

His kiss 401

Chapter 401

Brenden was completely puzzled. “How could that be possible? Gabriela is—”

Before he could finish explaining, the light fixture above Fiona flickered erratically, went out, then surged back to life several seconds later.

The sudden electrical disturbance sent Fiona’s nerves into panic. She looked up and saw Gabriela standing close by, looking at her with clear displeasure.

“Ms. Dewitt? What are you doing here? Where did Brenden go?”

Gabriela’s dark hair fell over her shoulders. Her complexion was ghostly pale, and she wore a pristine white dress with the sleeves pushed up to her elbows, exposing arms so drained of color they looked almost translucent.

Several seconds passed before Fiona could even react. Her eyes widened in raw terror.

She dropped her phone and collapsed backward onto the sofa. The massive flat-screen television across from her suddenly switched on by itself. On the screen, a ghostly pale woman in flowing white robes emerged from a wardrobe, her vacant, lifeless eyes holding a sinister glint.

At that exact moment, the landline phone in the living room started ringing insistently.

Fiona let out a sharp scream, then immediately slapped a hand over her mouth, shaking in panic.

Gabriela glanced at her with confusion, but decided not to bother with whatever was wrong with her. She moved to answer the phone.

She had forgotten to put on shoes, and after being thrown from the car earlier, her knee was slightly injured, giving her steps an uneven, limping quality.

The room settled into an eerie atmosphere, broken only by the steady ticking of the oversized wall clock and the chilling soundtrack of screams and distorted dialogue coming from the horror movie playing on the TV.

Fiona's hair felt like it was standing on end. She honestly feared her heart might stop.

Gabriela lifted the receiver to her ear.

Brenden's voice came through the line, explaining Fiona's unexpected arrival and the ongoing electrical problems in the house.

Gabriela answered simply, "Understood."

She set the receiver down and walked toward Fiona, who was still clutching the book and scarf tightly against her chest. Gabriela held out her hand.

“Return my belongings to me.”

Without warning, the room was swallowed by darkness.

When the lights flickered back on a few seconds later, the television exploded with horrifying music at maximum volume, flooding the room with a suffocating, menacing atmosphere.

Fiona finally broke.

She threw the book and scarf aside and bolted toward the staircase in a blind panic. Halfway up, she lost her footing and fell, tumbling hard back down the steps.

Gabriela picked up the book and scarf from the floor, her expression darkening with displeasure. She moved toward Fiona, intending to help her.

But Fiona had already descended into full hysteria. She screamed, wild and desperate, “Stay away from me! Don’t come any closer!”

Right then, the lights went out again.

Unfamiliar with the layout of the house, Gabriela stumbled over something in the dark and crashed to the floor.

When the lights returned, Fiona saw Gabriela slowly pushing herself up from the hardwood, her long hair hanging forward in a tangled mess that completely obscured her face.

The sight mirrored the horror scene on the television. On the massive screen, that same pale woman in white was crawling forward with stiff, unnatural movements.

That was the last straw for Fiona.

She screamed with everything she had. "Oh God, please save me!"

Her eyes rolled back, and she collapsed, completely unconscious.

Still trying to steady herself, Gabriela looked at Fiona's motionless body stretched out on the floor and could only stare in confusion. Had Fiona completely lost her mind? Otherwise, why had she been screaming like that?

With a tired sigh, Gabriela reached for the landline and dialed the emergency number.

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When Fiona woke up, she found herself in a sterile hospital room.

Brenden was sitting at the edge of her bed, clear relief in his expression. "You're finally awake."

The vivid memory of Gabriela chasing her for her belongings flashed through Fiona's mind, and she grabbed Brenden's hand in a panic. "There's a malevolent spirit in your house!"

"Fiona, what nonsense are you talking about?" Brenden frowned. "Come on, supernatural entities don't exist."

Just as Fiona began explaining, she saw Gabriela walking toward them, holding something in her hand.

Fiona went rigid. She squeezed Brenden's hand with desperate strength, her voice breaking in terror. "Did you see that? Gabriela! She's come for me!"

"Fiona, that hurts! Let go!" Brenden hissed as her nails dug into his skin.

"Can't you see her? Gabriela has turned into a vengeful ghost and she's coming closer!" Fiona was on the verge of tears, pressing her palms together like she was begging. "Gabriela, please leave me alone."

Brenden grimaced, clutching his hand where her nails had left red marks, completely lost as he watched Fiona's performance.

Gabriela said calmly, "Ms. Dewitt, I am very much alive. Thank you."

Fiona trembled, hesitating, and slowly looked at Gabriela. "You didn't die?"

Gabriela rolled her eyes. "What, you thought I'd kicked the bucket?"

Fiona turned a blank stare toward Brenden. "Didn't you say she died? That they took her to the morgue?"

"What are you talking about?" Brenden looked honestly confused. "My friend got into an accident during street racing. The person who died was a stranger. I didn't realize the hospital had called the wrong person until I got there."

Fiona was speechless.

She forced herself to calm down and asked, "Then how do you explain your television? Why did it start playing horror movies on its own?"

Brenden lowered his gaze in embarrassment.

He had brought girlfriends home before and kept a collection of horror DVDs meant to scare them so they'd cling to him for protection. But he couldn't say that in front of Gabriela.

"I watch scary movies when I'm bored," he lied. "Maybe you pressed the remote by accident and it just turned on. It's not my fault."

Fiona stayed silent for several long seconds, reminding herself over and over that she should not lose her temper with an idiot like Brenden.

But Brenden refused to drop it. "Fiona, you really mistook Gabriela for a ghost? That's ridiculous. You—"

After one full minute of that, Fiona finally snapped. She launched herself at Brenden and wrapped her hands around his throat. She hissed, "Brenden, I've had it with you!"

Every time she had crossed paths with Brenden since coming back had ended in some kind of disaster.

Brenden yelled, panicked, "Fiona, let go! I can't breathe..."

Fiona's eyes blazed with fury, and she tightened her grip.

Gabriela quickly called a nurse and security to pull them apart. Brenden sucked in air and rubbed his throat, which had turned red. “Fiona, have you completely lost it? You belong in a psychiatric facility!”

Brenden then seriously called for a psychiatrist to assess Fiona and almost managed to have her admitted.

By the time the chaos finally ended, it was already late afternoon.

Gabriela decided to skip the office and go straight home instead. Truett, who hadn’t seen her all day, would definitely be growing restless.

At the headquarters of Apex Group, in the CEO’s office, Wesley sat in his black leather chair, staring out through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Chapter 403

The sun was shining brightly after the torrential morning downpour.

Billy knocked respectfully and stepped inside. “Mr. Moss, your grandfather has arrived.”

Wesley slowly turned his chair. “Send him in.”

Roger entered without his usual bodyguards. He stopped directly in front of Wesley and placed a phone on the polished table. "This belongs to that woman. Send someone to return it."

Wesley picked up Gabriela's phone. His gaze stayed low, hiding his expression. "Grandfather, what are you trying to say?"

He knew Roger well. A man like him would never come in person just to return a phone.

"Wesley, you've already agreed to the marriage alliance with the Howard family. You should devote more attention to Rebecca. For Gabriela's sake, you should keep your distance. Accidents happen so easily, after all."

Roger spoke slowly. His voice was rough with age, but still carried authority.

Wesley's grip on the phone tightened until his knuckles turned white. "Understood."

Roger nodded, clearly satisfied. "Wesley, you have to believe that everything I'm doing is for your own good. You are the one I value most in this family. With the Howard family's support, the entire Moss Group will eventually be under your control. When that day comes, you can keep as many women as you like, and no one will dare object."

Wesley let out a bitter laugh with no warmth.

He didn't answer. Instead, he called Billy back into the office. "See him out."

Ever since his parents had died, Wesley had been raised by Loretta. He had almost no emotional bond with Roger, and there was very little for them to say to each other.

Roger rose slowly.

At that moment, Rebecca stepped in carrying an armful of documents. She greeted Roger with polite respect. "Roger, what brings you to the company today? Are you heading out? Would you like me to walk you downstairs?"

Roger's expression softened. "Rebecca, your thoughtfulness never ceases to impress."

Rebecca quickly set her documents aside and moved forward with graceful ease to assist Roger, taking over from Billy.

Billy watched them leave, closed the office door, and couldn't help asking, "Mr. Moss, are you sure about bringing Miss Howard into the company?"

Wesley barely reacted. He just let out a low sound of acknowledgment. "Yes."

"But the Howard family is our direct competitor," Billy said.

There was a real risk that Rebecca might leak sensitive internal information once she was inside.

Wesley said, “Tell Tessa to assign her only basic tasks — copying, running errands, deliveries. Keep her away from all confidential documents.”

Wesley wasn’t worried about Rebecca herself.

The one he was truly cautious of was her cousin Jasper, the powerful young head of the Howard family.

Jasper held absolute control over the Howard Group and was infamous for his calculated, ruthless methods. In both legitimate business and the underground world, he was known for doing whatever it took to achieve his goals. No one in the corporate world dared provoke him.

Billy nodded. “Understood.”

Wesley held out the phone. “Return this to Gabriela for me.”

Billy was surprised. “This belongs to Ms. Haynes?”

Wesley, already showing signs of impatience, gave a brief nod.

Billy slipped the phone into his jacket. "I'll make sure Ms. Haynes gets it right away."

Chapter 404

Billy stepped out of the elevator just as Rebecca appeared in the corridor. Her gaze dropped to the phone in his hand, and after a brief pause, she offered a warm smile. "Billy, off to run an errand?"

"Yes," Billy replied with practiced politeness.

Rebecca's expression stayed pleasantly composed. "What unfortunate timing. I was just about to invite everyone to dinner on my first day. I thought it might help me get to know you all better."

Billy's smile remained perfectly professional. "Perhaps we could arrange something another day. My treat next time."

"Oh, I couldn't let you do that," Rebecca said softly. "I'm still settling in here, completely unfamiliar with how everything works. I'll need your guidance."

"You're too kind," Billy said.

After a few more polite exchanges, Billy excused himself and headed for the exit.

Rebecca watched him walk away, her head tilting slightly. The smile stayed on her lips, but something in her eyes cooled.

Her phone rang sharply. She glanced at the screen before answering. "Hey, Jasper."

Whatever came through the speaker made Rebecca laugh, light and melodic. "Don't worry. Wesley has been nothing but considerate, and I doubt anyone here would dare cross me. Though I will say, his assistant carries himself with quite an aloof attitude — but that's normal for someone with real ability. Yes, yes, I promise I won't let anyone push me around. Thank you for caring."

By midday, word of Rebecca's sudden appointment as Wesley's secretary had already spread through every corner of Apex Group.

Jaylene wasted no time. She marched into Gabriela's former office, practically glowing with malicious delight.

"How funny. I thought Gabriela had Mr. Moss completely wrapped around her finger, and that all of you would ride her favor to the top. But look how that turned out — she got kicked out, and someone else took her place. I'd say rough times are ahead for you."

Aubrey planted her hands on her hips and called out in a voice that carried across the office, "Cleaning lady! We've got a massive pile of garbage cluttering up our workspace. Can you help us clear it out?"

"On my way!" came the enthusiastic reply as the cleaning woman appeared with her broom ready.

Jaylene jumped back to avoid the broom and planted herself in the doorway. Her voice shot up to a near-shriek. "Who do you think you are, acting all high and mighty? Word is Miss Howard is going to marry Mr. Moss. Since you were so close to Gabriela, you'd better start bracing for what's coming!"

"Stop yapping, you bitch." Cali raised her coffee cup like a weapon.

Jaylene bolted.

Aubrey let out a furious breath. "Why hasn't anyone fired Jaylene already? She's unbearable."

"Don't let her get to you," Cali said, trying to calm her. "People like her always get what's coming. With a mouth that nasty, she'll eventually piss off the wrong person."

Even so, Aubrey stayed irritated for the rest of the afternoon. After work, she went to find Tessa.

Chapter 405

"Tessa, I need to visit Gabriela tonight."

Aubrey felt she had to warn Gabriela about Rebecca.

Tessa shared the same concern, but added a warning. “Just remember — Mr. Moss’s grandmother and Miriam are both at the villa right now. Be very careful not to say anything you shouldn’t.”

“I understand,” Aubrey said with a nod.

Meanwhile, Gabriela ran into Billy near the entrance of her villa.

Billy held out her phone, and Gabriela lifted her eyebrows in surprise. “How did my phone end up with Mr. Moss?”

“I don’t know,” Billy admitted. “Mr. Moss’s grandfather came to the company earlier today.”

The peaceful days at Apex Group seemed to be ending. Rebecca’s sudden appointment as Wesley’s secretary, and Roger showing up more often, both pointed to changes coming.

“I see,” Gabriela said, taking the phone. “Thank you for bringing it back, Billy.”

She had never met Wesley’s grandfather in person, but she could already picture the kind of complicated, dangerous family politics that ruled a family like his.

Pieces began falling into place. She finally understood why she had been kidnapped and abandoned in the wilderness.

It hadn't been an attempt to truly harm her. It had been a warning. A lesson.

As for Brenden showing up to save her, maybe Wesley's grandfather had arranged for him to step in and make sure nothing actually happened to her.

But there was still something bothering her: Fiona. How had Fiona heard about the accident so quickly?

Brenden wouldn't have shared that kind of news in the middle of the night.

At the hospital, Brenden had been wondering the same thing. "Fiona, who told you that Gabriela was hurt?"

"I heard it through the grapevine," Fiona replied flatly. Their earlier fight still hung in the air and sharpened her tone. "Bad news travels fast. Gabriela's made enemies everywhere. Everyone's just waiting for her to crash and burn."

Brenden ignored the insult and let his mind drift back over the night.

His closest friend had suddenly called him out for a race in the middle of the night, then given him the wrong directions entirely.

The whole situation reeked of planning. And that particular friend happened to be close with Wesley.

Maybe Wesley had arranged all of it. He had known Gabriela was in danger and made sure Brenden was the one who saved her. Then, when Gabriela stayed at his place, Wesley had made sure Fiona ended up there too — ruining any alone time they might have had.

The more Brenden replayed it all, the more his theory made sense.

But one question still stuck with him: why hadn't Wesley just gone himself to rescue Gabriela?

Then the answer hit him.

Maybe Wesley had done all of this on purpose — to create a chance for Brenden to be the hero and win Gabriela's heart.

The thought struck something deep in him, and Brenden made a quiet promise to himself. He would repay Wesley's unexpected kindness.

Chapter 406

Meanwhile, outside Gabriela's villa, Billy politely declined her dinner invitation after returning the phone and prepared to leave. As he approached his car, he crossed paths with Aubrey and Tessa. After brief pleasantries, Billy drove off into the gathering dusk.

Gabriela's face lit with genuine warmth when she saw her friends. "What brings you here tonight?"

Tessa and Aubrey exchanged a look before Aubrey delivered the news with her usual bluntness. "Gabriela, someone has taken your former position at Apex Group."

The words hit Gabriela like a physical blow, leaving her momentarily speechless. She recovered quickly and forced a bright smile. "Apex Group is expanding rapidly. Bringing in fresh talent makes perfect business sense."

"No, you don't understand," Aubrey said, frustration breaking through her composure. "A woman has taken your exact role as secretary. Her name is Rebecca Howard — old money. She's clearly after Mr. Moss."

Rebecca Howard.

The name instantly brought back Wesley's parting words when Gabriela resigned: "Perhaps the timing is perfect. Rebecca will be back soon, and she'll slip right into your position."

So the sophisticated, elegant woman Brenden had praised so highly had finally made her entrance.

Gabriela kept her cheerful mask in place. "I see."

Despite her calm exterior, pain sliced through her heart with surgical precision.

Damn it. If Wesley hadn't already made his feelings painfully clear — that he wanted her erased from his world — Gabriela would have thrown away her pride without hesitation. She would have fought with everything she had to win him back.

But reality had already spoken.

Wesley had cut her out of his life with clinical finality. She had no choice now but to stop fighting for his heart.

Tessa and Aubrey studied Gabriela's face with worried intensity, only beginning to relax when they saw what looked like genuine indifference settling over her expression.

"Let's go — I've been dying to hold Truett!" Aubrey said.

The three of them slipped into easy laughter as they walked into the villa.

Loretta appeared in the hallway, cradling Truett against her shoulder. Her face lit up when she saw Tessa, and she immediately waved Truett's little hand in greeting. "Truett, look who's here! Say hi to your mommy."

Tessa shifted, clearly uncomfortable, unable to respond to being called "mommy."

Loretta went on cheerfully and gently transferred Truett into Tessa's arms. "Two whole days without visiting! Didn't you miss your precious little one?"

Tessa took the baby awkwardly, but Truett immediately began twisting toward Gabriela, growing restless. His face crumpled — the unmistakable beginning of tears if she didn't take him.

Gabriela stepped in quickly and gathered Truett into her arms.

Loretta and Miriam exchanged amused looks and let out quiet laughs. "How odd. Even after a short time apart, a baby shouldn't forget his own mother so completely. Why does he act so distant toward the woman who gave birth to him?"

Tessa forced a smile and chose her words carefully. "Work's just been too busy lately. Truett must be upset with me."

Chapter 407

Even Miriam found the explanation hard to believe, let alone Loretta, who had always been suspicious of Tessa.

Loretta's voice carried sharp skepticism. "Tessa, what's going on at home? Why can't you take care of your own child? Tell me the truth, and I'll make sure Wesley helps you."

Tessa felt pressure building in her skull. She shot a desperate look at Gabriela, blinking quickly, silently begging for rescue.

Farley stepped in at once. "Loretta, caring for the child was my decision. Tessa's family situation is complicated, and I don't mind helping."

Gabriela nodded firmly. "Mrs. Larson, family matters deserve privacy. Please don't push Tessa for details."

Their answers managed to deflect the question for now, but Loretta's suspicions only deepened. Tessa worked under Wesley's supervision, yet her child was being raised in Gabriela's home — a situation that looked pitiful from the outside. Loretta felt certain there was more to it, and she became determined to uncover the truth.

After dinner, Loretta spent the evening whispering with Miriam.

Miriam eventually suggested, "We could quietly visit Tessa's home and see for ourselves."

Loretta nodded in approval. "Brilliant idea."

Gabriela had no idea the two older women were planning to investigate Tessa in secret.

Only after she had settled Truett into peaceful sleep did she finally let out a heavy breath.

The past two days had been a storm of chaos, keeping her so busy that she barely had time to feel anything.

Wesley's cold expression flashed across her mind, and Gabriela quickly shook her head.

She pushed the thought away — there was no point holding on to it.

She had tried to tell Wesley about the child, and he had still cut her out of his life without hesitation.

When Truett grew up and asked about his father, she already knew what she would say: "Your father rejected us. We'll rely on each other instead."

She believed her son would understand and would never blame her for not having a father.

Gabriela, who refused to let sadness follow her past midnight, fell asleep quickly after her shower.

She had no idea that the next day, chaos would arrive courtesy of Loretta.

The next day, during a company meeting about plans for the GD Fashion Show — a project that had already run into problem after problem thanks to Marie's supporters constantly creating obstacles — Gabriela's phone buzzed with a frantic call from Tessa.

Tessa's panicked voice came through the speaker. "Gabriela, you need to come to my house right now. Mr. Moss's grandmother and Miriam are about to start a fight with my mother-in-law!"

Gabriela shot to her feet so fast that her water glass toppled and shattered on the floor.

Even Kaleb stared at her in surprise. "What's wrong, Gabriela?"

"My house is burning down! I have to go!"

Without another word, she bolted from the room.

The directors, who had only recently begun showing her any cooperation at all, started whispering gleefully about her personal crisis the moment she left. The conference room filled with murmurs while Kaleb frowned and dismissed the meeting.

Gabriela rushed to Tessa's home, where the living room looked less like a home and more like a battleground.

Loretta stood with her hands planted on her hips, shouting at Tessa's mother-in-law, Raven.

Raven's voice dripped with contempt. "Look at you two — broke and pathetic. If you're here to beg, go do it somewhere else."

Loretta shot back without hesitation. "Everything that comes out of your mouth is trash. Do everyone a favor and keep it shut."

Raven's eyes bulged with fury. "How dare you act like that in my house, you old hag! Get out before I throw you into the street. The police won't even bother helping you."

Loretta's reply was fast and sharp. "Trash in, trash out. That's you."

Chapter 408

Raven's voice rose into a shriek. "You insane old woman — you barge into my home and run your mouth like that? I'll tear you apart!"

At first, onlookers could make out individual insults, but the argument quickly devolved into an incomprehensible storm of profanity and rage. Soon, the entire room dissolved into pure chaos and fury.

Miriam, unaccustomed to such vicious confrontations, positioned herself protectively beside Loretta to shield her from any harm. Gabriela stood frozen in shock. She had witnessed Raven's viciousness before, but she never imagined that the gentle and kindhearted Loretta could transform into such a formidable opponent. Looking closer, Gabriela noticed that Loretta and Miriam wore clothing covered in patches. What purpose did such disguises serve?

Gabriela's eyelid twitched as she finally asked, "Why are Mrs. Larson and Miriam even here?"

Tessa's voice carried quiet resignation as she explained the situation. Loretta and Miriam had arrived at her house posing as impoverished relatives—their humble clothing was a deliberate disguise to investigate Tessa's family situation. Raven had genuinely believed their deception and unleashed a torrent of insults from the moment they appeared at her door. Tessa had been summoned home from work against her wishes to handle the escalating confrontation.

Just as Tessa concluded her explanation, someone seized her hair with brutal force. Her husband had awakened and emerged from the bedroom, dragging his injured leg behind him. Seeing the chaos erupting in his living room, he ignored the circumstances entirely and immediately grabbed Tessa's hair before delivering a vicious punch to her face.

The violent display finally revealed to Gabriela the source of Tessa's frequent bruises.

Tessa's cry pierced the air as she pleaded, "Fulton, release me. My friend is here."

Fulton Ortiz's eyes remained swollen from sleep, but his face blazed with pure malice. His grip tightened around Tessa's hair as his voice turned arctic. "Tell your friend and these pathetic relatives to leave. They're interrupting my rest."

Loretta, who had been locked in a heated battle with Raven, froze at the shocking scene before rushing to intervene. Miriam, positioned closer to the violence, charged forward without a moment's hesitation.

Loretta's voice rang out in disbelief. "What are you doing? How can you strike her like that? She's your wife!"

Fulton shoved both elderly women aside with contempt. "Get out of here, you dried-up hags!"

He was too strong for them. Both women went down hard. Loretta seemed to hurt her back in the fall, her face twisting in pain.

Tessa tried to step in, but Fulton kicked her hard in the stomach.

Raven's voice rose in vicious approval. "Fulton, teach Tessa a lesson. She's been giving us less money and dragging useless relatives here to eat our food. She deserves it!"

Gabriela rushed to help Loretta, fury igniting at Raven's cruelty.

How dare they lay hands on Loretta.

Gabriela snapped.

She took several quick steps forward and drove her foot into Fulton's groin with full force.

He wasn't prepared.

Fulton let go of Tessa instantly and dropped to the floor, writhing in agony and spitting curses. "I'm dying! I'll kill you, you bitch!"

His screams sounded like an animal being slaughtered, and they only made Raven more frantic.

Raven lunged at Gabriela in a rage while Tessa and Miriam scrambled to protect Loretta from further harm. The room exploded into chaos.

Raven attacked with ferocity, and Gabriela, afraid Loretta and Miriam would get seriously hurt, put herself in front of them, taking the hits herself.

Fulton's earlier shove had already dislocated Gabriela's arm, leaving her almost unable to defend herself.

Fulton, still pale and shaking from the pain but back on his feet, grabbed a nearby baseball bat and swung it at Gabriela's head with murderous intent.

At that critical moment, a long, powerful arm shot forward and caught the bat in midair, stopping it with unshakable force.

Fulton spun around and found himself staring into a chilling expression, eyes so sharp they seemed to cut straight through him.

The force of that presence sent a shiver down his spine. His grip faltered, and the bat slipped from his hand as his confidence collapsed.

At the same time, Wesley pulled Gabriela into his arms and shielded her. Raven had shoved her aside, and Gabriela had braced herself for another hit — but instead, she was caught in a firm embrace.

She looked up into Wesley's dark, intense eyes and felt an unexpected wave of relief. Her eyes stung. "Wesley, what are you doing here?" she whispered.

Surrounded by her familiar scent, Wesley held her by the waist for a moment before quickly letting go. His face stayed cold.

He glanced once at Fulton, then said to Billy, who had followed him inside, "Handle this."

Raven, still not understanding who they were, exploded in anger. "How dare you storm into my house and hurt my son! I'm calling the police!"

But Gabriela had already called the police and reported the assault.

Tessa had been beaten in front of witnesses. Fulton needed to face consequences.

The police arrived quickly.

At the station, while statements were being taken, Raven made a scene. She clutched her lower back and wailed for sympathy, demanding compensation from Gabriela and the others.

Pointing at Loretta and Gabriela, she shouted, "Officers, they broke into my home and attacked me. And this vicious woman kicked my son in the groin! I want justice!"

Loretta, hearing that, immediately dropped onto a bench with dramatic flair, clutching her lower back. "Oh, my spine! I'm in agony! Fulton attacked me! If you go after Gabriela, I'll sue you."

Gabriela and Tessa were briefly stunned by Loretta's performance.

In her younger years, Loretta had been infamous in the neighborhood as a truly formidable woman. Anyone who crossed her would be dragged into a public scene at their own doorstep, and by the end of it, they always regretted it.

Years later, when Wesley was orphaned, it was Loretta's fierce protection that kept him safe as he grew up.

In recent years, she had toned herself down. But today, the old Loretta had resurfaced.

Wesley rubbed his temples in exasperation, clearly unable to control her.

Billy stepped in, helping Loretta up gently and soothing her. "Mrs. Larson, please, let's stay calm. Mr. Moss will take care of everything, and Miss Haynes will be fine."

Loretta kept groaning, but Billy continued patiently, "If you keep this up, you'll only make things harder to resolve."

Reluctantly, she straightened.

The moment Loretta quieted down, Raven threw herself onto a bench and announced, "I'm telling you right now, unless I get a million today, I'm not moving."

Wesley ignored her and walked over to Gabriela.

Gabriela's arm ached badly, and as Wesley approached, her heart sped up. She stammered, "Mr. Moss, I was just worried..."

"Come with me," Wesley interrupted, leading Gabriela and the others away and leaving Billy to contain the chaos.

Raven tried to block them, but a group of tall bodyguards and sharply dressed lawyers walked in.

At the front, Benedict Sanchez spoke politely. “Mrs. Raven Ortiz. Mr. Fulton Ortiz. I am the attorney representing Miss Gabriela Haynes. I will be handling all further proceedings.”

Chapter 410

Only then did Raven realize she had picked a fight with people she could not afford to provoke. She fell silent.

Wesley’s legal team moved quickly and handled everything cleanly.

At the hospital, examinations showed that Tessa had a fractured cheekbone, along with evidence of older injuries. During the investigation, it was revealed that Fulton had been abusing her regularly, usually avoiding her face so others wouldn’t notice.

In the end, Fulton was convicted of domestic violence and sentenced to three months in jail.

Raven, unhappy with the ruling, protested, “My son was hurt too! I won’t accept this!”

The police calmly explained, “Your son was injured, but not seriously. Miss Haynes acted in justified defense of another person. She bears no liability. In addition, her arm was dislocated because of your son’s violence. If you pursue charges and she countersues, your son’s sentence could become more severe.”

Raven snapped, "It was just a fight between my son and his wife. That bitch chose to interfere, so how is that self-defense? Are you being paid off?"

After her long outburst, the police warned her that if she continued disrupting the process, she could be charged with obstructing justice, which carried at least three days in detention. Raven finally went quiet.

Once she left the station, she rushed to the hospital to confront Tessa, hoping to pressure her into backing down and saving Fulton from jail time.

In the hospital room, a nurse was applying medicine to Tessa's swollen face.

Ignoring everyone present, Raven burst out, "Tessa, you pathetic wretch — drop the charges against Fulton now, or you'll regret it."

Tessa's face was so swollen that speaking was painful, and her silence enraged Raven, who was used to controlling her. "What, you can't talk? Fix this and get Fulton home. He's not in good health. Jail is too much for him!"

Tears gathered in Tessa's eyes, but her voice was firm. "I won't do what you're asking."

Stunned by the defiance, Raven lifted her hand to strike her, but a nurse immediately stepped in.

Raven spat, "So you've got an attitude now? It's normal for a husband to discipline his wife, and you're really sending him to prison over that? You've been nothing but bad luck for my son."

Raven's insults kept escalating until the nurse finally cut in. "This is a hospital. Keep your voice down."

"You're just a nurse," Raven snapped. "Stay out of it, or I'll hit you too."

Her hostility pushed the nurse, righteously angry now, to call security. Security arrived and removed Raven from the room.

Gabriela, who had been standing at the doorway feeling uneasy, watched everything unfold.

Tessa gave her a faint smile. "Gabriela."

Gabriela stepped closer, hesitant. "Tessa, I didn't mean to cause all of this."

"I know you wanted to protect me," Tessa said with a tired smile.

After a pause, Gabriela asked quietly, "Tessa, why stay with your husband? He hurts you, he makes you support him, and your mother-in-law is unbearable."

With a pained smile, Tessa answered, "I want to leave, but I can't."