

His kiss 23

Chapter 23

The workday finally ended, and Gabriela followed Aubrey out of the building, the weight of the luxurious gift box tucked under her arm.

Aubrey's endless curiosity bubbled over as they walked, peppering Gabriela with questions about her so-called boyfriend.

Heat crept up Gabriela's cheeks. Was Brenden even her boyfriend? He was a notorious flirt, not exactly boyfriend material. All they were doing was scratching each other's backs. The only reason he'd sent that extravagant SK Elite Boutique dress was because he needed her to play the perfect date at some fancy banquet.

Realizing Gabriela wasn't in the mood to share, Aubrey let the topic drop, though her eyes still gleamed with mischief.

They reached the bus stop and settled in to wait. Suddenly, a bright red BMW slid up to the curb with a showy squeal, horn blaring in rapid bursts.

Both women turned, startled, just as the tinted window slid down.

Phyllis lounged in the passenger seat, her smile bright and insincerely sweet. "Are you on your way home, Gabriela? I can give you a ride."

Before Gabriela could respond, Phyllis gave a theatrical little gasp and pressed a hand to her chest. “Oh, silly me! With your new wealthy boyfriend, I’m sure regular cars aren’t good enough for you anymore.”

Gabriela barely spared her a glance, lips pressed in a thin, unimpressed line.

Noticing Gabriela’s chilly silence, Phyllis’s grin only sharpened. Clearly convinced Gabriela was bluffing about her boyfriend, she pressed harder. “If your boyfriend’s so loaded, why isn’t he here picking you up? Why are you standing around waiting for a bus?”

Gabriela’s voice was flat and steady as she answered, “He’s got work. He’s busy.”

Phyllis let out a smug little laugh. “Naturally—men that important must have a million people to meet every day. I guess there’s no time left for his girlfriend.”

As she finished, Phyllis angled herself so Gabriela and Aubrey had an unobstructed view of Dustin behind the wheel. “Not like Dustin. He always drops everything just to pick me up after work.”

Dustin’s grip tightened on the steering wheel the moment he spotted the SK Elite Boutique box in Gabriela’s hand.

Gabriela stood quietly beside Aubrey, her beauty impossible to ignore—velvety skin, impossibly long legs, the kind of looks that made strangers stare. She could have stepped right off the pages of a fairytale. Even after their breakup, Dustin couldn’t shake the old feelings. Some part of him still wanted her—resentful as he was.

But Gabriela appeared to have moved on from him. She had barely ended things before flaunting a new boyfriend, and if Phyllis was right, this guy was rich—probably middle-aged, maybe even older. What kind of young billionaire handed out gifts worth a small fortune just for fun?

The more Dustin mulled it over, the more bitter he became. He shot Phyllis a sidelong glance, voice laced with contempt. “She doesn’t even appreciate it. You’re wasting your energy picking her up. Seriously, you’re way too soft. Just let her fend for herself.”

Dustin’s sneer only made Phyllis feel more pleased with herself, though she managed to mask it with a syrupy apology. “Oh, Gabriela, don’t mind Dustin. He’s just brutally honest. He doesn’t mean anything by it.”

Gabriela didn’t so much as blink. “It’s fine. When someone’s working with such a tiny processor upstairs, it’s only natural that whatever he says bypasses his brain entirely. Why would I waste my energy arguing with someone like that?”

Aubrey also leapt to Gabriela’s defense. “That’s right! Honestly, you two are a match made in heaven—one struts around like royalty, and the other cruises in a screaming-red BMW like it’s a trophy. But here’s the thing—Gabriela’s SK Elite Boutique dress probably costs more than three times the price of your car. If you’re here to put on a show, you’re just making fools of yourselves.”