

His kiss 36

Chapter 36

For a split second, Claire hesitated, thrown off by the possibility that Gabriela meant more to Wesley than she'd realized. Irritated, she spat on the floor, fixed Gabriela with a piercing glare, and spun on her heel.

Pulling out her phone, Claire scrolled to a WhatsApp contact, transferred a sum of money, and typed, "Find out everything there is to know about Gabriela Haynes."

The reply came almost instantly. "Consider it done."

Gabriela couldn't be bothered by Claire's sour glare. All she could think was that Claire's so-called otherworldly beauty seemed ordinary now that she had seen it up close. She couldn't wait to share that little detail with Aubrey later.

Then Gabriela turned her attention to the food. One bite was perfectly savory, the next sweet, the following one crisp and golden—she sampled everything with reckless abandon. Eventually, she realized she'd overdone it. Now she was stuffed to the point of discomfort, her stomach tight and bloated. Rubbing her middle, she glanced across the room and caught sight of Wesley. He was surrounded by a cluster of well-dressed guests, but he seemed to stand apart from the crowd, drawing every eye in the room with that magnetic presence.

Even from a distance, he radiated authority, his profile sharper and more striking than anyone else's—even Vincent, the movie star, couldn't hold a candle to him. Gabriela secretly wondered who would be deserving enough to stand beside him as his wife in the future.

Still a little dazed from her brief fangirl high, she gave her rounded belly a gentle pat and slipped quietly into the garden for a stroll.

The hotel's garden sprawled before her, dominated by a glimmering pool and cascading artificial waterfalls. Despite the chill of winter in the air, flowers bloomed everywhere, lush and impossibly vibrant. The extravagance here was on a whole different level—being rich really did rewrite the laws of nature.

She wandered between beds of color, admiring petals sparkling with frost. “How do you manage to bloom like this in the dead of winter?” she murmured, half-talking to the pampered flowers, half-marveling at the absurdity of it all.

Just then, her phone vibrated sharply in her hand. A new message flashed on her screen. “Where are you?” It was from “NotASaunders.”

She texted back immediately, “In the garden.”

The reply shot back almost at once, the tone clipped and unmistakably irked. “I brought you as my date, and here you are, sneaking off?”

Gabriela blinked, puzzled. Brenden hadn't attended the banquet at all. How could he be so well-informed about her every move?

She rushed through her explanation. “I ate too much. Just needed a walk—to settle my stomach.”

After a few quiet moments, an unexpected message popped up. “So, what do you think of Mr. Moss?”

Gabriela instantly straightened, her curiosity piqued. Wasn’t this almost the exact question Wesley had tossed her way about Brenden earlier, back in the car?

Now it felt like she’d stumbled into some secret game where they were sizing up her loyalty. Determined not to let anyone trip her up, Gabriela’s fingers danced across her phone as she fired back. “Mr. Moss is outrageously handsome! You should see it for yourself—every woman here is staring at him. Even Claire, who’s supposedly the top beauty in the business, can’t keep her eyes off him.” Worried her praise still wasn’t enough, she immediately added, “Honestly, I think he’s the most attractive man at the event. Even the movie star Vincent doesn’t come close.”