

A Favor 631

Chapter 631

I tried to sleep, but that cursed sleep just wouldn't come. I'd tried almost everything, and yet every time I closed my eyes, all I could see was his face, smiling at me.

And the same question kept circling in my head—what was my real reason for agreeing to his deal? Was I actually attracted to him? No, impossible, we'd only known each other two months.

And how was I supposed to explain any of this to my mother? Tell her the truth, or pretend I was actually in love with Gabriel?

I don't even know what time I finally drifted off. Honestly, it was the first time that had ever happened to me—falling asleep thinking about a person.

6:00 in the morning.

6:30.

7:00.

7:30.

Brrring...

Brrring...

"Argh, I hate you! Would you please stop ringing!" I shouted, frustrated, not even sure anymore if it was my alarm or my phone.

Brrring...

"Argh," I groaned, grabbing the alarm clock off the nightstand. "Who on earth sets an alarm this early on a Sunday?" I switched it off.

I was almost back asleep when my phone rang somewhere under the blanket.

My God. Can someone please tell whoever this is that I need more sleep?

I fumbled around for my phone and picked up without checking who it was.

"Hello?"

My eyes were still shut.

“Hello, my foot, Madi! Where the hell are you? Mr. Wilsons has turned into the Hulk again this morning, for God’s sake!”

My eyes snapped open as I stared at the screen.

“Sandy?”

Why was she calling this early on a Sunday?

“Yes, Princess Madi. I’m asking, where the hell are you?”

“Home. In my room. And you just ruined my sleep, oh my God, Sandy. Can’t this wait until tomorrow? We’re seeing each other Monday anyway.” I closed my eyes again.

“What is wrong with you, crazy woman? It is Monday! And Mr. Wilsons is genuinely upset his coffee wasn’t on his desk. It’s already 8:45!”

“What are you talking about—damn it! Oh my God!” I bolted upright, eyes wide, sprinting to the bathroom with my phone still in hand. “Why didn’t you tell me it’s Monday? Why didn’t you call earlier?”

“Wow, is that on me? This is the first time you’ve ever been late! What’s going on with you, Madi? Are you sick? Because if you are, I’m telling Mr.—”

“No! I’m fine. Not sick. I’ll be there today. And, about his coffee—could you just make his first cup? Please?”

“Oh, Madi, I already offered, but he keeps asking about you!”

“Oh my God—okay, I’m getting in the shower, Sandy, bye.” I hung up before she could get another word in.

Oh my God. What had happened to me? I really thought today was Sunday. Standing under the water, I tried to piece together the night before.

Right—Saturday night. We’d talked again, and as far as I could remember, I’d already agreed to his deal. Then he’d driven me home.

Chapter 632

And yesterday—damn it—I’d just stayed home the whole day, never visited any of my restaurants like I usually did on Sundays. That’s why my whole sense of time had gotten stuck somewhere back on Saturday night.

After getting into my uniform, I put on just a touch of mascara and my “Love That Red” lipstick, figuring that even without full makeup, at least my lips would stand out and carry me through the day.

Of course, on my most fortunate, luckiest day, the elevator ride was blessed with none other than Jenny, our resident office queen, and her sidekick Ailene.

“Wow, what happened to you, Miss Davis? Running late?” Jenny asked first, laughing along with Ailene’s signature witch-like cackle.

“Oh no, Jenny, she’s not late, she’s just super early for tomorrow,” Ailene added, cackling harder.

As usual, I didn’t bother with them. I just kept my eyes on the elevator doors, catching their reflection in the stainless steel as they exchanged their pleasantries, laughing like there was no tomorrow.

Go ahead, laugh all you want, I really couldn’t care less. I don’t work for you, and neither of you signs my paycheck. Hmph.

I just rolled my eyes at the thought. And honestly, it was true—why should I care about those two? They didn’t hold a candle to my own beauty. Kidding, of course.

Ding!

“Ah, thank God,” Ailene said the moment the doors opened on our floor.

“Yeah, at least we don’t have to look at this pathetic woman anymore, trying to seduce your boss!” Jenny huffed, shoving past me lightly on her way out.

My mouth dropped open in an “o.”

Me? Seducing my boss? Ha! If only you knew the truth—it’s actually ‘your’ boss who’s been asking me to be his wife.

There was no one else in the elevator, no witnesses to what they’d just done, except for whoever was watching the security cameras. I smiled straight into the lens. I knew someone had seen it. It wasn’t the first time either.

Thanks to my lack of sleep, my eyes burned a little under the harsh overhead lights, courtesy of whoever in Engineering had decided those bulbs needed to be blindingly bright.

“Ah, there you are!” I was just about to sink into my chair when Sandy appeared at my door. I had my back turned. “What happened to you—” She stopped mid-sentence the moment she caught sight of my face.

I frowned. “Why, do I have dark circles?” I asked, dragging a finger under my eyes.

“No! Are you wearing red lipstick today? Why?” she asked, and I laughed, like wearing red lipstick was some kind of crime.

“Yes. Why, is that bad?”

“No, it actually looks beautiful. I’ve just never seen you wear that shade before.”

She wandered over to my desk.

“I have worn it before.” I grabbed my mirror to double-check, then smiled once I remembered. “Ah, right—I only wear it on weekends, never here at the office.”

“So what made you wear it today?”

“I was running late and didn’t have time to add any real color to my face. Anyway, what about Mr. Wilsons?”

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I tucked the mirror back into my bag, trying to hide my face. Just saying his name apparently was enough to make me blush.

“He’s still waiting for you,” she said, in the most casual tone imaginable.

“What?” My eyes snapped to hers, confused.

“Yes. I have no idea what’s gotten into that grumpy old man. Last week he wanted absolutely nothing to do with you. Now he refuses to let me make his coffee, says he’s waiting for you specifically.” She rolled her eyes, clearly annoyed.

“My God,” I muttered under my breath.

When I looked back at her, I caught the curiosity written all over her face.

“What?”

“Tell me something, Madielyn Davis. Is there anything I’m missing here that I need to know about?” She looked at me like a hawk sizing up its prey.

I sighed and shut my eyes. Part of me wanted to just tell her the news right then, since she’d already been in the loop from the very beginning. And honestly, it was going to be nearly impossible to move around this building once everyone realized the “boss” and the “boyfriend” were one and the same. I blushed again just thinking about it.

“Oh my God, you’re blushing!” she said, way too loudly.

“Keep your voice down. I’ll tell you at lunch,” I said, practically whispering.

“Oh my God, Madi, don’t tell me what I’m thinking right now is actually true?”

I rolled my eyes. “Whatever. I’ll tell you at lunch, that’s it.”

“Ahhhhhgg!” She clapped a hand over her mouth and shrieked before dashing back out toward her own office, still squealing.

Tsk, ts, ts. How was I supposed to break this news to her later without her screaming like that all over again?

I just let out a heavy sigh.

Madi’s point of view

“Why are you late?”

That was the first thing my boss said the moment I walked into his office, his face wearing that old, familiar “Gabriel” expression.

I set the coffee on his desk, trying to act normal, smiling at him anyway.

“I’m sorry, sir. My mother called last night, and I ended up sleeping late. It won’t happen again.”

He studied me for a few seconds before his lips curled into a wicked smile.

“It’s alright, love. Since it’s your first time being late, I’ll let it go.”

Huh. So much for professionalism. I raised an eyebrow at him.

“Don’t call me that, Mr. Wilsons. We’re in the office, we’ve already talked about this.”

“Ah, yes, love, we talked about the arrangement. But calling you ‘love’ wasn’t part of that conversation. We agreed to keep this act going throughout the entire building—that part was your idea. Well, I have a condition of my own. We’ll call each other ‘love’ whenever we’re alone.”

“Huh! Why didn’t you mention this Saturday night?” I bit my lip, trying to keep my voice level.

Chapter 634

“Don’t raise your voice at me, we’re still in the office. I’m just letting you know—you can speak to me however you like outside this company, but in here, I’m still your boss.” His voice slid back into that cold, serious register.

Honestly, the sudden shift in his tone threw me off. Playful one second, ice-cold the next. Was the man dealing with some kind of split personality?

“Yes, sir.” I straightened up, though I had no intention of actually apologizing. Why should I? He’d started it.

“Did you bring my planner, love?”

Again? Was he messing with me on purpose?

“Mr. Wilsons, I thought—”

“Madi, listen. That’s part of the deal. I need to call you something affectionate so I’m not slipping and using your last name in front of your family, or mine. Just play the part, Madi. I don’t see anything wrong with it. We’ll only do this in private, never in front of the staff.”

I sighed and nodded. “Alright. But please, don’t call me that in public, especially in this building, with all these eyes on us.”

“Fine. But start practicing it now, Madi. You need the practice too.”

My brow knit into a tight line. “Why would I need to practice calling you ‘love’? I don’t have memory problems.”

“Madi, let me remind you—contract signed or not, you already agreed to this. And I’ll kiss you right now, in this office, or in the cafeteria while you’re eating, if you don’t start calling me ‘love’ immediately.”

Huh. My heart was suddenly racing like I’d just run a marathon.

“Ahh, see? Now I know exactly how to win these little debates of ours.”

Great, now he was smiling. What a bipolar mess of a man.

“You can’t do this! You’re not even my boyfriend!” I hissed, though he just laughed again.

“I only wish this carefree side of you was genuine—not just something for this contract, or whatever else this is.”

“You really do make me laugh, love,” he said, still chuckling, shaking his head.

“And what exactly did I say that was so funny?” I asked, annoyed, though honestly, a small part of me was glad to be one of the reasons he was laughing at all.

“Darling, the moment you agreed to this deal, I officially became your boyfriend. And you became my girlfriend.”

My God. I smacked my own forehead. “But none of it’s real!”

“No, my love, it is real. I told you—we’re actually getting married.”

“Wait, once we’re married—”

“You’ll be living with me.”

“What?” My voice jumped an octave.

“Yes. We’re getting married. Where else would you live—your apartment? Absolutely not, I won’t allow it.”

“But, and, um, you know—”

“What? Say it, love.” He smiled, clearly enjoying my discomfort. He stood, walked slowly toward me, and settled against the edge of his desk, arms crossed, only a couple of steps away.

My eyes followed his every movement.

“You already know what I mean, do I really have to spell it out?” I said, irritation creeping in, my face flushing pink.

“About sex? Is that what you’re getting at?”

“Yes, that. If I’m living with you, I need my own room. No kissing, none of that. No—ugh—no sex.”

Chapter 635

“And what about our wedding night? We won’t consummate our marriage?”

“Mr. Wilsons!” I shouted, horrified.

His expression snapped serious in an instant as he stared at me.

“You just called me ‘Mr. Wilsons’ again, love. And I promise you, you won’t leave this office without me kissing those lips of yours.” His voice carried a low, commanding weight.

And I swear, if we hadn't just been talking about a kiss, I never would've backed away like that.

"Argh! You can't do this!" I said, glaring at him.

He just laughed and pushed himself off the desk.

"What are you doing?" I asked, nerves suddenly setting in for real.

"You said I can't kiss you. So I'm going to prove otherwise."

I wished I could kiss that devilish smile right off his face myself.

He started walking toward me while I backed away.

"Oh my God, stop right there!" I shouted, hands out in front of me.

"Why? I'm not doing anything," he said, playing innocent, hands sliding into his pockets.

“Gabriel, we’re in your office!” He looked genuinely surprised I’d used his name, before that sly smile crept back onto his face.

My back finally hit the cold wall behind me, eyes wide.

“And... nowhere left to run, love?”

“Gabriel, please?” I pleaded, swallowing hard.

“Please, what? Say it, darling.”

I lost count of how many deep breaths I took before finally caving.

“Fine!” I threw up my hands in surrender. “Cut it out, darling!” I watched his smile stretch even wider as his body closed the last few inches between us. I could practically feel his minty breath, the scent of his aftershave mixed with cologne.

“Good. See? Not so hard, is it, darling?”

I rolled my eyes.

Neither of us noticed the figure standing at the door.

“No, darling, not hard at all.” I kept my eyes locked on his, until the sudden clatter of something hitting the floor pulled our attention away. A white folder.

“Sandy?”

“Miss Aguilar!”

We both said it at once, though in completely different tones—mine, confused; his, accusatory.

Sandy, ever true to form, ducked her head, visibly flustered. I couldn’t help but shake my head. Why was she so nervous?

“Don’t you know how to knock, Miss Aguilar?” Gabriel had already slipped back into full arrogance mode, a world away from the playful version of him seconds earlier.

“I’m sorry, sir, but I promise, I knocked five or six times. There was no answer, so I—”

“So you let yourself in without permission?”

“No, sir, I’m sorry.” She lowered her head again.

I don’t know what came over me, but I grabbed Gabriel’s hand and shook my head at him, silently telling him not to bother—Sandy was my friend, no need to make a scene.

“I need to head out, sir—I mean, love.” I raised my voice deliberately, half to provoke him, half to clue Sandy in. “I’ll leave your schedule on the desk, love.”

I gave him a light poke in the stomach, and he flinched.

Chapter 636

“Ahh, sorry, love, did that hurt?” I asked, smiling. I was fully back to myself now.

He just stared at me, saying nothing.

“Alright, bye, love. Call if you need me.” I winked at him before pulling Sandy out of the office with me.

As far as I knew, I was the one who’d dragged Sandy out of the CEO’s office, but somehow she was the one pulling me along by the hand now.

Once we were both inside her office, she shut the door. I couldn’t help smiling when I noticed she even locked it.

“Sit down!”

My eyes went wide. I felt like a puppy being ordered around by its owner. Ah, maybe next she’d want me to roll over too. Argh.

“Madielyn Davis! Is there something I should know? Or maybe something you’d like to tell me?”

I bit my lip to keep from laughing. “What?” I said, feigning innocence.

She looked at me, both hands on her hips.

“There’s just no changing you, Madielyn Davis! What was that, back in the CEO’s office?”

“Ahh, that?”

“Madielyn!” She grabbed a fistful of her own hair in frustration. Watching her like that only made me laugh harder. I really do love teasing her.

“I already said I’d tell you everything later—”

“No! I can’t wait that long! Tell me right now! For heaven’s sake, you two nearly kissed. What was that? Don’t tell me—” her eyes went wide as two saucers before she could even finish the thought.

“Oh my God, Sandy, don’t shout! People will hear!” My face flushed red just glancing at the glass panel of her office.

“Relax, I locked the door.”

“You locked the door, sure, but this office isn’t exactly soundproof! What were you thinking?” I gestured for her to sit.

“Okay, sorry.” She dropped into her chair. “Now, tell me everything!”

“Sandy, let me remind you of something. This isn’t a real relationship. Not a real engagement. Definitely not a real marriage.”

“Then why were you two calling each other ‘love’ earlier?”

I sighed, staring at some point behind her before answering.

“Because he wants me to call him that. It’s supposed to be our little affectionate thing, for when he introduces me to his family—especially in front of his so-called ex-fiancée.”

“Ah... why does it sound like there’s a bit of bitterness in your voice when you say ‘his ex-fiancée’?” she echoed, mimicking my tone, and I immediately grimaced.

“What bitterness? What are you talking about? Like I said, this is nothing but a fake relationship.” I made sure to hit the word “fake” hard.

“Ah, I see. A ‘fake relationship,’” she said, tapping her chin thoughtfully. “So what changed your mind? I thought you wanted nothing to do with his whole revenge scheme against the ex. What happened?”

I sighed again, staring intently at the bookshelf across from me, avoiding the smirk I could already feel forming on her face.

Chapter 637

“Last Saturday, the girls called me—you know, my managers—wanting to go out, so I met them at the mall. Long story short, I ran into Mr. Wilsons and his ex-fiancée there. And that’s basically where everything happened,” I explained, shrugging.

“Ohh, Madi, I am dying to know more. Give me details!”

“My God, what more do you want? Word for word? Scene by scene? We’re literally in the office, Sandy, during work hours!”

“Argh, I hate you,” she muttered, arms crossed. “Fine! But at lunch, you are not getting out of this. I don’t care if you have to reenact the whole thing, you’re telling me everything, I’m dying of anticipation!”

I just rolled my eyes at how excited she was, clapping her hands together.

I started to wonder—if this was her reaction without even knowing the whole story, what would she do when I told her that her boss had actually kissed me, stealing my very first kiss?

“I need to go, he might be trying to reach me.”

“Alright, but Madi, promise me you’ll tell me everything at lunch!”

“Okay, okay. Bye.” I rolled my eyes one last time as I headed for the door. “You really locked this, huh?” I muttered, tugging at the handle.

I stepped out, and even from the hallway, I could still hear her laughing.

The moment I walked back into my own office, the intercom rang.

“Mr. Wilsons!”

I rushed to press the speaker button. It was a call from the CEO's office.

"Where have you been? I've been trying to reach you for almost an hour," came his demanding voice.

An hour? I wasn't even in Sandy's office for thirty minutes, I thought.

"I'm sorry, sir, I was just picking up some documents from Mrs. Aguilar's office."

"Did I just hear that right? You're calling me that again?"

Huh? What is he even talking about? Is he upset I didn't pick up, or what?

"You just called me 'sir' again."

Ahh, so that's what he meant.

"That's because we're on the phone, sir," I said, brow furrowing. What difference did that make?

“Yes, but it’s just the two of us here.”

Huh? Don’t tell me, sir, that I have to call you ‘love’ over the phone too? My whole face twisted in disbelief. Were we... an actual couple now?

“Yes. How else are you supposed to practice?”

Wow. This was genuinely strange, the voice in my head echoed.

“Sir, this is a business line. Maybe it’d be better if we used our personal phones for this kind of thing.”

“So you’re saying I should be calling your cell whenever I have something important to say?”

“No, that’s not what I meant, sir.” I took a breath before continuing. “Why did you call, Mr. Wilsons? Is there something I can help with?”

The line went quiet for a moment.

“Sir?”

“I want you to send me a copy of the latest reports from the finance department.”

“Yes, sir. Anything else?”

“That’s all for now, my love.”

I clenched my jaw, hearing him chuckle on the other end. He was teasing me on purpose.

You really enjoy this game, don’t you? I thought.

Chapter 638

My wristwatch read 11:50 when Sandy walked into my office, dropping into the chair across from my desk, wearing a huge grin.

“Yes?” was all I managed to say.

“Lunch time,” she said, shrugging, smile still in place.

“Sandy, don’t you own a watch? It’s still ten minutes to noon. You’re way early.”

“Ah, my dear Madi, I’m not accepting that excuse. Ten minutes? Please. By the time we walk from here to the cafeteria, ten minutes will already be gone.”

“Wow, since when does the walk to the cafeteria take ten minutes? Watch, we’ll get there in three.”

“Oops, well, obviously we’re going to slow our pace down considerably, so you can finally give me the rest of that story.”

I rolled my eyes as she kept winking at me.

“Ah, got it. That really is a brilliant plan. You’re a genius.”

“Of course I am!”

“Mrs. Davis, time to go.” Our conversation was interrupted as our boss walked in.

“Sir?” I stood up the moment I saw him.

“Mr. Wilsons.” Sandy stood too, greeting him.

“Let’s go.”

His expression was completely serious, leaving no room to argue, though I raised an eyebrow anyway.

“Where are we going?”

“A business lunch. That’s all he offered.

“A business lunch?” My eyes flicked straight to Sandy’s face. I nearly burst out laughing at her expression—she looked like she was about to cry.

“Yes. A business lunch. Let’s go.”

“But, sir, I don’t recall a business lunch on today’s schedule?” I was genuinely confused. Where had this come from?

“Ah, right. It’s not on the schedule because Mr. Enriquez called me directly about it.”

“Mr. Enriquez, from the southern project?”

“That’s the one.”

Why did it feel like he was lying? Since when did he approve a meeting like this without telling me to add it to his calendar?

“Ah... yes, sir.” I shook my head slightly and glanced back at Sandy, who was sneaking a look at me too.

Not my fault, I tried to tell her with my eyes.

I gave her a small smile before grabbing my things.

“So what documents should I bring, sir?”

“You don’t need to bring anything. They just want to have lunch with us. That’s all.”

“Okay. Just... lunch, then.”

“Goodbye, Sandy,” I said, smiling, giving her cheek a quick kiss.

“Skank!”

I laughed at her reaction.

I knew exactly how she felt right now. And I was fairly sure she'd be plotting to chop off all my hair by the time I got back.

I followed Mr. Wilsons to the elevator, relying, as always, on whatever was left of my athletic instincts to keep pace with his massive stride.

"So, where's this meeting, sir?"

He looked at me, expression completely serious, but said nothing.

Alright, thanks, I understand. He's not in the mood. Don't waste your breath on the grumpy man, I told myself silently.

By the time we left the elevator and reached his car, he still hadn't said a single word.

"Passenger side."

"Huh?" I asked, confused.

"I said, passenger side. Get in."

Chapter 639

Wow. What was going on with him now? Could he not manage a full sentence? What happened to his mood—playful all morning, and now suddenly cold and grumpy again? Tsk, tsk, tsk. Old habits die hard, I guess.

We'd been driving for twenty minutes now, him behind the wheel, silent the entire time. I was genuinely hungry, and bored. I wanted to say something, start any kind of conversation, but he looked so serious that I just kept my eyes forward.

After about five more minutes, I noticed a red car not far ahead of us. What was going on? Were we actually following the same route?

When he turned right at the light, the red car turned too. I glanced between him and the car again.

Are you following that red car?

I couldn't help myself, I had to ask. Why? Because I could feel a familiar ache in my stomach, my friends in there growling and whining, feed us, Madi.

But, just like before, I got nothing from him.

“It’s a simple yes-or-no question. Are you following this—”

“Yes! We’re following that car! Happy?” he snapped, clearly irritated.

I hadn’t expected that kind of reaction from him. Did he really need to shout at me?

And happy about what, exactly? How could I possibly be happy? I’m starving!

I took a deep breath.

Come on, Madi, relax. Maybe he’s having some kind of episode. Or dysmenorrhea.

Ha, since when does a man suffer from dysmenorrhea? Well—not every man, just this particular one in the driver’s seat. I rolled my eyes. If I could carve this man up and drop him straight into my stomach, I swear I would have done it the second it growled.

Oh, thank God.

I silently thanked whatever was listening as the red car finally pulled up in front of a restaurant.

Maybe it's Mr. Enriquez, I thought, sighing at my own wishful thinking. But my eyes went wide the moment I saw who actually stepped out of that car.

His ex. And her boyfriend.

I couldn't believe it. This entire time, we'd been tailing none other than his "great ex-fiancée and her equally great boyfriend."

Wow. And here I thought this was supposed to be a business lunch. I stopped myself, watching the way he glared daggers at both of them. Poor them, honestly—if looks could actually cut, neither of them would've made it through the restaurant door.

I pushed aside the small ache in my chest, watching how deeply the sight of them affected him. Still, I tried to pull myself back together, back into "Madi" mode. You know what that means—stay strong, stay composed.

"So, these are the ones you've been following this whole time?"

"Yes, I've been following them. Can you just be quiet for a second?"

"Hmm!" He'd raised his voice at me again. We weren't in the office right now, which meant he wasn't exactly my boss at this moment.

“You want me quiet? Gabriel, how? I’m starving! You said this was a lunch meeting. How does a lunch meeting turn into stalking your ex? My God, I’d rather be having lunch with Sandy right now!”

See? I could raise my voice too.

Chapter 640

“I’m sorry,” he said, his tone softening as he looked at me.

I raised an eyebrow and rolled my eyes at him. I didn’t care—my stomach was still throwing a tantrum in there.

“I promise, I’ll feed you. Just this once. Please?”

My whole body turned toward him at that.

Did I hear that right? Please? Did he actually just say please?

“You... you actually—”

“What?” he asked, waiting for the rest of my sentence.

But I remembered what happened last time I pointed out one of his smiles—how he’d instantly frozen up, gone cold and distant again. So this time, I kept my mouth shut.

“Nothing. I mean—aren’t you hungry? They’ve already gone inside, they’re clearly here to eat. Maybe you’d like to go in, sit at a table, keep an eye on them while I feed my babies.”

“Feeding your babies?”

“Ahh, I mean—my intestines. You know, the large one and the small one.” I smiled at him. Bingo. He smiled back.

My God.

“Hmm... what should I call today? A miracle? Or maybe another miracle?” I said dreamily.

And I didn’t even realize I’d said it out loud until he’d already started to walk away and paused, hearing me.

“What? What miracle?”

“Huh? Miracle?”

“You said, ‘miracle, miracle, another miracle.’ What was that about?”

Oh, damn it, Madi.

“Ahh,” I laughed nervously. “Don’t worry about it, sir. I’m just really hungry.” I waved a hand in the air before pulling open the car door.

I didn’t catch whatever he murmured after I stepped out.

“Madi.” He said my name just as we were about to walk into the restaurant.

I looked at him, and he seemed about to say something else.

“Love.”

“Ahh, right, love.” I smiled, remembering our whole situation. Right—the “real” meaning of love, in this case.

Still, a shiver ran through every nerve in my body when he took my hand, closing the last inch of distance between our fingers as we stepped inside.

The waiters greeted us and led us to an open table. We passed right by the one where his ex—what was her name again—ah, Stacey, sat with her boyfriend, Ray.

We were seated just a few tables away from them.

He kept his eyes fixed on the two of them while I did my best to pick out the finest thing on the menu.

“Good afternoon, madam, good afternoon, sir. May I take your order?”

“Hello, Ezra,” I said, smiling at the waiter, whose name I’d caught off his name tag. He smiled back—and oh, he had the sweetest dimples. I don’t know what it is, but I’ve always been drawn to people with dimples.

I kept smiling as I placed our order. But glancing over at the man responsible for my stomach doing flips, I realized he wasn’t watching the lovebirds anymore. He was watching me.