

His kiss 811

Chapter 811

Wesley's expression darkened, like storm clouds gathering overhead.

Gabriela recognized the futility of any words she might offer, so she surrendered to silence. "All right."

The deepest rift between her and Wesley centered on Allan—a wound that refused to heal.

The one stoking this smoldering conflict was Myah, the person Allan had treasured above all others.

Allan had placed Myah under their protection, and they would sooner betray themselves than allow harm to touch her.

For now, Gabriela could only wait for Wesley's anger to subside before attempting to bridge the chasm between them with careful explanations.

Wesley studied her face for what felt like an eternity, recognizing her retreat from battle, then turned his back on her—his disappointment cutting deeper than any argument.

That night, sleep abandoned many.

Gabriela rose with the dawn and carried the counterfeit ring to the jewelry store where the authentic repairs had once been made.

The clerk offered her a practiced smile of welcome.

Gabriela's eyes swept over the unfamiliar face before she produced the repair receipt and requested the original clerk who had served her.

The new clerk's expression crumpled with regret. "Dani handed in her resignation just days ago."

What cruel timing.

Gabriela's brow furrowed as suspicion crystallized in her mind like frost on glass.

The new clerk asked whether she needed Dani for a particular matter.

Gabriela offered nothing more than a casual explanation. Dani had always attended to her needs, creating a comfortable familiarity.

Since she had already verified the repaired ring's authenticity with her signature days earlier, confronting anyone with this fake would serve no purpose.

Worse still, it might draw unwanted attention from those who watched from the shadows.

Gabriela left the jewelry store and immediately called Tyler, enlisting his investigative skills to uncover Dani's secrets.

Tyler accepted the challenge with enthusiasm. "I'll unearth every detail about this Dani within forty-eight hours!"

Previously, Gabriela had tasked Tyler with tracking a mysterious man in white, but the investigation had yielded nothing—a failure that gnawed at his professional pride.

This time, he was determined to deliver swift, decisive results.

Gabriela thanked him, then steered her car toward the company headquarters.

When she arrived, she found the entrance transformed into a bustling theater of curiosity.

The fifth floor held the distinction of being Lakeshore Building's most economical space, and since Haynes Group remained modest in size, visitors from other floors rarely graced their presence. What extraordinary event had drawn such a crowd today?

Gabriela watched for several minutes before understanding dawned like sunrise.

After yesterday's infamous "belt incident," Alissa had become Lakeshore Building's most captivating topic of conversation, drawing even the most stunning women from neighboring floors.

"Billy might seem like nothing more than a work-obsessed machine, but he's undeniably handsome, with a commanding presence. I have to admit, your boldness in tugging his belt left me genuinely impressed," one woman said.

Another asked if Alissa had seized the chance to claim Billy's heart.

The sixth-floor receptionist chimed in with seasoned advice. "You didn't capitalize on the moment? How timid! Get his number, arrange lunches and movies, and shower him with attention. Even the most resistant heart can't withstand such persistent devotion. You'll have captured him within seven days!"

"That approach is entirely inappropriate," Alissa protested sharply. "What makes you assume I have any desire to pursue Billy?"

Chapter 812

As someone who placed tremendous value on maintaining her refined image, she could never lower herself to such aggressive romantic tactics.

Though she had to admit Billy possessed striking looks and magnetic charisma—qualities that still fell considerably short of her exacting standards.

Overwhelmed by the relentless gossip swirling around her, Alissa pivoted and spotted Gabriela observing from within the crowd.

Her eyes sparkled with recognition and desperate relief as she pushed through the circle of chattering spectators toward her salvation. “Ms. Haynes, your arrival couldn’t be more perfectly timed!”

Gabriela startled at her new assistant’s sudden burst of energy.

Alissa claimed Gabriela’s arm like a lifeline. “Could everyone kindly make a pathway for us? Today marks my inaugural day of employment, and arriving even sixty seconds late would cost me a thousand-dollar self-imposed fine. Are any of you prepared to cover that expense?”

Hearing their gossip session carried such a hefty price tag, the crowd swiftly parted like the Red Sea.

Still gripping Gabriela’s hand, Alissa guided them smoothly through the company entrance.

Gabriela settled at her desk, spread the day’s files before her, then looked up with genuine concern. “What exactly happened between you and Billy?”

Alissa handed Gabriela a steaming cup of coffee before replying with unmistakable gloom. “Ms. Haynes, I swear on everything sacred that I never intended to unfasten Billy’s belt. The entire episode was nothing more than a series of unfortunate coincidences.”

She painted the scene with vivid detail. “Can you fathom such rotten luck? As gravity claimed me, my desperate hand found Billy’s belt, and through some cosmic joke, my fingers struck the buckle’s release button!”

Alissa typically embraced life with wild abandon, surrounding herself with friends from every imaginable background. She navigated relationships with both men and women with equal ease, earning recognition as one of the city’s most carefree wealthy daughters.

The belt incident stood alone as the most mortifying chapter in her otherwise adventurous life.

“Your lack of romantic interest in Billy brings me considerable relief,” Gabriela admitted, her mind drifting to a painful memory from years past when Billy had opened his heart to love. “Four years ago, Billy poured his soul into a romantic proposal meant for one special woman.

“The attempt ended in heartbreak, and I’m still uncertain what followed afterward.

“If Billy eventually won that woman’s heart, then your accidental intimacy would cross ethical boundaries.”

Alissa hadn’t expected this hidden layer of Billy’s romantic history, and for reasons she couldn’t quite identify, a shadow of melancholy settled over her spirits. She dismissed the feeling with a casual wave. “Put your mind at ease. Someone as superficial as me could never develop feelings for Billy!”

Besides, her father hoped to arrange a marriage with the prestigious Wilson family and would wage war against any relationship with Billy.

Shaking off her unexpected mood shift, Alissa straightened with professional determination. “Ms. Haynes, since today is my official debut, what tasks await? Please guide me.”

Gabriela summoned an experienced employee to shepherd Alissa through company orientation and provide comprehensive insight into the organization’s future growth trajectory.

Once Alissa left for her tour, silence reclaimed the office, and Gabriela’s thoughts inevitably wandered back to Wesley.

The conflict with Wesley remained within her power to mend through effort and persistence. After all, her greatest talent had always been swallowing her pride and accepting blame.

Chapter 813

But how could she possibly navigate the treacherous waters surrounding Myah?

Myah held the sacred position of Allan’s beloved sister—untouchable and cherished beyond measure.

Moreover, Allan had once saved Wesley’s life, creating a debt that could never be repaid.

Under no circumstances could Gabriela bear the weight of disappointing Allan.

The deeper her thoughts spiraled, the more her skull felt ready to crack under the mounting pressure.

Wesley, it seemed, wrestled with equally torturous frustration.

Billy watched his boss with the careful attention of a man observing a sleeping volcano.

Today, Wesley had swept into the company wrapped in shadows so thick they seemed to darken the very air around him.

“Mr. Moss, did some disagreement arise between you and Ms. Haynes?” Billy ventured with diplomatic caution. “People often say lovers may clash like thunder and lightning, but they always find their way back to sunshine. Perhaps a touch more tenderness on your part—”

“Do you find yourself drowning in idle time?” Wesley’s glacial stare could have frozen hellfire itself. “Have you resolved every lingering matter concerning Alissa?”

Ever since the belt incident had spread like wildfire through the building, Billy had become the unwilling star of endless gossip. Even during client dinners, business associates would abandon serious discussion to probe the scandalous “belt situation” with barely concealed amusement.

Billy's mouth twitched as yesterday's social catastrophe replayed in his mind. He snapped to rigid attention. "Mr. Moss, the morning meeting commences in precisely five minutes. Should we proceed to the conference room immediately?"

Yesterday's postponed meeting demanded today's attention with unforgiving urgency.

Wesley responded with arctic finality. "Let's proceed."

Over the following days, Wesley and Gabriela immersed themselves in their separate professional worlds, neither willing to bridge the silence that had settled between them like morning frost.

Wesley wielded his overwhelming workload as both shield and sword, avoiding Gabriela's villa with almost surgical precision.

Gabriela truly was buried beneath an avalanche of responsibilities, requiring no pretense whatsoever. She hadn't sent even a single message in Wesley's direction.

Wesley stared at his silent phone for forty-eight relentless hours, massaging his temples as shadows gathered beneath his furrowed brow.

The ache wasn't confined to his head alone; every fiber of his being seemed to throb with unspoken frustration.

Gabriela—that heartless little deceiver—had committed her transgressions and still possessed the audacity to leave him suspended in this maddening limbo.

Just as his irritation reached a boiling point, his phone shattered the silence with an urgent ring. He seized it immediately, only to hear Jaycob’s voice through the speaker.

Jaycob invited him to dinner at Golden Days, one of those glittering establishments where business and pleasure intertwined.

As commercial relationships expanded their reach, such social obligations became as inevitable as the changing seasons.

Beneath the venue’s dazzling lights and flowing wine, maintaining elaborate facades had become an art practiced by necessity.

Wesley typically regarded these dinner theaters with barely concealed disdain and had prepared to decline with his usual curt refusal, but after a moment’s contemplation, he surprised himself by saying, “I’ll arrive at nine tonight.”

After ending the call and casting his phone aside like a discarded thought, Wesley buried his frustration beneath layers of ice and steel, returning to his familiar mask of composed indifference.

After all, he had never been a man who required anyone else’s presence to survive and thrive.

While Wesley headed to Golden Days, Gabriela arrived at Tyler's bar.

Tyler had already tracked down Dani and brought her to a private room on the bar's second floor for Gabriela to question.

Dani, who had quit her job and fled to her hometown, had been expertly concealed—until a group of burly men forcibly brought her back to the city and delivered her to the bar. She arrived confused and terrified.

The moment she saw Gabriela, clarity struck her: she'd been found after only a few days in hiding.

Without preamble, Gabriela produced the counterfeit ring and demanded, "What do you know about this fake ring?"

Dani initially feigned ignorance. "Miss Haynes, isn't this the ring you brought to our shop for repair? Is something wrong? You approved it when you picked it up..."

Gabriela's faint smile betrayed her impatience. With a glance at Tyler, she gave a silent signal.

Tyler clapped sharply, and instantly, several imposing men burst into the room.

Their tattooed arms flexed menacingly as they loomed over Dani.

An ordinary young woman, Dani was already intimidated by Tyler's towering presence. The added pressure from these men nearly made her lose control, and she confessed in a panic.

"Miss Haynes, your lost diamond was incredibly rare—its cut and type were unique," Dani stammered. "I went to great lengths to find a similar one and arranged for a factory to cut it. But before I could place the order, a woman in her early twenties approached me, mentioned your name, and urged us to rush the repair."

Assuming the woman was Gabriela's assistant, Dani accepted the diamond fragment without suspicion and sent it to the factory.

Later, the same woman discreetly offered her two million dollars to craft an identical ring.

Knowing a skilled diamond cutter, Dani split the payment with them and swiftly produced the replica.

After delivering the fake ring, the woman paid an extra half-million to ensure Dani's silence.

Dani took the money, resigned immediately after Gabriela retrieved the ring, and fled to her hometown.

Kneeling, Dani pleaded softly, “Miss Haynes, I’ve never done anything like this before. Please forgive me just this once. My mother has uterine cancer and needs costly surgery—and afterward, she’ll need my care... Please, let me go!”

After a moment’s thought, Gabriela showed Dani a photo of Myah on her phone. “Is this the woman who asked you to make the fake ring?”

Dani studied the image and nodded vigorously. “Yes, that’s her!”

Myah had made no effort to hide her identity, leading Dani and her contact to believe it was a minor, routine job—so they agreed without hesitation.

But now, facing the ring’s rightful owner, Dani grasped the severity of her mistake and pleaded desperately for forgiveness. Acknowledging her error, she begged Gabriela for mercy again and again.

Seeing Dani’s desperation, Gabriela thought of her own mother’s death from cancer and sighed. “You can leave. But after your mother recovers and is discharged, turn yourself in.”

Stunned, Dani thanked her profusely. “Thank you, Miss Haynes. I’ll repay your kindness someday!”

After Dani left, Gabriela sank onto the sofa, a trace of confusion in her eyes.

Tyler sat beside her, trying to lighten the mood. “Gabriela, stumped by a little indecision?”

He knew her as a relentless woman who, even with a fever, could still ace exams and thrive under pressure. No matter the circumstances, she remained resolute—dedicated to earning her living and embracing her life.

Chapter 815

Yet today, a fake ring had thrown her off balance.

“Don’t worry, Tyler,” she replied. “I know my next step.”

Gabriela loved Myah, but she also had boundaries.

After spending half an hour at the bar, sipping a drink to steady herself, she went to confront Myah.

Instead of talking at the villa, Gabriela led Myah to a quiet street outside the neighborhood.

They walked in silence for a long stretch until Gabriela showed Myah a video of Dani’s confession.

“Myah,” Gabriela said quietly, “that night, you slipped into my room, took my ring, and deliberately dislodged a small diamond. When you gave it back, you dropped it on purpose—making me think the diamond was lost in my room, where I couldn’t find it. You had the diamond shard all along, didn’t you?”

By removing the diamond, Myah had ensured Gabriela would need the ring repaired—giving her the perfect opportunity to manipulate the shop staff. Every move had been calculated.

Gabriela never imagined the girl she treated like a sister could be so deceitful—and so malicious.

Myah froze, stunned and panicked. She couldn't believe Gabriela had gathered evidence so quickly—and even recorded it. "Gabriela, why are you investigating me?" Myah asked, her voice trembling. "Are you going to show Wesley this video?"

Gabriela studied Myah closely. Her recently healed eyes sparkled with a fragile purity that stirred protective instincts.

A wave of sorrow hit Gabriela as she said slowly, "Myah, I don't blame you for liking Wesley."

After all, Wesley's exceptional qualities made it natural for a young, naive girl to develop a crush.

"But you shouldn't have schemed against me," she continued. "We are friends, but you secretly betrayed me. Myah... you've disappointed me."

Seeing Gabriela's weary expression, Myah's breath caught.

She'd only wanted to drive a wedge between Gabriela and Wesley—not make Gabriela despise her.

Tears streaming down her face, she dropped to her knees. “Gabriela, please don’t show Wesley the video. I swear I’ll never do it again. I don’t like him anymore!”

Gabriela gently but firmly pulled Myah to her feet. She said, “Myah, you don’t need to do this—and you don’t have to use Allan to guilt me. Allan and I were close friends, but that doesn’t mean I’m forever indebted to him. I will tell Wesley and let him decide.”

“No!” Myah cried, clutching Gabriela’s arm in desperation. “You are the one who got Allan killed! How can you say you owe him nothing?”

Gabriela paused, then gave a bitter smile. “We are all devastated by Allan’s death. I don’t want to keep reliving it. But the truth is, he didn’t check the traffic lights...”

“It was you! You are the reason he died!” Myah shrieked, her voice cracking with hysteria. “That day, he was on his way to confess to you. He had ordered flowers and bought movie tickets. He was so excited, so distracted—that’s why he wasn’t careful!”

She pulled a diary from her bag and thrust it into Gabriela’s hands.

“Read it yourself! His diary spells it out clearly. That day, he ordered flowers, bought movie tickets, dreaming of confessing his love to you—only to lose his life for it.”

Gabriela clutched the diary, her hand shaking uncontrollably.

After all these years, could this buried truth really exist?

She struggled to accept it.

Sensing her disbelief, Myah said icily, "You recognize Allan's handwriting. Check if it's fake."

Chapter 816

Gabriela stood motionless, the diary trembling in her hands.

"Gabriela, don't you even think of opening it," Myah said, deceptively gentle as she flipped the book to a random page.

The entry described the day of Gabriela's college entrance exam.

"Gabriela's arm had been scorched, and a fever burned through her. Even the doctor urged her to skip the test and try again next year. She refused. She said college was her only way out of the nightmare at home.

Those words landed like a blow. Respecting her choice, I insisted on getting her to the exam on time.

While she sat inside battling questions and exhaustion, I waited outside for two and a half hours.

When she finally stepped out, hollowed by the effort, I rushed forward. All I wanted was to sweep her into my arms and promise she'd never be abandoned again.

But when I met those tired yet luminous eyes, I only squeezed her hand and whispered, 'You might not have a family... but I can be your family, okay?'"

Gabriela remembered Allan, how he'd roared up on his motorcycle that morning in a white shirt snapping in the wind, and how, riding behind him, she'd silently vowed to repay him one day.

Tears welled in her eyes.

Myah watched her, her expression softening with shared sorrow.

"If Allan hadn't died," she said quietly, "you would have been his. Since he's gone, you owe it to him to take care of me. And don't you dare tell Wesley about the ring."

Gabriela lifted her head slowly, meeting Myah's gaze with quiet steadiness.

"You're wrong, Myah. I don't belong to anyone. I belong to myself." Her voice was calm, edged with steel. "I grieve for Allan, too, but his accident isn't my fault. I cared for you because I promised him I would. That promise doesn't mean you can trample me. You've stopped respecting both me and yourself. So I'm no longer bound to let his memory be held hostage by your whims."

Myah's eyes widened, disbelief cracking through her composure. "How can you say that so calmly, so selfishly, while clutching Allan's diary?"

"For the last time," Gabriela said, snapping the book shut. Something in her softened, then hardened into resolve. "I won't tell Wesley about the ring. But you're an adult now. You must answer for your own choices. This is the last time I'll indulge you. Take care of yourself."

She turned on her heel and walked away into the neighborhood.

Only when Gabriela's silhouette disappeared did Myah crumple to the damp, cold ground. No one hurried to her side this time.

"Myah," a voice drawled from the shadows, "what did you do this time?"

Myah glanced up, her expression hardening into a sneer. "What are you doing here?"

Stewart crouched beside her and extended a hand. "It looks like Gabriela saw right through you. If you stay like this, you'll catch a cold, and she won't be there to pick you up."

The words struck like a lance. Myah glowered at him. "Hmph. If I'm unhappy, you won't be either. I'll go straight to Gabriela and tell her everything you've done to Wesley!"

Stewart's brows drew together, his voice dropping low. "I don't take kindly to threats."

"You think I'll be scared just because you glare at me?" Myah shot back. "In Wesley's eyes, you're nothing but a schemer. Once he knows the truth, he'll deal with you himself. Just wait."

"Wesley?" At the mention of Wesley's name, Stewart's expression shifted. His sharp gaze flickered with sudden clarity, then he chuckled softly.

So that was it. Myah's sudden hostility toward Gabriela wasn't random. It was jealousy. Of course, it was always about Wesley. The man's pull was strong enough to warp anyone's heart.

Unwilling to continue the exchange, Myah turned to leave.

But Stewart's voice cut through the night, deliberate and smooth. "Do you want Wesley and Gabriela torn apart for good?"

Her steps faltered. Myah whipped around, suspicion and curiosity tangling in her eyes. "What are you suggesting?"

Stewart leaned close, murmuring a few quiet words into her ear.

Myah hesitated, doubt flickering across her face. "Will that really work?"

"There's only one way to find out," Stewart replied. A faint smile curved his lips. "The method is yours to decide."

He walked away without looking back.

Myah stood frozen in place. Only after a long while did she drag herself back to the villa, her steps unsteady, her eyes clouded with unease.

Meanwhile, in the living room, Truett spun and bounced with unrestrained joy, laughter echoing off the walls as music pulsed through the space. Loretta tapped her fingers along the rhythm, her eyes flicking anxiously toward the door.

"Myah, you look pale. Are you feeling okay?"

Gabriela's gaze followed, a shadow of concern crossing her face, though she said nothing.

Myah shook her head, a faint, tired smile ghosting her lips. "It's nothing... maybe I caught a chill earlier. I'll head to my room for a bit, Loretta."

"If you're not feeling well, you should rest," Loretta said softly before turning her attention back to Truett's carefree dancing.

Later that evening, Gabriela sank into silence, Allan's diary resting in her lap. The final entry ended the day before his accident: "Bought flowers. Got movie tickets. About to confess to Gabriela. Hope it all goes well."

The words stopped abruptly.

The flowers never reached her. The movie tickets went unused. No one would ever know if his confession would have succeeded, not even Gabriela.

A cold ache gripped her chest. Such a kind soul was snatched away too soon. Life was cruel in its indifference.

She closed the diary gently and rose, walking toward Myah's bedroom.

She paused at the door, hand hovering. For a moment, she almost knocked.

But she steadied herself, forcing patience. Myah had gone too far this time, but tomorrow, she would confront her properly.

That moment's hesitation, however, would cost her more than she could imagine.

The next morning, Gabriela found a letter folded neatly on her nightstand.

"Gabriela, I was wrong about the ring. You've been so good to me, and yet I treated you terribly. I'm sorry. I'm leaving and won't trouble you anymore. I'm an adult and must take responsibility for my actions. I'll manage on my own. Please don't worry about me."

The words struck like a knife, sharp and unyielding.

Regret surged violently in her chest. Perhaps she shouldn't have spoken so harshly the night before. Myah had always been sensitive, and Gabriela had failed to see it.

Heart hammering, she snatched her phone and dialed Wesley, worry and guilt twisting in her stomach.

The moment Wesley learned Myah was missing, he bolted from the office, his mind a storm of fear. He ordered his team to search relentlessly, dispatching people in every direction.

Loretta's face paled as realization struck her. She blurted out urgently, her voice trembling, "Myah... she came to me late last night. She said she missed her brother and something about wanting to see him." The memory made her voice crack. "I thought she was just sad, so I comforted her. I didn't see... I should have noticed something was wrong. It's my fault... I've neglected her..."

Gabriela's stomach twisted; her face drained of color. The truth hit her hard. She, too, had failed Myah.

"Could she... be at Remembrance Park?" Gabriela asked in a low, urgent voice.

That was where Allan's ashes were interred.

Wesley's eyes sharpened immediately. Without hesitation, he jumped into his car and sped toward the cemetery, Gabriela following in the backseat.

When they arrived, their worst fears were confirmed. There, in the biting cold, Myah knelt before Allan's tombstone, shivering, pale, her thin clothes offering little protection against the freezing air.

Wesley and Gabriela shouted in unison, their voices breaking as they ran toward her.

But three hours of kneeling in the cold had taken its toll. Myah's lips had turned blue; her eyes were glassy with despair. And before they could reach her, she pulled a blade from her sleeve and slashed across her wrist.

Chapter 818

Myah's blade cut deep with desperate force, crimson spilling from the savage wound.

Wesley and Gabriela arrived to find her unconscious, a dark pool spreading beneath her still form. Horror struck them both silent.

“Myah!” Wesley tore fabric from his shirt and wrapped her wrist with trembling hands. The makeshift bandage slowed the relentless flow.

He swept her into his arms and bolted down the mountainside, his boots pounding against stone and earth. Gabriela followed close behind, terror gripping her chest as blood seeped through the crude dressing.

Myah’s eyes fluttered open in Wesley’s embrace. His jaw was carved into harsh lines of worry above her, and his heart thundered against her ear like war drums. This man, who moved through life with such elegant confidence, now ran as though death itself chased them.

“Wesley...” she whispered.

She had never imagined he harbored such fierce concern for her. A quiet contentment washed over her as she pressed closer to his chest, drinking in each powerful beat. The rhythm carried her back to childhood — to the days when her brother’s presence had meant safety. An overwhelming desire seized her then: to claim this man completely, to never let him slip away.

“Myah, stay with me! We’re almost there,” Wesley called out between ragged breaths.

At the mountain’s base, he settled her gently into the backseat, then moved toward the driver’s door.

Her fingers locked around his neck. “Don’t leave me — I’m terrified!”

Wesley’s voice softened with infinite patience. “We have to reach the hospital. I promise I’ll stay right beside you through everything.”

“You’re deceiving me,” she said, her voice cracking. “Allan made identical promises before he abandoned me forever.”

She tightened her grip — and her wound split open again, releasing a fresh torrent of blood. Gabriela noticed Wesley’s shirt soaked crimson and stepped forward.

“You tend to Myah. I’ll take the wheel.”

There was no time for debate. Wesley accepted with a sharp nod.

Gabriela slid into the driver’s seat and handled the car with surprising skill, racing through city streets to the nearest medical center. The gash ran dangerously deep, but their swift arrival saved precious minutes. After twelve careful stitches, the doctor declared Myah stable enough for discharge.

“Clean the wound daily with antiseptic, maintain a light diet, and return next week for stitch removal,” the doctor instructed.

Gabriela thanked him before accompanying Wesley and Myah home.

Relief flooded the faces of those who had waited in anguish. The household surrounded Myah with concerned questions while Loretta paced restlessly nearby.

“Myah,” Loretta said gently, “whenever troubles weigh on your heart, come to me first. Never suffer alone — we’ll face whatever comes together.”

Myah sank into the sofa cushions, her expression a mixture of guilt and fragile sweetness. “Forgive me, Loretta. I never meant to cause such worry.”

Ken prepared soup while the family settled around Myah, watching over her recovery. Only after ensuring her safety did Wesley pick up the note she had left behind. Its contents carved deep lines of worry across his brow. He turned to Gabriela.

“Tell me exactly what happened last night.”

He had anticipated tension over the ring — but never devastation like this.

Guilt transformed Gabriela’s features as she addressed Myah directly. “My words last night were cruel and unnecessary. I apologize. The ring means nothing now. Just promise me you’ll never attempt something so reckless again.”

Watching Gabriela's confession, something flickered behind Myah's gaze. "Gabriela, your apologies aren't required. I'm grown now, and you owe me nothing. You were justified in asking me to leave. Taking your ring was wrong."

Tears pooled in her eyes as she spoke, each word measured and deliberate. "Once I heal, I'll go — and I swear never to burden anyone with such desperate acts again."

No one seemed to grasp the deeper currents beneath her words. Silence claimed the room. Seconds stretched into minutes. For Gabriela, the quiet became suffocating.

Wesley's eyes found hers, sharp with disapproval.

"What ring?" Even Loretta sounded surprised. "Gabriela, what piece of jewelry could possibly matter this much? If Myah wants it, just give it to her — or have something similar made."

At his grandmother's words, Wesley's expression hardened to ice. The truth crystallized in his mind: Gabriela's concern had never been about the ring itself. When faced with consequences, she had refused accountability and shifted all blame onto Myah. He had gravely misjudged the situation.

Shock rendered Gabriela speechless as she watched Myah's manipulation unfold with chilling precision.

Myah bowed her head with practiced sorrow. "Wesley, I'm exhausted. Would you help me to my room?"

Wesley offered his arm without hesitation.

Gabriela reached out, desperate to explain. “The ring —”

Disappointment clouded Wesley’s gaze as he cut her short. “We’re done discussing the ring. The matter ends here. Permanently.”

Loretta nodded with maternal concern. “Exactly, Gabriela. Myah has such a gentle, reserved nature. When something finally captures her interest, you should gladly share it.”

A triumphant smile bloomed silently across Myah’s lips. Intelligence might favor Gabriela — but when Myah struck with calculated precision, her rival stood utterly defenseless. Gabriela understood with crystalline clarity that her words would fall on deaf ears now. Who would suspect such a sweet-faced girl — one who had painted herself in blood mere hours earlier — of elaborate deception, without ironclad proof?

Yet the haunting image of Myah’s crimson-soaked form held Gabriela paralyzed, stopping her from revealing the evidence she possessed.

After the household surrendered to sleep, Gabriela seized her moment.

“Myah, what drives this madness?” she asked quietly. “I warned you — that was your final reprieve. Did you mistake my words for empty threats born of fleeting anger?”

Myah's gaze remained fixed downward, her dark lashes trembling like captured butterflies. When she finally lifted her face, tears cascaded down her cheeks in silver streams.

"Gabriela, this isn't what I wanted," she whispered. "But you must understand — Wesley carries Allan's heart within him. His pulse beats with the same rhythm as my brother's. I only seek closeness to Wesley because, in this vast, lonely world, he alone feels like family to me."

She slipped from the edge of the bed and dropped deliberately to her knees before Gabriela.

"Gabriela, I'm begging you. For Allan's memory, let Wesley belong to me. I need him beside me forever — and he has sworn to protect me always. You're the one who should step aside."

Shock sent Gabriela stumbling backward several steps. She had never fathomed that Myah's obsession with Wesley could run so deep — or turn so dangerous. But who was Gabriela, after all? Neither Marie's vicious schemes nor Phyllis's ruthless manipulations had brought her to her knees. Myah would fare no better.

Gabriela's composure returned like steel finding its temper. No matter how elaborate Myah's justifications, her principles remained unshakable. She had sworn to Allan that she would guard Myah with fierce devotion — but if Myah persisted in crossing forbidden boundaries, tolerance would harden into something far less forgiving.

"Myah," Gabriela said evenly, "Wesley pledged to shelter you for life. But gratitude and love live in entirely different worlds. We both know this truth — I pray you can accept it. I'm offering you one chance: confess everything to Wesley yourself."

“You’re deceiving yourself!” Myah’s voice shattered into hysteria, her angelic mask crumbling to reveal something twisted beneath. “You’re the one who hungers for Wesley while hiding behind false righteousness! You haven’t even tried to win him! How can you be so certain his heart doesn’t beat for me?”

Confronted with Myah’s unhinged outburst, anger flared in Gabriela’s chest.

“Myah,” she said sharply. “Whether Wesley loves you or not gives you no right to demand that my entire world surrender to your desires.”

Chapter 820

Wesley’s memories churned in chaos. If his heart leaned toward Myah out of old debts, Gabriela could learn to accept it. She would never beg for his affection — but she refused to bow to the warped logic Myah clung to.

Tears brimmed in Myah’s eyes as Gabriela’s words lashed at her. “Gabriela, when have you ever truly cared for me?” she cried, her voice cracking under the weight of sorrow. “After Allan died, you vanished for four long years, hiding from reality. I was left behind, blind and alone, with no Moss family to turn to. Every day was a tightrope between despair and survival. Where were you then?”

She took a shuddering breath. “You were meant to marry Allan. Instead, he died — and now his heart beats inside Wesley. And even the woman Allan loved is slipping away to him. All I’ve ever wanted was to reclaim a fragment of what was stolen. Is that so wrong?”

Gabriela stood frozen, stunned that after all this time, the wound still festered so deeply in Myah’s heart.

Noticing her shock, Myah let out a jagged, bitter laugh through her sobs. “Why are you acting surprised? I’ve told you this before, but you dismissed it — you thought I was lashing out in spite.”

Her voice dropped to a whisper. “Gabriela, after Allan was gone, you were all I had left. But to you, I’ve always been optional. You’re surrounded by people who matter — Truett, Wesley, Tyler, Farley, Ken... Even Tessa and Aubrey stand closer to you than I ever did.”

For years, Myah had played the part of the obedient, faultless girl, her mask stitched together by fear. She dreaded that if she asked too much, if she ever pushed too hard, she would be discarded and forgotten. So she had molded herself into the harmless shadow, desperate to prove she wasn’t a burden dragging anyone down.

Watching her break down now, Gabriela’s anger dissolved into sorrow. Whatever else stood between them, Myah was still Allan’s cherished sister — the same fragile girl Gabriela had once promised to protect. She shouldn’t have let her words cut so sharply.

Gabriela reached out and brushed a stray lock of hair from Myah’s face, her voice low and steady. “I’ve always thought of you as my sister. How could you possibly be expendable?”

A fragile hope flickered in Myah’s eyes. “If you really see me as your sister... then let me have Wesley.”

Gabriela inhaled slowly and wrapped Myah’s hand in hers. “Myah, Wesley isn’t something I can hand to anyone. He’s not mine to give. Caring for him, no matter how deeply, doesn’t justify hurting yourself. You acted on impulse. Why don’t you tell Wesley the truth yourself?”

Myah snatched her hand back as if burned. “If I don’t tell him,” she asked, her voice flat and hard, “will you run to Wesley with the evidence? I begged you. Do you still refuse me?”

The desperate edge in Myah’s stare made Gabriela realize that words would no longer help. She exhaled, defeated. “I won’t give Wesley the proof. Don’t worry about that. Try to rest and calm down.”

Gabriela turned toward the door — but a sudden shout froze her in place.

“Gabriela, you’re leaving me no choice!”

She whirled back and found Myah crawling onto the windowsill, pale as moonlight, her body trembling.

“Myah, what are you doing? Get down!” Gabriela cried.

Myah didn’t answer. She closed her eyes and leaned forward, as though surrendering to the air.

“Myah!” Gabriela’s scream tore through the room.

She lunged toward the window and watched, paralyzed, as Myah collapsed onto the lawn below and lay motionless.

Heart hammering, Gabriela raced down the stairs.

In the living room, Wesley grabbed her wrist, alarm written across his face. “What’s wrong?”