

## His kiss 105

### Chapter 105

Even if the year-end gift had let her down, she still had to guard her generous paycheck like her life depended on it.

Gabriela brushed off her sour mood and slipped seamlessly into her usual, razor-sharp work rhythm.

Across the desk, Wesley shut the file with deliberate finality, his fingers drumming against the polished surface. His eyes were cool as winter steel. "Not happy with the present you got yesterday?"

The mention of the present made heat rush to her chest. She'd swallowed her feelings all night, but now that he'd brought it up, the words tumbled out before she could stop them. "So why was I the only one who got something different?"

His gaze hardened instantly, shadows cutting across his face. "In this entire executive office, aside from Tessa and Billy, you're the highest-paid employee here," he said, each word clipped.

And yet she'd still had the nerve to call him petty behind his back.

Gabriela's voice tightened with quiet indignation. "I'm not just your secretary—I'm also your cook and housekeeper. I often work overtime deep into the night with you. And now, everyone else gets the same gift while mine's different. How do you think that makes me look in front of my colleagues? They'll start doubting whether I can even do my job."

Wesley let out a low, mocking chuckle. “And remind me—how exactly did you land a spot in the executive office?”

The insinuation hit like a slap, as if he’d just declared she’d gotten here through anything but skill.

Her mind flashed to those damning WhatsApp screenshots, souring her mood even further. She muttered, “I apologize for speaking poorly about you behind your back.”

His gaze sharpened, a faint smirk playing on his lips. “Oh? So you’re not scared of me anymore? Already bold enough to talk back?”

Gabriela kept her lips pressed shut, unwilling to risk another word.

Wesley—craving both praise and submission from those around him—was as conceited as he was domineering.

Aubrey had even hinted that he might be a little interested in her.

If this was his idea of showing interest, she didn’t dare imagine how ruthless he’d be if he wasn’t.

Wesley’s gaze lingered on her bowed head, her downcast eyes, and that flicker of defiance she was swallowing back. The combination made him smirk. He said, voice firm and unyielding, “Wear the bracelet on your right wrist tomorrow.”

The way he issued the order left no room for discussion, and Gabriela knew without a doubt—he was doing this purely to toy with her.

Wearing that bracelet would be like announcing to the entire company that she hadn't received a proper gift.

With her shoulders sinking, she managed a quiet, "Yes, sir."

Later that day, Aubrey clocked out alongside Gabriela and coaxed her into a shopping trip, suggesting they get their hair done.

"Once the holiday starts, I'll be spending eight full days with Kevin in Dialand! No way I'm showing up looking anything less than perfect," Aubrey said with a wink.

For many office workers, getting a fresh hairstyle before the New Year was almost a sacred tradition.

But Gabriela's paycheck still hadn't come through, and the knot of worry in her stomach kept her from spending freely. She passed on the salon and settled for picking out two new outfits instead.

Later, she and Aubrey tucked into a steaming pot of stew, the rich aroma and easy chatter finally sweeping away the last of her gloom.

That night, stretched out in bed, Gabriela absently scrolled through her WhatsApp messages.

Brenden's name still sat there, stubbornly silent.

The promise he'd made to be her plus-one at the wedding now felt like nothing more than a careless remark tossed into the air—words he'd never intended to keep.

It seemed as if misfortune had been dogging her heels for weeks. Once the holiday break came, she vowed she'd book a long meditation session and scrub the bad energy from her life like dust from a mirror.

At the same time, Brenden, feeling just as cursed by fate, grudgingly shoveled up yet another mound of dirt.

For nearly half a month, he'd been toiling under the watchful eye of the team leader, clawing his way barely two meters down—still without a trace of water. More and more, he wondered if the leader and Wesley had conspired to keep him trapped in this grueling task.

With a grunt, he flung another load of dirt aside, his clothes and hair caked in dust, and glanced up at the well walls towering above his head.

The thought struck him with grim humor—this didn't feel like digging for water anymore; it felt like he was carving out his own grave.

