

His kiss 77

Chapter 77

Wesley had a knack for bending her will to match his own.

He leaned back, an amused glint in his eyes. “Dinner won’t start until someone samples the dishes.”

Gabriela stared at him, stunned into silence.

Only a man like Wesley Moss could turn an ordinary meal into such a spectacle. If he was so afraid of being poisoned, why put her in charge of his meals in the first place?

Sliding into her seat, Gabriela took a careful bite from each dish, finishing them all in a matter of moments. She met Wesley’s gaze with a bright, earnest smile. “You have nothing to worry about, Mr. Moss. Everything I make is perfectly safe.”

Wesley seemed pleased, nodding his approval. “In that case, let’s eat together.” Somehow, Gabriela had morphed from a reluctant chef into an impromptu food taster and Wesley’s unwilling lunch companion.

She could hardly keep track of how many roles she’d filled for him already.

Maybe it was because lunch turned out just the way Wesley liked it, and he didn’t give her a single hard time for the rest of the day. Before she knew it, the workday was over.

For once, she didn't have to stay late. As she left the office right at six, a wave of pure relief nearly sent her skipping down the street.

Her brief burst of joy evaporated almost instantly.

There he was—the man from her ill-fated blind date—propped up against a gleaming white Audi at the curb, clutching a bouquet of roses.

It hit Gabriela all at once. The mysterious bouquet she'd received that morning—those gaudy red roses—had been from him.

The memory of his slick pickup lines made her lips tighten in distaste. She veered sharply, determined to sidestep him entirely.

No such luck. Rhys spotted her right away, waving the flowers like a flag. With her striking features and magnetic energy, Gabriela drew every pair of eyes on the street.

Rhys strode up, a smug grin on his face, and called out, "Gabriela, done for the day? I've been standing here ages! Did those roses I sent brighten your morning?" He acted as if she'd personally invited him to wait, his voice dripping with an insistent familiarity.

Gabriela's irritation simmered while curious colleagues snuck glances, their whispers blending into a low hum behind her.

She edged away, holding her chin high. "I'm afraid we're not that close, Mr. Fox. It's Miss Haynes to you."

Rhys closed the gap, brandishing a bright smile. "Feeling shy, are you, Gabriela? Honestly, both our families are thrilled about us. Phyllis couldn't stop talking about how much you love roses. That's why I went out of my way to get these white ones for you."

Rhys pressed the bouquet insistently toward her, but Gabriela sidestepped with a brisk shake of her head. "I'm afraid roses aren't my thing. Why don't you let the trash can enjoy them instead?"

Recognition flickered across Rhys's face as the truth hit him—she had tossed the pricey bouquet he'd sent that morning. He'd dropped a small fortune on those flowers!

The realization soured his expression, frustration knotting his features.

"Who do you think you are?" he snapped, his voice rising. "Don't go thinking you're so special. Being pretty doesn't mean every guy is desperate to chase after you."

Gabriela's jaw tightened, her patience snapping. "Then get out of my sight."

Rhys barked out a stunned laugh. "You seriously think you can talk to me like that?" He squared his shoulders, eyes flashing. "Your family practically begged me to give you a chance, pleading with me not

to write you off! I only bothered to show up as a favor to Phyllis—she and I go way back to college. Otherwise, I wouldn't have wasted my time."

He stepped in close, his voice rising. "Your family already agreed to us. Whether you want it or not, you're leaving with me today."

Initially, Rhys had agreed just to indulge his flattered ego, but Gabriela's beauty kept replaying in his mind.

Now, the decision was made. He wasn't going to back down. As far as he was concerned, the blind date and her family's approval gave him every right. No one else got a say. Without warning, Rhys seized Gabriela's arm in a bruising grip and tried to haul her toward his car.