

His kiss 109

Chapter 109

“When he was starting out, pulling all-nighters and crashing at the office was just routine,” Trey remarked, his voice casual, almost offhand.

That nonchalant answer hit her harder than she expected, a faint ache tugging at her chest.

Wesley might shine under the spotlight now, commanding the room with his presence, but behind that success lay nights spent grinding through exhaustion, climbing one step at a time.

Maybe she should try to upset him less in the future.

Bad temper, distant manner, unpredictable moods—yes, he had all of those. But he had also handed her a career worth having, and with it, a confidence she’d never thought she could own.

Her thoughts scattered when her phone lit up, the name “NotASaunders” flashing across the screen. “Pick out a suit worth at least six figures. I’ll be going with you to that wedding.”

Gabriela blinked at the words, her brain stalling. Six figures? How much was that supposed to be?

Her fingers twitched as she mentally counted zeroes. Was Brenden out of his mind? With that kind of money, she could hire ten handsome stand-ins—each one more than happy to play the part of her devoted boyfriend.

She was seconds away from turning him down when another notification flashed across her screen—this time listing his suit measurements.

The first thing she noticed was his height: six foot two of towering presence. Gabriela knew Wesley's stats by heart, and that number was unmistakably his. Brenden, on the other hand, was at least half a head shorter. Did he seriously expect her to believe he'd suddenly shot up to six-two?

Ordering a suit was one thing, but padding his height out of sheer ego was just pathetic.

Scrolling down, she froze. Oh, for heaven's sake—the waistline, chest, every detail had been lifted wholesale from Wesley's impeccable build.

Had Brenden completely lost his mind? If she actually went through with the order, she might as well toss her money into the nearest drain.

Still, she supposed, renting a stand-in boyfriend wasn't exactly the picture of dependability either.

She opened her banking app and stared at the numbers on the screen.

Two months' salary—hardly a fortune—and the small sum she'd scraped together from part-time jobs back in school barely padded the balance. Even combined, it was nowhere near six figures.

Brenden's request was utterly outrageous.

She typed a cautious reply. "Mr. Saunders, could we aim for something more reasonable? Say, fifty thousand?"

That was practically her whole life savings—barely sixty thousand—and spending fifty on a single suit would gut her account.

The screen stayed blank. No reply.

He probably didn't even think she was worth answering.

By the time she stepped through her front door, Phyllis was sprawled on the couch, phone pressed to her ear, her tone dripping with mockery. Gabriela caught snatches of conversation—words like "playboy" and "backup girlfriend" curling through the air.

Seeing Gabriela return, Phyllis ended her call, her gaze sweeping slowly from head to toe. There was something unsettling in her expression—a strange blend of appraisal and smug satisfaction.

Gabriela wondered if Phyllis was slipping into sheer madness.

Phyllis's lips curved into a taunting smile. "Only a week until my wedding. So, where's this mysterious boyfriend of yours? Got him all polished up and ready?"

Gabriela met her stare with a cool, measured look. "Why don't you focus on your wedding preparations with Dustin? Or is your freeloader already starting to bore you?"

The jab wiped the smirk off Phyllis's face, but only for a heartbeat. She gave a low, mocking laugh. "You've got a pretty sharp tongue, don't you? You've guarded that boyfriend of yours like some state secret. Just don't show up with someone so pathetic that my dad ends up regretting inviting you."

Without dignifying that with an answer, Gabriela brushed past Phyllis and disappeared into her room.