

His kiss 711

Chapter 711

That trace of sorrow softened Gabriela's heart. There was no way she could turn her down.

Instead, she spoke with quiet warmth. "You've been on a plane all day. Go home, rest, have a good meal. We'll sort everything else out later."

"Alright!" With that, Myah finally let the matter drop.

With a hesitant breath, Gabriela lifted her eyes to Wesley and softly called his name.

His gaze flicked over to her, steady and unreadable.

A faint unease crept over her, as if his look conveyed quiet reproach—though maybe it was nothing more than her own imagination.

He gave only a slight nod, then shifted his attention elsewhere, deliberately avoiding her eyes.

The chill that ran through her spine left her unsettled, unsure of how to bridge the distance.

Two years apart had etched something unfamiliar into Wesley—or perhaps not. He hadn’t changed at all.

The man before her was exactly as she had first known him: remote, cool, and impossible to reach.

Maybe it was the long absence that sharpened the gap between them.

All through the journey, Gabriela’s heart couldn’t settle, an undercurrent of unease lingering around her the whole way.

Myah, oblivious to Gabriela’s quiet heaviness, nestled in the back seat and held on to her arm as she chattered nonstop. From the moment she could see again, she had grown more full of new energy, her clear eyes frequently lingering on Gabriela with bright curiosity.

“Gabriela, when I first went to Athea, I couldn’t understand a word the doctors or nurses said. It was Stewart who thankfully found two women who spoke English to care for me. Later I discovered Wesley was there too, so I often visited him. That made things a lot less frightening.”

The cheer in Myah’s voice only deepened the quiet sorrow that welled inside Gabriela.

If Allan were still here, knowing Myah could see the world again and had become so spirited, he would have been elated.

Gabriela curved her lips into a gentle smile and squeezed Myah's shoulder. "Your eyes look so lovely, Myah."

A faint blush touched Myah's cheeks, and she lowered her voice shyly. "Thank you. And you look absolutely stunning."

Seated in the front, Wesley listened in silence to the chatter behind him. The constant mention of Allan pressed against his patience, pulling his lips into a faint scowl.

By the time the car rolled up to the villa, the atmosphere in the back was still light.

Gabriela and Myah stepped out together, each gathering their luggage, while Wesley remained inside, unmoving.

Turning back with a radiant smile, Gabriela called softly, "Wesley, come on out."

He didn't budge, his reply clipped and cool. "I'm heading back to the estate."

Her steps faltered for a breath before she gave a small nod, masking her disappointment. "Alright. I'll message you later, then."

No one at the estate, not even Loretta, knew of Wesley's return. Heading to the estate before anywhere else made perfect sense.

Without another word, Wesley's expression stayed unreadable as he signaled the driver to pull away.

Chapter 712

Inside the villa, Myah followed Gabriela in, offering polite greetings to Farley and Ken with a bright smile.

The two elderly men, already aware of her treatment, beamed with delight. "So you can see now, Myah? That's truly wonderful. We'll cook a fine meal to celebrate."

"Thank you," Myah replied softly.

With quiet purpose, Gabriela headed up to set up a guest room, believing it was best for Myah to remain under the villa's roof.

For once, Myah didn't object. Her cheeks turned rosy as she murmured with a shy nod, "Alright, I'll stay here with you."

Gabriela gave her an encouraging smile. "Then take a little rest. I'll let you know when dinner's ready."

Once she made her way downstairs, Gabriela was quietly pulled aside by Farley, who whispered, "Didn't Mr. Moss come back as well? Why don't I see him?"

“He went to the estate first to visit Loretta,” Gabriela explained softly.

Just then, Truett burst into view, latching onto one of her fingers and chirping in a clear, childish voice, “Mommy!”

At three years old, he was already at the age of tearing through the house like a whirlwind, leaving poor Farley exhausted from chasing him day after day.

Gabriela scooped him up with a laugh, tweaking his little nose. “Truett, are you feeling hungry?”

With both hands on his round belly, Truett gave a vigorous nod of agreement. “I’m waiting for Ken to cook.”

Slipping free of her embrace, he grabbed a bowl almost too big for his hands, carried it to the dining table, and sat there with exaggerated patience, like a diner awaiting a grand feast.

The sight tugged at Gabriela’s heart, filling her chest with warmth. She couldn’t resist pulling out her phone and dialing Wesley’s number.

The call rang on and on until it went silent, unanswered.

She told herself he was likely still catching up with Loretta.

Fingers brushing over the ring on her hand, Gabriela whispered silent reassurances. Wesley loved her deeply. Whatever storms came, that one truth would never change.

Meanwhile, inside the guest room, Myah shut the door before dialing Wesley's number. He picked up almost immediately.

"Wesley, I'm at Gabriela's place now," she informed him in a soft tone.

"Are you settling in comfortably?" His words came with steady composure.

"Of course. It's very comfortable," she replied at once, her tone lightening. "Gabriela takes such good care of me, and Farley and Ken treat me like I'm their own child—so warm and kind."

Wesley replied, "Good to hear that."

"Wesley..." Myah hesitated, fingers nervously twisting the hem of her sleeve.

"Go on. What exactly do you want to say?" he inquired, his voice clipped.

“I only showed you Allan’s diary because I didn’t want you caught off guard. I was afraid Gabriela might keep it from you. But she never meant anything malicious. She just misses Allan so badly. Please... don’t be so distant with her.” Her words came out soft, careful, almost pleading.

A shadow crossed Wesley’s face, his jaw set hard, yet his answer came out cold and terse. “Okay.”

Chapter 713

After ending the call, Myah exhaled heavily, exhaustion weighing on her.

The memory of Gabriela’s disappointed expression at the airport stirred a tangle of feelings within her, but she quickly steeled herself.

Gabriela was meant for her brother alone—no one else should care for Gabriela, and she must never marry another in this lifetime. Not Wesley, not Stewart.

Myah stepped out of the room and descended the stairs, where Ken was setting out a spread of freshly cooked dishes, their savory aroma wafting through the dining room into the living area.

For a moment, Myah felt the comforting embrace of a true home.

Pushing down a flicker of guilt, she grinned and said, “That smells amazing! Let me lend a hand with the plates.”

Gabriela, carrying a steaming bowl of soup, smiled back. “No need. Just take a seat—dinner is almost ready.”

Myah settled at the table, where young Truett eyed the tempting dishes but sat silently.

Glancing at the charming child, Myah asked warmly, “You’re Truett, right?”

“My name is Truett Haynes,” he answered, his curious eyes meeting hers. “What’s your name?”

Myah’s brow furrowed. “Why is your surname Haynes? Shouldn’t it be Ortiz?”

She dimly recalled that Tessa’s husband was Fulton Ortiz. Even if they divorced, Truett’s surname should at least be Ramsey, like Tessa’s.

“I’m Mommy’s child, so why would it be Ortiz?”

Three-year-old Truett, sharp and talkative, looked baffled by the question from this stranger.

Myah pressed, “So, who’s your mommy?”

Just then, Gabriela set the final dish on the table, and Truett waved eagerly, chirping, “Mommy!”

Myah froze, stunned. Since when did Gabriela have a child? Whose child was this?

As Gabriela lifted Truett into his highchair, she explained to Myah, “I never got the chance to tell you—Truett is Wesley’s son.”

Myah’s body stiffened, her mind reeling. When did Gabriela have a child? How had she missed this entirely?

Noticing Myah’s dramatic reaction, Gabriela soothed, “We kept it quiet because Wesley needed treatment. We’ve agreed to marry once he is fully recovered.”

She held up her hand, displaying a ring. “See, we’ve already exchanged rings.”

Myah stared at the ring, her face devoid of joy, her eyes quickly brimming with tears.

Gabriela, puzzled by her expression, asked, “Myah, what’s wrong?”

Hastily lowering her head, Myah wiped her eyes. “Nothing, just adjusting to my vision coming back—the steam is stinging a little.”

The hot dishes, fresh from the kitchen, filled the room with fragrant warmth.

Gabriela, concerned, slid a plate away from Myah. "Sit back a bit. Tell me what you would like to eat."

Myah mumbled a distracted, "Okay."

During dinner, Gabriela kept piling food onto Myah's plate.

Truett, noticing, pouted and called, "Mommy, meat!"

Gabriela carefully deboned a piece of fish and placed it in his bowl, saying, "Here you go, Truett."

Satisfied, Truett dug in.

Myah watched the sweet boy, her gaze heavy with mixed emotions, though she seemed far from fond of kids.

After dinner, Gabriela tried calling Wesley again, but he didn't pick up, leaving her disheartened.

After two years apart, she had hoped their reunion would rekindle their closeness, yet they hadn't even shared an embrace at the airport.

Chapter 714

Sitting on the balcony, Gabriela leaned against the railing, staring blankly at the distant woods.

A chilly drizzle fell outside, the winter air biting.

Myah stepped onto the balcony. "Gabriela, why are you wearing so little? It's cold here."

The cold had sharpened, and Gabriela, in just a thin sweater, had numb fingers but seemed oblivious.

She smiled faintly, shaking her head. "I'm not cold."

Myah settled beside her, pausing before asking cautiously, "Are you thinking about Wesley?"

Gabriela nodded, her voice low. "I've tried calling him, but he's not picking up."

Myah's face clouded with concern, but she pressed on. "Gabriela, I've got something serious to tell you. You need to be ready."

Seeing Myah's grave expression, Gabriela sat up, alert. "Tell me."

Myah hesitated, then said, "During Wesley's heart treatment, he took a drug with heavy side effects, messing with his memory badly."

A knot of dread tightened in Gabriela's chest, her brow furrowing. "What does that mean?"

"He might not recall much of what you two had," Myah went on. "I've tried reminding him, talking about your past, showing him your photos, but he barely responds."

Gabriela's mind flashed to Wesley's distant stare at the airport, her heart sinking like a stone. "What are you getting at?"

Myah's voice was heavy. "Wesley might not feel as strongly for you anymore. Maybe it's time for you to move on."

Gabriela shook her head, defiant. "That's ridiculous."

"It's not," Myah said earnestly. "He doesn't even remember me well, but he recalls my brother donating his heart, so he is kind to me. He remembers many important things, but not your engagement. Because in his heart, you don't really matter to him."

Gabriela's hands grew colder, her voice shaky. "What kind of drug could cause this kind of damage?"

"I'm not sure," Myah admitted. "The doctor named Gale was speaking French with Wesley, and I only caught bits of it."

Seeing Gabriela's ashen face, Myah added quickly, "Don't panic yet. In a few days, I'll go with you to Okburg to talk to his doctor, okay?"

But Gabriela couldn't wait. The next morning, she and Myah went to the hospital.

Wesley's doctor, Dr. Reed, listened to Myah's account, reviewed records, and said, "There is a heart drug with strong side effects, but I've never heard of it causing such severe memory loss."

Gabriela, desperate, asked, "Is there any way to fix this?"

The doctor shook his head. "Mr. Moss's recovery is already a medical miracle. If his memory issues don't disrupt his daily life, we should monitor him for now. New drugs could cause serious problems so soon after treatment."

Devastated by the doctor's words, Gabriela's hope crumbled. She quickly shared her own experience with memory loss, seeking answers.

After listening, the doctor provided his insight.

“Miss Haynes, your memory lapse stemmed from a head injury and a subconscious urge to block painful realities, which is why a specific trigger restored your recollections swiftly. Mr. Moss’s memory issues, however, are a side effect of his medication, similar to an elderly person gradually losing their past.”

Essentially, Wesley might never retrieve the memory of their shared promise.

Chapter 715

Gabriela stood frozen in disbelief.

Wesley’s mind, she was told, had chosen to bury the past on purpose.

The doctor made it clear that his memory of the love he once felt for her would never resurface.

Neither would he recall the vow they had shared to wed once he regained his strength.

Chilled to the bone, Gabriela stepped out of the hospital.

The sky wept steadily, rain dulling the already bleak day. Myah caught her hand and leaned close, whispering, “Gabriela, are we heading home?”

Gabriela gave a steady nod. "Yes, let's go."

In the car, Myah's eyes kept flicking toward her. "Gabriela, what will you do about Wesley?"

"Don't worry about me. I'll be alright," Gabriela replied.

Strength had always been Gabriela's armor. She only needed time to take it all in.

"If Wesley truly can't remember me, then so be it. We'll just begin again," she added.

Myah studied her with a mixture of admiration and sorrow.

"You're remarkable, Gabriela. Truly brave."

Why should a woman like her have to belong to Wesley at all?

Gabriela only smiled, choosing silence.

Resilience defined her, and by the next morning, she had already untangled the storm inside her.

Amnesia was nothing compared to the abyss of a hopeless diagnosis.

By afternoon, after asking Billy about Wesley's schedule, she found her way to his apartment with both arms filled with bags of fresh ingredients she had carefully chosen.

When Wesley stepped inside, the aroma of simmering borscht drifted through the air. He shrugged off his coat, tall frame angled away as he unfastened his watch.

Hearing the sound, Gabriela emerged from the kitchen, her face lighting up. "You're back!"

Wesley spun around, dark eyes flashing with irritation. "What are you doing here? How did you even get inside?"

"Did you forget?" She lifted her hand lightly. "My fingerprint still opens the door."

Her smile was easy, unbothered. "I made soup for you. Go wash up—dinner's almost ready."

The fragrance of beets and spices filled the room, the warmth of the dish promising comfort against the winter's damp chill. Having someone waiting at home with a hot meal was a rare, almost disarming tenderness.

Wesley swallowed the sharp retort that rose in his throat. Instead, he sat at the table, eyeing the soup.

A fragment of the past stirred as his gaze fell on the familiar bowl of borscht swimming in chili oil, just as it had been before—and the friendly warning from the person who made it: “Don’t drink the broth; the pasta turned out better.”

Brief flashes of her fingers deftly picking celery and scallions from his plate returned.

Her gentle insistence: “It’s good for your health, Wesley. Don’t be so stubborn. Just eat a little.”

Small pieces like these, small yet vivid, sent a ripple through his chest.

His expression eased, the hardness in his gaze melting as he looked at her.

He lifted the spoon, took a sip, and remarked, “Not bad.”

The words were curt, but his eyes, brimming with warmth he couldn’t quite conceal, gave him away.

Gabriela’s heart steadied. She had known all along this approach would reach him.

Wesley had once loved her with a devotion so deep it seemed unshakable. How could a handful of pills erase something that fierce?

Gabriela, steady as ever, quietly picked through his plate, removing the celery and scallions she knew he disliked.

They sat across from each other, her focus entirely on the task, her long lashes casting soft shadows over her cheeks. She was breathtaking without even trying.

A single glance from her sent his pulse racing, his composure unraveling.

Somehow, this woman always knew how to slip past his defenses and claim his heart.

The sudden ring of the doorbell shattered the fragile quiet.

It was Myah, standing in the doorway with an umbrella, her smile bright. "Gabriela, I knew I'd find you here. It's pouring out, so I brought you this."

Gabriela let out a light laugh. "I drove, so the rain isn't really an issue."

Over the past two years, she had learned to drive, passed her test, and now moved about with the confidence of a seasoned driver.

Chapter 716

“Oh, that’s right!” Myah pressed her tongue between her teeth playfully. “I still remember how Allan never let you go without an umbrella whenever it rained.”

With easy familiarity, she trailed Gabriela into the dining room. “Are you guys eating? I’m starving. Wesley, mind if I join?”

Across the table, Wesley looked at her with a warmth reserved only for Myah, his tone carrying that familiar indulgence. “Of course. Sit.”

Myah hurried to fetch utensils and helped herself to food. “Wesley, on my way in I noticed the white roses in the yard. The rain’s already making them wilt.”

“They’ll perk up once the rain lets up,” he replied evenly.

“Still, white roses don’t bloom easily in winter. I’ll have to figure out a way to shield them from the downpour. Allan adored those flowers; whenever it rained, he’d always carry them inside to keep them safe,” Myah continued.

The words slipped out carelessly, but Wesley’s expression clouded.

Myah, oblivious, continued chatting with Gabriela. “Gabriela, do you remember that winter storm when you helped Allan haul the pots inside?”

Gabriela hesitated. She didn’t want Allan’s name brought up in front of Wesley, but Myah’s joy was infectious, and she answered softly, “Yes.”

“And remember how Allan caught a fever the very next day? For such a grown man, he was so fragile. He burned up for days, and you never left his side. You even took care of me then, a blind girl who couldn’t do much for herself.”

Wesley set his fork down, his appetite gone.

Sensing the shift, Gabriela interjected gently, “Myah, let’s eat first.”

Chastened, Myah bowed her head and took a spoonful. Gabriela ladled soup into her bowl.

“Wow, borscht!” Myah exclaimed, delighted. “I always knew it tasted good, but I never realized it could look this beautiful. So many colors!”

Tomatoes, corn, yam, celery, beef. All the ingredients mingled into a vibrant rainbow in the bowl, a small feast for both eye and tongue.

“Back then, Gabriela used to make this soup for Allan all the time. He loved it,” Myah said softly.

Wesley’s faint smile vanished, and unease crept in. He suddenly felt out of place at the table.

Myah’s voice wavered as her head dipped. “But now... Allan will never taste it again.”

Her eyes shimmered, on the verge of tears.

A pang of pity tugged at Wesley. He reached out, resting a hand on her head. “Don’t cling to the past. I’ll take care of you from now on.”

Gabriela, disheartened by the constant mention of Allan, missed the flicker in Wesley’s mood. She, too, offered words of comfort.

The rest of the meal passed in silence.

Gabriela cleared the dishes afterward, while Myah, full and drowsy, made her way upstairs to rest.

Wesley lingered in the living room, thumbing through his phone, sending curt replies to work messages.

When Gabriela returned from the kitchen, his voice was calm, detached. "You should leave."

He rose, intent on heading upstairs.

Startled, Gabriela instinctively caught his sleeve. "Wesley, I..."

The words trembled on her lips. She longed to stay, to spend the night near him.

Two years apart had carved a hollow in her heart she could no longer bear.

Wesley's gaze dropped to her hand, and a memory of him once holding her, kissing her fiercely, flickered through his thoughts.

Then came another memory, just as sharp: her voice, cool and resolute. "Your heart belongs to Allan now."

Because Allan's heart beat inside him, she had once cared for him out of duty, not love.

His face hardened. "Let go."

The weight of his eyes frightened her. She loosened her grip, her hand falling away.

Irritation flared through him, sharpening his tone. "A woman shouldn't be at a man's house this late. Please, leave."

He walked her to the door and, with deliberate finality, erased every fingerprint from the keypad lock as she watched.

Gabriela's face blanched.

"Leave. Now." Expressionless, Wesley added, "From now on, never come here without my permission."

Chapter 717

The noise must have carried, because Myah, sharp-eared as ever, rushed down the stairs.

She clutched Gabriela's arm and rounded on Wesley. "Why are you trying to drive her away? She cooks for you, and you shove her aside? Forget it! I don't even want to call you a friend anymore!"

Her voice cracked with frustration. "My brother never treated Gabriela like this!"

Wesley said nothing.

Gabriela could only stare, lost and shaken.

It was unsettling.

Side effects might blur memories, yes, but this wasn't forgetfulness anymore—it was rejection.

His eyes no longer softened at her presence. They measured, judged, almost as if he were deciding whether she was worthy or not.

Where had things gone wrong?

When Gabriela stayed silent, Myah's glare sharpened. "If you send her away, Wesley, then I'm leaving too!"

Wesley's expression barely flickered. "Myah, your eyes have just healed. You should go home and rest early."

He didn't stop her, didn't even reach out. Instead, his tone remained flat as he added, "Gabriela, look after her."

Then he turned and walked back upstairs.

Myah caught the glimmer of tears in Gabriela's eyes and huffed. "He's impossible. Forget him, and come with me. We don't need him anyway."

Gabriela's chest tightened, her emotions tangled into knots, but she followed Myah out without another word.

After a while, Wesley made his way downstairs. The emptiness of the living room pressed on him, a quiet weight that made his mood even heavier.

He stepped out into the garden.

Two years away had changed everything. The yard was brimming with white roses in full bloom. He had no clue who had tended them in his absence.

Now, the rain dragged them down, petals heavy and sodden, their delicate beauty sagging under the storm.

Wesley's mood mirrored the roses: tired, soaked, restless.

Without hesitation, he grabbed his phone and called Billy. "Get some people here to uproot every single white rose in the garden!"

Billy froze. “Mr. Moss... it’s dark and pouring rain. Can’t we wait until tomorrow?”

Wesley’s patience snapped. “Now. I said now!”

Why on earth did he want to destroy the flowers the moment he returned?

No one knew, and no one dared question him. Workers were summoned immediately, braving the relentless rain to follow his orders.

Once the last rose had been torn from the soil, Billy ventured carefully, “Mr. Moss... what would you like planted in their place?”

Wesley’s reply was effortless, almost casual. “Water lilies.”

Billy blinked, incredulous. “Mr. Moss, water lilies are tricky this season.”

Wesley waved him off. “I don’t care. Anything but white roses.”

And just like that, the matter was closed.

Billy paid the drenched workers, arranging for them to return the next day to carve out a pond for the water lilies.

“No problem, consider it done, boss!” The crew left, pockets heavier and spirits lifted despite the storm.

Outside, the rain beat down through the night, temperatures plunging to minus three, seeping into bones and skin alike.

Inside, Truett clung to his mother, refusing to let go.

Gabriela wrapped him close, warmth against the chill, holding up a photo of Wesley. “Truett, Daddy is back! Do you want to see him?” she asked.

Chapter 718

Truett’s face lit up. “Yes, Mommy!”

Gabriela smoothed his soft hair, whispering a promise. “Don’t worry, sweetheart. Mommy will make sure Daddy comes back to us.”

Truett’s eyes sparkled as he clapped his hands. “Bring Daddy back!”

By the next morning, Gabriela had shed last night's heaviness. The fearless woman she had always been resurfaced. Life was full of obstacles, yes, but there were always more solutions than problems.

Straightening her shoulders, she set out to find Wesley.

If the apartment was closed to her, so be it. She would walk right into his company instead.

At Apex Group, many employees still remembered her and greeted her warmly.

Assistant Talia stepped forward with a polite smile. "Mr. Moss is in a meeting, Ms. Haynes. Please wait in the lounge. I'll let Billy know you're here."

"Thank you, Talia," Gabriela replied, taking a seat.

Meanwhile, Wesley, fresh from his long absence, had summoned the executives for a comprehensive briefing. He intended to grasp every detail of the company's last two years.

Gabriela waited.

One hour passed. Then another.

The meeting showed no signs of ending.

Inside the boardroom, Wesley's voice was firm. "We still have an hour left. Let's move forward with the Eventide Vale project discussion."

Years ago, after breaking off the engagement, the Howard family had offered the Eventide Vale land to the Mosses at cost as an olive branch of sorts. But with Wesley's treatment overseas, the project had been left to gather dust.

Billy, listening, began to piece things together.

The night before, his boss had returned grim-faced, ordering the roses uprooted as though they were poison.

Now, with Gabriela waiting just outside, Wesley deliberately stretched the meeting, keeping her at a distance.

What could Billy do? Nothing but scramble to pull up every detail on the Eventide Vale project to match his boss's sudden fixation.

The impromptu marathon meeting wore the room thin. Shoulders sagged, notes blurred, and fatigue set in.

Even Aaron Dean, head of the six-person think tank, shot Billy a weary glance, wishing to find the answer to why Wesley was dragging on the meeting.

Wesley's demeanor was cold, though Gabriela was outside the meeting room.

Billy kept his expression neutral, wisely holding his tongue. With no answer given, Aaron straightened in his seat and attempted to steer the meeting forward.

The executives around the table hardly dared to breathe.

But Brenden had reached his limit. He shoved his chair back with a loud scrape and stood. "Wesley, this project has been frozen for two years. We don't even have a draft on paper. Sitting here like this is pointless. Why not end the meeting?"

Wesley turned his gaze on him, a single frigid look.

Once, that look alone would have silenced Brenden. But not today. Though his knees shook beneath the table, he forced himself to stand tall.

He voiced his question. "Gabriela's here. Why won't you see her? If you don't want to, fine. Just send her away. But why drag on the meeting and leave her waiting like a fool?"

Wesley leaned back slightly, his voice low and edged with mockery. “So now I don’t even have the right to decide how long my own meeting lasts?”

Chapter 719

A dry chuckle escaped him. “Brenden, has two years in the CEO’s chair convinced you you’re more important than you are?”

The words landed like a slap. Brenden froze, stunned by the indifference in his cousin’s tone.

Then, with a sharp motion, he tore off his suit jacket and slammed it onto the table. “Wesley, do you think I care about being CEO? If it weren’t for covering for you these past two years, do you think I’d waste my life waking up before dawn, coming home at midnight, slaving over this company day after day? What’s so glorious about Apex Group’s CEO title? I couldn’t care less!”

The room went still. The silence was so taut that even the sound of a pin dropping would have thundered.

Wesley’s lips pressed into a faint downward curve, his expression unreadable. Yet the air thickened under his silence, the boardroom shrinking with the pressure he exuded.

Though fear prickled at him, Brenden’s defiance won out. He yanked off his tie, flung it to the floor, and stormed out.

In the lounge, he strode straight to Gabriela and seized her hand. “Gabriela, come on! We’re leaving!”

Startled, she looked up. “Brenden, what are you doing? I’m waiting for Wesley.”

“Waiting for Wesley?” Brenden’s voice rose with exasperation. “Are you out of your mind? You’ll wait forever at this rate!”

Anger and worry burned through him as he pressed on. “He’s completely lost it. He comes back after two years and dares to play cold and high-handed with you. Don’t let him walk all over you. If you give in now, after marriage he’ll crush you entirely!”

Gabriela, calm in the storm of his temper, gently drew her hand back.

She explained in a steady voice, “Wesley’s behavior... it’s the side effects of his medication.”

She recounted quickly what the doctor had told her.

Brenden blinked, stunned. “Can the side effects be that severe?”

Gabriela nodded firmly.

At that moment, the sound of footsteps broke the charged silence. Wesley stood at the lounge door, gaze like ice.

Brenden turned, their eyes locking. Frustration twisted in his gut, but he squared his shoulders and marched up to him, lifting his chin as if daring a fight.

“Wesley,” he said, his voice hard, “Gabriela has waited for you two whole years. While wealthy men lined up to pursue her, she never once faltered.”

It was the truth. Gabriela’s love for him never wavered, not even after countless men tried to win her heart.

Brenden’s chest tightened with a raw edge of envy.

If any woman had shown him that kind of devotion, he would have treasured her and cherished her as though she were royalty.

But Wesley? He left Gabriela in limbo, cold and unyielding, hurting her without a second thought.

“So what if you lost your memory?” Brenden snapped, eyes blazing. “Enough excuses. Today, give us a straight answer. If you want Gabriela, marry her! If you don’t...”

He drew in a sharp breath, voice ringing with reckless challenge.

“Then I’ll pursue her myself!”

Chapter 720

Brenden’s voice boomed across the courtyard.

A cluster of office workers lingered outside, their faces masking eager anticipation as they hunted for gossip. The six-member think tank hovered nearby, feigning disinterest while their ears strained for every word.

Now the entire company knew Wesley had lost his memory. Gabriela pressed her fingers to her temples, frustration pulsing through her skull.

Did Brenden have to broadcast it so carelessly?

She seized Brenden’s arm and hissed, “Silence. We’re leaving. Now.”

Brenden brushed off her urgency and turned to her with misplaced confidence. “Don’t worry, Gabriela. I’m fighting for you, no matter what comes next. I’ll protect you.”

Wesley’s expression darkened like storm clouds gathering.

Billy recognized the danger signs and rushed over to Brenden, his voice urgent but low. “Mr. Saunders, perhaps silence would serve you better. Mr. Moss appears... volatile.”

They couldn’t afford to escalate this situation.

Wesley’s murderous glare made Brenden’s knees buckle, but the thought of the woman he loved steeled his resolve. He couldn’t retreat now.

Despite his trembling legs, he planted his feet and demanded, “Wesley, make your choice.”

Wesley’s gaze swept over Gabriela with arctic detachment. “Leave.”

One word. Final. Dismissive.

He didn’t care about her anymore—Brenden could claim his prize.

Ice spread through Gabriela’s veins.

He was truly finished with her? It meant nothing to him if she walked away with another man?

Brenden recoiled at Wesley's cruelty, then grabbed Gabriela's hand with righteous fury. "Wesley's showing his true colors! Gabriela, ignore him. Let him drown in his regret."

As they walked away, Brenden's words tumbled out in an angry stream. "He's been a tyrant since childhood. Once he sets his mind on something, nobody can sway him. Nobody except Loretta..."

Brenden's eyes suddenly blazed with inspiration. "Why didn't I consider this earlier? Wesley obeys Loretta without question. If she intervenes, he'll marry you. He wouldn't dare cross her."

"Absolutely not!" Gabriela's eye twitched violently. "Brenden, we cannot involve Loretta in this mess. Don't make everything worse!"

Loretta had weathered too many years already—they shouldn't burden her with fresh worries.

Besides, what existed between her and Wesley belonged to them alone. If fate intended their union, it would happen. If not... time would reveal the truth.

Dragging others into their chaos could poison even the strongest bonds.

After Gabriela's explanation, Brenden's shoulders sagged in reluctant agreement. "Fine. No Loretta. I'll follow your lead."

“Thank you.” Gabriela’s voice carried genuine warmth. “Brenden, your support today means everything to me.”

She had misjudged Brenden completely, dismissing him as a shallow playboy and avoiding his company.

Perhaps he lacked maturity in romance, but his heart held genuine kindness.

“You’re welcome.” Brenden rubbed the back of his neck, color rising in his cheeks. “Whenever you need me again, just ask. I’ll give you everything I have.”

His sincere words lifted the crushing weight from Gabriela’s chest.

As he’d said before, what harm could memory loss truly cause? Wesley was confused, not completely erased from her life. If she fought harder, Wesley would surely recover everything they’d shared.

On the twelfth floor of Apex Group, even with Brenden, the acting CEO, having stormed out, the meeting dragged forward.

Wesley wore his fury like a mask, practically radiating the words “I’m livid” from every pore.

Everyone sat rigid, sensing their CEO’s mood had plummeted into dangerous territory.

Billy caught the six-member think tank's bewildered expressions, all of them baffled by their boss's contradictory behavior.

He'd banished Gabriela with ruthless indifference, yet now simmered with obvious displeasure.

The meeting finally concluded, and executives fled with their documents clutched like shields.

Only Billy remained, bound by unwavering loyalty.

He had no choice—his generous salary and massive year-end bonus demanded complete dedication.

The weight of his paycheck determined his devotion to his volatile boss.