

His kiss 1081

Chapter 1081

Hearing his son's unexpectedly mature words, something in Wesley softened, and the last of his earlier irritation faded away.

Whatever Gabriela wanted to pretend, the fact remained: they had spent the night together. That much she couldn't take back.

And he was Truett's biological father — nothing could undo that, either.

Gabriela might want to keep up appearances, but she'd have to reckon with whether their son was on board with that too.

Having a son, Wesley reflected, was a real advantage. It gave him a solid footing as the child's father. Whatever Leo — or anyone else — might try, none of it would get him very far.

Once that settled in his mind, Wesley felt considerably more at ease.

Even watching Gabriela finish only a few bites before rushing off didn't bother him.

Why get worked up over his own woman?

There was plenty of time ahead of them.

The good days, as far as he was concerned, were only just getting started.

Gabriela arrived at Crawford Manor with the gown in hand, only to find Leo already there.

He stood in a long-sleeved white shirt in front of a row of bonsai trees, his gaze low, seemingly lost in thought.

At the sound of footsteps, he turned, and his eyes brightened at once.

“Gabby. What brings you here?”

He’d assumed that after last night’s banquet, Gabriela’s whole world would be revolving around Everglow Group by now.

The recognition ceremony was behind them, after all — the natural next step would be her return to the company.

Both she and Rebecca were Matthew’s daughters, and either of them stood to inherit Everglow.

But Rebecca... her character left much to be desired, and she didn't come across as particularly sharp either.

It wouldn't be a surprise if Everglow eventually fell to Gabriela alone.

With the possibility of inheriting an enterprise that size on the table, most people would stop thinking about design entirely.

After all, Gabriela hadn't yet made a real name for herself in fashion — her future there was still uncertain. In comparison, preparing to take over the family business seemed like the obvious, sensible move.

Gabriela had no idea how much Leo had already worked through in his head, all in the space of a few seconds.

Sheepishly, she tucked the gown behind her back. "I actually came to ask Mr. Guzman for some advice."

She'd meant to have the gown repaired before telling Leo anything about it.

Running into him right away hadn't been part of the plan.

Noticing her guilty expression, Leo felt a flicker of curiosity, but didn't press, seeing she clearly didn't want to talk about it.

"As it happens, I have some things to attend to at the studio. I'll head back now."

He said his goodbyes to Presley and the old lady before leaving straightaway.

Presley watched him go and shook her head quietly to herself.

He'd shown up earlier claiming he wanted to admire her rare plants, but both she and the old lady knew perfectly well what he'd really been waiting around for.

Chapter 1082

The moment Gabby arrived, he made his exit.

A shame, really — Gabby was never meant to be his.

Not with that possessive man of hers standing guard. No one else stood a chance of getting close.

Once Leo had gone, Gabriela pulled out the gown.

“Mr. Guzman, at the banquet, my father had this gown specially made at SK Elite Boutique. Leo gave it to him personally, so it clearly means something. But now it’s ended up like this...”

Presley looked at the torn hem and, for a moment, had nothing to say.

“Don’t tell me your man did this?”

A tear this severe suggested more than a little jealousy, didn’t it?

Gabriela’s face flushed bright red.

“I’d had a bit to drink last night, and it got torn by accident while I was bathing.”

Watching her stumble through the explanation, Presley understood perfectly well what had actually happened.

It had indeed been the prince’s doing — though not out of jealousy, as she’d first assumed.

She took the gown from Gabriela’s hands. “Let me have a look.”

Presley had no formal training in fashion design, but her sewing skills were exceptional, and after a moment's inspection, she already knew how to fix it.

"A burgundy gown like this won't take well to just any color thread," she advised. "But mending it with matching thread would look far too plain."

"Try this instead — a gradient effect, starting near the tear with a shade close to the burgundy, and working your way down to create an ombre, like the color of a cocktail."

Starting dark near the top and fading lighter as it went down, mimicking the look of wine poured into a glass.

Gabriela's eyes lit up. "I see exactly what you mean!"

Presley's studio always kept a good supply of thread on hand, and Gabriela set to work at once on a test piece.

Since the damage wasn't extensive, she managed to finish the embroidery before nightfall.

The result turned out far better than she'd expected.

Presley raised an eyebrow, smiling. “You know, I think you should consider working with Leo. He handles the designs, you add the embroidery.”

Put the two together, and there was no telling what kind of results they might produce.

A spark lit up in Gabriela’s eyes.

Now that was a rather convenient excuse.

Even though Gabriela’s current standing and skill level made her proposal to work with Leo seem a little presumptuous, Presley had a real soft spot for her protégé and was convinced that partnering with Gabriela could only benefit him.

For Gabriela, it turned out to be the perfect excuse.

After all, she’d added her own touch to someone else’s work without really asking — she needed some kind of justification, didn’t she?

And now she had one, ready-made.

Rather pleased with herself, Gabriela had no real intention of going out of her way to track Leo down.

Chapter 1083

As Wesley had pointed out, the dress had been custom-made for her at Matthew's expense, already fully paid for. Even if something happened to it, Leo wasn't really in a position to object.

Still, Gabriela wasn't just any ordinary client.

For one, she and Leo were genuinely close.

For another, thanks to the princess's influence, Leo had already taken Gabriela under his wing, with plans to support her in the fashion world down the line.

Given both of those things, it hardly felt right to carelessly damage something a man of his standing had put so much thought into.

Now that the tear was mended and she had a plausible excuse ready, Gabriela could finally relax a little. If Leo ever brought it up out of the blue, she wouldn't have to scramble for an explanation on the spot.

She packed the dress away and headed to the bar to find Big Brother Tyler.

The day before, she'd asked him to gather a crowd of friends to back her up. In the end, they hadn't been needed — but if you wanted a horse to run fast when it counted, you had to keep it well fed.

Gabriela offered to treat the whole group to a feast, and Tyler simply nodded along without saying much.

Noticing how subdued he seemed, Gabriela was puzzled.

Tyler was usually carefree to a fault, the type who only worried about making a living and having enough cash on hand. Seeing him like this today was... unusual, to say the least.

"Big Brother Tyler, something on your mind?" she asked, curious.

Tyler sighed, took a swig of his drink, then shot her a glance loaded with quiet reproach.

Now Gabriela was truly curious. "What's going on?"

Tyler said nothing, keeping his attention on his glass.

She raised an eyebrow and made a show of standing to leave.

“If you won’t tell me, I’m out of here.”

There was a mountain of work waiting for her at the company, and before long she’d be heading back to Everglow Group.

The thought brought her a small measure of relief — at least she’d had the foresight to train Alissa up properly. Even without Gabriela at the Haynes Group day to day, Alissa could shoulder a good chunk of Kaleb’s workload.

Still, thinking about Kaleb left her with a twinge of guilt.

He’d fought through plenty of resistance just to bring her back to the company in the first place, hoping she’d get up to speed quickly enough that he could finally retire.

And she had gotten the hang of things — except the workload she kept handing off to him just kept piling higher.

Gabriela felt genuinely bad about it.

While each of them sat lost in their own thoughts — Gabriela steeped in guilt — Tyler suddenly spoke up. “Fulton’s getting out soon.”

She'd been turning over plans for her return to Everglow Group, thinking through how to take Lauren down quickly, how to drive a wedge between her and her precious daughter — when this remark caught her completely off guard.

Who?

Fulton? The abusive one?

Tessa's ex-husband!

Chapter 1084

Back when Fulton was sentenced, his mother and sister had hounded Tessa repeatedly, mostly out of envy over the house she owned, insisting that even after the divorce, the property should have been split between them.

Except the house had been bought entirely with Tessa's own money. What claim could they possibly have to it?

Eventually, Tyler had stepped in, bringing along a few tough guys to set them straight.

After that, every time the two women showed up near Tessa's apartment complex, they got roughed up. After a handful of incidents, they'd finally given up.

Everyone had assumed Tessa had finally escaped that dreadful family for good, ready to start over.

But after only a few years, Fulton was already getting released?

Would he come after Tessa the moment he was out?

That family was nothing but trouble — even if Tessa wasn't afraid of them, getting tangled up with them again would mean nothing but constant harassment.

Just as Gabriela was about to ask exactly when Fulton was due to be released, her phone rang.

She picked up, and Aubrey's panicked voice came through immediately. "Gabriela, something's happened! Come quick, Tessa needs help!"

It turned out that after work that day, Aubrey, Cali, and Tessa had gone out grocery shopping together.

No sooner had they stepped out of the supermarket than someone hurled a bucket of red paint at them. They managed to dodge most of it, but Tessa ended up soaked in red.

Before any of them could react, Raven pushed her way through the crowd, jabbing a finger at Tessa and shouting curses.

“Everyone, take a good look at this shameless woman — she ran around with other men and got my Fulton thrown in prison because of it!”

“Today, I’m going to strip her right here and let everyone see exactly what she is.”

Hands on her hips, voice raised, Raven’s shouting quickly drew a crowd of onlookers.

The moment people heard the word “strip,” a disturbing number of eyes lit up, and the crowd swelled with people eager to watch.

Cali did her best to wipe the paint off Tessa while instinctively stepping between her and Raven, terrified the older woman might actually try to make good on her threat.

“You old hag, do you have any idea what your son did?” Aubrey, trained in taekwondo, dropped instantly into a fighting stance, ready to put Raven flat on the ground.

Seeing this, Raven wasted no time collapsing to the pavement, wailing loudly. “Oh! I’m an old woman just looking for justice, and now I’m about to get beaten! How can young girls these days be so vicious?”

It had been two or three years since anyone had seen her, and Raven’s hair had gone mostly gray. Sprawled on the ground, crying, she looked almost pitiable to anyone who didn’t know the full story.

Someone in the crowd spoke up to intervene.

“It’s still chilly out — lying on the ground like that can’t be good for her. You girls shouldn’t be so heartless. Help her up.”

Furious, Cali and Aubrey rounded on them immediately.

“If you’re so kind, why don’t you help her up yourselves?”

Chapter 1085

The onlookers pointed accusing fingers. “Look at the three of you, all dressed up proper, and yet so cold-blooded underneath.”

Two young men, playing at righteous indignation, pushed to the front, shouting louder than anyone.

“Don’t let their polished looks fool you — who knows what kind of scandal they’re hiding underneath.”

“Exactly. Divorcing the second her husband’s locked up, running off with other men — that’s a complete collapse of morals.”

Aubrey's eyes practically burned with fury, and she rolled up her sleeves, ready to take them both on.

By then, Tessa had regained her composure. She stopped Aubrey and the others and turned a level gaze on the woman who used to be her mother-in-law, sprawled on the ground.

"Raven. What do you want?"

Seeing Raven stay put, unmoving, Tessa's expression turned to ice. "Not willing to actually talk this through?"

As the chief secretary at Apex Group, Tessa still carried a presence that wasn't easy to ignore.

Raven faltered slightly before reluctantly hauling herself up off the ground.

"That house was bought after you married my son, so even divorced, it should've been split between the two of you. He's getting out soon, with no job and nowhere to live. The three of us are crammed into a twenty-square-meter rental — it's pitiful."

Tessa stared back at her, cold as stone.

Raven kept shouting. "You and Fulton were married once. How can you just turn your back on him now, in this state?"

The two young men chimed back in. “Women these days really are something — marry a man just for his house, divorce him the second he’s locked up, and pocket the whole property.”

“Whoever ends up marrying a woman like that is cursed. Poor old lady...”

Of everything Tessa had endured, sharing a bed with a man like Fulton and calling him her husband had been the worst of it.

And now Raven dared to bring up their marriage?

Tessa took a slow breath, raised her hand, and slapped her across the face.

“Get out of here.”

Raven froze, stunned.

Even divorced, she’d once been Tessa’s mother-in-law. How dare her former daughter-in-law raise a hand against her?

This was outrageous.

Raven lunged at once, grabbing for Tessa's hair, clawing and screaming curses.

"You shameless woman — refusing to split the property, and now you hit me? I'll teach you a lesson today!"

Tessa wasn't about to let herself be pushed around and fought back immediately.

As the two of them tangled, several rough-looking men emerged from the crowd — almost certainly hired muscle Raven had brought along.

With only three women on Tessa's side, they were badly outnumbered.

Seeing things spiraling out of control, Aubrey quickly called Gabriela for help.

By the time Gabriela and Tyler reached the scene, chaos had already erupted outside the supermarket.

Two thugs had Tessa pinned down, her clothes smeared with red paint and soaked through with cold water, her hair plastered flat against her forehead.

She struggled against them with everything she had, but Aubrey and Cali were tangled up in their own fight and couldn't reach her, nearly in tears from sheer helplessness.

The onlookers did nothing but point and stare, savoring the spectacle without lifting a finger to help.

Tyler's stomach dropped at the sight, and he bellowed, "Move!"

The crowd, moments earlier eager to catch Tessa's humiliation on camera, froze at the sudden roar.

Towering over everyone like a giant, his presence alone was enough to part the crowd in an instant.

Gabriela and Tyler pushed through.

Tyler kicked the two thugs off Tessa and threw his jacket over her shoulders at once.

Seeing the red paint soaking her clothes, something flickered with concern in his eyes.

"It's just paint. Don't worry," Tessa said, trying to reassure him. "Tyler, let's go home."

He nodded and, without a word, lifted her into his arms.

Startled, Tessa opened her mouth to say she could walk — she wasn't badly hurt — but the words never came. Instead, she wrapped her arms around his neck and let him carry her.

Raven had always been wary of Tyler.

But bolstered by the crowd around her today, she stepped into their path and started shouting curses.

"It's this wild animal! Look at him, he looks like a killer. He's the one who framed my son and got him locked up, and now he's working with that little tramp Tessa to steal everything that rightfully belongs to my son—"

Before she could finish, Tyler kicked her to the ground.

Watching Tessa get mistreated had already lit a fire of rage inside him, and Raven slandering her on top of it was more than enough to push him over the edge.

He hit her with everything he had.

Raven flew back several feet and crumpled to the ground, motionless, feeling as though every bone in her body had shattered.

She begged for someone, anyone, to call the police for her.

Noticing the scratches on Tessa's face, Tyler said, "I'm taking you to the hospital."

Tessa shook her head. "No, it's really just a scratch."

He thought it over for a moment. "A woman's face matters. Better to get it looked at properly."

His words dragged Tessa back to memories she'd rather have forgotten — of Fulton beating her but always sparing her face, saying, "Can't damage your face, or how will you work and bring in money for us?"

Raven would chime in, mocking, "Right, you're so pretty, it'd be such a waste. By the way, Tessa, with that salary of yours, are you getting a little too close to your boss?"

And Sigrid would add, "If you really are, at least bring back more for us. My son's been wanting that action figure for ages..."

Recalling those unbearable memories, the loneliness and despair of it all came rushing back. And now, over something as minor as a scratch, someone was fussing over her like she actually mattered.

Tessa's eyes welled up, and she murmured, "Thank you, Tyler."

"Please don't cry. We'll be at the hospital soon," Tyler said, clearly at a loss.

Chapter 1087

He'd been married once before, but his wife had died of illness in her early twenties, cut down in the prime of her life.

Grief-stricken, he'd never once considered remarrying since. Having gone years without being close to any woman, he had no idea how to comfort one.

And yet his voice came out gentle, careful, as though he were afraid of frightening the woman in his arms.

Watching from behind, Gabriela and the others exchanged surprised glances.

Tyler and Tessa?

Could there really be something there?

But there was no time to dwell on it — events were already moving fast. Raven had been rushed to the hospital with three broken ribs and a damaged left kidney, currently fighting for her life in the emergency room.

Tyler's kick had landed with real force.

The police arrived quickly to investigate.

Tessa spoke up right away. "Officer, Raven brought thugs to attack us. Look, I'm hurt too."

"Tyler was only trying to protect us. He didn't mean to hit her that hard," Aubrey and Cali added, nodding along.

The officer replied, "Intentional or not, you'll need to come with us and cooperate with the investigation."

Tyler was taken away, and Tessa was left running through every connection she had in her head.

As Wesley's trusted assistant, she knew plenty of influential people — she just wasn't sure who might actually be willing to step in and help.

Seeing how tense Tessa had become, Gabriela murmured, "Don't worry. I'll take care of this."

After all, she'd only just been welcomed back into the Howard family. If she asked her father, he'd surely be willing to smooth over something this small.

The Howard family had managed to cover up Lauren's attempted murder — if not for Wesley's involvement, Lauren might never have seen the inside of a prison cell at all.

By comparison, Tyler's case was, at worst, a matter of excessive force in the heat of the moment. With a decent lawyer behind him, it wouldn't amount to much.

Resolved, Gabriela called Matthew.

The moment he heard it concerned a friend of Gabriela's, Matthew agreed without hesitation to send someone to sort it out.

After she hung up, Wesley, seated across from Matthew, asked, "Father-in-law, what's going on?"

Ever since Gabriela had started calling Matthew "Dad," Wesley had simply followed her lead.

Matthew had nothing to say to that.

This kid had been plenty arrogant with him before, and now that Matthew wanted to rein that in a little, he said sternly, “You two haven’t even registered your marriage yet. Don’t call me that.”

Wesley nodded, perfectly earnest. “You’re right. We’ll get the marriage certificate soon.”

Matthew was, once again, at a total loss for words.

This brat — heir to the entire Moss Group empire — had grown remarkably thick-skinned.

But there were more pressing matters at hand.

He filled Wesley in on Tyler’s situation.

Wesley listened, then said, “I’ll handle this. No need for you to worry about it, Father-in-law.”

With a single phone call, his company’s legal team was already in motion.

Chapter 1088

Benedict, who had previously handled Tessa’s domestic abuse case, arrived at the police station, posted bail, and had Tyler released before long.

Tessa and the others waited anxiously outside.

After half a day in custody, Tyler emerged looking worn out, his usual guilelessness somehow more pronounced than ever.

This gentle giant.

How had he managed to kick someone that hard, in front of that many witnesses? If Raven ended up bedridden because of it, there'd be no end to the trouble that could follow.

But Tyler didn't seem the least bit bothered by any of it.

Something in Tessa softened at the sight of him, and she said quietly, "I'm sorry for dragging you into this."

Tyler told her not to talk nonsense, then added, "Fulton's about to be released. It's not safe for you to be living alone right now..."

Before he could finish, Gabriela cut in. "Tyler, why don't you just stay at Tessa's place for a while?"

Tyler froze, his ears going red a beat later.

“Gabby, don’t say things like that.”

Ignoring him, Gabriela turned a knowing look on Tessa. “Tessa, what do you think? You know what Tyler’s like — honest, dependable. With him around, no one would dare lay a finger on you.”

Something about the way Gabriela was looking at her struck Tessa as a little too pointed, but thinking it over seriously, Tyler really was steady and trustworthy.

Having him nearby would genuinely put her mind at ease.

Tessa glanced over at Tyler.

He was tall and solidly built, his arms — the same ones that had held her so securely just moments earlier — noticeably strong.

Yet he stood there with his head down, offering no opinion either way, leaving her unsure whether he was even willing to help.

Quietly, she confided in Gabriela. “I’m worried Tyler might not want to.”

Gabriela caught the flicker of concern on Tessa's face, and her eyes sparkled with sudden interest.

There was something here.

She clapped her hands together. "Let me go ask him."

"Thank you," Tessa said, grateful.

Never one to sit still, Gabriela pulled Tyler aside for a quick word.

"Tyler, Tessa asked if you'd be willing to stay at her place for a few days."

He blinked, caught off guard, standing there unsure what to say.

He was rough around the edges, with a fierce look that tended to scare women off.

And yet here was Tessa — beautiful, accomplished — not only unbothered by him but actually inviting him into her home?

Seeing him hesitate, Gabriela pressed earnestly. “Tyler, back when I was at Apex Group, Tessa helped me out more than once. Do this as a favor to me, please?”

When he still didn’t answer right away, she pushed further. “Think about it — Fulton could be released any day now. If he starts causing trouble for her, and given how cunning that man is, having someone around would make all the difference.”

Tyler thought it over and finally gave a solemn nod. “All right.”

Chapter 1089

Surprised at how quickly he’d agreed, Gabriela couldn’t resist asking, “Tyler, what do you actually think of Tessa?”

She’d only just realized today that something had shifted between the two of them.

If her instincts were right, it was time to lend her big-hearted friend a hand.

“Tessa’s an extraordinary woman,” Tyler said. “Educated, beautiful, and she has such a pleasant way of speaking.”

Gabriela pushed a little further. “Do you like her?”

His eyes went wide at the question. “You cheeky thing, asking me something like that.”

To him, a woman like Tessa was something like a celestial being, far above him. Even entertaining the idea of anything romantic felt out of line.

“Not interested, then?” Gabriela said, feigning disappointment. “And yet you sing her praises like she’s a goddess.”

“She is a goddess,” Tyler shot back, glaring at her. “Gabby, don’t bring this up again.”

Gabriela nodded, perfectly solemn. “Okay.”

Meanwhile, Tessa was thanking Benedict, all while keeping half an eye on Gabriela and Tyler.

Tyler looked faintly troubled, and Gabriela seemed a little let down.

Had he said no?

Tessa’s heart sank slightly at the thought — maybe she’d overstepped.

After all, Tyler was only a friend. Just because he'd shown up in a crisis to protect her didn't mean he owed her anything more than that.

As her thoughts spiraled, Gabriela came back over. "Tyler said yes. He's going to grab a few things and head over to your place soon. I'll drive you home now."

She'd come with Alissa, who was waiting in the car.

It took Tessa a moment to process it all.

Once Tyler had driven off separately, she climbed into the car with Gabriela.

Gabriela wasted no time. "Tessa, be honest — what do you think of Tyler?"

Tessa's heart skipped. "Why would you ask that?"

"Because when I went to ask him about staying over, I realized something," Gabriela said, earnest. "He likes you."

Tyler likes her?

Tessa had never once considered the possibility.

Ever since Fulton's true nature had come to light, her faith in love had shattered, leaving her wary of trusting any man again.

And yet those four simple words — he likes you — sent an unexpected flutter through her chest.

Gabriela watched her closely, noting that far from being repelled by the idea, Tessa actually seemed pleased. What clearer sign did she need?

With a hint of mischief, Gabriela sighed. "Right? You're a little surprised too, aren't you?"

"I was completely floored," Tessa admitted. "Tyler's a good man, sure, but he's rough around the edges, not exactly gentle. And the way he talks is so blunt, no polish to it at all. It makes the two of you feel like you're from entirely different worlds."

Hearing Gabriela speak of Tyler that way made Tessa's brow furrow slightly, her lips pressing into a thin, irritated line.

Gabriela noticed and doubled down. "I even told him — Tessa's a college graduate, makes great money, and she's beautiful. You're none of those things, and honestly, you look a little intimidating. You should probably let it go."

Chapter 1090

Tessa bristled immediately. “Gabby! How can you say that? Tyler treats you like his own sister, cares about you more than almost anyone — and you’d talk about him like that?”

She didn’t even bother using the playful nickname anymore, clearly rattled.

“No, no,” Gabriela said, blinking innocently. “I’m just being honest. Tyler would make a wonderful brother, but as a boyfriend? What woman would really want that? His prospects just aren’t great.”

“That’s enough,” Tessa said, clearly annoyed now. “Gabby, looks aren’t everything. And Tyler isn’t ugly — he’s just tall, so he comes across as intimidating. Besides, what good is a fancy education anyway? Look at Fulton — he’s as cunning as anyone.”

After a pause, she added, more seriously, “You need to apologize to Tyler. Soon.”

“No need for that,” Gabriela said, waving the idea away. “Tyler’s got a good temper. He won’t hold it against me. At worst, he’ll mope for a couple of days and then be fine.”

Tessa’s frown deepened.

Why had Gabriela changed so much? The sweet, guileless Gabby she used to know would never have said anything so harsh.

Had running her own company, becoming Presley's apprentice, mixing with all these elite circles — had it changed her, somewhere along the way?

Face tight with disapproval, Tessa scolded her. "Gabby, you can't just take advantage of someone as good-natured as Tyler."

Ignoring the reproach entirely, Gabriela waved a hand, biting back a smile. "I already told you, he won't mind."

Before long, they arrived at Tessa's building.

"Tyler will be here shortly," Gabriela said. "We're heading off now."

Without waiting for a response, she opened the car door for Tessa, then turned to Alissa. "Let's head home."

Having spent enough time around Gabriela to know her well, Alissa understood exactly what had just happened.

Someone who treated Ken — a mere household cook — like family would never speak about Tyler that way for real.

That whole exchange had clearly been staged.

As she pulled the car back onto the road, Alissa asked, “Miss Gabriela, were you testing Tessa just now?”

Gabriela only smiled, mysterious. “Take a guess.”

Alissa laughed. “I’d guess there’s some good news on the way.”

She’d guessed exactly right.

By the time Tyler arrived with his things, Tessa was still a little annoyed with Gabriela for running Tyler down so thoroughly.

But the moment she actually saw him, her expression melted into a smile without her even meaning it to.

She led him to a guest room to help him get settled.

“Tyler, sorry to put you through the trouble these next few days. Are you hungry? Should I make you something?”

“No need to go to any trouble,” he said quickly. “You should get some rest. Don’t you have work at eight tomorrow?”

Tessa laughed softly. “It’s really no trouble. I’m a little hungry myself, and I’m used to cooking anyway.”

Watching her head toward the kitchen, Tyler didn’t press the matter further.

He’d actually considered offering to cook himself.

To him, Tessa was an educated, almost otherworldly woman who shouldn’t have to bother with kitchen work at all.