

His kiss 631

Chapter 631

“Calm down, Roger,” Beverley urged. “To demonstrate our sincere regret, we’re prepared to transfer the Eventide Vale property to the Moss family at our original purchase price.”

The property represented a goldmine waiting to be claimed.

Jasper had secured it for 3.9 billion, watching its value soar past 7 billion in the months since. Once construction transformed it into a luxury resort, profits would cascade beyond 10 billion without question.

Roger’s resistance wavered, his stern expression melting into something resembling hunger.

Beverley pressed her advantage with calculated sincerity. “I’ll orchestrate the engagement’s dissolution myself, ensuring both families emerge with their reputations intact.”

Confronted with such lucrative compensation and the Howard family’s obvious reluctance, Roger recognized the futility of forcing an unwanted union. Coercion would transform valuable allies into dangerous enemies.

His surrender came wrapped in diplomatic acceptance. “We’ll proceed according to your wisdom.”

Their conversation continued in civilized tones, each word layered with unspoken calculations.

Before departing, Beverley said, “Roger, my affection for Wesley remains unchanged. Perhaps future circumstances will still unite our families.”

Roger dismissed her words as empty courtesy, responding with practiced modesty. “My grandson possesses ability, but his temperament leaves much to be desired.”

The moment Beverley disappeared from view, Roger summoned Wesley to deliver the news.

Meanwhile, Beverley immediately set her network in motion.

Within hours, whispers spread through Okburg’s elite circles—Wesley and Rebecca’s engagement was finished.

The announcement detonated like a social bomb.

The Moss and Howard families commanded respect among Okburg’s highest echelons. Their original alliance had sent both families’ stock prices soaring toward unprecedented heights. Now, with this sudden reversal, speculation ran wild. Had some catastrophic betrayal torn the families apart?

Before theories could crystallize into accepted truth, Rebecca’s fury exploded into action.

She stormed through the Haynes Group's entrance like an avenging goddess, Cindy scurrying behind her while a dozen bodyguards formed their protective wall.

Cindy transformed into a snarling attack dog, her authority borrowed but wielded with vicious enthusiasm.

When the receptionist stammered questions about their intentions, Cindy stabbed a finger toward the woman's computer. "Destroy it!"

The machine exploded into electronic fragments within seconds.

Terror froze the young receptionist's protests in her throat. Recognizing the futility of resistance, she retreated to summon police protection.

Having demolished the front desk, Rebecca led her army deeper into the company's heart.

Confidence in her family's protective shadow made her reckless. Her gaze swept the office space with arctic coldness before she issued her decree. "Obliterate everything you see!"

Two minutes transformed Gabriela's carefully built empire into a war zone.

Alerted by the chaos, Gabriela burst from her office. “Rebecca, are you out of your mind?”

Rebecca closed the distance between them and delivered a vicious slap across Gabriela’s cheek.

The sound cracked through the air like a whip, sharp and deliberate. Rebecca’s manicured nails had been honed into weapons.

Caught completely defenseless, Gabriela felt fire bloom across her skin as those talons carved trenches through her flesh.

Crimson blood welled against her porcelain complexion, creating a sight that stole the breath from every witness.

Chapter 632

Scratches marred Gabriela’s beautiful face, and Rebecca’s eyes gleamed with dark satisfaction.

She extended her hand toward Gabriela, her apology dripping with false sweetness. “Oh, I’m terribly sorry. I only intended to slap you—I had no idea my new nails would slice your skin open.”

Kaleb jolted from his shock and rushed forward with a tissue to stem Gabriela’s bleeding.

“Uncle Kaleb, I’m fine,” Gabriela murmured, waving him away while fixing Rebecca with an icy stare.

Rebecca met her gaze with poisonous intensity.

The air crackled with tension, violence hanging by a thread.

Wesley remained oblivious to Rebecca's vengeful mission against Gabriela.

After concluding his discussion with Roger, he strode purposefully toward his waiting car.

Billy snapped the door open with practiced efficiency. The moment Wesley slid into his seat, tension sharpened his voice. "The Haynes Group. Now."

Rebecca's twisted nature had always simmered beneath the surface. Previously, their engagement had restrained her from unleashing her full cruelty on Gabriela.

But today changed everything—Beverley had suddenly proposed ending their betrothal.

Rebecca would unleash hell on Gabriela now.

Wesley's mind recoiled from the possibilities as he frantically dialed Gabriela's number. Ring after ring went unanswered.

Dread coiled in his chest. "Drive faster!"

Billy slammed the accelerator to the floor.

Stewart arrived at the Haynes Group before Wesley.

He clutched a pristine bouquet, his custom-tailored suit lending him an air of polished elegance.

But at the reception desk, he discovered the young receptionist trembling with terror.

Stewart's expression transformed instantly. He abandoned the flowers without a glance and charged inside.

He burst through the doors just as Rebecca's hand connected with Gabriela's cheek, drawing blood.

Rebecca offered hollow apologies while raising her hand for another strike.

"Gabriela, do you see this ring glittering on my finger? Wesley placed it there himself. Today, I'll use it to carve a lesson into your skin!"

Stewart's chest constricted as he prepared to intervene.

But Gabriela moved like lightning, seizing Rebecca's wrist and locking eyes with her. "What demon has possessed you?"

"You bitch, stealing what belongs to me. Now he's shattered our engagement because of you." Rebecca's eyes burned with toxic resentment. "And you dare resist me?"

Wesley had broken their engagement?

Gabriela froze for a moment before steel returned to her spine. "Wesley ended things between you two, so settle your grievances with him. Why terrorize my company?"

"Because I came here to destroy you." Rebecca's voice dripped jealousy as she struggled against Gabriela's grip. "I want to see if Wesley will still shield you after I turn your face into a ruin!"

When she couldn't break free, Rebecca whirled toward her bodyguards. "Don't just stand there! Demolish everything in Gabriela's office. Leave nothing but wreckage."

Gabriela's eyes erupted with volcanic fury as she seized Rebecca's hair in her fist. "You wouldn't dare!"

Her mother's precious mementos filled that office. Anyone who threatened those sacred belongings would taste her wrath.

Rebecca shrieked as her hair was yanked, tears streaming down her face, all pretense of elegance abandoned. "You wretch, you dare defy me! You've inherited your mother's shamelessness."

Cindy's shrill voice joined the chaos. "Everyone, destroy this bitch! Tear her clothes off! She has dared to bewitch Rebecca's man, and for that, she must pay."

The employees locked eyes with each other. Witnessing the bodyguards advancing to strip Gabriela, they surged forward as one, overwhelming the hired muscle.

These workers had weathered the company's darkest hours together, forging unbreakable bonds.

Though they lacked the bodyguards' raw power, they moved in coordinated teams, neutralizing the threat through sheer numbers and determination.

The overwhelmed bodyguards found themselves helpless.

Rebecca discovered no salvation as Gabriela's fingers remained tangled in her hair, her fury blazing at being dominated by someone she considered beneath her.

Rebecca glared up at Gabriela with murderous intent. “I’ll count to three—release me, or face complete annihilation!”

Gabriela’s grip never wavered. Her palm cracked against Rebecca’s cheek.

“I confess my feelings for Wesley, but I never seduced him. This war belongs to the three of us—why insult my mother? She’s been dead for years. If you dare disrespect her again, I will drag us both to hell.”

With each word, Gabriela’s fingers twisted deeper into Rebecca’s hair.

Rebecca felt strands ripping from her scalp, her hatred metastasizing. She clawed desperately at Gabriela’s collar.

Summer’s heat meant everyone dressed in light fabrics. Gabriela’s collar buttons scattered as they tore away, nearly exposing her chest.

Rage consumed Gabriela as her hand struck Rebecca again. “Rebecca, you parade around as nobility, yet you resort to gutter tactics. You’re absolutely revolting!”

Even if Gabriela felt nothing for Wesley, she knew Rebecca was utterly unworthy of him.

Rebecca had never endured such humiliation. Her composure shattered completely.

The two women descended into savage combat.

Rebecca, pampered by luxury her entire life, proved no match for Gabriela's fierce determination. Within minutes, Gabriela had her pinned helplessly to the cold floor.

Stewart froze on the sidelines, his pulse thundering as he absorbed the scene before him.

Gabriela's raw ferocity captivated him, sending his heart into a wild rhythm once more.

Gabriela maintained her iron grip on Rebecca's hair, her foot planted firmly against her back, rendering her completely immobile. "Apologize to my mother!"

"In your dreams!" Rebecca's shattered dignity left her desperate as she screamed to Cindy, "Tear her off me!"

Cindy lunged forward.

Gabriela's gaze snapped upward. "I dare you."

Blood still trickled down her face, but her eyes blazed like twin blades, sending tremors through Cindy's legs.

Cindy recalled Gabriela's fierce supporters, terror freezing her in place as she swallowed her courage.

Police sirens suddenly wailed outside, squad cars screeching to violent stops below.

Stewart reacted with lightning reflexes, yanking Gabriela back and breathing urgently into her ear, "Control yourself—you're the victim here."

With law enforcement present, personal vengeance became unnecessary.

Though stubborn by nature, Gabriela possessed sound judgment. She released Rebecca immediately.

Blinded by murderous rage, Rebecca seized a wooden rod and swung it toward Gabriela's skull.

The officers burst through the entrance, instantly tackling Rebecca and slamming her against the floor.

Rebecca had never endured such devastating humiliation.

Once Rebecca and her bodyguards were secured in custody, Stewart turned his worried attention to Gabriela's bloodied features.

He noticed her torn collar and caught a fleeting glimpse of exposed skin before quickly averting his gaze and wrapping his jacket around her shoulders.

"Thank you," Gabriela murmured.

When Wesley reached the Lakeshore Building, police vehicles were vanishing around the distant corner, transporting everyone to the station for official statements.

Anxiety clawed at his chest. "What happened here?"

Billy rushed to question the gathered spectators.

One witness volunteered, "Two women tore each other apart inside. Gabriela Haynes, the CEO of Haynes Group, suffered a scratched face, blood streaming from the wound. A terrifying sight."

Gabriela was wounded?

Wesley's fingertips turned to ice, his chest constricting.

He turned to Billy. “The police station! Now!”

Billy helped Wesley into the vehicle before spinning the car around.

Wesley’s desperate voice pushed Billy relentlessly. “Faster!”

Billy caught sight of Wesley’s ashen complexion, alarm spreading through him. “Mr. Moss, you look deathly pale. Should I rush you to the hospital instead? I’ve already contacted Benedict about Gabriela...”

Before Billy could complete his sentence, Wesley—consumed by overwhelming rage and terror—suddenly expelled a torrent of blood.

Billy slammed the brakes in horror, discovering Wesley had collapsed into unconsciousness.

Panic seized him as he raced Wesley toward the nearest emergency room.

Chapter 634

All participants in today’s altercation faced police questioning. Gabriela recounted the events with measured precision. After the officers grasped the situation, they examined her facial injuries with genuine sympathy and guided her aside for medical attention.

Rebecca, accustomed to commanding every situation, bristled with defiance. She refused to answer questions and demanded her lawyer's presence.

Lauren and Matthew arrived first, followed shortly by Jasper and Beverley.

The sight of her assembled family members—including her formidable grandmother—filled Rebecca with renewed confidence.

She dissolved into theatrical tears, transforming into a picture of wounded vulnerability. "Dad, Mom, Grandma, Jasper, thank goodness you're here," she sobbed, addressing each before turning desperate eyes to Lauren. "Mom, look what Gabriela has done to me!"

Lauren's heart shattered as fury blazed in her eyes toward Gabriela. "How dare you assault my daughter!"

Gabriela continued treating her facial wounds with steady hands.

Stewart stepped forward quickly. "Mrs. Howard, Rebecca initiated the attack at Gabriela's company. Look—Gabriela's injuries are far more severe. She's still bleeding."

Matthew rushed to examine Gabriela's face, his expression darkening with concern. The long, bloody scratch made him fear permanent scarring.

Distress overwhelmed him as helplessness consumed his thoughts.

Jasper found himself unable to look away from Gabriela.

That face, which embodied his perfect vision of beauty, now bore a vicious scratch that created an almost ethereal, wounded magnificence.

His pulse quickened before he forced his gaze elsewhere.

Beverley's weathered features hardened with displeasure.

She had orchestrated the engagement's dissolution herself.

Rebecca had acted without seeking explanations, pursuing Gabriela and directing bodyguards to destroy her company. Such reckless brutality was completely unacceptable.

Beverley prepared to smooth things over, but Lauren's voice cut through with disdain. "A wild, unrefined creature complaining about trivial injuries?"

In Lauren's eyes, her daughter possessed true breeding—something a nobody like Gabriela could never match.

The words struck Matthew like physical blows, and he fixed Lauren with eyes burning red with rage.

Lauren knew Gabriela's real identity, and his stare shook her composure. Her resentment deepened, making her words increasingly vicious. "Gabriela, summon your parents here. I want to witness what kind of crude people could raise someone as despicable as you."

Gabriela straightened her spine, her gaze turning arctic. "I'll handle this alone. My family doesn't need involvement."

Rebecca stood surrounded by her protective clan while Gabriela remained isolated.

Pity surged through Stewart as he positioned himself beside her. "Mrs. Howard, the evidence is clear. Rebecca initiated the conflict. Gabriela simply protected herself."

"Protected herself?" Lauren's hand struck without warning, slapping Gabriela across the face and deliberately targeting her existing wound.

Gabriela couldn't evade the blow, and fresh blood began flowing again.

The recording officer rushed forward, blocking Lauren's path. "Hey! This is a police station—control yourself!"

Lauren, shaped by a lifetime of wealth and influence, refused to endure further waiting for official judgment.

Her voice turned icy. "I've struck her. Money should be sufficient to settle the matter. Now I want my daughter released on bail."

Chapter 635

Despite Rebecca's brazen misconduct, her family offered no criticism—they simply paid her freedom's price.

Rebecca's triumph intensified as she cast Gabriela a contemptuous parting glance. "I'm warning you—stay away from Wesley!"

Outside the police station, Lauren immediately began interrogating Rebecca, convinced her daughter had suffered injustice.

Beverley's frown deepened as she entered the car and instructed the driver to head toward her place.

Upon arriving home, Beverley issued a cold command for Rebecca to reflect on her behavior in her room.

Rebecca's face remained swollen, and her heart plummeted at the order. Tears gathered as she asked in a fragile whisper, "Grandma, why?"

“I proposed ending the engagement,” Beverley declared, each word deliberate and final. “This situation had nothing to do with Gabriela, yet you brought bodyguards to attack her. Do you demonstrate any trace of refinement? Gabriela was wrong to strike you, and I’ll ensure she faces consequences.”

Though Beverley harbored no hatred toward Gabriela for Matthew’s sake, she naturally favored Rebecca—her legitimate granddaughter raised under her own guidance.

Gabriela hadn’t received formal recognition from the Howard family, yet she dared assault her sister. If she gained acceptance into their household, wouldn’t she just cause more trouble?

Regarding Rebecca, Beverley felt profound disappointment rather than anger.

“Examine yourself now—disheveled and disgraced. All this destruction for one man? How could you act so thoughtlessly? What happened to the manners and cultivation you’ve learned through the years? Have you abandoned all dignity?”

Earlier at the police station, Beverley had maintained public silence.

She valued family honor above all else, believing private matters should remain behind closed doors to prevent public humiliation.

Now, within their home’s sanctuary, her expression became terrifying in its severity.

Rebecca had always lived in fear of her grandmother's authority. Seeing that frightening countenance, she dared not speak and walked toward her room, feeling both wronged and defeated.

Watching her granddaughter's retreating form, Beverley released a silent sigh.

Lauren's anger finally erupted beyond restraint. "Beverley, what gave you the right to dissolve Rebecca's engagement without consultation?"

"If I hadn't intervened, would you want her to suffer your fate?" Beverley's gaze pierced Lauren with arctic precision, her words cutting without mercy. "I won't revisit your family's manipulations during the Hopolis project years ago. After all, you've shared Matthew's bed for over thirty years. Rehashing ancient history serves no purpose. But look what you've molded Rebecca into! Wesley despises her, yet you conspired with Roger to coerce him. Do you want Rebecca walking your path? Do you really think she'll find happiness with Wesley?"

Lauren recoiled, stunned that the old woman possessed knowledge of those buried secrets.

She ducked her head in shame, not daring to challenge the accusation. Yet malice flickered behind her lowered lashes. This interfering crone, practically dancing on death's threshold, still presumed to meddle in everyone's affairs!

Jasper maintained his position in silence, neither saying anything to stoke the fire nor playing the peacemaker. Rebecca and her family's implosion served his ambitions perfectly.

Chapter 636

Lauren departed Beverley's residence only to discover Matthew's absence from their group.

She dialed him immediately. "Where have you disappeared to? Our daughter endures such trauma, and you abandon her without comfort. Where have you slithered off to?"

Matthew's voice carried deadly calm through the phone. "I remain at the station."

Lauren's eyes blazed with infinite resentment. "What possible business keeps you there?"

His tone stayed emotionless as granite. "Rebecca created this disaster, and I'm cleaning up her wreckage."

Lauren swallowed her rage, forcing sweetness into her voice. "Our attorney should handle such matters. You needn't involve yourself directly."

"I'll return shortly."

With that, Matthew severed the connection and approached Gabriela.

Due to the altercation's severity, Gabriela and her company's staff remained trapped, awaiting their lawyer's arrival for bail proceedings.

Stewart whispered reassurance, "Don't worry—I've already summoned our attorney."

Gabriela responded with genuine warmth, "Thank you, Stewart."

Matthew opened his mouth, preparing to offer his own legal assistance.

However, before words could form, Benedict materialized carrying a leather document case.

Gabriela recognized him instantly, surprise coloring her features. "Benedict? What brings you here?"

Benedict's explanation radiated professional warmth. "Billy dispatched me. I've examined the situation comprehensively. Rest assured, I'll fight to ensure the Haynes Group receives full compensation for damages!"

After absorbing Benedict's promises, Gabriela hesitated before asking, "Benedict, regarding Mr. Moss..."

Benedict smiled with practiced ease. "Mr. Moss faces overwhelming demands and cannot visit personally. He instructed me to secure everyone's release immediately."

Benedict processed the bail payments, and the group emerged from the station's confines.

Gabriela addressed her employees with warmth. "Don't torment yourselves with worry. Return home and rest for several days. Once we resolve these complications, you'll resume normal operations."

After the staff scattered, Gabriela expressed gratitude to Benedict once more.

He waved his hand and hurried back to deliver his report.

Matthew lingered throughout the entire exchange.

Gabriela finally acknowledged his persistent presence.

Since Matthew had never created obstacles for her, Gabriela attempted measured civility. "Mr. Howard, you should return home. Rebecca and I will resolve our conflict through legal channels."

Witnessing the hate flickering in her eyes, Matthew experienced a knife-twist of pain in his chest. "Gabriela, your injuries..."

"Your concern isn't necessary, Mr. Howard. I'm leaving now."

Gabriela pivoted and slipped into a waiting vehicle parked along the curb.

Stewart drove her home, his mood darkening throughout the journey.

Gabriela observed his dejected demeanor and attributed it to exhaustion. With heartfelt appreciation, she said, “Stewart, thank you for today’s support. The hour grows late—perhaps you should head home.”

“I accomplished nothing meaningful.” Stewart’s voice carried profound disappointment. “At least allow me to complete the task of delivering you safely.”

The Williams Group’s attorney arrived mere moments after Benedict’s departure.

Once again, Wesley had claimed the victory.

No matter what Stewart did, he could never impress Gabriela; Wesley always beat him to it.

A curse escaped Stewart’s lips as frustration surged inside him. He had known Gabriela before Wesley!

Thanks to Benedict's remarkable expertise, the vandalism case at Gabriela's company was swiftly settled.

The Howard family agreed to pay the Haynes Group a staggering three hundred million dollars in damages. Gabriela was floored by the massive sum, having pegged the losses at under a million.

Three hundred million in reparations...

Benedict had boldly demanded such an amount!

"The Howard family was generous," Benedict noted.

Despite his vast experience in legal disputes, he had never seen an opponent so ready to part with cash.

Thinking back on Matthew's odd behavior, Benedict found it perplexing.

He had only itemized the damaged items without naming a figure when Matthew offered to cover the emotional toll and fear experienced by the Haynes Group staff, not to mention the critical data lost on computers and the potential business fallout.

Most crucially, Gabriela's facial injury warranted substantial compensation, as appearance was vital for a young woman.

Benedict had initially aimed for a ten-million settlement, but after reviewing the damage list, Matthew asked, "Mr. Sanchez, would three hundred million suffice?"

Even the typically composed Benedict couldn't help but widen his eyes.

Did these tycoons see three hundred million as pocket change?

After briefing Gabriela, Benedict asked curiously, "Miss Haynes, are you and Mr. Howard close?"

Matthew's eagerness to compensate, despite Lauren's furious expression beside him, was a bit strange.

Gabriela shook her head. "I just had him over for a casual dinner once."

Benedict then changed the topic and advised, "You should consider hiring skilled security for the company for a while."

Gabriela nodded gratefully.

After wrapping up, Benedict visited Wesley at the hospital to share the outcome.

Since regaining consciousness, Wesley was restless to leave, but despite appearing fine, doctors insisted on further care.

Propped against his pillow, his mood was sour.

Billy, stunned by Benedict's report, recalled rumors that Matthew had been bewitched by Gabriela.

Could that be the reason behind Matthew's surprising generosity on the compensation?

Noticing Wesley's grim look, Billy kept quiet.

Wesley, visibly irritated, asked, "Is there any progress on the investigation into Matthew?"

Billy admitted sheepishly, "Nothing yet."

Few people were aware of Matthew and Alanna's involvement two decades ago.

Although Matthew had sought a divorce to be with Alanna, his efforts collapsed within a matter of days, and the details of the incident were concealed from the public.

That was why Billy's investigation had hit a dead end, finding no link between Matthew and Gabriela.

"Keep investigating," Wesley ordered.

"Yes, sir." Billy nodded.

Gabriela's company soon returned to normal.

The hefty compensation funded generous employee bonuses, erasing any lingering fears from the incident—some even jokingly hoped for another.

At 4:30 p.m., Stewart arrived at the Haynes Group with vibrant red roses.

Having seen him stand up for Gabriela, the receptionist now welcomed him warmly and granted him immediate entry.

In her office, Gabriela was reviewing the approved proposal for their cooperation with GD Fashion on next month's major fashion show.

It was the company's first major fashion show project, and she meticulously checked for any missing details.

Raising her eyes, she noticed Stewart walking in with a vibrant bouquet.

"Stewart, must you bring flowers every time?" she sighed.

Lately, his visits always included extravagant blooms, and the entire Lakeshore Building was abuzz with news of the Williams heir passionately pursuing Gabriela.

Chapter 638

Stewart's smile was warm yet captivatingly charming. "Gabriela, your brilliance calls for these flowers."

Gabriela found herself speechless, wondering if he was toying with her through these floral gestures.

Her mind wandered to Wesley, who used to tease her constantly, even joking about slashing her pay.

Seeing her frown, Stewart feared he had crossed a line. "Don't be upset. I was only teasing."

"I'm not upset, just lost in thought," Gabriela replied, pulling herself back.

Why did Wesley still haunt her thoughts? She knew he no longer liked her.

Glancing at the wall clock, she smiled. "It's nearly closing time. Let me treat you to dinner."

Stewart had been a lifeline during the company's recent turmoil, and she felt it was right to repay him with a meal.

Overjoyed, Stewart handed her the flowers and gently pulled her up. "Turn off your computer now. I'm starving!"

Holding the bouquet, Gabriela met his beaming smile, yet a strange void stirred within her.

Stewart was an excellent person—handsome, wealthy, and with a better temper than Wesley.

Without Truett in the picture, she might have seriously considered him.

Gabriela took him to Seasons Restaurant for dinner.

While the eatery wasn't luxurious, it boasted a delightful menu. Stewart chose Gabriela's favorite dishes and even requested a bottle of fruit wine.

Throughout the meal, he tended to her with unwavering focus. Each time she spoke, he paused, gazing at her with rapt attention.

Such devotion unsettled Gabriela, who felt uneasy under his intense regard.

Unable to return his affection, yet accepting his kindness, she wondered if her detachment made her cold-hearted.

After the meal, they strolled to the parking area.

“Gabriela!”

A chilling shout cut through the night.

In the dimly lit parking lot, a figure clad in dark attire lunged at them, brandishing a blade.

Gabriela instantly identified the assailant.

It was Dustin! A fugitive who had evaded capture for six months, now boldly confronting them.

Reflexively, she dodged, but Dustin pursued her with relentless intent.

“Look out!” Seeing the knife arc toward Gabriela, Stewart shoved her out of harm’s way without a second thought. The blade slashed his arm, the sickening sound of metal cutting flesh reverberating in the stillness, chilling to the core.

Gabriela’s eyes widened in horror.

Infuriated by Stewart’s intervention, Dustin aimed the knife at his chest.

Without hesitation, Gabriela kicked off her stiletto and charged.

The pointed heel struck Dustin’s skull, drawing blood.

Reeling from pain, he staggered, unprepared for her strike. Fearing further resistance, he clutched his bleeding head and fled in panic.

As adrenaline faded, Stewart collapsed, gripping his wounded arm.

Gabriela discarded her shoe and rushed to his side. “Are you alright?”

His ashen face and silence alarmed her, prompting a frantic call to emergency services.

Stewart's injuries were grave—his arm bore a deep gash, exposing bone, necessitating over fifty sutures.

The doctor eventually spoke. "While not fatal, the wound is severe. A slightly deeper cut could have permanently disabled Mr. Williams' arm."

The doctor advised a minimum of a month-long hospital stay. "For the first week, arrange two caregivers for round-the-clock attention, ensuring no water touches the wound."

"Got it. Thank you, doctor."

Wracked with guilt, Gabriela remained at the hospital, personally tending to Stewart's needs.

Chapter 639

Stewart's injury remained hidden, known only to a select few.

The Howard family received the news first.

Lauren listened to her assistant's report and narrowed her eyes into cold slits.

“Interfering fool,” she muttered, her expression blank.

Grace and gentleness usually defined Lauren’s demeanor. Now, however, her gaze carried a chilling threat that could freeze blood in one’s veins.

The assistant lowered his head immediately, not daring to meet her eyes.

Lauren issued her commands with sharp precision. “Locate Dustin and pay him well. Arrange a passport for his departure from the country.”

A criminal like him would accept any job if the price proved tempting enough—even the most perilous tasks wouldn’t make him hesitate.

The assistant left to execute her orders.

At Okburg Hospital, Gabriela followed the doctor’s recommendations and hired two experienced caregivers who alternated shifts, watching over Stewart every hour of every day.

She rushed to the hospital whenever her schedule allowed.

Stewart embraced his role as an indulged patient, grumbling about the bland hospital meals. Gabriela responded by preparing porridge for him.

“Gabriela, I took a blade saving your life, and you only serve me this slop?” Stewart complained with theatrical dismay.

Gabriela explained with endless patience, “The doctor insists you eat only light foods for the first week. Once your wound begins healing properly, I’ll prepare something with real flavor.”

She spoke while lifting the thermal container’s lid to serve him the warm porridge.

Her long lashes cast delicate shadows as her gentle gaze focused downward—a sight that could capture any man’s attention.

Stewart found himself mesmerized by her beauty. When she extended the bowl toward him, he feigned complete helplessness. “Gabriela, my right hand is useless. I can’t grip anything.”

Gabriela nodded, then fed him carefully, spoonful after spoonful.

The terrifying events of that day remained vivid in her memory, and gratitude flooded her heart for Stewart’s selfless sacrifice—taking a knife meant for her.

In that moment, she felt prepared to grant any request he made, especially something as simple as helping him eat.

Stewart basked in pure contentment.

After the meal concluded and Gabriela had cleaned up and departed, Erik entered the room.

“Mr. Williams, are you certain you want to keep your family uninformed?” he asked, worried about the injury’s severity and the challenges of maintaining such secrecy.

“Not a single word,” Stewart replied with lazy satisfaction, settling back against his hospital pillows. “If they arrive, Gabriela will lose her courage to visit.”

He savored every moment of Gabriela’s devoted attention.

When he reflected on that dangerous day, Stewart experienced genuine regret about his missed opportunities. “I should have pulled Gabriela into my arms. Seeing me wounded yet still gazing at her with pure devotion, she would have been overwhelmed with emotion.”

She would have been willing to be his girlfriend.

Erik remained silent. Had the knife wound somehow damaged Stewart’s brain?

Chapter 640

He couldn't resist mocking his boss. "Mr. Williams, if you had swept Gabriela into your arms, you might have damaged your spine instead. Lying face-down on a hospital bed hardly creates a romantic image."

Stewart recognized the wisdom in this observation and immediately abandoned his regrets about that day's tactical choices.

He added firmly, "Remember—if my family starts asking questions, you must find ways to deflect them."

If his relatives appeared, Gabriela would definitely stop coming to the hospital.

Erik nodded quickly.

Stewart occupied a room in the same hospital where Wesley was recovering.

As Billy exited the main building, he encountered Erik and expressed his concern through questions.

Erik seized this perfect opportunity and embellished the story dramatically. "The danger was extraordinary. If Mr. Williams hadn't shielded Gabriela with his own body, she might have perished."

Billy's heart plummeted.

Dustin? That dangerous man had vanished from sight for months, yet he still prowled through Okburg's streets?

Billy chose not to burden Wesley with this information and immediately dispatched investigators to track Dustin's current location.

Still, Wesley discovered Stewart's hospitalization the following day.

Billy had stepped away from the room while a nurse escorted Wesley for scheduled tests. During this routine trip, Wesley spotted Stewart unexpectedly.

Stewart sat in a wheelchair while Gabriela pushed him from behind with gentle care.

Whatever words he spoke, Gabriela leaned forward to listen with patient attention.

The intimacy of the scene sent a jolt of irritation through Wesley.

When had Gabriela grown so close to Stewart?

Wesley observed this display with rising displeasure, his brow creasing with unmistakable anger.

The nurse watched his expression with nervous caution.

Wesley had spent days in the hospital, showing little interest in anything around him. This sudden shift to a menacing demeanor caught her completely off guard. Following the direction of his stare, she whispered helpfully, "That patient stays in Room 609."

The room occupied the same floor as Wesley's—both men had secured the hospital's most luxurious VIP accommodations.

These two patients commanded significant attention, and hospital gossip traveled quickly, so the nurse knew their identities well.

But she remained unaware of their personal conflicts.

Wesley asked in a voice barely above a whisper, "What caused his injury?"

"I can't say for certain," the nurse responded softly. She bore no responsibility for Stewart's medical care. "I heard he was hurt protecting a young woman—the very one who's pushing his wheelchair now. She demonstrates remarkable dedication, preparing meals in her own kitchen and bringing them to the hospital daily, tending to his every need. His arm sustained the injury, though I'm uncertain why he requires the wheelchair. Still, she never shows the slightest impatience with his demands."

The nurse murmured with quiet admiration, "Truthfully, if a handsome man like Mr. Williams had been wounded protecting me, I would gladly remain at his side every hour of every day."

Despite her whispered words, Wesley's acute hearing captured every syllable, and his expression turned as cold and unforgiving as winter ice.