

Taming A Billionaire

#Chapter 411 - Four Hundred And Eleven: It Was A Promise - Read Taming A Billionaire Chapter 411 - Four Hundred And Eleven: It Was A Promise

Chapter 411 - Four Hundred And Eleven: It Was A Promise

The third point of view:

"From dust, we came and from dust, we would return, no one can question your authority, " The priest began to say his prayer and readings as the rest of the family members stood at the graveside.

Everyone had gathered for this graveside service and were dressed in somber black and dark expression. Even the twins didn't dare to play pranks with the melancholic mood wrapping the environment.

Everyone wore different countenance; few were weeping bitterly like Kim who was being pacified by a friend; most had a stiff and unreadable expression like Sakuzi, but the sadness in his eyes was obvious; others were just there to fulfill their responsibility like Emily and Judy, who composed themselves simply as a sign of respect for the dead; others like Isabella came for the sake of Reina, she knew clearly how that woman had maltreated her -Reina- then; the rest of them were numb like Reina who wanted the event to end - so she could get vengeance.

Her blood was boiling with so much rage and anticipating bloodshed; it was a life for a life. Guess being around her real family had influenced her because the previous Maya couldn't even hurt a fly, not to talk of taking a life.

The priest went on, "Lord of all, we praise you for all who have entered into their rest and reached the promised land where you are seen face to face. We thank you for Angela's life, and all the years we shared with her. We lift her to you today, in honor of the good we saw in her and the love we felt from her. Please give us the strength to leave her in your care, in the knowledge of eternal life through Jesus Christ, "

Although they could have had a funeral officiant, Kim had claimed it had been Angela's last wish to be buried by a priest, so no one complained and granted her request. They had to honor the dead anyway.

After the priest was done, Reina read the eulogy, only because Kim was so emotional she couldn't produce a single syllable.

You know life was kind of fucked up. All this while, she had silently waited for a moment like this; a day where she could reveal Angela's evil nature; a day where Angela would be unable to defend herself while she brings up her wrongdoings to the open. But right now, Reina found herself vomiting words and words of virtues Angela never possessed nor showed - at least until her last moment on earth.

Reina had never planned to identify herself as Angela's relative nor to talk of a daughter, but here she was. She couldn't help but wonder if Angela knew wherever she was that the once rejected daughter was the one reading the eulogy at her grave. Ah right, Angela would have been the one reading this eulogy at her own grave if she hadn't died in her place.

The emotion almost choked Reina, but she pushed back the tears. She would bury the anger and unleash it once she catches that son of a bitch. He would wish he rather died than in her hands, Reina silently promised Angela. She would deal with that man who took away her only chance of knowing what it felt to be loved by one's biological mother; she would destroy that asshole who deprived her kids of the privilege of communicating with their biological grandmother. It was a promise.

Although Reina had not read out the eulogy with many feelings, most people were left in tears. She might not have cried, but the words were spoken straight from her heart.

The instant the eulogy was over, the body was lowered into the ground and it was time to shovel dirt into the grave. The first person to observe the rite was Kimberly and she would have fallen into the grave if not for the men who came to her rescue. With no choice left, they had to send the emotional woman away before she tried anything stupid. again.

Reina was the next to participate in the activity with her husband standing next in line with their kids - they had to say goodbye too. Angela and the kids might not have met when she was alive, but the kids had to bid her a safe journey to paradise then. After them, Sakuzi and Nadia followed till every last one of them paid their respects. The priest then made a short prayer and gestured to the funeral home to fill up the grave.

Watching that action, Reina's chest constricted painfully. Does this mean she would never see Angela again? She would not see the woman give her that hateful gaze; hate her for being an illegitimate daughter; criticize her for the choices she made? That genuine smile Angela had given her that day at the hospital, was that the last? Was that day the last time she would ever receive the warm hug? Her mother was gone? Like gone forever.

"We should go," She was startled out of her thoughts by Niklaus who placed a gentle hand on her shoulder.

Her husband put on his signature poker face he rarely wore unless he didn't want anybody seeing through him.

"Yes, we should," Reina took the hand he offered her, but she stole a glance over her shoulder one last time - It was goodbye - and moved on.

"Are you okay?"

Reina gave him a long look, he has been asking her that a lot lately and she replied as usual with, "I'm fine,"

"It's a good thing you did out there," Niklaus said to her just as the kids called dibs on the front seat of the car, running away before he could stop them. They didn't even seem as affected as the other mourners here.

"What?" Reina had no clue what he was talking about.

"For a moment there," His face was lit with amusement, "I thought you were going to thrash her or something"

Reina's expression changed, "I would have done so," She added, "Until?she died for me,"

Niklaus suddenly stopped, realizing how insensitive his words might have seemed. He didn't mean to insinuate she was that heartless, he just wanted Reina to laugh and relax - she was uptight these days. So he faced her and apologized, "I'm sorry,"

"Why are you sorry? You didn't kill Angela - that's who should be sorry," She said to Niklaus, walking around him but Niklaus drew her back gently.

He sighed, "Can we for a moment forget the murderer and focus on you, please?"

"There's nothing about me to focus on. We should leave," She dismissed him.

"You hardly sleep these days, Reina!" he hissed under his breath.

Reina retorted, "I can't sleep because each time I close my eyes, all I see is her death, I relive that moment again and again. Niklaus, I can't sleep because the murderer is still on the loose and until he's brought to justice, let's not have this discussion, again" she made her point known to him and strode away.

Chapter 412 - Four Hundred And Twelve: Who Stole His Heart

The third point of view:

A memorial service was held immediately after the funeral which meant that everyone returned from the burial ground. Most people used the opportunity to convey their condolences and one of them involved Julie and his grandfather.

"I heard what happened and you should know that I'm so sorry for your loss," George, Julie's grandfather said to Sakuzi and his daughter, Reina. It pained him that it took this unfortunate occasion to meet once again.

"Thank you so much, George. It's quite an honor to see you today," Sakuzi patted the old man on the shoulder. This old man was his mentor, teacher, and friend back in the days; they had fought alongside each other.

"I promise you that her murderer will not go unpunished. I would use my resources and fish out Miguel from wherever he's hiding," George pledged to them.

Although both mafia lords were not even distantly related by blood, their gangs were on good terms and that was enough reason to fight each other's battles. That was how loyal gangs were.

"I would really appreciate that," Reina thanked him, "My mother was killed right under our noses and if she had not done that, the target would have been me. That alone is a humiliation to a big gang like ours,"

"You're right. An insult on your gang is an insult to mine too. Your father and I aren't just friends, we're brothers bound by blood and the test of time. You don't need to think twice about coming to me for help anytime," The man announced, busy strengthening their alliance while his grandson had his gaze somewhere else.

Julie had a smirk on his face as soon as he spotted Anabelle from the crowd. She looked beautiful in her simple black dress with her hair put in a bun. As if she sensed that someone was staring at her, Anabelle turned in his direction at that moment, their eyes met and held.

Julie couldn't explain it but at that instant, he felt something swell inside of him. Anabelle looked more beautiful than usual and his heart began to pound so fast he thought it would leap out of his chest.

His hand unconsciously traveled to his body as if he wanted to hold back his heart threatening to jump out with that amount of throbbing. He couldn't breathe, all the air in his lungs seemed to have been stolen - who stole his air? What the hell was going on with him?

However, his face fell when Anabelle scowled at him and made a U-turn to God knows where. What the hell did she do that for? Were they quarreling? He couldn't remember them having a fight? If anything, wasn't she the one over the moon last week when their contract ended.

Yeah, you heard him, right. Anabelle was now a free woman and she sure rubbed her freedom all over his face. Julie smiled at the memory however he suddenly went red in

the face when he also remembered that kiss between them. He felt a rise down there and cursed mentally, it couldn't be that the memory of that silly kiss was rousing him?

He had kissed several girls and he could tell that the kiss he shared with Anabelle that day was mediocre. However, out of the many kisses he's shared with girls of different sizes and shapes, how could it be that one made him feel weird? He wasn't normal today.

"Alright, we'd discuss more on that when I come to your office later," George finished his conversation with Sakuzi and daughter, intentionally awakening his grandson from his internal battle.

"Thanks for coming then. Make yourself comfortable," Sakuzi excused himself to go attend to the other guests in need of his attention.

"Who was that girl?"

Julie was startled by that question from George, it came out of nowhere.

"What girl?" He played dumb even though something told him his grandfather was referring to Anabelle.

"The one you had your gaze fixated on earlier?" The man pressed and the boy knew he was not getting out of that one.

Julie carried on with his act to the end, "Oh, that's Anabelle, Isabella's cousin. What do you ask? Is there any problem?"

"What's your relationship with her?" George went straight to the point, pinning the boy with his knowing eyes. The way his grandson had stared at that girl disturbed him - he didn't want any unnecessary distraction.

Julie was his only grandson and child and as a father and grandfather - Julie's father was late - he has done everything to make his path successful. He has laid the groundwork, it was left for his son to follow through and a young foolish teenager would not disrupt that.

"We're just friends, grandfather" Julie chuckled with a shrug of his shoulders, "Why are you staring at me that way? I would never fall for that girl, I have a fiancée for Christ's sake and you should have a bit of faith in your grandson, old man," He said playfully.

"I hope it remains that way then. You might not know this but you're an alpha, the leader of the great clan I would be leaving in your hand once in gone,"

"Don't speak like that, grandfather. You would be with me for a long time and get to see your great-grandchildren,"

The man went on nonetheless, "And just like every great alpha of a pack, you need a strong Luna by your side, not an omega. Do you get me?" George lectured him in a "language" he would be able to understand.

Julie stared at the old man in wonder and couldn't help but ask, "Have you been watching movies again?"

"Answer my question boy, do you get me?" George was stern.

"Crystal. " Julie answered. It was no huge work anyway. He just had to get Isabella to fall for him, problem solved.

"Good. Now go find her and mark your territory, alpha,"

"Yes, old man," He almost saluted and went in search of Isabella which didn't take time since the girl was with her boyfriend Pedro and in the open. The memorial service ended already so everyone was sharing condolences with the families of the victims and the rest of them schmoozing with friends and neighbors.

"Hi Isabella," He waved over to them.

"I'll see you later," Pedro said to Isabella upon seeing that boy approach. He and Julie were not friends and would never be one - the boy was a thief who tried to steal what doesn't belong to him and until Julie returned everything to the way they were, this feud between them would continue, even to generations coming.

"Alright," Isabella understood his intention and didn't push the matter?knowing how sensitive Pedro was to that engagement. Instead, she leaned down and shared one long kiss with him.

Julie watched his fiancée and her boyfriend kissing and where he would have felt something, he felt nothing.

No, he did feel something called jealousy but it wasn't directed towards them, but at the thought of Anabelle doing exactly that kissing scene to another guy that wasn't him. Where the hell did that thought come from?

Chapter 413 - Four Hundred And Thirteen: Leave That To Us

The third point of view:

"Hi, my beautiful Fiancée," Julie made his presence known with his signature smile that has bought over the hearts of many girls. Sadly, except Isabella. What was he even doing wrong?

"Do you have a death wish?" Isabella asked him as soon as she sent Pedro away, "Didn't I tell you to make yourself invisible until my two years are over?" she stared at him with cold eyes that would have frozen him up if she had that ability.

"Actually, it's a year and ten months now," He specified

Isabella gave him the look.

"What?" he shrugged, then took on a goofy smile, "I've been counting to the day when I finally have you as my woman," Julie reached out to stroke her cheek.

However, before Julie's hand could touch her face, Isabella grabbed his arm and twisted his shoulder as he yelped in pain, drawing people's attention. However, no one tried to separate them, dismissing it as a play between friends - teenagers these days were rough with one another.

"Hey," Julie called, trying to ease his arms, but she added more pressure and caused him pain, "Must you always solve everything with violence," he spoke for crying out sake.

"Only for people like you," Isabella replied nonchalantly, "I warned you never to be within six feet of me. You'd regret coming here just touch me,"

Although Julie was capable enough to get out of her grasp, it would require deftness and might get physical which was inappropriate here - this was a funeral service, not a sparring ground - so he endured her maltreatment silently. One of these days, he would spar with her and show off his superiority once and for all.

"Am I crazy? Why would I come here to touch you? I came here to offer my condolences and thought to give you a comforting touch, who knew you would misunderstand?" he lied through his teeth.

Although Isabella sensed it was a lie, she still let go of him nevertheless. It would draw unnecessary attention and ruin her reputation if she kept on with the torture. People might not show much interest in their squabble but with technology these days? It might make an appearance on the internet.

"I'm sorry for the death of your grandmother?" Julie gave solace to her feeling of loss with all manner of seriousness - there was time for everything.

"Whatever," Isabella was not even appreciative.

"I'm serious here," Julie made himself clear, thinking Isabella thought he was joking again, "I'm really sorry for your loss,"

"And I'm serious here," Isabella gave him a long face, "I don't need your condolences,"

"But your grandmother just died or am I mistaken here?" Julie had furrowed brows and rubbed his jaw as he thought hard.

"Angela is not my grandmother but Reina's mother or whatever she was," She narrated emotionlessly

"Why do I sense some hostility there? Did you and her mother never get along - which I wouldn't be surprised anyway- or you simply never knew her?" he was confused by her.

"I did not know Angela, never did I know Angela, Thank God I didn't know Angela and I'm grateful I would never come to know Angela," she summarized their relationship for him.

Julie's mouth almost fell to the ground, how could someone be that.... cold?

Unknown to Isabella, she didn't know her attitude that instant turned Julie off. He couldn't help but wonder how dreary his marriage would look in the future if this engagement between them worked out. Living with an ice queen for the rest of his life didn't seem that appealing.

Julie desired for a ray of sunshine and his thought unconsciously drifted to Anabelle. She was totally different from her cousin, Isabella. It was as if she was the sunshine - warm and bright and Isabella the moon, illuminative yet cold.

At that juncture, he began to flash back to what had drawn him to Isabella in the first place, her great will? Strength? It all seemed frivolous now. Julie was stunned to discover he desired Anabelle, the weaker yet more feminine of the cousins. She might not be as strong as Isabella but she was brave and her insecurities actually were cute.

She was the only one who could hold his interest for more than a minute and he can freely converse without fear of getting hit. Thinking about it, he was the one always bullying her and she had never retaliated for once. Anabelle was kind, beautiful, and funny.

Maybe Grandfather wasn't entirely right, sometimes an alpha needed not a strong Luna that would contend for his throne, but an omega that would balance the demons inside of him. They said opposite attracts, this might be it.

He didn't need his woman to be strong - he would do the fighting - she just had to have a beautiful heart.

"Oh my God!" Julie gasped, realization dawned on him. He was in love with Anabelle, how could he not have seen that? [A/N: because love is blind]

"What is it?" Isabella was curious at the chaotic flashes of emotions on his face in such a short time.

"See you later," He said briskly.

"Julie?!" Isabella called after him but the boy had vanished into the crowd, "Well, goodbye then," Isabella clapped her hand together as if clearing dust and was grateful for whoever or whatever drew that "annoyance" away from her.

Now, where was Pedro? She looked around. Her face lit up with excitement, it was time to play hide and seek.

His heart was pulsating, Julie was in a hurry. He was afraid. Afraid that someone might have stolen his spot - his side by Isabella. He was such a fool for not taking his love interest seriously. He had been too relaxed around her and made her a target for other males who saw her worth. He prayed he wasn't late.

However, as if the universe was mocking him for his wrong choice, Julie looked out and spotted Israel and paled. What was he doing here? Was he here for Anabelle as well? Had he been serious in his pursuit of Anabelle? Or maybe he was the one who hadn't taken his threat gravely?

Oh no, he couldn't let that happen? But where the hell was Anabelle? He had to find her before Israel did, else he might lose her forever.

As if an invisible cursor directed his gaze, Julie's sight landed on Isabella's troublesome siblings - yes, he's encountered them too.

And, oh no, he was about to get more than he bargained for? But then, they were his best shots at finding Anabelle quickly and so he approached them. May God bless his soul.

"Allen, did you cry?" Neon asked him, still clearing the tears from his eyes, "That scene of aunty reading the eulogy was so tearful,"

"Why should I cry?" Allen rolled his eyes, "I don't even know who she is,"

"She's our grandmother, dumbhead," Ailee sassed.

"I don't care. Nadia is my grandmother, she isn't," he concluded.

"Still, you should show some respect - at least that's what mummy said," Ailee reasoned, and as if both twins were psychic, burst into laughter at the same time.

"That's not funny," Neon chided, yet was jealous at the same time of their twin bond.

"Chill, Neon," Allen patted him on the shoulder.

"I'm trying but I can't, maybe something got into my eye," He began to rub his sight.

"Something got into your eye?" Ailee's interest was piqued and she stepped closer, ready to blow out whatever was in his vision when Allen stopped her.

"What are you doing?" He gave her a skeptical look.

"What is wrong with you? I'm trying to help him get it out," she couldn't understand her brother's odd behavior lately.

"Don't worry, I'll do it," He offered his help which was kind of suspicious - Allen never helps Neon, he bullies him.

"No, you'll be rough with him, I know you," The girl knew her brother thoroughly.

"No, I'll do it,"

"No, you won't!"

And it was in the middle of this debate that Julie approached them.

"Hello?"

"Who?!.. Oh, hello?"

There was a three-sixty degree change of attitude in them realizing he might be a prospective customer. What service do they run again? Yes, helping people. That was it.

"Hi, I'm Julie," He went ahead to introduce himself.

"Yeah, we know you, the guy who broke Anabelle's heart," announced Neon, the fighter of Justice.

"Well, since you know me, I'll go straight to the point. I need your help,"

"Why would we help you when you hurt Anabelle -" Ailee instantly shut Neon's mouth with her palm

She faked a smile at Julie, "Dm us, no, I mean, tell us,"

And just like that, Julie narrated everything quicker than he ever thought was possible; he was losing track of time.

"We don't know where Anabelle is," Allen appeared to be uninterested.

"I would give you whatever you want?" he proposed.

"But we can find her," their testimony changed immediately.

"Fine, but what if Israel got to him first?" he narrated his worry.

"Leave that to us,"

Then Julie watched as they huddled together and began to discuss in hushed tones for over a minute which made him impatient. He was just about to remind them that time was running out when they finished.

"You're a racer, right?"

"Yes?" Julie had a feeling he was about to regret this.

"Then you're going to take us on your next race, that's our payment,"

"What?"

"To be precise, drive us in your car. We want to know the thrill of racing, that's all for payment,"

"What?!!" Julie was horrified out of his mind. Their parents would kill him if they heard he took them racing.

"Take it or leave it," they demanded.

"Fine, it's a deal," It was Anabelle or his life. Anyway, he just had to be careful and reduce his speeding - the kids knew nothing about racing anyway.

"What about Israel? Where is Anabelle?"

"Leave that to us,"

Chapter 414 - Four Hundred And Fourteen: Be With His Wife

The third point of view:

Only a few people who attended the burial knew Reina was Maya and the reason she was active in the services. The other curious guests were fed with the lie that she was a friend mistaken for their dead daughter - Maya- because of their similarities hence the reason they had gotten so close. In one word, they took her as a daughter and sister.

The lie worked pretty well because she could assume her role as a daughter without suspicious looks or probing from gossipy guests.

And at that moment Reina was receiving condolences from visitors and well-wishers, someone also made his debut.

"Excuse me," She paste a fake smile at the woman occupying her time for a while now, and strode over to Alfred who paused as soon as their gaze met.

"What do you think you're doing here?" She spoke through gritted teeth.

"I'm here to pay my last respect," He said to her, holding her gaze.

"No, you're not going to do that because I'm sure as hell Angela wouldn't want you here anyway," Reina spoke through a hushed tone, she didn't want to cause a commotion.

"I admit that I made a mistake but do not deny me the chance of saying goodbye to her one last time,"

"Exactly, that's it. I'm denying you the chance because you did so to her too," she was furious, "I admit that Angela did pretty horrible things, but everything she did was for you! She loved you!"

"She loved my money!" he hollered.

"If she loved your money, why would she leave Mr moneybags aka Valentino for you! Get your eyes fixed, she slept with my father to save your business. What woman in her right mind would do that if not for the one she loves. But yet, what did you pay her back with? You abandoned her in the time she needed you most,"

"How dare you come here?!"

Reina heard a roar behind her and didn't need a prophet to tell her that it belonged to Kim. Her eyes met with Alfred's and she smirked at him with a look that says, "Deal with her,"

Knowing how volatile Kim could be, Reina didn't bother to stop her, rather she took her leave and left father and daughter to settle their business. This was out of her jurisdiction, she claimed.

The instant Kim walked over to Alfred, she pushed her father on the chest, "Who do the hell gave you the permission to step in here?!" She yelled at him, attracting a crowd.

"Kimberly, calm down!" the man said, steadying himself from falling from stumbling.

"Calm down?" she threw her head back and laughed hysterically, "I'm far from the word 'calm down'.?What do you come here to do? Laugh at my mother's face?" She pointed at the huge framed picture of Angela on the memorial stand.

"She begged you! I begged you! I asked you to see her just once? But what do you say? You snubbed me, told me you were busy? Busy with what? your mistress? Money?!" She shouted in his face.

"I admit it, I was selfish. I never took your words seriously, thinking it was one of her acts to get me to come to see her," was his excuse.

Kim smirked, "Well, as you can see, her death is not an act, so kindly take your..." she looked down at the bouquet in his grasp, "damned flowers and shove it up to your ass. I don't ever want to set my eyes on you again,"

"Kim -" the man tried to touch her but she shrugged him off with a deep warning,

"Don't you touch me If you don't want to get it from me," Kim threatened him, took hold of her son's hand - Tommy had appeared in the middle of the quarrel - and left.

"Kimberly, wait -"

"I think it's best you left sir," Niklaus came out to take control of the situation. The family had washed enough of their dirty laundry in the public already.

"No, I want to talk to her," Alfred insisted.

"Trust me," Niklaus lowered his voice, saying, "If your daughter shares half the gene as my wife, then I'm sure as hell you're not getting anything from her today - she's so damn stubborn,"

Alfred must have realized Niklaus was not kidding even though his words were amusing, he gave in immediately.

"Come on, I'll lead you out," Niklaus walked the man out from the church.

Once they were out, Alfred looked up at the sky with a tired exhale, "I messed up big time, didn't I?"

"Yes, you did,"

The man sighed. It

"But the point is that you're willing to atone for your sins. I would have given my father a second chance -after he paid for his crimes -?if he had repented sincerely, blood is still blood. There is no night I don't stay awake visualizing how things would have gone if he had taken that step. So you still have hope mister, they just need time and sincerity, "

Alfred stared at Niklaus, "You're Maya's husband, aren't you?"

"Yes," He answered yet questioned him, "Why do you ask? You don't approve of me?" he lips kinked to the side amused.

Alfred looked him over and shook his head, "No, you're decent. Just don't commit the same mistake I did and," He placed his hand on Niklaus' shoulder as if about to vest upon him a great responsibility, "Give her the love I never gave her,"

"You don't need to tell me that twice. Reina is a very special woman, I did not come all this way only to give up on her,"

"Keep up the good work, while I work on amending my ways. See you later," he added, "Son-in-law"

Niklaus grinned, looking down at his shoe.

Alfred stared at the flower, "I'll give this to Angela when I've gotten her daughter's approval," He finally said and left.

With a deep breath, Niklaus went back to the church but this time, there was emotion swirling in his gaze.

Gratitude.

He just realized it wasn't easy to have a happy and contented family. Every family has its own problems and it's left for them to solve them or let them escalate. So Niklaus located his wife where she was talking to one of the guests and hugged her from behind.

"Niklaus, what are you doing?" Reina gasped, surprised at the sudden hug, and spoke in a hushed tone, "We're in -"

"I don't care," He didn't even let her finish, instead he tightened his hold on her.

Reina flashed the older woman an apologetic smile who sure understood by saying, "You two are so adorable," and left.

"Okay, what is it?" She turned around in his arms.

"Let's go home," He said to her

"Sure," she nodded, relaxing in his arms.

Niklaus was tired of all these dramas. Angela's death has not only stressed but tested their will, stand, and faith. Right now, he only wanted to be with his wife. Intentionally refusing to bring up the issue of her vengeance, because there was no way in hell he'd be letting her out of his sight.

Chapter 415 - Four Hundred And Fifteen: Treacherous Thoughts

The third point of view:

Anabelle was free at last and that had to be the happiest day of her life, however, to her horror, it wasn't. The girl couldn't explain it but she wanted more time with Julie.

It was true that the asshole bullied and made her do difficult things?- some of them being things she had never done in her entire life- but he never made her do inappropriate things and knew how to appease her anger. Although he hadn't been that sweet the first time they met, Anabelle had come to discover that was the mask he hid beneath; he always appeared to be tough and uncaring. But in reality, he was a big, bad, softie.

It was true that when Anabelle was freed from that contract, she had been over the moon and happily sent every single video of her celebratory cruising to him yet waited for his opinion - which didn't fail her expectation. Julie had the special talent of demoralizing a person's confidence with just a speech, but she didn't take it to heart knowing he didn't mean it - it was one of his great pretenses.

Then it dawned on Annabelle, since when did she learn to understand him this much? This was someone who had broken her heart to the extent she had sworn never to get married - said out of disappointment at that moment, common people, heartbreak hurts like a bitch. How could men be this heartless? Dabbling with one's feelings?

Recognizing her sudden feelings for him, Anabelle drew back, discovering she had overstepped a boundary she shouldn't have. But then, it hasn't been easy. She fought against the urge to pick up her phone, call him up and quibble like they usually do. When did they grow this close? She couldn't possibly be that deeply in love with him. Oh no, she was doomed.

Anabelle wasn't a sucker for pain or something and had learned from her first experience. Julie was not the type to love a woman, he was a player. Moreover, even if by chance he truly felt something for her, it would never grow into anything special. Why? Because he was Isabella's fiancée and the Julie she knew would never go against his grandfather. It was ingrained in him, the boy loved the old man to the bones and would never make him unhappy.

For the first time in her life, Anabelle loathed her cousin, Isabella. Who gave her the right to own everything she wanted? First, it had been Pedro and although that relationship had been based on her great need for companionship, it was still something and she snatched it away.

Now, destiny gave her Julie by chance, it was love at first bra, yeah, no, you know what, forget the fact she had seen him at a lingerie store. But the point was that things wouldn't have blown out of proportion if Isabella had just glued her butt to a chair. Yes,

she understood Isabella had done it to get revenge for her, but her angry self didn't want to acknowledge that as of now. Why does her cousin always get the best ones? It just made her insanely annoyed.

The girl was so bitter inwardly that when Israel had called her up on a date, she took it. Anabelle needed a distraction, something to take her mind off the fact she might have fallen in love a second time with a guy that shattered her heart - a guy she could never have because he was beyond reach. It was humiliating and heartbreaking - that affection was doomed to fail before it even began.

However, that date might have been for nothing because her mind wandered off now and then to him. The only thing Israel proved to her was that he was a good distraction - not at all times though. Israel was actually a good friend but he just couldn't hold her interest as much as Julie did. To Anabelle, Julie was like a blend of sunshine mixed with danger. He was positive, of course, but there was this thrilling sense of precariousness about him that turned her on.

So when that date with Israel ended, Anabelle was clear on what, no, who, she wanted. Sadly enough, she couldn't have him. Plus the fact she learned never to throw herself at a man as she did in her other relationship - with Pedro. She decided to bury her feelings for Julie while planning to withdraw from their newfound friendship - there was nothing friendly about her feelings for him.

However, withdrawing so quickly would draw suspicion and trust her when she said Julie was stubborn, like incredibly headstrong. He would begin to probe her for the sudden change and God damns her if she dares confess. So Anabelle began by limiting the "hours" they spoke on phone, stopped sending him videos of herself and prayed he got bored of her and moved onto another "friend". However, the reverse was the case, the boy kept calling which made her wonder if he even had a life.

She had seen his friends that day at the racing track, doesn't he hang with them or something? The long hours he spent teasing, bullying, and infuriating her on the phone were suspicious. What about Israel? Don't Julie hang out with him? Wasn't there a belief that guys like sharing secrets with fellow guys? Why was she the one hearing the eww-worthy stuff he ever did?

Well, here was the pathetic her, currently hiding in the backyard of the church, waiting out for him to leave - nobody would miss her presence anyway. Anabelle had a feeling that Julie and his stern-looking grandfather - it seems - would attend the burial today - honestly, she never expected his grandpa here - and had prepared herself mentally. But then, imagining and seeing him physically were two different things, so when their eyes met, she panicked.

Her heart pounded so loudly blood rushed to her head and she felt dizzy. Anabelle scowled at the reaction, deciding to disappear before she made the mistake of introducing herself to grandfather dearest. Who was she kidding? She bet the man

would have no interest in her. Anabelle snorted, why would he be intrigued when he had a perfect daughter-in-law called Isabella. Her cousin Isabella was the perfect, capable, beautiful, and know it all child. Who wouldn't like her? Even Julie liked her.

Anabelle felt like a bitch with the treacherous thoughts inside of her towards Isabella. She loved her cousin but this wasn't a good time for her. Seeing Isabella with Pedro and knowing she had another standby called Judy at her side just made her envious and bitter. She better wallow in self-pity outside than transfer this strong aggression on someone else.

So she squatted down on the tiled floor, leaning back against the church pillar and grateful for the fact that there was no audience to witness her in one of her lowest moments. Or so she thought because Anabelle felt that feeling of being watched from earlier and turned around, only to release a startled breath.

Tell her this was a dream. No, slap her.

No way, what was he doing here?

Chapter 416 - Four Hundred And Sixteen: Wed You Both

The third point of view:

"Hello mister, you must be here for the funeral," Israel was startled when a little boy came up to him out of nowhere.

He glanced down at him, blonde hair with blue innocent eyes, no sort of resemblance hit him. But why does it seem like the boy knew him, he could see it in his eyes?

"Am I in trouble? " Israel's brow raised at the amount of scrutiny the little boy was giving him.

"Punch,"

The strange boy lifted a tray to him and his eyes fell on the cup of chilled fruit punch. Speaking of which, Israel was thirsty and took a sip and at the same time watching the weird boy carefully.

He was getting level three creepiness, not enough to make the hairs of his arm stand on edge but enough to make him cautious. He stared at his environment, already plotting an escape plan mentally if he felt dizzy out of nowhere.

"I knew you'd be thirsty," He almost spat the juice out of his men. How could the boy tell exactly what he was thinking? Also, why was he speaking as if he knew him? Israel has never set his eyes on the kid before. Maybe, this was one of those times he left already.

"Thanks, kiddo, but I've got to leave," Israel said, turning to the other direction. The boy was creeping him out.

But to his astonishment, the boy ran over to his front asking,

"Go where? Didn't you come for the funeral?"

"Urm... yeah?" he answered yet changed his mind at the last minute, "You know what, I really need to find somebody right now," Exactly, Anabelle was the reason he had come here today - he hardly knew anybody here.

After their date that day, he had a feeling that Anabelle was avoiding him and he couldn't understand why. Their date held promises of a blossoming relationship, right?

"Find someone?" The kid gave him an accusing look that made him uncomfortable.

"Why are you staring at me that way?" What a strange child.

"You came to a funeral to chase after a girl?"

"Yes, what? No? I mean, what are you talking about?" Israel was flustered.

The boy gave him a straight face.

"I really came for the memorial," Israel couldn't even understand why he was defending himself. This was a kid for christ's sake.

"Fine, then," The boy gave him a smile that raised the alarm bells in his head, "Then you should come along," the boy grabbed his hand and began to lead him further into the church, "I need to tell you the great history of the woman we're mourning today,"

Everything happened quicker than Israel could comprehend and before he knew it, he was being led away by the strange kid nor did he get to see the boy make secret signs to another set of kids hidden away from sight.

"Neon succeeded," Ailee informed Allen with Julie standing beside them with arms wrapped in front of his chest. These kids had real skills, maybe he should let them into their gang.

Ah crap, they were Niklaus' kids and Sakuzi's grandkids - they already belong to the Sakuzi clan. Not to add the fact his limbs would be broken if he dares to bring that up to Reina. What a loss.

"So how are you going to find me, Anabelle?" Julie asked, restless. She wasn't picking his calls.

"Shhh, mister, you talk too much. Let the professionals do their job," Ailee chided him, shifting her attention back to her brother.

Julie kept quiet yet his eyes widened when he saw Allen brought out his phone and typed into an app he couldn't get a clear view of, yet he unmistakably saw a cursor appear on the screen.

"You kids put a tracker on Annabelle?"

"Pfft," Ailee was smug, "We literally have a tracker on everyone in the family...." she trailed off dreadfully when she realized what she just blurted out.

She faked a smile to Julie, "I think we should discuss the confidentiality of our business once again,"

"I found her!" announced Allen oblivious to the fact that the secret of their business has been revealed, "She's at the church's backyard," He hardly revealed before Julie zoomed off.

Julie was exhilarated, there was a ray of hope and he didn't look back - not even when his grandfather was calling after him - he had to go where his heart summoned him.

The boy found himself outside and in no time located Anabelle who squatted on the floor, leaning on the pillar and staring out in space. Julie's heart throbbed, did he put her in this state?

Anabelle must have sensed his presence just like earlier - they must be attracted to each other like magnets - and turned to him, their eyes locked. She froze.

For five good minutes or so, none of them said a word, just kept staring at one another as if they had been pressed "pause" until Julie decided to break the silence.

"What are you doing here?"

"Do you own here too? Is there a law that states that I have to answer to you?" she sasssed, as usual, hoping he would feel insulted and leave.

But to Julie, that comment warmed his heart. This was Anabelle, the warm-hearted witch he preferred to be with.

Anabelle was dissatisfied with the grin on his face, Julie was supposed to be pissed off, not happy.

"Were you hiding from me?" He asked, slowly approaching her.

"Why would I hide from you? Who do you think you are?" She lifted her chin in a show of defiance.

However, Julie kept a smile on his face as he walked over to Anabelle which made her uncomfortable.

"W-what are you doing?" she asked, taking a step until he successfully cornered her into a wall. Anabelle glanced up at Julie, what was wrong with him today? He was creeping her out.

Julie backed her against the wall, trapping her successfully since he knew she would attempt to escape after his unbelievable confession.

"Let's date"

"H-huh?" Anabelle choked on her saliva.

"I love you, Anabelle," He finally confessed, but not without fidgeting with nervousness.

But then, that nervousness heightened to the highest level because Anabelle stared at him, mouth agape after five minutes of his confession.

"Please say something," His confidence dwindled like never before.

Still yet. Nothing.

Julie scratched the back of his head, deciding to do damage control, "I know it sounds pretty stupid but that's how I sincerely feel about you and I'm sorry for not realizing that sooner. So if you don't feel the same way, I'll understand if you -"

But Anabelle cut him off by standing on her toes and kissed him. It took him off guard that he responded to the kiss late and when he did, it was the best feeling ever. Like he had found his way back home or something.

"You like me?" That was the first question he asked the instant they broke away.

"Duh, would I be exchanging saliva with you if I don't?" She flicked him on the forehead.

A rare smile broadened Julie's face and he leaned in, kissing her once more and this time passionately until they heard a movement behind them.

"Urm..." Both of them pulled away with flushed cheeks. Oh boy.

"Sorry, father " Anabelle apologized to the priest staring at them, shocked. She could feel all the blood rushing to her face. Of all moments the priest of God had to catch them in the grandeur of sin - lust.

"May the Lord forgive us, amen," Julie quickly made the sign of the cross. That should do, right?

However, the father asked to their shock, "Do I need to wed the both of you?"

Chapter 417 - Four Hundred And Seventeen: Love Is Stupid

The third point of view:

"Tell me you're kidding," Isabella had a massive look of disbelief on her face as Anabelle behaved lovey-dovey with Julie. What the hell was happening? One moment this asshole was bothering her and the next he's onto her naive cousin.

"What did you just say?" Pedro blinked twice at that announcement.

"You heard me right," Anabelle giggled, obviously high on excitement, "We are getting married,"

Isabella let go of Pedro's arm and walked over to Anabelle, pulling her out of Julie's arm with a deep frown, and then placed a hand on the girl's forehead, checking her temperature.

"You don't have a fever," she observed with pursed up lips while feeling her own forehead too, "Neither do you look sick?" Isabella let go, observing her appearance, "What's the problem then?"

"Seriously, let go!" Anabelle pushed out of her grasp, frustrated, "What the hell is wrong with you?"

"I should be the one asking you that question!" Isabella retorted with furrowed brows, "You just called me here out of the memorial to?blabber this nonsense about getting married?!"

"Yes, you are right. Indeed, we are getting married," Anabelle acquiesced, relaxing her head against Julie's chest.

"Was that his idea? Did he put you up to this? "

"Actually, that's the Father's idea?" She shrugged in the direction of the Priest who straightened up with a raised brow.

"That was meant to be a joke," The priest clarified.

"A bad joke as you can see, obviously" Isabella sassied, throwing her hand up.

The priest defended himself, "Marriage seems to scare young people these days so I thought suggesting that would make them both scamper away from fear - you don't make out behind the church,"

"Unfortunately, you gave them the worst advice in history!" Isabella bellowed at the priest.

"Isabella," Pedro called, pulling her to his side in an attempt to calm her down, "It's a priest you're talking to,"

"Oh, a priest," She pretended to be remorseful yet yelled at his face, "A priest that's about to wed my eighteen-year-old Cousin!"

"Hey little one, I'm not forcing anyone to take a marriage oath. As I said, it was a bad joke. Besides, I'm not even -"

"You know what? Let's speak the truth here," Anabelle stepped out, her jaw was tightly clenched, "Why don't you tell me you're simply jealous,"

"What?" Isabella blanched, taken aback by her words, "What should I even be jealous of?"

"Jealous of the fact that I plan to get married to your intended Fiancé, Julie " She emphasized

"Are you for real?" Isabella looked as if someone threw shit on her face. Was this the Anabelle she knew or someone else?

"Yes, I'm serious here. Why are you so shocked? Because I point out the fact that you're one selfish cousin with eyes set both on Pedro and Julie at the same time. How greedier could you get?"

"Julie and I have come to admit our feelings to one another, we love each other and thought marriage is the best plan to annul your engagement to him - Of course you know that already, why won't you know, you're the great, smart Isabella - and yet you're against it. Tell me why? If not the fact you're jealous!"

Julie was uncomfortable with where this was heading to so he decided to step in, "Anabelle, maybe we should -"

"No, don't interrupt us. This is a matter between women," She interrupted him.

"Yes, you're right. This is indeed an issue between women," Isabella concurred by nodding her head and jutted out her jaw in a determined manner, "So tell me, Anabelle, why would I be interested in this piece...." she looked Julie up and down with a look of disdain, " of human -"

"Don't you dare insult him," Anabelle warned, staring Isabella straight in the eyes with blazing intensity. This was the first time both cousins were having a serious altercation. Most often it was just a simple quarrel often settled over a pint of Ice cream but this time, both ladies were fiercely defending the men close to their hearts.

"You think I'm fucking jealous of you? Of your relationship with Julie? How conceited could you get Anabelle? I'm just saving you from impending doom, Anabelle!"

"What doom!"

"The doom my father Niklaus got himself into!" She said in an outburst and this time an awkward silence stretched between them.

"You're eighteen, Anabelle, what the hell do you know about marriage? Do you think it's all rainbow and sunshine? Just because you had the first taste of love and you somehow think it's enough to carry you through the roses and thorns of marriage? Marriage is sacred and real not a simulation," Isabella shook her head with a heavy heart, "Once you're in, you can't leave, and if you do leave, you leave a part of yourself behind,"

Anabelle didn't say anything, the truth was gnawing at her heart and slapping her right in the face. She had taken the Father's idea of marriage in the spur of the moment even though she knew the man was pulling her leg.

At that time, it had seemed the only possible means of getting Julie out of the engagement with her cousin. She was just envious of the title bestowed on Isabella - Julie's fiancée. It was totally unfair. Why does she have to get all the men?

"And let's face it. Are you even ready to leave your father for the rest of your life? And yes I know you won't live with your father for eternity..." Isabella could already tell what was on her mind, "But then, this suddenly? Did you consider how he would feel about this marriage thing?"

The guilt clawed deep into her chest, Anabelle almost felt like suffocating. She hasn't thought about her dad's feelings? Would he accept his baby girl leaving just suddenly? She had just thought that as her father, the man would be happy and respect whatever her decision was.

"And your future? Would you give up your dreams for marriage?" Isabella raised her voice as if to carve sense deep inside her head, "Anabelle, there's a whole big world to explore out there without being in the confinement of marriage for Christ's sake,"

As if that was not enough, Isabella stepped over and placed both hands on Annabelle's head, focusing her eyes on hers announcing,

"Love is blind, but don't let it make you plain stupid,"

Chapter 418 - Four Hundred And Eighteen: Her Dream

Reina's point of view:

Niklaus said it was time to leave and heck I wanted to go home too. This place was too suffocating, which intensified each time I stared at Angela's large frame on the display stand.

"That could have been me," That was the thought in my head. She had died in my place, and what pained me the most was the fact she died in the hands of a criminal - a criminal that wasn't worth a quarter of her life.

I searched around the church for my kids. They were a bunch of trouble but I liked it that way because their troubles have been a source of distraction to me lately. Honestly, with his good behavior, I had thought Neon would change Allen and Ailee, but what the twins did was to influence him instead - confirms the fact that bad behaviors rub off faster on a person quicker than the good counterpart.

Suddenly my thoughts changed direction to Jennifer, I wondered how she was doing in that mental asylum. Perhaps, when all of this is over, I would take Neon to meet her - she was still his mother anyway. Don't mind my kind-heartedness, I'm quite sensitive to the word "mother" lately.

It wouldn't surprise me if I become a tireless advocate for the care of mothers. Angela's death taught me a big lesson and now, I've figured out my life mission. I'm going to help every parent and child - it wasn't just restricted to the mothers, fathers too - out there who've fallen out with one another.

The family was a big deal, a good family produced better kids which in turn produced better citizens for the society and country. Broken homes were a big deal, it weighed more heavily on the kids- parents should not just know that fact?- they should feel it as if it were their own pain.

And then, to the illegitimate ones, I want a society where they're accepted and recognized, where they're not ostracized for being the result of an illicit relationship - which wasn't the case often. Rape was real.

The idea seemed unachievable in my head but I knew it was possible. I had the money, resources, and power. It was time to make that change. The world being a better place starts from the family. But then, if the family is divided, what then happens to the world? And no child should suffer for the crimes of the parents. Society should not shackle nor exploit those innocent souls, they deserve love too.

"Thank you," Kim appeared out of nowhere, startling me although I didn't show it. Our relationship after my mother's death was so so. We only worked together because of

the burial and she must have perceived we would go back to the no-talking terms after today.

"You don't need to thank me," I told her straightforwardly, "I didn't do it for you,"

"I know, but you still deserve to be thanked. I would never have done this all by myself. You might not have known, but you were a source of strength towards me during this bad time,"

I could already imagine how hard it was for her to say those words to me. I mean, we're talking about the proud Kim here; the Kim who couldn't stand the sight of me and treated me like garbage.

"I have a question for you,"

She turned to me with a mix of wonder and curiousness which wasn't expected. I mean this was the longest normal conversation we've ever held when we were not organizing Angela's burial.

"What is it?"

"Those years, you mistreated me, did it make you happy? Seeing me at my lowest point, how did it feel like?" I couldn't help but ask. I've always wondered how much joy bullies derived from abusing their victim.

"Is not the joy," Kim said to my astonishment.

My brow raised at that comment to which she explained,

"Is the power that comes with it. Yes, maltreating you then made me happy but the greater happiness was the power that came with it. Seeing you below me, made me feel powerful like you were meant to be there and would always remain there - you proved me wrong by being the woman you are today

"So what's my point? Most times I didn't beat nor maltreat you because I wanted to have a good laugh at your misery, I just craved dominance - like God-level kind of glory. I wanted you to squirm and tremble at the sight of me. I called you scumbag - amongst the many others - because I wanted you to be one so I could prove that I was greater, better, and more competent than you.

"But then power comes with its curse. No matter what you did, I craved to bring you down because I was insatiable. To be honest, you might not have realized it but you saved me by sending me away to Africa. I was slowly turning into a monster I couldn't recognize," Kim turned to me, took my hand with this rare kindness in her eyes, saying, "Thank you for saving me, Reina,"

I took a deep breath, beginning to comprehend the load of information I just downloaded. To think that I always thought of myself as inferior when I was Maya when it had been psychological manipulation all this time.

"Fine, if you say so," I said, checking my time and still searching around for those kids. I'll kill them once I get my hands on them.

"You should get Tommy to come around sometimes," I announced and watched confusion grow on her face.

"My kids never got to know Angela, I would not deny them the opportunity of knowing their nephew too," I said to Kim, taking my leave before she could respond. Just like I said, the sins of the father should not be visited upon the children anymore - Tommy is ignorant and innocent of all things.

I resumed my work of finding the kids and in no time located Neon with a stranger, probably his latest target - they are a terror. My kids were the most questionable when on good behavior - you should never trust them.

"Excuse me, gentleman," I faked a smile to the startled young man after I caught Neon who had attempted to slip away as soon as he laid eyes on me - yes, he's been corrupted that much by Allen and Allen.

"Now, lead me to the others,"

I commanded Neon amid the questioning look from the young man. Catching one of the triple troubles means catching all of them.

Chapter 419 - Four Hundred And Nineteen: Disannul The Engagement

The third point of view:

Everyone knew Isabella had a great talent for slapping everyone and anyone on the face, so by the time she was done with advising her good cousin, Anabelle wished the earth could open up and swallow her. However, she stubbornly didn't go down without a fight.

"So then what?" Anabelle jutted out her chin unyieldingly, "Let's say you're right in all of this, does it solve our problem then? At the end of the day, you're still engaged to Julie!"

There was an expression of pain on her face as she went on, "Do you know?how difficult it is to watch you being happy with the love of your life while I sit around hopelessly?"

"Anabelle, I understand your pain but that -"

"No, you don't feel a thing! You don't understand my pain! You don't even understand anything because you don't feel it?!" Anabelle yelled at her cousin, then laughed sardonically, "Of course, why would you? You're the great Isabella after all?"

Isabella pulled back her hand, the comment had cut right through her and her eyes spat fire as she breathed, "That's a stereotypical accusation," She nodded her head bitterly, "You think that because I seem to excel at everything that I'm Miss perfect incapable of emotion?"

Liquid fire burned through her vein as she stared her cousin straight in the eyes saying, "In case you don't know, I'm not that perfect as you think, I just have confidence. So if you have a problem with your self-esteem, go solve it and don't use me as an excuse,"

"Also," Isabella continued, "You think there's not a day that goes by without me thinking about how to break the annulment? Do you think I'm so selfish and insatiable that I enjoy having my boyfriend and that annoying jerk at the same time?" she referred to Julie and then laughed mockingly, "Heck, do you think this is some sort of game or? I practice polygamy?"

Anabelle felt guilty, she swallowed, "That's not what I mean - "

"That is exactly what you're implying!"

Silence reigned once again until Isabella said, "You know what? I don't care anymore, you can do anything you want with your life while I promise to solve the annulment all by myself. I wish you a happy married life," She said and then took Pedro's hands, "Let's leave the happily married couple,"

"Whoa, happily married couple?" The priest brows raised, "I didn't wed them," He added to their surprise, "And I can't even wed them,"

"What are you talking about?" Anabelle had a bad intuition. It couldn't be that he's a fake Father.

"I'm not a real Father,"

"What?! " Everyone shouted, including Isabella, who was hell-bent on leaving.

Her fear just came through.

"My uncle is the real Priest. I just dressed up in his, you know, Cassock robe to feel what it's like to be in his shoes, and from what I've seen, it's enough drama to keep one interested all through the day," He grinned, hinting he found their issue entertaining.

Anabelle didn't know how to feel; she suddenly became tired. All this while, they were fighting over a marriage that wasn't even going to happen in the first place.

"Don't stop me, " Isabella said to Pedro and he unconsciously nodded. However, by the time he realized the threat beneath those words, he hurriedly grabbed her from behind by the waist.

"No, let me go! I need to teach that cunning fart a lesson!" She struggled with him fiercely. Who does the asshole think he is? He just toyed with their emotions.

"I was trying to tell you, but you guys didn't even let me speak," claimed the fake priest.

"You can explain better after I cripple you!" Isabella threatened him.

Seeing that his angry girlfriend was intent on her mission to lecture the priest, Pedro quickly turned her around in his arms and kissed Isabella, her anger instantly dissolved into nothing.

However, he felt the fury in the kiss; the way she gripped his scalp, the way she ground her lips harshly against hers, and the way she pulled him closer till there was nothing as much as space between them.

"Whoah, I never knew the ice queen was this passionate?" Julie blurted out of astonishment and in return received a mouth shutting glare from Anabelle that he would never forget in a hurry. Women were so scary sometimes.

"Oh my God!" the fake priest suddenly shrieked as soon as he glanced down at his phone, "My uncle is on his way here,"

He then looked at Anabelle with panic since he couldn't disrupt the kissing couples, "You have to stop your cousin, my uncle would kill me if he saw them making out in his office," he begged

And yes, the asshole pulled the prank to the extent of inviting them to a pretend office that turned out to be his uncle's office in the end.

"Oh really?" Anabelle smirked as an evil thought crossed her mind. She wasn't the avenging type but the boy went too far with his prank and she needed to transfer that aggression on someone.

So while Mr. Fake priest was still in the middle of asking her to stop her cousin Isabella and Pedro - who was almost swallowing each other's faces - Anabelle pulled Julie to her and started kissing him.

The young man almost went crazy from the sudden turn of events, it was like falling from flying pants to fire. How was he going to stop this madness?

Julie was stunned by the sudden kiss, but he quickly figured out Anabelle's intentions and he indulged her. Who in the world says no to a free kiss anyway?

And that was the scene that confronted the Father as soon as he stepped into his office - the real priest this time.

"What in the world is going on here?!" the Priest bellowed like a wounded beast. His face was pale, looking as if he had seen the devil himself.

As expected from the cousins, they pulled away from their partners looking startled as if they had been caught doing evil - Isabella had caught onto Anabelle's plan in the middle of the kiss.

"Oh God, your uncle is here. We're dead meat. Why didn't you inform us on time?" They behaved like a normal teenager would in this situation yet tactically throwing blame on the fake priest.

"Elijah! Explain this atrocity!" the man boomed, the veins on his neck bulging from anger.

The boy was right; he was in deep trouble. The kids realized that and quickly made it out of the office in giggles.

"That was crazy!" Anabelle remarked after they had made it far away from the angry priest. They all leaned on the wall breathing heavily.

For a moment, nobody spoke, just catching their breath until Anabelle and Isabella's eyes met by mistake. They simply stared at each other, unknowing what to say.

"I'm sorry for saying those mean words to you. I didn't mean what I said," Anabelle apologized

"You mean half of what you said?" Isabella smugly pointed out the fact that half of her words were from her heart.

"Fine, you deserved those," Anabelle had no choice but to acquiesce. There was no need to deny the obvious.

Isabella threw her hand around her cousin's neck and brought Anabelle's head closer so she rubbed hers against it affectionately,

"This selfish bitch would find a way to disannul that engagement," she promised her.

Chapter 420 - Four Hundred And Twenty: The Raid Tomorrow

The third point of view:

The environment in the meeting room was somber yet alert. Everyone had gathered for the final meeting having found out Miguel's location. Each one present today knew how risky the operation was and the fact that lives could be lost.

"I'm sure you all know why you're here today," Sakuzi began, standing in the middle of the conference room with everyone's eyes trained on him.

Amongst everyone present was his wife Nadia, his two sons Finley and Victor. Niklaus and Reina were present as well, alongside Eden and his wife, Camille - both had been welcomed into the family.

Emerald was there but without the presence of Cecil. The woman was pregnant with his child and would not let her in even if she wanted to. She detested violence by the way, nor had he mentioned to Sakuzi that he wouldn't be participating in this operation.

Judy was present with Emily, but it was obvious to everyone that the prince wouldn't be participating in the war tomorrow. As much as they wanted help from all sides, Sakuzi wouldn't want to be on the bad side with the kingdom of Lincolnshire - the prince was too important to become a casualty loss. In fact, he knew the queen dowager had not consented to him being here.

The others present in the meeting were Sakuzi's men in diverse high-ranking positions who would then deliver the final instructions to their subordinates.

"Tomorrow we would vanquish an enemy that had not disgraced our family but taken a precious soul from us. To some of you, Angela might have meant nothing to you, neither had she been the nicest person on earth, but then we live by a code, and that code has bonded us for years, neither would we fail to meet up with its expectation now,"

Sakuzi walked around the room making sure to keep eye contact with everyone he passed through as he went on,

"We are all different people from different backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life but bound by a single word, 'family'. Tomorrow! We would defend our code of honor and imprint fear into the heart of our enemies! Family is everything! "

There was clamor and applause from everyone, encouraging him to go on. A minute later, the noise died off as soon as he gestured to them to stop.

"Now, this mission isn't going to be all rainbow and sunshine. You could die. I could die," He broke the information down, "Which is why only one partner can volunteer. No two parents should join this mission no matter your rank nor position whatsoever - the danger is real,"

As soon as he said that, Niklaus and Reina's eyes met yet none of them said anything and took their gaze away. Even a blind man could sense the voiceless tension between both couples. It was obvious that deciding which of them would join the raid tomorrow would be a tough one.

"Make a wise decision. This battle is as real as it gets and there's no shame in withdrawing from battle. Our enemies are ruthless, we won't be kind either. This is Kill or be killed," Sakuzi laid more emphasis on the dangers they would encounter tomorrow.

"Don't."

Reina's hand froze in the air as soon as she lifted it to volunteer. She turned to face Niklaus whose jaw was clenched tightly, staring at her with intense orbs. Reina knew that look, he was holding back from exploding.

"Let's face it, you always knew inwardly I won't back down. Why make a big deal out of it now?" She told him, letting her hand fall to her laps.

"I kind of now regret sending you to Angela," He told her, the anguish reflecting in his eyes.

"Yeah, I regret it too," Reina nodded her head, "Because I brought death to her. She would have been much alive if I haven't come to visit her,"

"I'm sure if Angela could talk from whatever she is, she wouldn't let you do this," Niklaus tried to talk her out of this. He knew he couldn't force Reina not to go - it was her choice-?so he hoped to solicit her to change her mind.

"And I'm sure Angela knows whenever she is that she wouldn't be able to persuade me either. Niklaus, I can't be at peace if I don't do it,"

"Then send me, I'm your husband. I'm the one supposed to do the fighting. Your battles are my battles too." he reminded her - almost desperately

"Oh, come on, Niklaus," She fought against the urge to roll her eyes, "This isn't the medieval ages where women's rights are limited to the kitchen nor do I have to wait for the prince in shining armors to fight my battle,"

Niklaus threw his face the other way grumpily.

"Niklaus," Reina grasped his face and brought it back to her line of focus, "I know what you're worried about, but I can assure you that nothing would happen to me. Come on, I'm going with my old man, I'm sure as hell he would protect me with his life," she promised.

God knew how hard it was for Niklaus yet he gave in reluctantly, "Fine," and quickly added, "But promise me that you'd return to me. No damage done, all hale and hearty?"

"I promise you," Reina said, bringing out her pinky finger for them to guarantee the pledge.

Niklaus chuckled at her childishness yet indulged her by bringing out his pinky as well and they sealed the deal.

A smile on her face, they leaned in at the same time and kissed, a tentative kiss that soon heightened into a passionate one.

No matter how many times he tasted her, Niklaus still couldn't get enough of those wonderful lips. It was like a drug. He sucked on her lower lips while Reina grazed his upper lips with the edges of her teeth as her hand worked in his hair.

"Seriously, get a room you two," Emily was cringy at the sight of them exchanging saliva, "We're approaching the apocalypse and here you two are making out," she clicked her tongue in disapproval.

Reina pulled away from Niklaus with a grateful and light heart - the crisis has been averted.

"I'll be back," She smooched him fully on the lips briefly before standing to make her intentions of joining the raid known.

As soon as she left, Emily took her place beside her brother. She scrutinized him saying, "I know you brother, that was too easy. Reina must be dumb to think you surrendered," she accused him.

Niklaus didn't reply, rather he turned his face away as if declaring he wanted no disturbance. However, that dark look was all Emily needed to know he had something up his sleeve. This was not the end.