

His kiss 821

Chapter 821

“Myah jumped out of the window!” Gabriela gasped, the words tumbling out in a frantic rush.

The household followed in stunned silence. Wesley was the first to reach her, lifting Myah into his arms. “Myah, can you hear me? Stay with me. Open your eyes. I’ll get you to the hospital now.”

Myah’s room was on the second floor, so the fall hadn’t been fatal — only enough to knock her unconscious for a brief moment. Wesley’s voice brought her back. She clung to him, sobbing. “Wesley, I want to be with my brother. I’m so lonely.”

Wesley’s chest tightened as he held her and carried her to the hospital. Everyone went with them except Farley, who stayed behind to look after Truett, leaving the house in a whirl of panic.

At the hospital, the doctor examined Myah and offered some relief. “No brain injury — just a mild sprain in her left leg. She should remain here for a week, then rest at home to recover fully.”

Gabriela lingered outside the exam room, apart from everyone else, watching as Wesley thanked the doctor while Myah kept apologizing and blaming herself for the chaos. A strange, hollow feeling washed over Gabriela.

Who was the real Myah beneath all the tears and the performance?

When Myah finally noticed Gabriela standing apart, she asked in a small voice, “Gabriela, why aren’t you saying anything? Are you still angry with me?”

Gabriela could only answer with silence. Myah had already come close to something irreversible once. Provoke her again, and who knew what might happen?

Seeing Gabriela hold her tongue, Myah shrank back with a meekness that seemed rehearsed. “Gabriela, once I’m discharged, I’ll go back to my own house. Please, don’t be upset with me.”

The words were disarmingly simple — yet to anyone listening, they painted a damning picture: as though Gabriela’s cruelty at home had driven Myah to her reckless leap.

Wesley’s face darkened. “Gabriela,” he said, his voice tight, “with Myah in this fragile state, can’t you set aside your anger for once?” His brow furrowed and his gaze turned cold, unreadable.

Ever since that disastrous mix-up with his medication, suspicion had festered in him like a shadow. The side effects had twisted his judgment, leaving him doubting Gabriela at every turn.

For the first time, Gabriela felt utterly defeated. All she could manage was a weary murmur: “Myah, you don’t need to leave. Stay with us. At least then we can all look after you.”

But the sound of her concession only deepened Wesley’s unease. Beside him, Loretta let out a sigh of relief and took Myah’s hand, murmuring comfort over and over.

The hospital door stood ajar — and Brenden lingered just beyond it. He had come rushing the moment he heard of Myah's fall and had caught every word that followed. Frustration burned in him. Did no one see the truth? Gabriela had borne Myah's burdens more than anyone — surely more than Wesley or Loretta ever had. And yet here she was, made to carry the blame. Why?

Beside him, Fiona couldn't hide her smug delight. "So Gabriela got herself tangled up with Myah? Turns out she's not as saintly as everyone thinks. How pathetic."

Brenden's patience snapped. "Shut your mouth!" he barked.

Fiona recoiled, stung and indignant — but swallowed her protest, too shaken to answer back.

Brenden's fists itched to strike back on Gabriela's behalf, but inside the room all eyes were on Myah. In that moment, no one would hear the truth from an outsider. All he could do was step forward, clasp Gabriela's hand, and guide her quietly away.

Myah watched their departure, her lashes lowering to mask her expression. In a faint voice she told the others she was tired and asked them to leave.

Meanwhile, Brenden led Gabriela into the quiet of the hospital garden. Beneath the dim lights, he met her gaze with steady resolve.

"Gabriela," he said softly, "I know you're the one suffering the injustice here."

Brenden couldn't grasp what had transpired — but he chose to place unwavering faith in Gabriela. Warmth flooded her heart, and she smiled. "Thank you."

"For what?" Brenden asked, appearing more agitated than she was. "What's gotten into Myah? How can she speak such poison — like some cunning manipulator? All that affection you once showered on her... completely wasted."

As he continued his tirade, Brenden paced restlessly before Gabriela, hands planted firmly on his hips. The constant motion made her head spin. "Please," she said softly, "just stop for a moment."

Brenden froze mid-stride and listened.

"Don't fret," Gabriela said. "Myah's schemes won't plague me much longer." A shadow passed over her features. "I'm troubled — not for any surface reason, but because I can't comprehend how Myah became this person."

Beyond that, the rift between her and Wesley had never truly been about Myah. It had always revolved around Allan.

Four years earlier, when Wesley discovered Gabriela's connection to Allan, suspicion had taken root in his heart. At the time, he was battling illness and lacked the strength to confront the matter directly. Later, desperate to make Gabriela surrender her pursuit, he shattered their relationship in that fateful café. Perhaps subconsciously, he had convinced himself her feelings were mere pretense.

Today, however, in a moment of crystalline clarity, Gabriela finally understood the truth: that devastating breakup had poured directly from Wesley's most authentic emotions — raw and unfiltered, straight from the depths of his soul.

What exactly had he declared back then?

She still remembered his icy, merciless stare — and every cutting word he had delivered. “Gabriela, understand this clearly: Allan rescued me. I owe you nothing, so stop chasing after me.” He had claimed he regretted ever knowing her. He had commanded her to spend the rest of her life with her “precious Allan.” He had revealed that after their first encounter in Room 1205, the hairpin she'd left behind had belonged to Allan — which explained her desperate attachment to it, her relentless efforts to retrieve it.

These memories sent a lance of pain through Gabriela's chest. In that café, Wesley had indeed unleashed a torrent of merciless words.

Later, when his condition became public and they faced life-threatening crises together, everyone had instinctively pushed Allan's shadow aside. Until now. Wesley's treatment had erased parts of his memory — and Myah's interference had awakened his buried recollections.

A rueful smile touched Gabriela's lips as she thought of Wesley's self-imposed martyrdom. “Wesley and I have been prisoners of Allan's name for far too long. No matter what I do, he effortlessly ties it back to Allan.”

The situation defied easy resolution. Though it sounded harsh, the reality remained unchanged: Allan was gone. No matter how fervently Gabriela insisted there had never been romance between them, her protests fell on deaf ears. All along, Myah had clung to the fantasy that — had Allan survived — Gabriela would inevitably have become his wife. And Wesley had accepted Myah's assumptions as truth.

Brenden, who had been seething moments before, softened instantly when he saw tears gathering in Gabriela's eyes. In his experience, Gabriela had always embodied strength and optimism. When had he ever seen her like this?

He ached to pull her into his arms, to comfort her, to sweep her away and buy her the most exquisite jewelry — anything to bring back her smile. But Gabriela wasn't like the women from his past. He didn't dare touch her so casually.

Instead, he pulled out a tissue and offered it with gentle care. "Don't let this consume you," he said, his voice sincere. "My cousin's judgment has faltered, and he keeps misunderstanding you — but he's resilient. Maybe soon he'll overcome these side effects and remember you completely."

Seeing Brenden's earnest expression, Gabriela managed a faint smile. "Yes. I still have faith in him."

After they spoke for several more minutes, Brenden suggested, "Gabriela, let me escort you home. Myah's still putting on that theatrical performance at the hospital — you shouldn't go back to that ward."

"That won't be necessary," she replied. "I can manage on my own."

Self-reliant since childhood, Gabriela had never learned to lean on others. After thanking Brenden once more, she slipped quietly into the evening.

The moment she disappeared from view, Fiona emerged slowly from behind a towering oak tree.

“Brenden,” she said, her voice sharp with bitterness, “Gabriela has built a family. Why do you still orbit around her every day? Are you trying to win her heart?”

The resentment in her tone was unmistakable — but Brenden not only missed her pain; he snapped back angrily. “What’s wrong with wanting to protect her? Wesley’s judgment has spiraled into chaos. He’s fallen right into Myah’s trap and keeps tormenting Gabriela. Right now, he doesn’t deserve her. I just want to shield her from harm. One day, I’ll expose that scheming brat Myah for the fraud she really is!”

Fiona’s frustration deepened. She opened her mouth to retort — but Brenden suddenly whirled toward her, finger raised in accusation.

“Speaking of which,” he said coldly, “someone recently turned Wesley and Gabriela’s marriage into gambling entertainment. You bet two million dollars against their union. What kind of sick game is that? Do you still think you can win Wesley’s heart?”

The question struck Fiona like a physical blow. She stood frozen, words failing her.

Watching her stunned silence, Brenden shook his head in disappointment. “Fiona, Wesley belongs with Gabriela — no one else. If you’re still clinging to fantasies about him, consider our friendship over.”

Rage twisted Fiona’s features. “As if I actually care about your friendship!” she spat. “Fine — I’m gone!”

The two had clashed like this for years. Brenden dismissed the exchange without another thought, while Fiona stormed off without looking back. His mind had already shifted to strategizing Myah's downfall.

Unbeknownst to both of them, Myah had witnessed the entire confrontation from a nearby hiding spot. Her fingers seized a low-hanging branch and tore off a leaf, crushing it methodically between her palms until only damp green fragments remained. Venom coiled through her silent thoughts: "I only want a future with Wesley. Why does everyone keep trying to destroy my happiness? Brenden... you'd better stay out of my affairs."

Fiona remained oblivious to the target Myah had painted on Brenden's back.

Thunderclouds darkened her expression as she returned home. She brushed past her parents' concerned questions and barricaded herself in her bedroom, where resentment festered in solitude.

It had been two years since the Blue Star incident — the disaster that had nearly cost lives. Back then, she had genuinely wanted to mend things with Gabriela. But that infuriatingly stubborn woman had kept up her aloof act, deliberately ignoring every olive branch Fiona extended. Her aristocratic pride couldn't tolerate such dismissal.

So she had seized every chance to challenge Gabriela's authority, convinced that opposition would force Gabriela to notice her. Instead, Gabriela stayed locked in her feud with Rebecca — completely blind to Fiona's existence.

When she had heard about the marriage bet, she hadn't hesitated to wager two million dollars. Victory or defeat meant nothing. As long as Gabriela suffered disappointment, Fiona felt a twisted satisfaction.

Now Brenden had thoroughly ruined her mood.

When, she thought bitterly, would that dense fool finally realize her feelings for Wesley had withered long ago?

Chapter 823

Fiona sulked at home, brooding over her frustration, while Brenden's mind churned relentlessly, plotting how to unmask Myah — the sly little manipulator who wore innocence like a second skin.

Throughout Myah's hospital stay, Brenden had visited nearly every day. They had known each other for years, but only as distant acquaintances whose paths rarely crossed. Their relationship had never deepened beyond polite familiarity.

Today, he appeared once more, carrying a basket of meticulously wrapped fruit. With careful, almost ceremonious gestures, he peeled an apple for her himself.

"Myah, eat some apples — they're good for your skin," he said.

She accepted it softly, murmuring her thanks, and nibbled cautiously while Brenden watched her every move like a hawk circling its prey.

In his youth, Brenden had wandered through countless circles where beauty and vanity reigned. Yet he had always been drawn to one type: gorgeous, greedy, and transparent in their desires. But Myah was different — quiet, calculating, elusive. She had fooled even Wesley and Loretta. Brenden had never met anyone who could weave deceit so seamlessly.

Feeling his scrutiny, Myah's lips trembled slightly. "Brenden, why are you looking at me like that?"

"I'm curious," he said evenly. "Before you met Gabriela, did you always speak to people this way? Or did it change after your brother passed?"

Myah's expression flickered. She lowered her eyes with practiced innocence. "Brenden... what have I done wrong? Why would you say that?"

Brenden crossed his arms, radiating quiet authority — a presence honed by years of steering Apex Group in Wesley's absence. "Myah, do you like Wesley?"

Myah hesitated, a trace of fear creeping into her voice. "Of course I like Wesley." Then, with deliberate sweetness, she added, "Brenden... I like you too."

Such a cunning little fox.

Brenden's eyes shifted, betraying a flicker of unease. No — he had to find a way to expose her true intentions. He patted her head casually and smiled. "Seems Wesley and I are equally charming."

For a fleeting moment, disdain flashed in Myah's eyes — but she masked it instantly. "Brenden, I just took my medicine. I'd like to rest now."

Brenden nodded and left, leaving her to the quiet hum of the hospital room.

The moment the door clicked shut, Myah grabbed a disinfectant wipe and scrubbed every surface he had touched. Strangers' touch disgusted her. Only Wesley — and, reluctantly, Gabriela — were allowed that kind of intimacy.

Halfway through, the door swung open and startled her. Thinking Brenden had returned, she hastily pretended to wipe the table.

A soft chuckle echoed from the doorway. "No need to pretend — it's me."

Myah turned to see Stewart standing there, holding a bouquet of flowers. Her expression hardened instantly, and she threw the wipe aside.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"Just checking how badly you're hurt," Stewart said casually, setting the flowers on the nightstand and pulling up a chair. "We know each other, after all." He added with a cryptic smile, "You've got more nerve than I imagined."

Myah's face darkened. She pushed herself upright and strode toward the door. "Get out."

Stewart chuckled, a mix of amusement and resignation. "I just got here, and you're already kicking me out?"

Her patience snapped. "Gabriela and Wesley will be here any minute. If you don't leave, I swear I'll make Gabriela despise you in under ten minutes!"

"Afraid to face me?" Stewart leaned forward, a sly grin tugging at his lips. "Feeling guilty? Relax. We're in the same boat. I won't talk — and neither will you."

And before she could respond, he turned and left.

Myah gripped the door handle, eyes narrowed as she watched him disappear down the hall. These people were insufferable.

A week passed like a whisper.

Gabriela neither exposed Myah's true nature nor visited often. On Myah's final day in the hospital, however, Gabriela arrived.

Myah's eyes lit up. "Gabriela, you finally came to see me!"

“Yeah,” Gabriela replied with a calm nod. “I’m here to take you home.”

She no longer held Myah accountable — but the tenderness in her care had faded. Myah, however, felt a surge of joy. She knew that no matter what she had done, Gabriela would never truly abandon her.

Just then, Brenden appeared, grinning. “Myah, I’m here too! Wesley will be here shortly — he’s just finishing up with the doctor.”

Myah’s composure faltered. Previously, only Gabriela had seen through her act. Tears, tantrums, and subtle manipulations had always swayed Gabriela’s loyalty. But Brenden was unpredictable. They weren’t close. A single misstep could plant seeds of doubt in Wesley’s mind.

Her thoughts raced, calculating how to silence Brenden — permanently, if necessary.

At that moment, Wesley arrived. Dressed in a black suit and a long coat, he stood tall and commanding, yet an unexpected warmth radiated from him. Myah’s pulse quickened. Since her brother’s death, she hadn’t felt such a stirring. Suddenly, life felt vivid again — the air crisper, the light brighter. In that instant, she made a silent vow: no matter the cost, Wesley must be hers.

Wesley’s assistant swiftly handled the discharge paperwork. As they headed toward the parking lot, Myah turned to Brenden with a sweet smile. “Brenden, can I ride in your car?”

Without much thought, Brenden agreed. “Sure.”

Gabriela felt a twinge of unease. “Myah, why not ride with Wesley today?”

Myah cast a timid glance at Wesley and lowered her voice. “Gabriela, I took your ring and caused a misunderstanding. You two even argued because of it. From now on, I’ll keep my distance from him.”

Before Gabriela could reply, Wesley interjected gently, “Don’t worry. Ride with me. Whatever happened between Gabriela and me doesn’t involve you.”

Gabriela felt suddenly drained.

Yes, Myah had sown discord between them — but the deeper wound bore a single name: Allan Espinoza. If Wesley had trusted her from the start, none of this chaos would have unfolded. Yet Myah had insisted on riding with Brenden, leaving Gabriela no graceful way to object.

So Gabriela and Myah rode together in Brenden’s car, while Gabriela texted Alissa to return her own vehicle.

Wesley drove alone. His eyes were fixed ahead, his expression calm — but beneath the surface, turmoil churned. He felt it in his bones: Gabriela was avoiding him.

Chapter 825

Wesley never held Gabriela responsible for Myah’s reckless jump. But Myah’s existence carried a meaning for him that went far deeper than anyone else knew.

Back then, Wesley had lived under the shadow of death — every day feeling like a countdown to his last. Then came the news that changed everything: the hospital had found a heart that matched his. The donor, however, had one request. He wished to meet Wesley in person.

Wesley was led to a dimly lit ward, where Allan lay bloodied and deathly pale, clinging to the final threads of life. Summoning what little strength he had, Allan seized Wesley's hand and spoke with unwavering resolve.

"Mr. Moss, I'm willing to give you my heart," he said hoarsely. "But please, promise me you'll care for my sister as if she were your own. She's blind and timid. Without me, she'll be terrified. From now on, you must be there for her in my place. Swear that no matter what happens, you won't abandon her."

A storm of emotion surged through Wesley. If there had been any other way, he would never have accepted another man's sacrifice to save himself. But the doctor explained Allan's fate plainly: the car accident had left him with catastrophic head injuries. By all rights, he should have died at the scene. His survival until now was nothing short of a miracle.

In the end, Wesley consented to the transplant. With a solemn heart, he gave Allan his word — that no matter what Myah did or became, he would never leave her. Wesley's life was a gift bought with Allan's final breath, and his vow to care for Myah was a debt he intended to honor until the very end.

Whatever storms lay ahead, Wesley knew with certainty that Myah would remain his responsibility for the rest of his life. Still, he feared the situation with her might drive a wedge between him and Gabriela. His faltering memory had already carved out a distance he could never fully bridge.

As for the ring, he wanted so badly to trust Gabriela's words. Yet in the quiet corners of his mind, a darker voice insisted that her concern leaned more toward Allan than toward him. Because Myah was

Allan's sister, Gabriela seemed to treasure her more than even the symbol of their engagement. The thought left Wesley restless. He would take care of Myah — yes — but he couldn't accept Gabriela indulging her blindly out of loyalty to Allan.

His frustration boiled over. He yanked at his tie. "Drive faster."

The startled assistant gripped the wheel tighter. "Understood, Mr. Moss."

Clearly, only someone like Billy could weather the storm of serving Wesley Moss.

By the time Wesley's car pulled up to the villa, Brenden's vehicle lagged nearly ten minutes behind. Inside Brenden's car, silence pressed down like a weight. Gabriela sat beside Myah, watching her every movement with quiet vigilance. Trouble was always a possibility, and if Myah dared to drag Brenden into their tangled web, Gabriela would make sure she regretted it.

Myah, sensing the scrutiny, lowered her lashes. Beneath her outwardly gentle expression churned sadness and resentment. She wanted Wesley — but she knew that if she reached for him, Gabriela's affection would vanish forever. Why did Gabriela have to fall in love with Wesley? Why couldn't her heart have stayed with Allan, where it belonged?

Her grievances coiled tighter inside her, twisting her feelings into something sharp and bitter. Yet her face betrayed none of it. She still looked as innocent as ever.

Gabriela, watching her closely, wondered if she was imagining things.

The ride back to Rosemont Gardens passed without a single hitch, and Gabriela's shoulders eased the moment the gates came into view. When the car rolled to a stop, she stepped out and instantly noticed Wesley waiting in front of the villa. He stood tall and composed, but his gaze lingered on them with an unsettling stillness.

"I'll head in first to check if Ken's prepared lunch," Gabriela said quickly.

She didn't pause for a response, slipping past him like water around stone. Wesley's hand lifted — instinct urging him to reach for her, to stop her. But she moved too quickly. His fingers curled into his palm, empty.

His jaw tightened as he watched her retreat inside without so much as a glance his way. His brow furrowed deeply. Ever since Myah's fall, one truth had gnawed at him: Gabriela had cared too much — far too much — to ever drive Myah to such despair. That was undeniable. And yet, in the heat of his anger, he had lashed out, accusing her recklessly, letting words sharpened by fury spill from his tongue. No wonder she now treated him like a stranger.

He adjusted his cuffs in a small, practiced gesture, but the movement only served to hide his unease. He knew he owed her an apology. If not for himself, then for Truett. For the boy's sake, he had to bridge this widening rift.

Inside, the villa carried the warmth of home. Ken had already laid out lunch, and Farley, Loretta, and Miriam — who had stayed behind from the hospital — were bustling about to help. The aroma of braised meats and fresh vegetables wafted through the dining hall, wrapping the household in a comforting illusion of normalcy.

Gabriela slipped easily into her role, moving from chair to chair, arranging cutlery, pouring wine, her smile gentle as she invited everyone to sit. The scene looked perfectly ordinary — like a family at peace.

Truett, perched in his high chair, broke the illusion with an eager cry. His little hand shot toward a plate of ribs. “Meat!” he announced.

Chapter 826

Gabriela chuckled softly, placing a tender portion onto his plate before coaxing him to eat his vegetables as well. The table filled with the hum of conversation, the scrape of cutlery, the light chatter of family.

But for Wesley, there was only silence.

Brenden, ever quick to notice, leaned over with a grin. “What’s with the long face, Wesley? Myah’s out of the hospital — you should be celebrating. Or is Gabriela still giving you the cold shoulder?”

Wesley’s gaze slid to him, cool and sharp. “Are you finished eating?”

Brenden’s smile faltered. He raised his hands in surrender and wisely turned his attention to Truett instead. Since learning the boy was his nephew, Brenden had spoiled him shamelessly, arriving each day with new toys and forging a bond that looked almost fatherly. Truett adored him for it. Whenever Brenden appeared, his little face lit up with pure delight.

Today was no different. Truett scooped a spoonful of vegetables onto Brenden’s plate with solemn care. “Uncle Brenden,” he said earnestly, “Mommy says eating veggies makes you strong. You should eat them too.”

Brenden nearly burst out laughing. The little one wouldn't touch his own greens, yet had thought up such a crafty excuse to pawn them off. Even at his age, he had already mastered the art of mischief — and the table erupted in laughter.

The air softened, warmth spreading easily among them.

Then Myah's quiet voice cut through the cheer. "Gabriela, I... I want to learn how to drive."

Gabriela stilled, her smile fading. "Driving? Why the sudden interest?"

Myah lowered her eyes, twisting her fingers against her lap. "Because I watch you, Alissa, Tessa, Aubrey. You all drive. You all have important jobs. And me?" Her voice trembled with fragile honesty. "I'm the only one sitting at home, doing nothing. I just feel useless."

A hush swept the table. Loretta's expression softened instantly. "Oh, sweetheart, if that's what you want, then do it. Learn to drive. And once you've got your license, I'll buy you a car myself."

Loretta meant every word. Though she had grown up with little, Wesley had given her more than enough to live comfortably. She spent hardly any of it, tucking the money away as though saving for the future. To her, she was already a wealthy woman — and for Myah, she would gladly give it all away.

Myah's face lit up. "Thank you, Loretta."

Then, almost shyly, she turned her gaze toward Wesley. “Could you... teach me, Wesley?”

Though he had always indulged her, the request felt like it crossed a line. Teaching Myah to drive himself seemed far too inappropriate. “Myah, I’m swamped with work,” he said evenly. “But don’t worry — I’ll hire the best instructor for you.”

Her expression faltered, the brightness dimming into a look of gentle grievance. “But it’s my first time learning. Strangers make me nervous.”

Before Wesley could respond, Loretta stepped in, her tone warm but insistent. “Oh, Wesley, just help her. Work can wait — family should come first.”

To her, Myah was no different from her own granddaughter, and she spoke with that same unconditional fondness. Wesley parted his lips, ready to decline again, when Brenden leaned forward with a grin.

“Loretta, if it’s about driving, I’m better than Wesley anyway. Why not let me teach her?”

Loretta glanced uncertainly at Myah. “What do you think, dear? Would you be comfortable with Brenden instead?”

Myah feigned a brief hesitation, then smiled sweetly. “Of course. Brenden’s driving was so smooth earlier — I’d be glad to have him teach me.”

Behind her polite words, however, she had already decided: even if Brenden hadn't volunteered, she would have found a way to rope him in.

Chapter 827

Gabriela thought it strange that Myah had suddenly developed an interest in driving. Not knowing what Myah was really plotting, she offered casually, "Why don't I teach you instead? You might feel more comfortable learning from me than from Brenden."

For a split second, Myah looked rattled. Then she masked it with a bright show of excitement, her eyes lighting up too quickly. "You'd really teach me?" she asked, her voice trembling with false hope. "You're not angry anymore? You won't push me away?"

Deep down, she decided to spare Brenden for now — but sooner or later, she would make him pay.

Gabriela gave a small nod. "I'm not angry."

Before Myah could press further, Brenden cut in. "Gabriela, you're already overwhelmed. Where would you find the time to teach her?"

It was true. Between running the company, sketching out designs, and tending to Truett, Gabriela's days were stretched thin. Any rare free hour she had should have been spent resting. Unlike the sheltered heiresses of wealthy families — whose greatest concerns were manicures and limited-edition handbags — Gabriela carried every weight on her shoulders. The thought made Brenden's chest ache with sympathy.

“That settles it,” he declared firmly. “Tomorrow I’ll handle the company’s affairs, and the day after, I’ll start teaching Myah myself.”

Myah lowered her gaze, her tone meek. “Alright.”

Brenden then turned to Wesley. “Wesley, will it be alright if I step away from the company for a few days?”

Wesley gave a short nod. “Sure.”

After dinner, however, Wesley quietly instructed Billy to contact the very best driving coach available.

Brenden wrapped up the company’s affairs and showed up the next afternoon to take Myah for her first lesson. Near Rosemont Gardens lay a stretch of open land. It had once been earmarked for a parking lot over a decade ago, but after the developer skipped town and the half-built commercial complex was abandoned, the space had been left to weeds and silence. Few ever passed by.

Myah pointed to it eagerly. “It’s close to Gabriela’s house, so I can rest there if I get tired. And since hardly anyone comes around, it’s safe.”

Brenden agreed easily, but Gabriela couldn’t shake her unease. She insisted on tagging along for the first day.

To her surprise, Myah applied herself with unusual focus. By the end of the session, she was already driving steadily, if cautiously, along the road. During a break, Brenden leaned close and murmured, "She looks timid on the surface, but when it comes to driving, she's got real nerve. Bold, even." Indeed, grasping the basics so quickly took both courage and precision.

Gabriela glanced toward the car. Myah sat inside, head bent as she studied the steering wheel, clutch, and handbrake with almost obsessive concentration.

Then Brenden edged nearer, lowering his voice conspiratorially. "Gabriela, just wait. I'll dig the truth out of her." With a self-satisfied smirk, he produced a small recorder from his pocket. "Got this ready. You'll see how I handle her."

Gabriela's stomach tightened, memories of Myah's reckless stunts flashing before her eyes. "Brenden, don't provoke her. This is between her, Wesley, and me. Stay out of it. Tomorrow, make up an excuse not to keep teaching her."

He grinned at her concern. "Worried about me, Gabriela? Relax. I've dated more women than I can count, and none of them ever got the better of me. Don't be afraid."

Just then, Myah leaned out of the car window. "Brenden, are you coming back? I'm ready to go again."

"On my way," he called, jogging toward her with practiced ease.

Unable to dissuade him, Gabriela could only remain by their side for another two days, watching in wary silence.

On the third day, Gabriela was tied up in a company meeting. Beforehand, she rang Brenden with instructions. "Myah's driving is much steadier now. Let the professional instructor handle it. Didn't Wesley find an excellent teacher? Let him step in."

Chapter 828

Brenden's reply bristled with frustration. "No chance. Myah's too cunning. I've tried every trick these past two days, but she won't bite. Today, I have to get her to tell me the truth!"

Gabriela sighed helplessly and dialed Wesley instead.

At that very moment, Wesley was at Eventide Vale. With the project greenlit, the grounds fenced in, and construction underway, he was there to preside over the groundbreaking ceremony. When his phone lit up with Gabriela's name, his heart gave a small, unexpected stir. It had been ages since she had reached out first. He gestured for Billy to manage the site and stepped away.

"Gabriela, what's wrong?" His low, magnetic voice curled through the receiver, leaving her ear faintly tingling.

"Wesley, didn't you hire a driving instructor? Could you send him to teach Myah? I don't feel comfortable leaving it all to Brenden," said Gabriela.

The request soured Wesley's mood. She hadn't called for him — but for someone else. Still, Brenden was his cousin, and he couldn't simply brush it aside. "Alright," he said after a pause. "I'll have it arranged."

Gabriela thanked him quickly and ended the call.

Wesley stared at the silent phone a beat longer before slipping it into his pocket. His expression had shifted, and Billy, watching quietly, could sense that something had dampened his mood.

Just then, the chief engineer hurried over with a bright smile. "Mr. Moss, the groundbreaking ceremony is about to begin."

Wesley gave a faint nod.

The Eventide Vale Resort was more than just Apex Group's flagship project in recent years — it was the Moss family's proudest undertaking. Though Roger hadn't attended in person, he sent his trusted butler to represent him. Wesley accepted the commemorative gold-plated shovel from Billy, pressed a hand briefly to his heart, and drove it symbolically into the earth.

A series of cannon salvos thundered in the background, music swelled, speeches echoed across the grounds, and ribbon-cutting was followed by bursts of ceremonial fireworks that painted the sky in glittering color. Reporters crowded in with flashing cameras while hostesses handed out gifts to the guests. The atmosphere brimmed with celebration.

Yet when the festivities wound down, Wesley lingered at the edge of the crowd, a quiet heaviness settling in his chest. His career was soaring — but the one person he wished to share it with was absent.

He called Billy over. "The driving instructor I mentioned earlier — make sure he heads to Rosemont Gardens today."

Gabriela's unease with Brenden lingered in his mind. Better to have a professional keep watch.

Billy nodded and swiftly carried out the task.

Meanwhile, Myah's third day of driving lessons was underway. Steering confidently, she beamed at Brenden. "Brenden, hop out for a bit. I want to try driving on my own."

Brenden hesitated. "Are you sure you can handle it?"

Despite his irritation with the girl's sly temperament, he knew she was dearly valued by Wesley and Loretta. Any mishap would be disastrous.

Myah flashed an OK sign. "Relax, I've got this!"

Reluctantly, Brenden stepped out. "Take it slow."

"Got it!" she replied with a playful grin.

But the moment Brenden stepped away, he realized something was wrong. The car jerked forward unevenly, its speed lurching up and down. Twice Myah nearly clipped the barriers lining the practice field. Brenden's pulse spiked. Panic seized him as he sprinted forward, shouting, "Myah, hit the brakes!"

The car slowed just enough for him to reach the front. He waved frantically for her to stop. Instead, Myah reversed several meters — then slammed her foot down on the accelerator.

Chapter 829

Brenden's initial relief at seeing Myah back up the car vanished in an instant. Shock gripped him as she suddenly accelerated, barreling straight toward him. By the time he registered the need to move, the car was already upon him, leaving no room for escape.

The impact sent Brenden flying several meters, and he crashed brutally onto the pavement. It felt as though a massive force had crushed every bone in his body. The agony was excruciating, stealing his voice. His vision blurred, fixed on Myah's panicked expression through the windshield. He watched her fumbling with her seatbelt, her face drained of color, as she scrambled toward him.

"Brenden, are you alright?" she cried, her voice trembling.

The collision had slammed his head against the ground. A pool of blood spread beneath him, and more trickled from his mouth. His body convulsed. He could not form words.

Trembling, Myah dialed Gabriela. "Gabriela, Brenden's hurt! Please hurry! It wasn't on purpose — I thought I hit the brake, but the car kept speeding up. I'm so scared, I didn't mean it..." Her words dissolved into incoherent sobs.

On the other end, Gabriela shot up from her chair. “Myah, what are you saying?”

Through tears, Myah choked out, “I hit Brenden. He’s bleeding so much.”

Stunned, Gabriela nearly dropped her phone. She abandoned her meeting and rushed from the conference room. The executives murmured in confusion until Kaleb stood to clarify. “Ms. Haynes has a family emergency — someone’s in the hospital. We’ll resume the meeting later.”

As Gabriela exited the building, Myah called again. “Gabriela, we’re heading to the hospital now. An instructor and Loretta are with us — we’re almost there.”

Myah had already contacted emergency services, and the instructor’s car had met the ambulance halfway, quickly transferring Brenden. During the ride, Brenden briefly regained consciousness, fighting to stay awake. Loretta gripped his hand, tears streaming down her face.

“Brenden, how did you get hurt again? Stay with me — don’t close your eyes, okay?”

Myah, sobbing, added, “Brenden, does it hurt? I’m so sorry... I didn’t mean to. I kept pressing the brake, but the car just kept going...”

Brenden stared at her, speechless.

A nurse worked tirelessly beside him, staunching the bleeding and performing urgent procedures.

Upon reaching the hospital, Gabriela was already there, and Wesley was hurrying back after hearing the news. Gabriela swiftly made her way to the emergency room, her eyes scanning the group gathered in the corridor — Loretta and Myah clinging to each other in tears, alongside a composed middle-aged man who was likely the instructor Wesley had arranged.

Gabriela turned to him. “Sir, can you explain what happened?”

Jamal Robles, the instructor, spoke gravely. “Loretta and I arrived at the lot just as Myah’s car hit Brenden, knocking him down hard. I had no time to ask questions — I focused on getting them to the hospital. I called an ambulance immediately.”

Myah, tears streaming, sobbed, “Gabriela, I’m so sorry! It was an accident. I was reversing, but the car surged forward. Brenden was right there — I tried to brake, but it just sped up...”

Before she could finish, Gabriela struck her across the cheek with a resounding slap that reverberated through the hospital hallway. The impact left a red mark blooming across Myah’s face, her skin burning with a sharp sting.

Frozen in shock, Myah paused briefly to collect herself, her head bowed in humiliation. “Gabriela, I admit my mistake,” she murmured. “You’re justified in striking me.”

With chilling composure, Gabriela retorted, “That was for your dishonesty.” Her hand rose again, delivering another blow to Myah’s other cheek. “And this is for betraying Brenden’s trust.”

Chapter 830

Clutching her stinging face, Myah felt a surge of resentment and remorse, though her expression conveyed deep contrition. “Gabriela, I know I messed up. I acted recklessly before mastering my driving skills. But how can you accuse me so harshly? It wasn’t intentional.”

Another sharp crack echoed through the corridor as Gabriela landed a third slap.

“Myah, will you still deny it?” Gabriela’s gaze was glacial, her voice colder still. “Brenden saw through your facade. He had been working to expose you these past few days. You feared he would reveal your true self to Wesley — so you tried to eliminate him permanently.”

A heavy silence blanketed the corridor.

Jamal, present only for a routine task, had inadvertently overheard this shocking revelation. A shiver ran through him as he quietly stepped aside, pretending not to notice. Loretta, equally stunned, approached Gabriela cautiously.

“Are you certain, Gabriela? Myah is so timid — could she really have the nerve to run someone over?”

Especially Brenden, who had doted on Myah for years, always arriving with thoughtful gifts. How could she harbor such cruelty?

Gabriela fixed Myah with an icy stare. “Confess to Loretta yourself.”

Myah’s sobs turned frantic, her breaths ragged. “Confess what? I didn’t mean it! How can I admit to something like that? I’m overwhelmed with guilt and sorrow.”

After a tearful outburst, she fumbled for her phone and desperately began dialing the police. “Gabriela, if you need someone to blame, I’ll turn myself in. I’ll go to prison if it makes you feel better!”

Loretta rushed to intervene, but Gabriela watched impassively. Her disappointment in Myah was absolute. Despite Allan’s past kindness toward her — and the gratitude she owed him — Myah’s malice and selfishness had obliterated it all.

“Loretta, let her make the call,” Gabriela said firmly.

Loretta wavered, while Myah, incredulous, cried, “Gabriela, how can you misunderstand me so completely? I’m utterly devastated.”

The corridor rang with her wails — until the emergency room door swung open and a nurse rushed out.

“Who is Brenden’s family?”

"I am!" Gabriela and Loretta responded in unison.

The nurse's voice was grim. "Mr. Saunders has a critical brain injury, a shattered left leg, a fractured rib on his left side, and severe internal organ damage..." As the nurse listed the injuries, a suffocating heaviness gripped Gabriela's heart.

Finally, the nurse added solemnly, "The surgical team is doing everything possible, but survival is unlikely. Prepare for the worst."

Gabriela's face paled, consumed by regret. She shouldn't have attended that company meeting today. She had enough wealth to provide for her child — why chase more? And knowing her suspicions about Myah, why had she left Brenden alone with her? It was her fault.

Myah collapsed to her knees, wailing. "I'm sorry! I caused Brenden's accident!"

Gabriela steeled herself, grabbed her phone, and dialed the police.

"Myah," she said coldly, "go turn yourself in."