

His kiss 871

Chapter 871

In the side mirror, Wesley caught sight of her unmoving shape, and a heavy pressure lodged itself in his chest. Yet Myah lay writhing in the back seat, pain etched into every breath, and the ambulance had still not arrived. With no other option left to him, he slammed down on the accelerator and sped straight for the hospital.

After a stomach pump and multiple rounds of emergency treatment, she was finally pulled back from the edge. The doctor emerged pale and tense, his voice carrying the weight of what might have been. “She was lucky. If the dosage had been any higher, the outcome would have been irreversible.”

A breath Wesley hadn’t realized he was holding escaped in one long release. “Thank you,” he said, his voice low and strained.

“The patient cannot be released for at least seven days,” the doctor continued. “She requires constant monitoring.” He hesitated before adding, “Her mental state is highly volatile. I strongly advise arranging professional caregivers to watch her around the clock.”

Wesley agreed without hesitation, instructing the hospital to assign several experienced caregivers before calling Delia to come at once.

Delia hurried into the ward and stopped short the moment her eyes landed on Wesley. In her memories, he was always composed and intimidating — a man so commanding she rarely dared meet his gaze when she followed Myah back to the estate. The man standing before her now looked emptied of that presence, the sharp authority in his eyes dulled by fatigue. She allowed herself only a fleeting glance before bowing her head. “Please rest assured, sir. I will personally look after Miss Espinoza.”

Wesley inclined his head, then spoke in a muted tone. “Keep this from my grandmother.”

Loretta had already been pushing herself far too hard, barely allowing time for proper rest. If she learned that Myah had attempted to end her life, sleepless nights would follow without question. Delia nodded repeatedly in agreement.

After completing every arrangement the hospital required, Wesley had no chance to rest.

Myah had regained consciousness.

As soon as her eyes fluttered open, his name left her lips. Wesley drew in a measured breath, eased the door open, and carefully composed his expression into something calm and indulgent.

The VIP ward stretched wide and open, sunlight pouring freely across the space. Potted greenery framed the windows, leaves catching the light. The room carried a sterile freshness — clean and mild, without the sharp bite of disinfectant.

Myah leaned back against the pillows, gauze wrapped around her forehead, one eye concealed beneath a bandage, the other fixed straight ahead. That one visible eye held nothing — stripped bare, hollowed of warmth.

“Wesley.” Her voice fell flat and colorless, dulling the brightness of the room as though a veil had been drawn over it.

Even Wesley, a man unused to smiling, curved his lips anyway — gentle and restrained — as his fingers smoothed her hair away from her face. “If something feels unbearable next time, come to me first,” he said quietly. “You can’t keep hurting yourself like this, Myah.”

Remorse flashed across her features at once. “Wesley... did I trouble you again?”

His tone remained soft. “There’s no trouble. It just pains me to watch you suffer.”

Chapter 872

Her voice quivered as tears gathered. “But Gabriela doesn’t care anymore. She won’t forgive me. Not ever.”

“Then stop anchoring your life to hers,” Wesley said calmly. “She already has her own life. She has moved on — she is no longer living inside that pain. You need to do the same, Myah. Start again. Just try, alright?”

Her emotions surged, tears spilling over as agitation crept into her voice. “I was blind for so long. Allan was the one who took care of me the entire time. I never studied. I don’t know how to do anything. Even though I can see now, I still feel worthless. How am I supposed to start over like this?”

Wesley offered no rebuttal. Fatigue tugged at his expression as a faint, weary smile appeared. “Then I’ll keep looking after you. As long as I’m breathing, you’ll never be without food or shelter.”

She searched his face. “Wesley, you said it yourself. You can’t take that back.”

He stayed by her side until her breathing steadied and the storm in her eyes eased. After she swallowed her medication, she lay back — still and compliant — and slowly drifted into rest.

Wesley stepped out into the corridor.

The clock had passed nine, and silence reigned along the hallway. Unbidden, Gabriela’s unnervingly composed expression surfaced in his mind, sending a quiet ripple of unease through his chest. He reached for his phone, thumb hovering over her name — nothing more than an impulse, a brief urge to gauge her state of mind.

Before he could act on it, Roger’s name lit up the screen.

Wesley accepted the call at once. An aged, steady voice came through the line. “Return to my place. There is something we need to address in person.”

“Alright.”

Whenever Roger contacted him directly, it was never for trivial reasons. Wesley weighed the situation carefully, keeping his thoughts steady.

Gabriela had given birth to Truett. She was Matthew's cherished daughter, a fact well known within their circle. On top of that, she was Presley's only student, and her work had even drawn Alvira's attention. With all of that weighing in her favor, Roger had every reason to acknowledge Gabriela openly — there should have been no room left for hidden calculations or quiet opposition.

Before leaving, Wesley returned to Myah's room to explain. Worried about unnecessary suspicion, he even turned his phone to show her Roger's incoming call. Myah lowered her voice and forced composure. "You should go, Wesley. Don't worry about me. Delia will be here all night."

By the time the car turned onto the road leading to Wesley's grandfather's residence, Gabriela had already begun preparing for sleep.

Chapter 873

Truett remained unsettled, displeased by Wesley's absence and unwilling to calm down. She spent a long time coaxing him, murmuring softly until his restlessness faded. Only then did she lie down beside him and close her eyes. The day had already drained her dry — losing more rest over Wesley and Myah would have been pointless. Her sleep came heavy and uninterrupted, her phone switched to silent. She never heard the calls Wesley placed one after another.

When the seventh call went unanswered, something in his gaze finally dimmed.

Gabriela couldn't stand Myah. And yet, walking away from Myah was never a choice he could make. Wesley pressed his fingers against his temples as irritation seeped in. He could not understand how Gabriela's attitude toward Myah had hardened so completely, so fast.

By the time he arrived at Roger's home, Roger was already seated in the living room, both hands folded over the head of his cane. The butler stood off to the side, unmoving, the atmosphere weighted by an unspoken gravity.

"Grandpa," Wesley greeted evenly.

"You're here. Come with me to the study," Roger replied. He pushed himself up with visible effort, the butler stepping forward quickly to support him. Wesley's gaze lingered on Roger's unsteady frame, and a quiet sigh passed through him. For once, the resentment tied to his parents' deaths felt muted, pushed far into the background.

Once inside the study, Roger spoke first. "You've been staying at Gabriela's place recently?"

A faint, detached smile touched Wesley's lips. "You already have the answer, don't you?" If Roger ever set out to uncover something, he never missed his mark. Asking now served only one purpose — to probe Wesley's stance.

A crease formed between Roger's brows. "I'm not getting any younger. When do you plan to return to Crownridge Group headquarters?"

Crownridge Group was the Moss family's inheritance, passed down through four generations. Among all the successors, none matched Wesley in intellect or capability. Roger had pressed him for years to step in, yet Wesley had chosen to build his own enterprise and kept his distance.

"If that's all you wanted to discuss, Grandpa, then I'll take my leave," Wesley replied.

Within the Moss family, Roger's word was law. Every younger generation member fawned over him, eager to please and afraid to offend. Wesley alone spoke without restraint, meeting Roger head-on without pretense.

A shadow crossed Roger's face — irritation surfacing before he forced it down. He understood Wesley too well: refined in appearance, unyielding beneath the polish.

Without delay, Roger added, "I've heard you're looking into Randall."

Wesley's brows knit together. "And who told you that?" For someone as insignificant as Randall to draw Roger's notice was deeply unsettling.

"Whatever you think you've uncovered, end it now," Roger replied flatly. "Do yourself a favor and let it go." His voice hardened, each word edged with warning. "If you don't, you will regret it."

The question pressed at Wesley's throat, demanding to be asked. Why.

Roger cut him off before it could surface. "Don't ask. I won't explain myself to you."

When Wesley stepped out of the house, a heavy pressure settled in his chest, refusing to ease. A disturbing possibility began to take shape in his thoughts — too extreme to accept, too precise to ignore. A low, humorless laugh slipped from him.

Chapter 874

Abandon the investigation, simply because Roger ordered it? Had he ever followed instructions that easily, Apex Group would never have existed.

As he drove toward Rosemont Gardens, he made another call. Gabriela still didn't answer. She was likely asleep by now. To her, nothing ranked higher than rest and financial security.

Wesley watched the screen fade as the call disconnected once more, a faint redness creeping into his eyes.

Heartless little liar.

Did she have the slightest understanding of what truly mattered to him above everything else?

Wesley lingered outside Gabriela's house the entire night.

No one would have imagined that a man who had ruled the heights of success for years — well into his thirties — could behave like a lovestruck boy. He had driven to her house and waited there until morning, tension wound tight the entire time.

By dawn, there was still no response from Gabriela. He started the car and drove away.

It was the day the company resumed operations after the holiday break. Wesley didn't have to show up in person, but there were matters that needed to be handled with Billy. When Billy arrived at the condo and saw his exhausted face, he couldn't hide his surprise. Having already heard about the recent strain between Gabriela and Myah, he could easily piece together what had left Wesley so worn down. He chose his words with care. "Mr. Moss, I can manage everything at the office. Would you prefer to stay home and rest today?"

The first day back after a holiday was never demanding — mostly distributing bonuses and giving a brief talk to lift everyone's spirits. Those tasks were well within Billy's abilities. At times like this, he couldn't help thinking of Brenden. If Brenden hadn't been injured, he would have been able to assist and ease at least some of the burden on Wesley.

Wesley gave a small nod. "Alright. I'll leave it to you."

Billy paused, then asked, "Shall I have lunch prepared for you, Mr. Moss?" Since Wesley wasn't going to the office and wasn't at Gabriela's place, Billy guessed there had been some kind of dispute between them, and he couldn't help worrying that Wesley might spend the entire day at home and skip his meals. Wesley was still in the process of healing and needed to look after his health.

Exhaustion clouded his eyes as he gave a slight nod. "Do whatever you see fit."

They reviewed a few remaining company matters before Billy finally took his leave. On his way out, he deliberated for a while, then decided to make a stop at the hospital.

Myah was visibly startled when she saw him. “Billy? Why are you here? Did Wesley ask you to come?”

Billy regarded her in silence for a brief moment. After learning that Wesley owed Allan his life, he had always extended courtesy and compassion toward Myah. Lately, however, she had worn down everyone around her, creating conflict wherever she went. If not for Allan’s final request, she would have long since exhausted the goodwill people still offered her.

Chapter 875

His eyes rested on the bandage across her forehead. “Miss Espinoza, please look after yourself. Do not put yourself in harm’s way — and do not cause pain to others either.”

Myah’s expression softened. “Thank you, Billy.”

Noticing that she was calmer now, he continued. “After what happened yesterday, Mr. Moss didn’t get any rest at all. He looks utterly drained. It’s the first day back after the holiday, and he’s already overwhelmed with work and family responsibilities.”

Myah’s brows creased. “He has so much on his plate.”

“That’s right,” Billy said, keeping his tone mild. “It would be better not to trouble him for the time being. Let him have a few days to recover.”

“I’m sorry,” she said quietly. “Is Wesley... with Gabriela right now?”

“He’s at his condo,” Billy answered carefully. “He should be resting. It would be better not to contact him today.”

Myah dropped her gaze. “I understand. Thank you for letting me know.”

She was unusually gentle and compliant, which took Billy by surprise. Had he misjudged her after all? Perhaps Myah was simply sensitive rather than ill-intentioned, and maybe everyone had been too quick to judge her.

But then he thought of Gabriela — level-headed and clear-minded. She would never make accusations without solid reasons. Billy shook his head. Wesley’s personal affairs were not something he should involve himself in. The only thing he could do was find ways to lighten his boss’s load whenever possible.

“If anything comes up,” he added, “you can reach out to me anytime. I’ll help however I can.”

Myah gave a small nod.

After showering, Wesley reached for his phone again. There was still no response from Gabriela. Was she still sleeping, or had she seen his calls and chosen not to answer? Had she truly made up her mind to walk away from him?

He paced the length of the condo, restless and unable to settle. Finally, he stopped resisting and dialed her number once more.

By that time, Gabriela was no longer asleep. She had slept until her body decided it was time to wake up — sleep had always been her way of coping. When emotions became too heavy to carry, she retreated into it. She had formed that habit long ago, as a child.

Other children had bullied her for growing up without a father. She would run home sobbing, desperate for answers, asking again and again where he had gone. Her mother would pull her close and murmur softly, “It’s okay, sweetheart. Let’s lie down and sleep. When you wake up, it won’t hurt so much.” And in a way, it always helped. Each time she woke, the ache felt a little less sharp.

Chapter 876

After her mother passed and Marie’s family began treating her badly, sleep became the only peace she could reach. There was no one left to protect her from harm — only the quiet nothingness that came with closing her eyes. Even later, after she met Allan and grew older, that instinct stayed with her. Whenever life struck too hard, she would sleep deeply and let the darkness soften the hurt. When she finally woke, she would convince herself that everything was fine again.

She was still trying to make sense of everything that had happened the night before when her phone rang.

“Gabriela, why did you take so long to answer?” Myah’s voice was gentle and cautious — the same careful tone she had always used, as though nothing between them had changed.

Gabriela felt a surge of revulsion. Her gaze drifted to Truett, still asleep beside her, and guilt washed over her for ever having allowed danger into their lives.

“What do you want, Myah?” she asked flatly.

“What happened yesterday was my fault,” Myah said. “Wesley stayed awake the entire night because of me.” Gabriela said nothing. She had no interest in guessing Myah’s intentions or following wherever she was steering the conversation. “He’s finally fallen asleep,” Myah continued, “sleeping peacefully. Whatever your plans are for today, please don’t disturb him, alright?”

Gabriela felt the last of her patience drain away. Without a word, she ended the call.

The moment it disconnected, a WhatsApp notification appeared on her screen. Two pictures. In one, Wesley lay sleeping, his face turned slightly away. In the other, Myah’s hand — threaded with an IV tube — rested softly in his much larger palm. The caption read: “Wesley was with me the entire night. He’s utterly exhausted.”

Gabriela glanced at both pictures and deleted them without hesitation.

Then she noticed ten missed calls from Wesley — all from the night before.

She stared at the screen, and something cold and quiet settled in her chest. When she had let go of his hand last night, she had never planned to reach for it again. From that moment forward, neither Wesley nor Myah would be allowed anywhere near Truett.

Without a second thought, she blocked Wesley’s number and deleted it. Her expression remained calm as she made the decision to sever their ties completely.

Back at the condo, when Wesley called again, the line didn't connect. He waited, then tried once more — and understood. He had been blocked.

The realization hit him like a physical blow.

He grabbed his coat and drove straight to Rosemont Gardens. When he arrived, he walked quickly into the villa.

Farley met him in the entryway. "Gabriela has left for the office."

Wesley turned around without a word and headed for the Lakeshore Building.

Inside the Lakeshore Building, Wesley took the elevator to the fifth floor.

At the front desk, the receptionist was practically beaming, waving a check as though she had just won the lottery. It was the first day back after the holiday, and clearly no one was in a rush to dive into real work just yet. Two employees had already gathered around her desk, eyes fixed on the number printed on the paper.

"This is insane," the receptionist said, barely containing herself. "Our bonuses are twice what they were last year."

One of the employees let out a low whistle. “Ms. Haynes really knows how to reward loyalty. Once she makes money, she never forgets the people who stayed with her. Sticking around was the best decision we ever made.”

The other laughed. “And she’s gorgeous. Actually nice, too. I dropped off some files in her office once, and she smiled at me. My brain shut down for a full second. Almost made me jealous of Alissa. Shame Ms. Haynes won’t hire male assistants.”

“Keep dreaming,” the receptionist said with a wide grin. “Ms. Haynes is already taken by Mr. Moss. Let’s worry about keeping our paychecks instead of fantasizing about the boss.” She dragged a finger dramatically across her throat. “Careful — if Mr. Moss hears you, you’re done.”

“Mr. Moss!” the two employees called out simultaneously.

The receptionist spun around too fast, her breath catching. Wesley stood there in a perfectly tailored black suit, tall and effortlessly composed, as though he had materialized from a magazine cover. Every line of his face looked sharp enough to cut. He carried his usual cool distance, though today there was the faintest hint of something warmer in his eyes.

The receptionist’s heart gave an involuntary flutter. Was he actually in a good mood? Or had praising Gabriela earned them a rare moment of mercy? Back from the holiday for barely a morning, and she had already walked headfirst into a moment worth gossiping about for weeks. Caught off guard, she blurted out before her brain could intervene, “Good morning, Mr. Moss.”

Wesley barely slowed, giving her a small nod as he headed past the desk.

At Apex Group, everyone knew he belonged to Gabriela. He never had to sign in when visiting their boss. But today the receptionist hurried to step in front of him, her cheeks warming. Wesley paused, a slight crease forming between his brows. “Do I need to make an appointment now?”

The mild edge in his tone made her heart flip all over again. It wasn’t quite anger — more like amused resignation. Even if Gabriela had forced him to schedule a visit, he clearly wouldn’t be particularly bothered by it.

“No, you don’t,” she answered quickly, lowering her gaze. “Ms. Haynes isn’t in today. She left earlier — she said she was heading to the hotel.”

The Riverside Hotel had been operating under Gabriela’s name for nearly two years. Between the Howard family’s reputation and that viral incident from years past — the one people still whispered about, involving a hundred homeless men — the hotel had become famous before it even opened. Combined with the rapid rise of the Haynes Group, Gabriela had quietly grown into a figure no one in the business world could afford to ignore. While other women her age were busy talking about their husbands’ wealth, Gabriela moved in an entirely different lane. She was beautiful, self-made, and impossible to overlook — and her refusal to return to the Howard family only made her story more compelling.

Chapter 878

Gabriela moved through the hotel lobby with easy grace, flashing warm smiles and nodding at staff as she passed. She was friendly without trying too hard, and somehow that made people respect her even more. She had Alissa distribute the bonus checks to everyone — from management down to the cleaning crew — and then took her time offering a few sincere words to each person, making it clear that no one was invisible to her. It was the kind of leadership that inspired loyalty without ever demanding it.

Alissa trailed just behind her, catching all the admiring glances people threw Gabriela's way. Being this close to her felt almost unreal. So this is what real power feels like, she thought, a small smile creeping onto her face.

Once the checks were distributed and a brief staff meeting wrapped up, Gabriela moved on, already heading to her next appointment.

Wesley arrived at the hotel too late. Gabriela had just left. When he asked a receptionist, she replied politely, "I heard Ms. Haynes say she was going to Presley's place."

That was all he needed. He turned around, got back in his car, and drove straight to Presley's estate. It was smaller than his own, but elegantly maintained and well-staffed. Four gardeners worked out front, and from the gates to the main house, the walkway was lined with carefully pruned bonsai trees, each shaped to quiet perfection. Wesley barely spared them a glance.

Inside, the butler guided him to the drawing room and poured him a cup of coffee. "Please wait here, Mr. Moss."

A moment later, Lilian appeared, lightly holding the butler's arm. Though she had stepped down years ago from her position as chairwoman of the National Landscape Painting Committee, her name still carried undeniable weight. She settled into her chair and looked at Wesley with a soft, kind smile. "You must be Mr. Moss. Gabriela is with Presley right now, going over her latest design. Princess Alvira hasn't set a hard deadline, but Gabriela hates making anyone wait."

The handbag design was already finished — a detailed arrangement of flowers and butterflies woven seamlessly together, rendered in deeper, richer colors that gave the piece a calm and elegant presence. Six butterflies, each captured in a different motion, seemed ready to lift off the surface, while the

blooming flowers grounded the composition with quiet sophistication. Even as a sketch, it was stunning. It was easy to imagine how breathtaking the finished embroidery would be.

Alvira had been completely taken with Gabriela's design and had even mentioned that a younger friend of hers was eager to see the final version. Since then, her assistant had been checking in every few days. That day alone, several messages had come through, each politely noting that Alvira hoped to unveil Gabriela's work at a major event the following month. Because of that, Gabriela had pushed everything else aside and was working around the clock at Presley's.

Lilian explained the situation with an apologetic smile. "Gabriela's completely tied up right now. Mr. Moss, perhaps you could come back another time."

Wesley answered without a trace of impatience. "No problem. I have time. I'll wait."

At eighty-two, Lilian tired easily. After a little light conversation, she pushed herself up slowly. "Please excuse me, Mr. Moss. I can't sit for too long these days. Make yourself at home — if you need anything, just let the butler know."

Chapter 879

Wesley waited far longer than he had planned. The coffee kept coming, one refill after another, as daylight faded into evening. Still, Gabriela didn't come down.

That was when it finally sank in. She wasn't busy — she was avoiding him, and she had no intention of seeing him today.

He let out a quiet, resigned sigh, asked the butler to pass along his regards to Lilian, and left the manor without another word.

In the room upstairs, Presley glanced over with a faint smile. “Mr. Moss has been sitting downstairs for most of the day. You’re really not going to see him?”

Gabriela’s hand paused — the needle hovering for a single heartbeat — before moving again. Her voice stayed quiet and even. “I gave Princess Alvira my word that I’d finish this by the end of next month. I don’t want to waste my time.”

The Wesley she had loved before his illness had been someone worth holding on to. But the man he had become since was paranoid and unpredictable, always on edge for reasons she could never fully untangle. And above it all, Myah clung to him like a shadow that never left. Gabriela had reached her limit. Whatever fire she had once carried for him was gone.

Presley watched her in silence. Gabriela looked composed on the outside, but the hurt was buried deep where no one could reach it. This time, Wesley had truly broken her heart.

Presley said nothing and went back to sorting her threads.

Outside the manor, Wesley sat in his car with his hands resting on the wheel, going nowhere. He tried Gabriela’s number again and found he was still blocked. A sharp breath left him as he tugged at his collar, his gaze drifting to the bracelet on his wrist. The sight of it only made his chest feel tighter.

She wasn’t answering his calls. She wasn’t willing to see him. Did she honestly expect him to back off now?

Not a chance. He wasn't giving up that easily.

A faint shift passed through Wesley's eyes as a quiet, unyielding resolve took hold — the decision already made, settled deep in his bones.

For the moment, though, exhaustion demanded its due. He needed to get back to his condo and force himself to rest. Ever since the illness two years earlier that had nearly claimed his life, discipline had become sacred to him, down to his sleep schedule and every measured bite of food. It had never been about a fear of death. What haunted him instead was that memory — the unbearable sensation of having sworn to protect someone for a lifetime, only to discover too late that he had been utterly powerless.

By the time Wesley reached his condo, he found Billy standing at the door, as if he had just arrived himself. A heavy tension darkened Billy's face, his fingers gripping a thick file envelope like it carried bad news he couldn't set down. "Mr. Moss, there was something urgent I needed to report."

Chapter 880

Wesley acknowledged him with a brief, restrained nod and said nothing. Without another word, they stepped inside together, the door closing softly behind them.

The moment they were in, Billy pressed the envelope into Wesley's hands. "Mr. Moss, we finally made headway on Randall."

According to the investigation, Randall had begun frequent, suspicious contact with the Howard family eight years earlier. "I managed to locate a former servant from the Howard household," Billy continued

in a low voice. “He claimed Randall showed up at the estate multiple times — and every visit was deliberately kept out of sight.” After that, Randall had vanished from Okburg entirely, as if erased. Not long afterward, the entire staff of Howard family servants had been abruptly dismissed.

Wesley absorbed the information in silence, his expression unreadable as his mind picked apart every loose thread. Taken together, it left no doubt that Randall’s ties to the Howard family ran far deeper than a few casual visits. What unsettled him most was the warning — why had Roger been the one to step in and shut him down? How exactly were Randall, the Howards, and the Moss family tangled together beneath the surface? Somewhere in the shadows, a connection existed — fragile as a single thread, yet stubbornly bound to a hidden truth.

Roger had warned him plainly: keep digging, and he would pay for it. In Wesley’s world, no warning had ever been powerful enough to make him retreat simply because someone said he would pay. If Randall truly had entanglements with the Howard family, Wesley intended to pry every last one into the open — digging until there was nowhere left for the truth to hide.

“Bring in better private investigators,” Wesley ordered flatly. “I don’t care what it costs. I want every detail about Randall laid bare.”

“Yes, sir.” After wrapping up his report, Billy caught the fatigue etched into Wesley’s features and withdrew in silence.

Wesley chose not to visit the hospital that night. Despite promising Loretta he wouldn’t deliberately avoid Myah, he simply didn’t want too much contact with her. Gabriela’s hostility toward Myah ran sharp and unfiltered, yet he still couldn’t bring himself to shut Myah out entirely. Instead, he settled on the only compromise he could live with — quietly cutting down how often their paths crossed.

By the following day, close to noon, Wesley finally made his way to the hospital. The moment Myah spotted him, her entire face brightened, as if someone had flipped on a light. After a full night of treatment, she looked noticeably better — color back in her cheeks, energy returning to her eyes. “Wesley, I’m really okay now,” she said eagerly. “Can we go home?”