

His kiss 74

Chapter 74

While Wesley's irritation grew, Gabriela remained blissfully unaware, wrapped in her perfect, unknowing world.

After work, she rushed to the dry cleaners, clutching her coffee-splattered dress.

But when the clerk quoted her \$120, she recoiled, quickly snatching the dress back.

She had just landed in the executive office—who knew how long she'd last—and her first paycheck was still nowhere in sight. Now wasn't the time to splurge. With a sigh, she trudged home, dress in hand.

As she approached her doorstep, she spotted Phyllis shivering on the front steps, stubbornly braving the cold.

Gabriela pretended not to see her, angling to slip past unnoticed.

But Phyllis, sharp-eyed as ever, immediately clocked the brand of Gabriela's dress and stepped forward to block her path.

"Home early for once, aren't you, Gabriela?" Phyllis drawled, her voice dripping with implication. "Did your boyfriend buy you that dress?"

Gabriela, focused on the stain, shot back with a clipped, “What’s it to you?”

Phyllis’s lips curved into a mock-sympathetic smile. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you. The more those rich men spend, the more they expect from you.”

Gabriela glanced over her shoulder, a sly grin breaking through. “Are you worried about me, or just green with envy? Either way, you’re still stuck on the outside looking in.”

Back in school, Gabriela had been too busy hustling for tuition to care about high-end labels. She realized just how expensive the dress was when Phyllis’s sharp tone made it clear.

After putting Phyllis in her place, Gabriela hurried off to scrub the stain out, leaving Phyllis standing in the cold air, burning with envy.

Phyllis seethed, unable to comprehend how Gabriela—once the timid girl she used to boss around in school—had suddenly grown a spine.

The more she thought about it, the more it unsettled her. She racked her brain, but couldn’t figure out what had changed. All she knew was that she couldn’t let it go.

With her wedding to Dustin less than three weeks away, Phyllis was supposed to be basking in bridal bliss, but instead, she tossed and turned each night, furious at the sight of Gabriela parading around in luxury labels that even she couldn’t afford.

It gnawed at her—Gabriela, of all people, daring to flaunt such things right under her nose.

She couldn't possibly wait for the wedding to put Gabriela in her place. The thought of humiliating Gabriela was the only thing that would allow her to rest easy. Phyllis pondered her next move, then pulled out her phone and dialed Rhys without hesitation.

Gabriela had ditched her blind date with Rhys, and though he still felt slighted, he kept his tone courteous when Phyllis reached out—after all, she was a Haynes.

"Mr. Fox, I truly apologize for how things went with Gabriela last time," she said, her voice syrupy with forced warmth.

Her reverent tone made Rhys feel unexpectedly important. He replied with cloying eagerness, "How can I help you today, Phyllis?"

His forced cordiality made Phyllis want to gag, but she kept her friendly mask firmly in place. "You know, Gabriela and I are about the same age, but she always finds ways to make the family worry. I was hoping you might help me talk some sense into her."

She laid out her plan, then lavished him with praise for his education and fine character, leaving him grinning with pride.

Rhys relished his sense of superiority. “If she’d been half as sensible as you, she wouldn’t have bailed on our blind date.”

Phyllis let out a delicate sigh. “Gabriela’s just obsessed with money, but real work? She wants nothing to do with it. She’s always on the lookout for shortcuts—that’s how she lost her way. But honestly, she isn’t a bad person deep down.”

Phyllis continued, “Right now, she’s only with that old, unattractive guy because he showers her with expensive gifts. If you’d just talk to her, maybe spend a little time together, I’m sure she’d start to realize how capable you are. She might even find her way back.”

After mocking Gabriela, Phyllis kept piling on the flattery to Rhys, insisting he was the only genuinely exceptional man she’d ever met. With a helpless smile, she confessed that he was her last hope.

“If you can help steer Gabriela back on track, I’d owe you a debt I could never repay—one I’d be grateful for the rest of my life.”