

Chapter 148 Kaleb Offers Xander Money

Isabel was telling the truth, but Kaleb didn't believe a single word of it.

Isabel was baffled. How could she have possibly caused Eva's predicament? It seemed absurd to think she had anything to do with Eva's severe food poisoning, a condition so debilitating that she'd been rushed from the hot springs lodge all the way to the hospital.

"All right, enough talking. I've got things to do. Stop bothering me," Isabel said.

With that, her teasing smile faded instantly and was replaced by a cold, unfeeling look.

Looking into her icy, piercing gaze, Kaleb felt as though he'd fallen into a frozen lake.

Isabel ... she really had changed ...

Both Kaleb and Xander watched Isabel walk away, but their reactions were starkly different. Kaleb seethed with anger, while Xander felt a wave of relief wash over him.

He had heard every word Isabel had just said. From his own experience, he could tell Isabel wasn't lying—she truly didn't have any feelings left for Kaleb.

When Kaleb turned around, his gaze landed on Xander, who was standing around the corner.

"It's him ... "

Kaleb walked over to Xander, his irritation flaring up as he looked at the man standing there in his hospital gown.

Just a moment ago, when he saw Isabel, he assumed she was secretly following him, which had annoyed him; he thought she was like an unwanted shadow he couldn't shake off.

Now he understood. Isabel wasn't following him at all—it just so happened that this man was hospitalized here.

Even though that was the truth, Kaleb still couldn't bring himself to believe that Isabel had genuinely fallen for this man.

"So, you're really with Isabel, huh?" Kaleb asked.

In response, Xander reached into his pocket, pulled out a marriage certificate, unfolded it, and held it up for Kaleb to see.

Kaleb's eyes went wide, practically bulging out of his head.

"This is impossible! Isabel would never marry you!"

She loved him, and he was sure of it. Without him, she'd fall apart! Even though they'd fallen out, he still believed that deep down Isabel loved him—her bitterness was simply a twisted form of love.

Kaleb reached out, trying to snatch the marriage certificate from Xander's hand, but Xander was quicker, tucking it back into his pocket.

Their marriage certificate was something he wouldn't let anyone else touch.

Especially not Kaleb.

"It's fake! It must be fake! Isabel would never be with someone like you!" Kaleb's voice rose, a touch of hysteria in his tone.

"Exactly, it's definitely fake. Who carries around a marriage certificate all the time, anyway?" Kaleb muttered to himself, trying to reassure himself.

To be fair, most married couples wouldn't carry their marriage certificate everywhere, but Xander wasn't like most people.

He simply enjoyed having it on hand, flipping it open whenever he felt like it. It gave him a sense of peace.

Regaining his composure, Kaleb convinced himself that the marriage certificate was fake. He assumed Xander had only shown it to try and get some benefit out of him.

With this thought, Kaleb's gaze turned disdainful as he looked at Xander.

After a brief silence, Kaleb pulled out a check, filled it out for 500,000 dollars, and held it out to Xander with a condescending smirk. "Take it. This amount should keep you comfortable for a long time. Just make sure you stay away from Isabel from now on."

Kaleb was doing this partly because Isabel had once been his fiancée and partly because she had saved him when they were kids. Even though Isabel had changed, becoming as venomous as a snake, he thought it was beneath him to hold grudges against a mere woman.

He couldn't stand by and watch Isabel sink into ruin. If he could, he was willing to be generous and pull her back onto the right path.

He hoped Isabel could find it in her heart to forgive him and to let go of the hurtful past. Even if a romantic relationship was impossible, he wished they could at least salvage a friendship.

Just as Kaleb was lost in this thought, Xander reached out and took the check.

A smirk tugged at Kaleb's lips, his eyes full of mockery.

He'd known all along that Xander couldn't resist the allure of such an amount.

However, Xander tore the check in half.

"What are you doing?!" Kaleb growled, staring in disbelief at the torn check.

Xander folded it again and tore it in half once more.

Piece by piece.

Kaleb's eyes grew wider with each rip.

Before Kaleb could recover from the shock, Xander casually tossed the shredded pieces of the check into the air, letting them flutter down from Kaleb's head to his feet.

Kaleb stood rooted in place, fists clenched so tightly that his knuckles went white, his expression like a storm about to break.

Xander's gaze swept over Kaleb's face with icy indifference. His lips curled into a cold, mocking smile as he spoke, "Five hundred thousand, huh? To me, she's priceless."

Xander's low, even tone wasn't heated, but in Kaleb's ears it sounded like a fierce declaration of possessiveness over Isabel.

Kaleb finally understood what was happening. Xander was genuinely interested in Isabel; this wasn't some charade with a hired actor. Xander's feelings were real.

They were really together.

At that moment, Kaleb felt a storm of conflicting emotions.

Even though Isabel was something he had discarded, it stung to see her cherished by someone else like a precious gem. It was infuriating.

Over the next two days, Xander remained in the hospital, and Isabel devoted herself fully to his treatment, working day and night, barely stopping to rest.

By the third day, she finally succeeded in finding a treatment plan for Xander.

"Your condition will need a combination of modern and alternative medicine, and you'll need to take herbal medicine for at least a month."

Xander looked at the exhaustion on Isabel's face, reached out, took her hand, and brought it to his lips for a gentle kiss. "Thank you."

Isabel felt a jolt, like an electric current passing through her hand where he'd kissed it.

"Um, could you maybe not do that so often? It ... doesn't suit your 'gentleman' image at all," Isabel said, pulling her hand back.

Xander leaned back against the headboard, a mischievous smile playing on his lips. "Kissing my own wife's hand makes me less of a gentleman? Besides, it's not my fault—it's you who's always seducing me."

What? I was seducing him?

Isabel blinked in surprise. "Oh really? And how exactly am I seducing you?"

Xander raised an eyebrow, a glint of something unreadable flashing in his eyes.

"Come closer, and I'll tell you."

Isabel looked at him suspiciously. Could something like this really be a secret?

Curiosity got the better of her, and Isabel leaned closer to Xander's face.

"A little closer, or someone else might hear."

Isabel rolled her eyes. "It's just the two of us—"

Before she could finish, Xander suddenly sat up and stole a quick kiss on her cheek.

"You see? When you get that close, you're seducing me."