

Chapter 27

Bill's foul mood was a permanent resident, like an uninvited guest overstaying his welcome. His unpredictable and arbitrary rages turned any situation into a potential minefield.

Mark had not touched a beer since the event, and it showed on his body. He must have lost a good ten pounds, if not more. A smile appeared on his face more frequently now, and he spent less time behind his bedroom door, at least when she was there. He'd told his brother about his mistake. He knew Bill would tell him anyway and wanted Oliver to hear his version first.

She received confirmation that her quote for another office building had been accepted. Maurice and Annette agreed to shoulder the cleaning together on Monday and Thursday evenings. It was her second biggest contract ever. She was confident her employees would make her proud.

If the phone didn't stop ringing, she would have to post another ad to recruit a new team member.

What she learned from *The Power of Your Imagination* was like a second skin now. Questions to improve her days popped up frequently in her mind.

For instance, when she received confirmation about the

new office building, she asked herself how she could make her team happier. Among the different options she generated, she chose one: for every employee's birthday, she would invite the whole team for lunch and offer the celebrated employee a one-hundred-dollar gift certificate. She felt a sense of pride in having come up with this initiative.

Her Spanish was nowhere near fluent, but those evenings spent with stimulating company were a plus to her life. Bianca, the teacher, was such a delightful woman, always innovating to engage her students, making sure they had fun and learned a ton. The students were all highly motivated, unlike what she remembered from her classes in high school. Here, no one was afraid to make mistakes, as it only triggered friendly laughter.

The lesson that night was all about acquiring travel vocabulary, and Bianca brought it to life by transporting them to her beloved island, Puerto Rico. She designed an immersive experience, setting up five desks, each representing a different scenario: a tourist attraction, a bed-and-breakfast front desk, a hotel reception, a fast-food counter, and a restaurant table. She even brought menus to make the experience feel authentic.

One of Bianca's signature rules made the class even more dynamic: if anyone spoke a word of English, the entire group erupted into a loud, exaggerated "Noooo!" It was a ritual she had established from the start, and it never failed to bring laughter.

To make things even more interactive, roles were drawn from a hat. Gaby ended up as a stubborn six-year-old who refused to follow her parents' lead, much to everyone's amusement. The students moved from desk to desk, asking questions, practicing conversations, and navigating real-world scenarios.

Bianca's enthusiasm for her homeland was infectious. She seamlessly transformed into a tour guide, a waitress, and a B&B host, responding to her "tourists" with energy and humor. The

lesson was engaging, fun, and genuinely helpful.

Just as the session was wrapping up, Bianca dropped a bombshell. And, true to her teaching style, she delivered it entirely in Spanish, relying on expressive gestures and animated nonverbal cues to ensure they understood every word.

“I am organizing a trip to Puerto Rico at the end of the semester.”

“¿Qué? ¿Qué?” The classroom erupted, voices overlapping, excitement crackling in the air. They practically bounced in their seats, like kids being told there was no bedtime that night.

“It’s a five-night, six-day trip,” she continued, speaking slowly to rein in the energy. “No hotels, just a cozy B&B that belongs to my aunt and my parents.”

From what Gaby understood, Bianca couldn’t take more than six students, since she only had access to a seven-seater minivan for transportation on the island and wanted to keep things simple.

The trip included transportation from Cape Cod to Boston Airport, the five nights in her family B&B, every breakfast, transportation, and the sightseeing tours. And of course, their private guide, their beloved teacher.

“The places you explored tonight are all part of the itinerary.”

With infectious excitement, she handed out a vibrant homemade flyer detailing the upcoming adventure, complete with a daily itinerary and costs.

Gaby’s heart pounded with anticipation. The idea of exploring a new place, one outside the continent, sent an exhilarating shiver down her spine.

She had never been on an airplane before and wouldn’t have had the courage, at least not yet, to embark on such a trip on her own. But with a group and a private guide like Bianca, she didn’t give her concerns a chance to rear their ugly heads. She raised her hand and declared, “¡Me voy!”