

His kiss 781

Chapter 781

Wesley's chest tightened as if a stone had dropped inside. His hand clenched around the phone, knuckles whitening, his brow furrowing deeply. "What happened?" he asked, his voice strained and low with unease.

Gabriela exhaled shakily. "Farley just called. He said Truett is missing."

She'd been running on fumes for weeks. Last night, she'd holed up in Presley's studio, determined to push through her draft. She never made it home.

Then, just before sunrise, her focus was shattered by Farley's frantic call: Truett's bed was empty, and he was nowhere to be found. She had rushed back immediately, tearing through the house and the yard, but found no trace of him.

"Farley swears he put him to bed around nine-thirty," she added, her voice breaking. That meant the little boy must have disappeared sometime during the night.

Tears welled and spilled fast. "It's all my fault. If I had just come home last night—"

Perhaps if she had been there, Truett wouldn't have wandered off.

"Stop." Wesley cut her off, calm but sharp. "This isn't your fault."

He hung up before she could argue. Orders flew almost immediately.

Billy pulled a team together. Wesley dropped everything, heading straight for Okburg.

By the time he reached the villa, Gabriela looked wrecked—red-rimmed eyes, hands shaking uncontrollably.

Wesley took her hand gently, his voice softening. “I’ve already got people searching. We’ll find him.”

Her lips trembled. “He’s just a kid, Wesley. It’s freezing. How far could he even have gone?”

The search had already begun. Security guards were questioned, and every angle of the surveillance footage was reviewed. But Truett never appeared on camera. The only plausible explanation was that he had slipped through a blind spot.

Rosemont Gardens wasn’t exactly the safest neighborhood. The villas, once upscale, were over thirty years old and losing value. Many residents had already moved out.

Security was weak. Just months ago, a house was broken into. The police never caught the thieves, and the case went cold.

“Have the police been called?” Wesley asked.

Gabriela nodded quickly. “Yes.”

The police inspected the villa and sent officers to pull footage from nearby roads.

Farley and Ken were beside themselves with guilt, both blaming themselves, tears streaming down their faces.

Meanwhile, Myah sat apart in the corner, utterly silent. She didn’t cry, didn’t move—just watched as though she were detached from it all.

The house was chaos. People were shouting, searching, making calls. Amid the noise, no one noticed Myah’s strange stillness in the corner.

By afternoon, the news had spread. Matthew and Kaleb showed up almost simultaneously, their anxious faces betraying their worry.

Even Stewart arrived, offering his resources without hesitation.

Wesley, who normally kept him at arm's length, swallowed his pride and nodded. "Thanks. I owe you this."

He called Erik and set his network in motion.

Elsewhere, Tyler rallied his three hundred followers, scattering them across the city to cover every possible route.

Kaylie's crew of more than a hundred joined the search as soon as Tyler called, asking for nothing in return.

One by one, more people came. Aubrey, Tessa, Nina, and Cali pitched in. Even Alissa, who was new to Gabriela's circle, showed up to help.

The sheer scale of the effort should have brought hope. But as the hours dragged on and night faded into another day, there was still nothing—not a single lead.

Gabriela hadn't eaten. She'd barely sipped water. Her body was running on panic alone, eyes bloodshot from crying.

"It's been a full day," she said, her voice breaking as she looked at Wesley. "Still no news. If Truett was kidnapped, why hasn't anyone called? Why no ransom demand?"

That was what terrified everyone most. If it was about money, they could pay. Problem solved.

Chapter 782

But if he'd fallen into the hands of traffickers, swallowed up by the underworld, no amount of money or influence from the Moss or Howard families might ever bring him back.

Wesley's chest ached as he watched her, her lips dry and cracked from anxiety. He pushed aside the harsh words he'd thrown at her days ago—none of it mattered now.

He pulled her into his arms, his voice rough but steady. "Don't spiral. Truett's clever. If he's in danger, he'll find a way to signal us."

Pressed against him, Gabriela's trembling eased slightly. The warmth of his embrace dulled the sharp edge of her fear.

As he held her, Wesley made a silent vow: if Truett returned safely, he wouldn't wait another day. He would marry Gabriela, with no more hesitation or distance between them. Life was too short for games. She was the one—the only woman he would ever love.

News of Truett's disappearance spread rapidly, and it wasn't long before it reached Roger.

With Wesley, Stewart, and Matthew mobilizing search teams, and hundreds from local networks scouring every alley and back road in Okburg, the commotion was impossible to ignore.

Roger's inquiries quickly uncovered the truth: Wesley was searching for his son.

Just like that, word raced through Okburg's elite circles—Wesley Moss had a child. His heir. And the boy's mother was Gabriela.

The city's high society buzzed with scandal, whispers igniting like wildfire.

Soon enough, Roger and Loretta arrived at Gabriela's villa, one after the other.

Loretta entered first, her voice breaking as she called out, "Gabriela! Tell me it's true! Is Truett really my great-grandson?"

Gabriela's swollen eyes filled with fresh tears as she nodded. "Yes. I'm so sorry, Loretta. I never meant to hide this from you."

Loretta pressed a hand to her chest, her face taut with anguish.

She had held that child countless times, never knowing he was her own great-grandson.

Moments later, Roger entered quietly. His gaze was heavy, etched with age yet sharp with authority, fixing Gabriela where she stood.

He remained silent for a long moment before his voice cut through the room. "You brought a Moss heir into this world, yet you couldn't even keep him safe."

His eyes blazed with fury, locking onto Gabriela like a blade. "With negligence like this, you've forfeited the right to call yourself his mother."

Normally, Gabriela would have fired back, her temper as fierce as his. But crushed under grief and guilt, she could only lower her head in apology.

Loretta still felt resentment toward Gabriela for keeping the secret, but she couldn't ignore how tirelessly Gabriela had raised Truett all these years.

Torn between anger and compassion, she stepped forward. "Roger, that's unjust. Gabriela has worked, provided, and raised Truett entirely on her own. She's carried every burden alone, and you know how devoted she's been to that boy. Do you honestly believe she wanted this to happen?"

Her voice rose as she turned to Wesley. "And you! Where have you been? Why weren't you living with Gabriela and Truett after you returned? You ran off to Eventide Vale for some project and left them alone. My great-grandson is missing because of your absence!"

Wesley flinched at the accusation, but before he could respond, Matthew interjected firmly. "Roger, that's enough. Gabriela has given everything for Truett. Right now, she's suffering more than anyone here, and you're standing there blaming her? If you have any influence, use it to help find him instead of wasting time on accusations."

If Roger thought Gabriela had no one to defend her, he was profoundly mistaken. To condemn her without knowing the full story—what right did he have?

Chapter 783

Loretta and Matthew rose at once, stepping between Gabriela and Roger's simmering wrath to form a fragile shield.

Roger's jaw remained locked, his face carved in stone. But with both of them standing guard, he swallowed his rebuke and fell silent.

Wesley, worn thin by sleepless nights and gnawing dread, exhaled heavily. His voice was frayed. "This isn't the moment to debate fault. First, we bring Truett back."

But the days bled away. Two long, hollow nights passed with no word of Truett.

Gabriela's eyes dulled with despair. She hadn't slept, hadn't touched food, and now even water turned her stomach.

Seeing her waste away, Wesley had Ken prepare a simple broth and carried it to her himself. He crouched at her side, his tone roughened by fatigue yet unbearably tender. "You have to eat a little, Gabriela."

Gabriela only shook her head faintly. Without Truett, her body rejected life itself.

Wesley pressed gently but refused to relent. "If you go on like this, you'll collapse before Truett is even found. And when he returns, who will he have left to care for him?"

Nearby, Farley stood hollow-eyed, guilt eating him alive. His exhaustion mirrored hers, his gaze raw with remorse. Watching Gabriela unravel finally broke him. "Gabriela... this is my fault. Please, for my sake, eat something."

At his words, her fragile composure shattered. Tears surged forth as she wept at last. "Farley, I don't blame you. I'm just..." Her voice faltered.

For years, Gabriela had endured poverty, humiliation, and loneliness. But the fear of failing to give Truett a safe, happy life was what gnawed at her to the bone.

Truett wasn't just her child; he was her very heartbeat, her reason for enduring. The mere thought of losing him made her chest seize and her stomach twist.

Before panic could consume her, Wesley gathered her into his arms. His hand moved gently over her hair, his voice low, steady, and relentless. "Don't be afraid. Truett will be fine. With the security systems we have in place, no trafficker could easily slip out of Okburg. I swear to you, we'll bring him back."

Slowly, Gabriela lifted her tear-reddened eyes, clinging to him as if he were her last fragile thread of hope. "You... you promise?"

"I promise," Wesley said firmly, his eyes unwavering.

He brushed the tears from her cheeks with a tissue, coaxing softly, "Now be good. Eat a little, okay?"

After a long pause, Gabriela nodded faintly. "Okay."

Wesley brought the chicken soup closer. "Let me feed you."

Spoon by spoon, he guided it to her lips.

When she finally swallowed, a sheen of moisture rimmed his own eyes.

In that moment, he understood the weight she had carried all these years: a single mother torn between guarding Truett's health, fearing the Moss family's claim, and concealing the boy's true identity. She had lived on pure willpower, suffering in silence.

Patently, Wesley stayed with her until she finished, then coaxed her into drinking some water.

From the corner, Stewart stood wordless, shadows shifting in his gaze.

Everyone else's attention remained locked on Gabriela and Truett—everyone except Myah, who stole a glance at Stewart before quietly looking away.

At last, under Wesley's steady comfort, Gabriela's trembling eased.

Roger, however, cast her a cold, cutting look even as she faced her deepest nightmare. "Falling apart under pressure? How laughable!" This woman, in his view, wasn't fit to be the wife of the Moss family's future leader.

Wesley opened his mouth, ready to intervene, but a piping voice cut through the tension. "Mommy!"

The reprimand froze on Roger's lips. His head snapped toward the doorway.

There, framed in the light, stood a tiny figure: a little boy of barely three, bundled in a bright yellow down jacket with a backpack bouncing against his shoulders. His whole body was smeared with dirt; even his round, soft cheeks were smudged. Yet his eyes shone like twin stars, dazzling enough to melt the hardest heart.

Chapter 784

Roger blinked in disbelief. His great-grandson.

Without thinking, he stretched out his arms as if to draw the child close. But the boy didn't even glance his way. Instead, he barreled across the room straight into Gabriela's embrace. "Mommy!"

For a heartbeat, Gabriela thought she was dreaming. Her hands trembled as she crouched low, catching the little body that flung itself against her.

Only when Truett's warmth filled her arms did the truth crash in. Tears burst forth, unstoppable. "Truett, you're back, you're finally back!"

All the fear, the sleepless nights, the suffocating dread broke loose in that cry. She wept, trying to hold herself steady, terrified of frightening him.

But Truett's tiny hands reached up, clumsily brushing at her tears. His sweet, milky voice soothed her. "Mommy, don't cry. I'm okay."

Gabriela choked back her sobs at once, forcing a shaky smile. "Alright. I won't cry. Are you hungry, sweetheart? Do you want something to eat?"

Truett's eyes lit up. "I want Ken's mango mousse."

Ken swiped at his damp eyes, forcing a smile. "I'll make it right away."

"I'll take him to change first," Farley added quickly, already moving to guide Truett away.

The moment the child left her arms, Gabriela collapsed against Wesley, half-laughing, half-crying. “I can’t believe it! Truett is safe! He’s really back!”

A collective breath of relief swept through the room. The air, heavy with dread for days, finally lightened.

Erik and Billy hurried out to spread the news that the search was over.

When Truett returned, freshly changed with scrubbed-clean cheeks, everyone urged him to start with some warm chicken soup before indulging in mousse.

Not long after, the mousse was ready. Truett ate happily, cheeks bulging, until he was full and content.

Seeing that the boy seemed unharmed, Wesley finally gathered him into his arms. His tone was gentle but probing. “Truett, where have you been these past few days? What kind of adventure did you go on?”

Meanwhile, Billy had already reviewed the security footage again and again. Not once had Truett been seen leaving the gates of Rosemont Gardens.

It meant that the boy had been right under their noses the entire time. A three-year-old, surviving for three days without anyone knowing.

At first, Truett kept his lips sealed.

Wesley leaned closer, voice soft but steady. “Do you know, Truett, Mommy was so sad while you were gone? She cried so much her eyes are still swollen.”

He needed answers—not for himself, but to ensure this never happened again.

At once, Truett’s little head snapped toward Gabriela. He scrambled down, clutching her hand with his tiny fingers. “Mommy, don’t cry.”

Gabriela bent to his level, coaxing gently, “Then tell Mommy where you went. It’s cold out there, Truett. What if you got sick wandering alone?”

Truett bit his lip, then glanced at Myah. She gave the faintest nod.

Taking a deep breath, he blurted it out in one rush. “I just wanted Daddy and Mommy to get married already! But Daddy’s always busy and doesn’t come see me, so... I thought if I left for a while, he’d hurry up and make up with Mommy!”

The words came out clear and logical.

Then, with great ceremony, he unzipped his tiny backpack, revealing crumpled snacks and half-empty bottles of water. “See? I didn’t starve. And I wore thick clothes, so I wouldn’t catch a cold!”

But Wesley's face darkened, shadows gathering beneath his gaze. He leaned closer, his voice low and every syllable heavy. "Truett, who gave you the idea to do this?"

Chapter 785

Wesley's voice cut through the room like a blade, drawing every eye to him.

A chilling realization struck everyone at once: if someone had manipulated Truett into running away, that person's cruelty was beyond comprehension.

To exploit a child's innocence just to pressure Wesley and Gabriela into marriage was heartless.

Suspicion rippled through the room. Suddenly, everyone close to Gabriela became a potential culprit. The most obvious suspect? Gabriela herself.

Her heart sank as she felt the weight of their stares. Who could possibly be coaching Truett to do something so reckless?

Oblivious to the tension, Truett puffed out his chest with pride. "I came up with it myself because I'm a genius kid!"

No matter how Wesley and Gabriela pressed him, the boy stubbornly maintained he'd hatched the plan alone.

Loretta and Matthew, their hearts aching for him, stepped in.

Loretta fixed Wesley with a sharp glare. "Truett's been out there for three days, frightened and alone. Now that he's home, he deserves warmth and love, not an interrogation that'll scare him more!"

Matthew scooped Truett into his arms, soothing him. "Don't worry, Truett. With Grandpa here, your parents won't trouble you."

Truett wrapped his arms tightly around Matthew's neck, his eyes sparkling. "Grandpa, you're the best!"

Matthew cherished Truett like a precious gem. Whenever Gabriela tried to discipline her son over matters of principle, Matthew would swoop in, pick the boy up, and shield him without hesitation.

It was the classic grandparent-grandchild bond—overflowing with indulgence and affection.

Truett's closest elder was Matthew, followed by Farley and Ken.

Gabriela frowned, her tone tinged with disapproval. "You're going to spoil him rotten if you keep this up."

Matthew stood firm. “With so many good influences around him, as long as his heart is filled with love, he’ll turn out just fine.”

Truett, sensing Matthew’s protection, clung to his shoulder and flashed a cheeky wink toward Gabriela.

Faced with such an endearing child, Gabriela’s frustration melted away.

Truett was safe—that was enough. She silently thanked the heavens, deciding that lessons in discipline could wait.

Wesley, too, seemed to reach the same conclusion and eased off his questioning.

Seeing their tempers cool, Loretta approached Truett with a warm smile and gently patted his head. “Truett, do you know who I am? You should call me Great-Grandma.”

As Truett’s great-grandmother, she’d waited years to hear that address. Today, she was determined to hear it.

Truett glanced at Gabriela. “Mommy, is Loretta my Great-Grandma?”

Gabriela nodded.

The boy tilted his head. “Mommy, what’s a Great-Grandma?”

With patience, Gabriela explained, “Great-Grandma is your dad’s grandmother. Got it?”

Truett, half-grasping the concept, turned to Loretta and called out, “Great-Grandma!”

His voice was sweet and clear, instantly lighting up Loretta’s face.

Loretta and Matthew whisked Truett off to play nearby, their laughter floating back across the room.

Roger lingered on the sidelines, a pang of unease stirring within him.

Chapter 786

As Wesley’s grandfather, he longed to hear Truett’s sweet voice call him “Great-Grandpa.” Yet his pride, cold and unyielding, held him back.

He’d just dismissed Gabriela with quiet disdain; asking Truett to address him so warmly felt beneath his dignity.

Still, envy gnawed at him. He cleared his throat pointedly in Gabriela’s direction, hoping she’d catch the hint.

Gabriela, however, seemed oblivious, her face glowing with relief as she smiled at Truett.

Roger's brow furrowed. This young woman was hopeless at reading the room.

Just as he considered how to subtly scold her, Wesley seized Gabriela's wrist, his voice low and urgent. "Come with me."

Gabriela followed him outside without protest.

His grip was tight, almost bruising. She bore it until they stepped beyond the villa's threshold. "Wesley, let go," she murmured. "You're hurting me."

Wesley released her, his gaze icy. "Tell me why Truett ran away."

Silence stretched between them, heavy and tense, for what felt like an eternity.

Gabriela stared at him, disbelief etched across her face. Her eyes, still puffy from hours of tears, shimmered.

“Are you suggesting I put Truett up to this?” Her voice, hoarse from crying, trembled with raw disappointment.

Wesley faltered for a moment but quickly steeled himself. “Truett’s so young. You expect me to believe he planned this on his own?”

The boy had packed food and water for days, even bundling up in warm clothes to brave the cold.

Wesley couldn’t fathom a child orchestrating such a scheme without an adult’s guidance.

Gabriela’s shock deepened. “Wesley, you’ve gone too far! Truett is my son! Why would I ever put him in harm’s way?”

“You want me to marry you,” Wesley said flatly, his voice colder than the wind. “That’s motive enough. You even taught him to scribble on my face a few days ago.”

The paint had taken two days to scrub off, forcing him to wear a mask in the meantime—a calculated act, he believed.

“I didn’t teach him that!” Gabriela snapped, exasperation flaring. “I don’t know why Truett did it, but I had nothing to do with it!”

Wesley’s cold stare dismissed her protests. “Don’t let it happen again,” he warned.

Even with Gabriela's patience and affection for Wesley, his accusation pushed her to the edge.

"How dare you doubt me? What gives you the right? Do you really think I'd endanger Truett—make him run away—just to trick you into marrying me? If that's what you believe, then forget the wedding. I'm not desperate to tie my life to yours!"

Her words, sharp and unfiltered, spilled out in a rush of hurt.

Wesley's face darkened. The breeze ruffled his bangs, as if his hair had turned to ice.

"So, you've finally said it," he growled, his voice tight. "In your heart, I'll never measure up to Allan."

Chapter 787

Confronted with his frigid, unyielding expression, Gabriela's chest tightened. Confusion and helplessness flooded her at once.

Two years of waiting, of clinging to hope, shattered in a single moment.

She retreated a few steps, leaving nearly two meters between them—as if distance could shield her from the frost in his eyes.

Yet even from afar, his hostility pressed down on her, stifling and merciless.

“Wesley... is this truly what you think of me? That I’m unworthy of trust? Every word I’ve spoken, every vow of love, was real. There has never been anything between Allan and me. I don’t know who planted such poison in your mind, who twisted the truth until you saw me through their lies. Or perhaps it’s the treatment clouding your memory, making you believe I once cared for Allan. I could explain it all, but you’ve already shut me out—deaf to reason, blind to faith. And maybe... maybe it no longer matters.”

Gabriela’s vision blurred. A slow burn crept into her eyes, and tears spilled over again.

“You can doubt anything about me,” she said, her voice trembling but fierce, “but never my love for Truett. You have no right to judge me! Wesley, this ends now. Believe whatever you like; I won’t trouble you anymore.”

She forced the words out with everything she had, then turned and walked back into the living room without waiting for his response.

Outside the villa, Stewart had already risen and asked Myah to show him out.

At the car, he yanked the door open and, before she could step in, hauled her inside.

Myah flinched. She hated being handled and tried to pull away. “What are you doing?” she snapped.

Stewart's gaze pinned her like a vise; his eyes were cold and assessing, making the cramped car feel unbearably tight.

Myah bristled under the stare and reached for the door, only to find it locked.

"Stewart, what do you want?"

He leaned closer. "Were you behind Truett's disappearance?" he asked, each word measured.

Myah went rigid. Panic flared as she avoided his eyes. "I don't know what you're talking about," she whispered.

"Don't play dumb with me." Stewart's voice dropped, hard as stone.

He closed the distance between them. "I don't care what schemes you're running, or whether Wesley lives or dies. But Gabriela is off-limits for you. You don't get to hurt her or anyone she loves."

"Are you insane?" Myah snapped, deflecting his question with a taunt. "Stewart, who gave you the right to talk to me like that? In Athea, you paid off that doctor and hired a hypnotist—that's why Wesley ended up like this."

Her voice twisted into a cold, sharp laugh. "Tell me... if Gabriela ever learns you used Wesley's illness to take advantage of him, do you think she'll forgive you?"

Stewart's jaw tightened; ruthlessness hardened his eyes. "Bring that up again and I won't hesitate to expose you to Gabriela."

"Go ahead," Myah said, flat and fearless. "Gabriela is kind; she'll forgive a sincere apology. You, on the other hand? Once the truth comes out, she'll never speak to you again."

Chapter 788

She stepped back, voice icy. "Open the door."

The lock clicked. She slipped free and walked back toward the neighborhood without a backward glance.

Stewart stood in silence, his expression a mask carved from shadow.

Gabriela stepped back into the living room, unaware that Stewart had already left.

Matthew's eyes caught her first; concern flickered across his face as he noticed her shaken state.

Leaning closer, he asked quietly, "Did something happen with Wesley?"

Gabriela shook her head, weariness sinking into her bones. “No... I’ve just been so tired lately. I’m going to rest upstairs. Please, take care of Truett for me.”

Everyone urged her to get some rest, and she made her way up to her room.

Pushing the door open, Gabriela slipped inside and sank onto the bed, curling into herself, knees pulled tightly against her chest.

The memory of Wesley’s suspicious, contemptuous gaze stabbed through her heart, leaving a bitter ache.

She pressed her forehead against her knees, whispering through clenched teeth, “Pull yourself together, Gabriela. You’re unstoppable. You don’t break.”

Repeating the words like a mantra, exhaustion finally dragged her under, and she drifted into a restless sleep.

When she awoke, the air was chilly and the room was wrapped in darkness.

A sharp jolt of fear shot through her. She fumbled for the bedside lamp.

Light flooded the room. She blinked against the brightness, her throat burning with dryness.

She padded downstairs for water but froze halfway.

On the living room sofa lay Myah, perfectly still, as if she had dozed off there.

Frowning, Gabriela hurried closer and tried to wake her. "Myah? Why are you sleeping out here in the living room?"

Startled awake, Myah saw Gabriela and immediately flung herself into her arms. "Gabriela!"

"Are you okay?" Gabriela asked at once.

Through sobs, Myah said, "If... if one day you discovered I'd done something to hurt you... would you hate me? Would you drive me away?"

"Of course not." Gabriela brushed the tears from her cheeks, her voice soft as a lullaby. "You have such a gentle heart, Myah. Even if you made a mistake, I would know it wasn't intentional."

Myah stiffened, her breath catching.

“Don’t cry anymore,” Gabriela coaxed. “After everything it took to heal your eyes, you’ll ruin them again with all these tears.”

Myah stared at her blankly.

Gabriela’s tender eyes seemed to see right through people. Her loose hair spilled over her shoulders like a silken waterfall, making her look fragile yet irresistibly graceful.

Without thinking, Myah whispered, “Gabriela, you’re so beautiful.”

In her heart, she thought of Allan—how handsome he had been, and how perfectly Gabriela had matched him.

If only Allan were still alive, the two of them would surely have lived a blissful life together.

Gabriela smiled gently. “And you are beautiful too, Myah.” She stroked Myah’s hair with sisterly affection. “Go back to your room now. If you sleep out here, you’ll catch a cold.”

Chapter 789

“Alright.”

After sending Myah back to her room, Gabriela quietly checked on Truett.

The little boy lay sprawled across the pillow like a tiny frog, his blanket kicked to the floor, sleeping soundly without a care in the world.

Gabriela pulled the blanket over him, then stayed by his side instead of returning to her own room.

Watching him breathe softly, her heart gradually calmed, and before long, she drifted into sleep beside her son.

The long night slipped away.

The next day, morning light spilled into the room.

After a full night's rest, the heaviness in Gabriela's heart seemed to lift; the fatigue and sorrow that had clung to her were gone.

In truth, she had never had the luxury of indulging in weakness. Her past had been nothing but survival, each day demanding her full strength.

Beside her, Truett stirred awake. The moment his eyes opened, he leapt into her arms, beaming. "Good morning, Mommy!"

Gabriela pressed a kiss to his cheek. “Good morning, Truett.”

The little boy’s smile widened. “Mommy, you look so happy today. Did Daddy agree to marry you?”

Gabriela froze for a beat. Yesterday’s quarrel flashed back—Wesley’s harsh accusations, her own reckless retorts.

Marry? It felt like they were more like enemies now.

The memory of Wesley’s stormy expression pricked her with regret.

Given the circumstances, his suspicions were almost inevitable. Why had she been so impulsive, so sharp with her words? She had only made things harder between them.

Suppressing the ache in her chest, Gabriela smiled faintly and asked, “Truett, if you really want to know when Daddy and I will marry, then you must first tell me: who told you to run away from home?”

Truett’s little mouth drooped into a pout. “Mommy, I came up with that plan all by myself! I’m a genius boy!”

Looking at his stubborn little face, Gabriela’s resolve softened.

Perhaps Truett really had come up with the idea on his own. After all, someone he trusted so deeply would never deliberately hurt him.

Gabriela realized that doubting everyone around her wasn't good.

For now, she chose to believe her son's words and let the matter rest.

Life quickly swept her back into its demands.

The princess's handbag had to be completed by April of the following year. With deadlines looming, Gabriela threw herself into work.

Between the pressure of her projects and the rift with Wesley, she had neither the time nor the heart to coax him.

Romance could wait; for the coming months, her world would revolve around work alone.

Meanwhile, Wesley hadn't laid eyes on Gabriela in days, and his mood soured with each one that passed.

The tension seemed to infect Apex Group itself. Employees noticed the shift immediately: their boss's temper had grown razor-sharp, his patience worn thin. Even the smallest mistake drew his ire, and the staff moved with nervous precision, careful not to breathe wrong in his presence.

Chapter 790

Gabriela and Wesley were locked in a silent war—frigid at home, yet set ablaze in society's whispers like dry leaves to a spark.

"Wait! Mr. Moss already has a son? If there's a son, then there must be a mother. No wonder he's been impervious to every woman all these years!"

"Didn't Rebecca get engaged to him two years ago? Then, out of nowhere, the whole thing was called off, dismissed as 'incompatibility'? Looks like the truth is he was already involved."

"Involved? That's not just involvement—it's history. The boy is three and a half now. Factor in the pregnancy, and Gabriela must have been with him a year before Rebecca ever entered the picture."

"So that's it..."

Tongues wagged, drawing their own conclusions. Rebecca, with all her family's influence, had forced her way into the engagement. But in the end, Wesley had turned his back and chosen love over power.

"Rebecca once flaunted her family's prestige. But now, with Gabriela revealed as Matthew's daughter, no one can predict who'll stand higher in the future."

“Two sisters vying for the same man—what a spectacle.”

“My money’s on Gabriela. She already has the trump card. That child alone secures her position.”

Ever since the news of Wesley’s child broke, Rebecca had been shadowed by whispers wherever she went. The endless gossip grated on her nerves.

At the Holt family’s party that evening, the same women huddled together, giggling and speculating, even betting that Wesley would marry Gabriela within six months.

Rebecca’s chest burned with resentment, but she kept her smile poised as she glided toward them.

“What’s everyone discussing so animatedly?”

She expected guilty looks, but they merely paused.

One socialite—long her rival—tossed her hair and said boldly, “We were reminiscing about the Blue Star from two years back.”

The Blue Star—to outsiders, an upscale lounge; to those in the know, a discreet venue where wealthy women entertained male companions.

It had been shut down overnight after crossing the wrong people, a lesson in the dangers of provoking a man like Wesley Moss.

Their chatter continued, sharp and relentless. Rebecca waited in silence, lips pressed tight, for the innuendo to subside.

Then Alissa, lounging elegantly among them, tilted her head. "Rebecca, was it because of Gabriela that you visited those escorts back then? Trying to make Wesley jealous, only to humiliate yourself?"

Rebecca's face paled, then flushed with fury. "Which of your eyes saw me there? Be careful with your accusations."

"My apologies, Rebecca!" Alissa replied, patting her chest theatrically, her smirk bordering on cruel. "But you're always glaring and snapping. Could it be bitterness from still being unmarried? Is that why you're so combative?"

Rebecca's expression hardened. Two years ago, she would have dragged Alissa out by her hair.

But tonight, she held her chin high. "Alissa, we're both women. Why must we wound each other? Isn't it cheap to attack me over age?"

"Oh, now you remember we're both women?" Alissa shot back. "Where was that solidarity when you were throwing your weight around, treating everyone else like dirt?"

Alissa's bluntness matched Gabriela's.

Rebecca snorted. "No wonder you get along with Gabriela. You're both equally crude."

"Jealous?" Alissa arched a brow. "Of course, the illustrious Miss Howard must find us commoners unbearable. No wonder you struggle to keep friends."