

His kiss 411

Chapter 411

Gabriela tilted her head, puzzled. “Why can’t you just file for divorce?” Given Fulton’s violence, it seemed like more than enough for the court to dissolve the marriage immediately.

Tessa opened her mouth to answer, but her phone lit up and rang.

She tapped the screen, switched it to speaker, and clearly intended for Gabriela to hear.

The moment the call connected, a stern, weathered voice filled the room. “Tessa, what on earth is going on? Raven told me you quarreled with Fulton. How did things escalate all the way to the police?”

Tessa’s expression didn’t change. “Dad, he hit me.”

“I already know,” Coleman Ramsey sighed heavily. “Raven told me everything. But don’t pretend you’re completely innocent either. How could such shabby, low-born relatives suddenly show up at your place to make a scene? Your mother and I have never associated with people that vulgar.”

Standing nearby, Gabriela felt her anger surge all over again.

How could he call them vulgar?

Coleman continued, voice thick with authority. "Fulton's health isn't good, and sometimes he loses his temper. Let's just let this go. Drop the charges and bring him back home soon."

Tessa let out a bitter laugh. "Dad, I have a fractured cheekbone. If I let this go again, what happens the next time he hits me?"

She still remembered the last time — when his beating left her bleeding and caused her miscarriage — and she had still forgiven him. Every time she forgave him, the violence got worse.

If she kept enduring it, she knew one day it would kill her.

Coleman's tone shifted to gentle persuasion. "Every marriage has storms. Raven promised me she'll keep Fulton under control from now on. If you let him go this time, they'll be grateful and they won't make things difficult for you later."

Tears stung Tessa's eyes as she forced herself to speak. "I won't do that. I want a divorce."

"Don't you dare!" Coleman's voice hardened instantly, rising with anger. "A wife's duty lasts a lifetime. You chose to marry into the Ortiz family, and you'll remain one of them until the day you die."

"What do you mean, 'a wife's duty lasts a lifetime'?" Tessa's heart twisted. She had just been humiliated in front of her friend. She had nothing left to protect — not her pride, not her safety — and now even Coleman refused to stand on her side.

Her voice shook, heavy with despair. "Dad, are you only worried that a divorce will make you look bad? Do you even care what I'm going through? I feel trapped in hell with no way out, every single day."

There was a pause before Coleman's tone softened. "Have you ever stopped to think how miserable your life would have been without Fulton? He injured his leg saving you, and now it's permanently lame. You owe him for that."

Tessa's throat tightened. She snapped back, "All these years I've swallowed everything. Every paycheck I earn, I hand to his mother. After long shifts, I still come home to cook, scrub laundry, and handle every chore in the house. I even pay for his sister's expenses. And no matter what I do, they tear me apart like it's never enough."

Tears streamed down her face. "I can't carry this anymore. If I stay in this marriage, it will destroy me."

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Coleman's voice turned cold again, sharp and dismissive. "You really think you're suffering that much? Your mother and grandmother went through hardships a hundred times worse when they were young, and they never abandoned their families. But you? You complain about life instead of enduring it."

Tessa's mouth twisted into a bitter smile, but her eyes were empty.

On the other end of the line, Coleman hissed, "I've said everything I need to say. If you dare go through with this divorce, don't call me your father again."

The call ended with a hard click.

For a moment, Tessa just stared at her phone in a daze. Then the tears finally broke. She collapsed against Gabriela, sobbing until her chest ached and her breathing turned shaky.

“Gabriela, you heard him, didn’t you? The moment I even try to get a divorce, my dad will cut me off. He’ll turn the whole family against me, make everyone believe I’m some ungrateful woman who betrayed him. I’ll have no one. What’s the point of earning all this money every year? No matter how hard I work, it feels like there’s no place for me in this world.”

Tessa’s sobs were so raw that Gabriela felt her own chest tighten. But she didn’t know the full history between Tessa and her father, so she held back from giving advice.

All she could do was place a gentle hand on Tessa’s back and let her cry.

“You have us,” Gabriela murmured softly. “Aubrey, Loretta, Farley — all of them care about you. And if you ever have nowhere to go, come stay with me. I have more than enough space. Stay as long as you want.”

Through her tears, Tessa grabbed her arm. “Gabriela, you’re such a good friend.”

She cried until her strength ran out. Then, finally, she took a shaky breath. She rubbed at her swollen eyes and let out a weak laugh. “Look at me. Falling apart again in front of everyone.”

Gabriela shook her head firmly, refusing to let her say that about herself. Curiosity crept into her voice. “Tessa, how did you end up with Fulton in the first place?”

Tessa was the poised, capable chief secretary of Apex Group — anyone could see she was exceptional. Fulton, by comparison, had neither the character nor the ability to match her.

Why would Coleman fight so hard to keep her tied to him?

Gabriela’s thoughts raced, and she blurted out, “Is your dad hiding some kind of secret that Fulton—”

Tessa immediately shook her head, cutting her off before she could finish.

“My dad is a university professor, Gabriela. He’s a man of principle. He would never do anything underhanded.”

She let out a quiet sigh and continued. “I actually met Fulton in college. He was a year below me.”

With her looks, her background, and her talent, Tessa had drawn plenty of admirers back then.

Fulton confessed his feelings early, but she had her eyes on graduate school and turned him down without hesitation.

Then, one night, everything changed.

She was cornered in a dark alley by a group of thugs and almost assaulted. Fulton suddenly appeared, fought them off, and got her out — but he injured his leg so badly that he was left with a permanent limp.

Coleman, who was respected on campus for his integrity, kept telling her over and over that she owed Fulton for saving her, that she should repay that debt with care and loyalty.

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Little by little, she let Fulton into her life.

By the time she graduated, Fulton staged a grand proposal in front of their classmates. He went down on one knee and asked her to marry him.

By then, the story of Fulton's "heroic sacrifice" had spread through every corner of campus. Students applauded and insisted that a man who had suffered so much for her deserved her lifelong devotion.

Crushed by the weight of expectation, Tessa forced herself to nod and accept.

Gabriela frowned, unease settling in her chest. Something about it all felt wrong.

She finally asked, “Be honest — what are the chances that Fulton just happened to show up at the exact moment those guys cornered you in that alley?”

Tessa’s expression went cold, her voice flat. “What a coincidence, right? I wish I had never met Fulton.”

She thought bitterly that even being assaulted back then might have been easier than the life that followed.

Her mouth twisted into a tired smile. “At first, after the wedding, he treated me okay, and his mother wasn’t too bad either. But then his sister, Sigrid Ortiz, moved back in with her child after her divorce, and suddenly every single expense landed on me.”

Tessa had urged Sigrid to get a job. Sigrid insisted she wanted to work at Apex Group — and demanded that Tessa use her position to get her hired as an executive assistant. Sigrid didn’t even have a high school diploma.

Even so, Tessa swallowed her pride, went to HR, and begged until she managed to get Sigrid a basic clerical position.

Instead of appreciating it, Sigrid twisted it into an insult. She claimed Tessa had humiliated her by not getting her a more important role. She quit after just a few days and then brought chaos back home.

“After that, Fulton only got colder toward me,” Tessa said, her voice unsteady. “Sometimes I think he even regrets hurting his leg for me.”

She had never told anyone all of this before. But with Gabriela sitting there, listening, the walls finally gave way. The tears wouldn't stop until her body gave out and she fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

Gabriela stayed with her until she drifted off, then gently pulled the blanket up around her and slipped out of the hospital room.

In the hallway, Loretta and Miriam approached, both wearing the same tight, worried look.

"How is Tessa?" they asked at the same time.

Gabriela let out a tired sigh. "She's okay now — she's already asleep."

But Tessa's situation was messy. Fulton really had injured his leg protecting her, and with Coleman's threats hanging over her, divorce seemed almost impossible.

As she spoke, her gaze shifted — and there was Wesley, standing a short distance away. The sharp line of his tailored trousers emphasized the long, powerful shape of his legs. His presence pulled attention without trying.

Steadying herself, Gabriela walked over to him and looked up. "Wesley, I owe you for today," she said quietly.

Without him stepping in, she might have been the one lying in a hospital bed in critical condition.

Wesley lowered his eyes to meet hers. His voice was smooth and cool, carrying quiet authority. “There’s no need to thank me. It wasn’t anything at all.”

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Hearing Wesley’s distant tone, Gabriela felt the words she wanted to say die in her throat.

She drew in a slow breath. The memory of what he’d said to her at the café still burned, and her mood sank.

Sensing the tension between them, Loretta stepped in quickly. “It’s my fault this time. If I hadn’t gone to Tessa’s house without asking, she wouldn’t have gotten into that fight with her family.”

Miriam sighed. “It was my fault too.”

The memory of Loretta standing her ground in that living room still amazed her. Watching her, Miriam quietly decided that learning a few of Loretta’s methods might not be a bad idea.

Dealing with the two of them — who apologized quickly and yet never stopped causing trouble — was enough to give Wesley a headache.

He was about to question them further when Raven suddenly marched down the hallway again, dragging her daughter Sigrid behind her. Both women were radiating hostility.

They tried to force their way into the hospital room, but Billy blocked the doorway.

Raven glared at him with open hatred. “Who are you? Why are you guarding Tessa? Are you her lover? I knew that tramp had gotten bold — barely coming home, refusing to hand over her salary. Now it all makes sense.”

Sigrid sneered, her eyes flashing. “How can Tessa be so shameless? She’s cheating on the man who saved her.”

Billy — an executive who spent his days dealing with clean, educated, civilized people — was completely stunned by the level of filth coming out of their mouths. For a moment, he didn’t even know what to say.

“Please watch your words,” he finally managed.

Raven set her hands on her hips and snapped, “You bastard, you deserve a beating for messing around with a married woman!”

Sigrid laughed coldly. “Exactly. You’re just like Tessa — no shame at all.”

Billy, who had never in his life dealt with women this crude, was completely caught off guard.

Seeing him speechless, Raven only grew bolder. She shouted toward the hospital room, “Tessa, get out here! If my son hadn’t saved you back then, he wouldn’t be walking around with a crippled leg. How can you still be ungrateful?”

Sigrid added, “Tessa, my brother saved your life. You should devote yourself to him. And you actually had him jailed just because he hit you? That’s vicious.”

Loretta immediately stepped forward to block them.

But Gabriela, already burning with anger, moved first. She rolled up her sleeves and strode forward.

“Can’t you shut your fucking mouths?” Gabriela snapped.

At the sight of her, Raven’s face twisted. She still remembered how Gabriela had kicked Fulton’s groin and she lunged toward her in rage.

Gabriela pointed straight at Sigrid. “You’re a divorced, middle-aged woman living off your parents. You need to shut up and know your place. Look at yourself — wrinkled, screeching, and useless. You’re pathetic.”

She had wanted to say all of this the first time she went to Tessa's house. Now there was nothing holding her back. Her words were fast, sharp, and merciless. Raven and Sigrid both froze, stunned into silence.

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Off to the side, Wesley let out a quiet laugh.

With just her mouth, Gabriela could shut down even the loudest troublemaker.

Billy, just as shocked, discreetly gave her a thumbs-up.

He was beyond impressed. Gabriela really was extraordinary.

Raven, unable to win the argument, hissed, "This isn't over, Tessa. If you don't drop the charges, I'll show up at your company every single day and make a scene. Let's see how long you can keep that so-called dignity then."

With that, she stormed out of the hospital, dragging Sigrid with her.

After they were gone, Loretta warmly grabbed Gabriela's hands. "You're incredible, Gabriela."

Gabriela quickly shook her head. "I'm not. You're the strong one."

Loretta's affection for her deepened instantly. She almost wished Wesley would marry Gabriela on the spot.

Watching the two of them praise each other, Wesley let out a scornful laugh.

What was so impressive about winning an argument, anyway?

Wesley asked, "Grandma, what were you doing at Tessa's house today?"

Loretta answered earnestly, "Tessa's been leaving her child with Gabriela, and I got curious. I asked her about it, but she wouldn't explain why. She's one of your employees. I just wanted to understand her situation better so I could help."

Miriam added, "Mr. Moss, Tessa is truly pitiful. She needs your help."

Both women were genuinely fond of Tessa's child, and both were worried about her.

Wesley nodded, then turned to Billy. "Reassign Tessa's workload to the other secretaries and give her a month of paid leave. We'll decide what to do next once she's recovered."

Billy nodded immediately. "Understood."

Standing nearby, Gabriela couldn't help thinking that Wesley really was a good boss. He hadn't punished Tessa for her personal situation. He was protecting her.

As if sensing her thoughts, Wesley suddenly turned his head and caught Gabriela watching him.

A faint, satisfied look touched his face, and some of the cold distance in his expression faded.

His gaze dropped to her arm. "How's your injury?"

Gabriela answered quickly, "The doctor treated it. It's not serious."

"And your knee?" he asked.

That injury had come from being thrown onto the mountain road. It didn't really hurt anymore, but she was still moved that he remembered.

A soft warmth spread through her. "It's almost healed. Thank you for asking."

Wesley said, "Try not to go out alone in the future."

Gabriela nodded obediently. "Okay."

"And if you ever run into someone like Fulton again, call the police and let them handle it. Don't fight them yourself. Understand?"

Gabriela nodded again. "I understand."

Loretta and Miriam exchanged a look. It was obvious Wesley cared about Gabriela. They could both sense the possibility there.

"And also..." Wesley started to say more, but held back. Instead, he said to Billy, "Arrange bodyguards to watch the hospital. Make sure those people never bother Tessa or Gabriela again."

"Yes, sir," Billy replied.

Wesley stayed at the hospital for half the day before finally leaving. By the time he returned to his condo, night had already fallen.

A red car was parked out front.

Rebecca was standing beside it, smiling sweetly. "Where have you been, Wesley? I've been waiting for you for two hours."

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Wesley gave Rebecca a cool, detached glance.

Her pulse quickened as she looked up at him. To her, Wesley was the most striking man she had ever met, and she had fallen for him the moment they were introduced. Her feelings for him were real, and she was willing to do whatever it took to win him.

"Wesley, why aren't you saying anything?" she asked softly.

"It's late. You should go home," Wesley replied curtly, turning to unlock his door.

Rebecca felt a flicker of irritation, but she kept her expression gentle and composed. She stepped closer, let her fingers brush his arm, and smiled in a shy, inviting way. "I've been waiting out here for so long. Won't you at least invite me in for some coffee?"

"Miss Howard, please leave now," Wesley said. His gaze flicked briefly to the sleek luxury car parked nearby as he calmly removed her hand from his arm. "A woman like you shouldn't be standing out here alone at night."

With that, he stepped inside and closed the door.

Rebecca stood there, stunned.

She had been so direct, and yet Wesley hadn't reacted at all.

As the door shut, a wave of frustration burned through her. After a moment, she got into her car, her face cold.

The driver asked carefully, "Miss Howard, shall we head home now?"

"Take me to Jasper's place," she snapped.

At Jasper's place, Rebecca threw her bag aside and dropped onto the couch, seething.

Jasper handed her a cup of coffee and frowned. "Who upset you?"

"Jasper, Wesley is seeing another woman! He doesn't care about me at all!" Rebecca pouted, which only amused him.

He ruffled her hair and asked, "Do you want me to teach him a lesson?"

Rebecca answered immediately, "I've already looked into her. Her name is Gabriela Haynes, and she runs a small company. Can you get someone to deal with her for me?"

Jasper let out a tired sigh, mildly annoyed. "You need my help for someone that insignificant?"

"Wesley's protecting her. No one in Okburg would dare touch her," Rebecca insisted, making it clear that only Jasper had the power to do anything.

He nodded slowly. "Wesley's influence is no joke. Nobody lays a hand on someone under his protection."

Rebecca tugged on his arm. "So are you helping me or not?"

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

Rebecca's eyes narrowed in thought.

Jasper usually treated her well, but asking him to attack Gabriela directly might push him too far. Going after Gabriela herself was also risky — if Wesley found out, she would destroy the gentle image she'd been trying to show him.

“Jasper, I know a woman named Fiona Dewitt. She has history with Gabriela and probably hates her. Can you arrange for Fiona to cause her some serious trouble?”

Fiona came from money. She had already lost to Gabriela once and almost certainly held a grudge. She would jump at the chance to make Gabriela’s life miserable.

Jasper studied Rebecca in silence.

His presence alone was intimidating — calm, cold, in total control. In that moment, his expression revealed nothing, but his gaze was sharp enough to freeze anyone.

Rebecca wondered if she’d pushed too far.

Then Jasper’s features softened into a smile. “Alright. I’ll take care of it.”

Relief washed over Rebecca. She lit up and clung to his arm. “Thank you, Jasper. You’re the best.”

That night, Jasper quietly reached out to the Dewitt family and to the representative of GD Fashion Week.

Meanwhile, Tessa, hospitalized with a fractured cheekbone, was told she would need at least a week to recover.

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Gabriela, worried about her son, refused to stay overnight at the hospital and went home.

Her injured arm made it impossible to hold Truett, which almost made him cry.

Loretta teased her with a playful grin. “Gabriela, with you taking care of Truett while Tessa’s away, do you think he’ll start seeing you as his mom?”

Gabriela’s lips twitched.

In truth, she was his real mother.

After three days of rest, Gabriela’s arm had healed enough for her to return to work.

She was upset to learn that the GD Fashion Show proposal had been rejected for the seventh time.

They even warned that if she couldn’t deliver a satisfactory plan soon, they would look for another partner.

Gabriela and Kaleb stayed up through the night revising the proposal. The next day, they went to meet the project lead. The secretary gave them a dismissive eye-roll and said, “Addie’s at the Vista Hotel. Your proposal wasn’t good enough, so she’s talking to other companies.”

When Haynes Group signed with GD, they agreed to strict terms, including a clause allowing GD to move forward with someone else if the proposal quality wasn’t acceptable.

GD couldn’t terminate the contract outright, but they could delay it and hire another company in the meantime.

A delay wouldn’t kill them financially — but it would damage Haynes Group’s reputation. Other companies would start doubting their ability to deliver results.

Determined not to let that happen, Gabriela grabbed the revised proposal and rushed to the Vista Hotel to find Addie.

At that same time, Fiona was sprawled out at home.

“Dad, I’m not going to any business meetings,” she said flatly.

Her father, Hanley Dewitt, let out a sigh. “Why are you avoiding these meetings?”

Fiona scoffed. “We’re rich. You, Grandpa, and my brother run the company. Why do I need to know anything about management?”

Her logic nearly made Hanley lose his temper. “Skip this, and I’ll freeze your card.”

Relying on her grandfather’s favor, Fiona shot back, “Go ahead.”

Hanley knew his daughter’s temperament well. If he pushed too hard, she’d only dig in further.

With no other option, he said evenly, “The business meeting isn’t the important part. I need you for something else.”

Securing the GD contract was not Hanley’s main goal. What he truly wanted was to build a relationship with the Howard family’s young head.

After hearing that, Fiona — still reluctant — asked, “What do you need me to do?”

Hanley explained, “We’re meeting GD’s representative today. Once we close the deal, a rival is going to try to take it from us. When she does, I want you to outshine her.”

Intrigued by the challenge, Fiona agreed and went with her father to the Vista Hotel, where they quickly reached an agreement.

Meanwhile, Gabriela had tracked down Addie's room. She knocked and stepped in just as Addie was saying, "Mr. Dewitt, Ms. Dewitt, I'm looking forward to our partnership."

Fiona, bored by the nonstop business talk and already fighting sleep, still hadn't seen any supposed rival.

Her mood had gotten even worse after thinking she might have spotted Wesley downstairs — with some attractive woman holding his hand. How dare that woman hold his hand.

Fuming and distracted, Fiona just wanted to wrap this meeting up and confirm whether Wesley was really here.

Addie continued, "Mr. Dewitt, please send the contract to our office for legal review."

At that moment, Gabriela rushed in with the revised proposal. "Addie, please, one moment. We've updated the plan to your requirements. Can you review it?"

Addie's expression immediately stiffened.

Fiona's gaze snapped to Gabriela.

Was Gabriela the rival her father had warned her about?

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Fiona struggled to hold back her laughter, a wicked glint in her eyes.

“Gabriela, you’re finally at my mercy. Just wait and see how I handle you,” she thought with a smirk.

Addie turned to Gabriela and said calmly, “Our company was not satisfied with your proposal, and we have decided to postpone our collaboration with Haynes. You should head back for now.”

Ignoring Fiona and everyone else in the room, Gabriela pleaded earnestly, “Please, just a few minutes. I’m begging you to review the revised proposal.”

This project was critical for Haynes Group’s future. A delay could stain the company’s reputation and make it difficult to secure new partners. If Addie couldn’t be convinced, Haynes Group could be in serious trouble.

Addie was growing impatient and was about to dismiss her.

Fiona quickly stepped in. “Addie, she’s here with the revised proposal. Doesn’t she at least deserve another chance?”

Addie looked toward Hanley for his opinion.

When Hanley heard Addie call the newcomer “Miss Haynes,” he realized the expected person had arrived. He said smoothly, “Fiona seems familiar with Miss Haynes. Why don’t we let them handle this privately?”

With a few calm words, Hanley managed to settle Addie, and the two of them stepped out, leaving Fiona and Gabriela alone.

Fiona planted her hands on her hips and stared down Gabriela with smug satisfaction. “I bet you never saw this coming, did you? You’re at my mercy now.”

Gabriela’s mind snapped to clarity. “So you’re the one sabotaging this collaboration?”

Fiona scoffed and rolled her eyes. “Please. I don’t have time for this. You’ve just made too many enemies.”

If not Fiona, then who?

Gabriela kept her voice steady. “What do you want?”

Fiona’s face lit up with spiteful delight. “To humiliate you, obviously.”

Every memory of Gabriela stealing Wesley's attention and ruining things for her only fed Fiona's anger.

Gabriela, not interested in wasting time arguing, turned to leave.

Fiona called out, "If you want Addie to proceed with the project, you'd better do what I say."

Gabriela drew a steady breath.

Her pride didn't matter. The project did.

She turned back and gave Fiona a calm, controlled smile. "What do you want me to do?"

Fiona smirked at Gabriela's change in attitude, her mind already spinning. She had seen someone familiar earlier. She knew Gabriela had feelings for Wesley. Today, she would test whether Wesley felt anything for her in return.

Fiona curled a finger in Gabriela's direction, voice dripping with malice. "Follow me."

She led Gabriela to a private dining room.

At the Vista Hotel, each private room had its own dedicated, high-end attendant. Flashing her wealth, Fiona slipped the attendant a generous tip and had them leave the door cracked open.

Through the slightly open door, they peered inside.

Wesley was seated at the table beside a woman Fiona vaguely recognized but couldn't immediately place.

He wore a perfectly tailored black suit and sat with flawless composure, gaze lowered slightly as he cut into his steak with calm precision. Every movement carried a quiet, polished authority.

Across from him sat Rebecca, just as elegant, delicately dabbing at her lips with a napkin after each bite — the picture of refined grace.

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Gabriela quickly understood. This had to be Rebecca, the new secretary Tessa had mentioned.

She and Wesley looked well-matched.

Gabriela remembered how clumsy she had been eating in front of Wesley and felt a wave of embarrassment.

Her chest tightened and her eyes stung, but she curled her fingers into fists and forced herself to stay composed.

Fiona watched her reaction and sneered. "Hurts, doesn't it? You may have beaten me before, but you'll never cross the gap in background. Look at her — so elegant, so perfect for Wesley. Watching the man you love slip away must feel awful. Just like it did for me when you stole him."

Gabriela's face stayed calm.

That only made Fiona angrier.

"Come on, show some emotion!" Fiona snapped.

Gabriela should have been crying. She should have been desperate. But instead, she was infuriatingly steady, and that denied Fiona the satisfaction she wanted.

Gabriela answered quietly, "If someone like you, with all your money, couldn't keep Wesley, why should I feel defeated?"

Fiona curled her lip. "So now you finally understand your place."

But after a second, the meaning actually hit her.

Couldn't keep Wesley?

Excuse me?

She hadn't even started trying to keep him yet. In all of Okburg, who could possibly compete with her once she did?

Seething, Fiona looked back through the door at Rebecca, who was fussing over her steak like some delicate little princess. And smiling at Wesley, too.

Fiona's blood boiled.

Why did every shameless little woman think she could flirt with Wesley?

Then Rebecca leaned forward and took food from Wesley's plate — casually, intimately. Something even Fiona had never dared.

Who was this woman, touching what was hers?

Her jealousy lit like a fuse. She spun back to Gabriela, eyes blazing.

Startled by the intensity, Gabriela whispered, "What is it?"

Fiona hissed, "Aren't you worried that woman will be in Wesley's bed tonight?"

Gabriela had no response for that.

Done watching Wesley and Rebecca together, she said quietly, "I did what you asked. I came and saw them. Now you'll keep your word, right?"

Fiona hadn't expected that. Gabriela wasn't breaking down over Wesley at all — she was focused on the project.

That only infuriated her more.

Fiona grabbed a glass of red wine, thrust it into Gabriela's hand, and snapped, "If you want the project, throw this in that woman's face."

Gabriela was speechless.

It was exactly the kind of petty stunt Fiona would come up with.

Still, Rebecca was, in a way, her romantic rival.

Would throwing wine on her in front of Wesley be going too far? Would he think she was trash?

Gabriela hesitated.

She was doing everything she could to earn enough money to raise her son on her own. If her company collapsed, how many jobs would she have to work just to survive?

"Alright, Ms. Dewitt. I hope you keep your word," Gabriela said firmly.

"I always keep my promises," Fiona snapped.

Gabriela took the glass of red wine, steadied her breath, and kicked the door open, storming into the room.

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As Gabriela shoved open the door to the private dining room, her gaze swept over the elegant scene.

Soft lavender drapes lined the walls, glowing under warm, muted lighting. In the northeast corner, a polished bookshelf stood beside a decorative sculpture. Nearby, a young violinist played with full concentration, his melody wrapping the room in a quiet, romantic atmosphere.

At the center of the room, an extravagant dining table was set with roses.

Across from Wesley, Rebecca was leaning in, picking cilantro from his plate with a playful smile. “I just learned you don’t eat this stuff,” she said lightly. “From now on, I’ll make sure to remove anything you don’t like. Does that sound good?”

Wesley went still, clearly irritated by the familiarity.

Before he could answer, Gabriela — stung by the intimacy of the moment — strode forward, seized a bottle of red wine, and poured it over Rebecca’s head.

The violinist stopped mid-note.

The room went cold.

Red wine ran through Rebecca’s hair, down her forehead, nose, and chin, soaking into her pristine suit. Scarlet streaks bled across the pale fabric, leaving her looking both ruined and absurd.

It all happened so fast that even Wesley could only stare at Gabriela in disbelief.

After a stunned second, Rebecca screamed, "Are you insane? What is wrong with you?"

Gabriela didn't flinch. She planted her hands on her hips and said evenly, "I'm just following the orders of someone who can't stand you."

Cackling, Fiona strutted in, delighted, drinking in Rebecca's humiliation. "That's right. Gabriela is my assistant today. She does whatever I tell her to do."

Rebecca froze when she saw Fiona. She snatched a napkin and dabbed angrily at her face, snapping, "You idiot. Didn't I tell you to—"

Fiona cut her off, jabbing a finger toward her face and laughing. "Look at you. Without all that makeup, you're average at best. And with that nasty expression, you're flat-out ugly. Who gave you the nerve to flirt with Wesley?"

She spoke about Wesley with such open possessiveness that Rebecca's jaw tightened with rage.

Still not satisfied, Fiona shoved a compact mirror toward her.

Rebecca looked down and froze. Her bangs were soaked and plastered to her forehead, red wine streaked down her face, and her flawless makeup had melted into a smeared mess. She looked humiliated.

Worse, Wesley had seen all of it.

Her face burned with fury. Her composure snapped, and every trace of the elegant, noble lady she tried to present was gone.

“You bitch! Are you insane?” Rebecca screamed at Fiona. “I told you to go after Gabriela, not me! What are you doing?”

Fiona shrugged smugly. “Oh, I did exactly what you asked.”

She had humiliated Gabriela by making her stand there and watch the man she loved dining with another woman. She had then forced Gabriela to throw wine like some street thug, shredding her pride.

Rebecca was speechless. Fiona was such an idiot.

Shaking with anger, Rebecca was already thinking about how to get rid of her.