?

Cecil watched from amongst the other shocked spectators, as a completely different Emerald stepped out, causing a momentarily hush amongst the crowd.

Throughout her stay, Cecil has never seen him in a suit not to talk of formal wear. It was always his casual tops that showed off his muscles and pants showcasing his long legs. His ink-black hair was always tousled and combed backward. But right now, everything about Emerald was just different.

Emerald was wearing a blue tuxedo suit with a black bow tie and white shirt, complete with black pants. His hair resembled a hawk, but the modern pompadour hairstyle was created by adding height on the top with the buzzed sides having continuity with his cheek line, all the way to the chin, giving him a perfectly balanced shape. He was simply breathtaking.

But then, Cecil's expression changed when a woman from nowhere looped her arm around Emerald's arm and walked down the red carpet with him. Cecil felt a stab in her heart and her world whirled, what was happening to her?

She had seen that woman in the afternoon but hadn't asked about her since it wasn't her business, plus the fact she was hiding from Emerald. Was she Emerald's woman?

Unexpectedly, Cecil felt anger wash over her, had Emerald kissed her even when he had another woman? Feeling as if someone slapped her harshly on the face, Cecil wanted to leave, yet she still couldn't.

She held on to the possibility that this was a misunderstanding. Moreover, Olivia would have told her if Emerald was engaged.

Also, wouldn't it prove how cowardly she was if she left because of this? Rather she would confront him later about it - if it turned out to be true. This was his birthday and she can't afford to ruin it.

Cecil decided to play it cool, but each time she looked at the both of them - who looked good together - it irritated her. Why was she disturbed by that? Yes, because there was a possibility Emerald played her.

The woman is just an escort, this must be some sort of birthday procedure that involved walking in the celebrant, Cecil reasoned. But why that woman? Weren't there others to welcome him? There was Sakuzi, urm... Urm.... fine, just hold a grip of yourself, woman! You're not interested in him, period!

But then, it was at that moment that Emerald was crossing her side. As if he sensed the emotional turmoil in her heart, Emerald turned in her direction.

Having an intuition he was going to turn, Cecil's eyes grew wide and she panicked, immediately choosing to hide behind one of the guests in front of her, her back turned to him.

It was only for a second as Emerald continued down the rest of the red carpet, but to Cecil, it felt like forever. Her heart was pounding in her chest and she couldn't help but chide herself. Why was she behaving like a kid? She slapped her head.

Thankfully, after that, everything went back to normal. The orchestra continued their merry number and the guests carried on with their discussion.

"Hey, isn't that Juliet?" Cecil's attention was immediately drawn to the ladies discussing by her side.

She turned in the direction of the woman they were discussing and it was the same woman that escorted Emerald and was still lingering by his side.

So her name's Juliet, Cecil took in the news like a businessman digging for information of possible investors.

"Of course," the other woman confirmed.

"She must be so happy she got a chance with Emerald tonight," snickered the first woman, and Cecil sensed envy beneath her tone. Olivia was not kidding, Emerald was the most eligible bachelor tonight.

"She liked him for a long time, it's not surprising that she jumped in at the first chance of being his escort," the second voice was also filled with Jealousy.

"You think she stands a chance of being his partner at the end of the night? Something might blossom between them?"

At the mention of that, Cecil let out a shaky breath. Why was she so affected by this discussion? It was not as if Emerald finding a partner was her business. She and Emerald just had a one-night stand, that's all.

"Blossom my butt?" The lady snorted, "Emerald would never even look her way,"

Cecil let out a breath she had been holding?- unknowingly.

Both women continued their gossip, "Why would you say so?"

"I don't how true this is but there have been some rumors that Emerald has a first love,"

"First love?!"

Both Cecil and the other woman shouted at the same time.

Uh-oh, she has been busted.

With an awkward smile, Cecil bowed her head to them apologetically while tucking her hair behind her ear, "Sorry"

Other than a dirty look, the women didn't say anything else and Cecil accepted that as a cue to find her way out of there. Gosh, this was so embarrassing.

Cecil was still ranting about her bad luck on a low key when she bumped into someone. Good lord, the universe must have cursed her today.

"I'm so sorry," Cecil was still apologizing when she glanced up to discover that the woman was no one but the object of discussion minutes ago. Juliet.

Wonderful, she was indeed cursed today.

"No, it's alright," the woman said.

At least, she's civil, Cecil was thankful for that. She didn't have the energy to deal with a pompous socialite.

With an appreciative nod, she was about to leave when the woman grabbed her. What now? She sighed inwardly.

"Do we know each other?" Juliet asked, scrutinizing her.

"No," Cecil tried not to lash out at her, hoping the woman would let her go. If she was here, Emerald would not be far away.

"But you look familiar," she still pressed.

"No, I don't know you nor do you know me, so can you please let go of my hand," She asked through gritted teeth while tactically struggling to be free. But damn, the woman was strong.

"What's going on here?" A voice said and all the hairs on her body stood on edge. Finally, it happened.