

Chapter 143 No Strings Attached

The thought of her living under the same roof with another man for three months, sharing intimate moments, holding hands, kissing hugging and even sleeping together, was unbearable for Chris.

Just thinking about it pushed Chris to the edge of sanity.

At the heart of the issue was that Declan had drugged her, planning to commit something terrible, clearly showing his malicious intent towards Kimberly.

Chris felt a storm of emotions brewing inside him. He grabbed her wrist and removed the hand that was covering his mouth. "Ms. Holden, do you really think so poorly of me? Do you believe that without you, nobody else would have me?"

Kimberly was slightly embarrassed, worried she might have misinterpreted his words. "No, that's not what I was trying to say."

"Then what are you trying to say?"

"Perhaps I'm overthinking things?"

Chris quirked an eyebrow, gently took her chin between his fingers, and planted a quick kiss on her lips before pulling back. He saw her eyes widen in surprise and smiled softly.

"You see, men often hold a sentimental value to their first experiences. You're my first woman. I find you attractive and have thought about taking responsibility especially after last night which was our first time together. But you refused, and I don't want to pressure you. I'd like us to be friends, friends who can sleep together."

Kimberly was caught off guard and almost bit her tongue. She stuttered, "Friends with benefits?"

"That term sounds too wild." Chris's brow furrowed as he thought for a moment. "Let's say lovers, I want us to be lovers."

Kimberly's expression showed her dilemma as she furrowed her brows, her beautiful face torn.

Honestly, with what Chris had to offer, she doubted she'd find another man as remarkable as him.

He was generous and experienced, and if only he weren't so clingy, it would be perfect....

Furthermore, she had to oversee the collaboration between the Holden Group and Howard Group. If Chris continued to press her about taking responsibility it could complicate things.

She also wondered if Chris was like her, someone who had been reborn.

After a moment of silence, as if deciding Kimberly looked up into his calm and handsome face, hesitatingly asked, "A purely physical, no strings attached relationship?"

Chris looked unfazed but clenched his hand, hiding his mixed feelings, and nodded slightly. "Yes."

"For how long?"

Kimberly fixed her gaze on him, eager to understand the terms. "How long should we keep this arrangement?"

It was crucial to have clear terms since their relationship was transactional. He had helped her escape her problems and start afresh, while she satisfied his needs. Besides, she found enjoyment in the arrangement, so it felt fair to her.

Chris's eyes darkened with intensity. As she discussed their relationship like a mere business deal, he clenched his fist tightly, his fingernails pressing into his palm, seemingly unfazed by the pain.

Or perhaps the pain in his heart was far more overwhelming than any physical pain could be.

His voice came out raspy as he said, "How long do you think?"

Kimberly opened her mouth to suggest a month, remembering how Chris had assisted her significantly, even gifting her a limited edition sports car, and how he had been there for her the previous night, even at his own expense...

She paused, realizing that suggesting just a month would appear ungrateful. She managed a smile and proposed, "Three months?"

Chris gave a slight scoff, showing his dissatisfaction. "Do you see me as a philanthropist? I solved a major problem for you, and you offered me just three months? Ms. Holden, you would do well in business.

Just so we're clear, you can utilize my resources and connections freely during our relationship. I'll provide you with a hundred million as spending money each month. If you need anything else, just ask, as long as it's within my limits."

What a generous man!

Kimberly's eyes sparkled a bit. The offer was too good, and it tempted her.

She hesitated, then cautiously asked, "Any other conditions?"

"Yes, I'd like us to move in together," Chris looked at her earnestly. "It would be more practical."

Even though they lived only half a mile apart, a short walk from one another, his request was somewhat ambitious.

"Move in together..."

Kimberly furrowed her delicate brows, pausing for a few seconds. "It's not out of the question."

"Six months. Would that be acceptable?"

She bit her lip, looking at Chris with uncertainty.

Originally, she thought three months would suffice to learn everything about Chris's background, but he seemed to prefer a longer period. Six months might just be long enough for him to grow weary of her.

"Alright," she said.

Chris's eyelashes quivered slightly. Deep down, he felt even six months was too short.

He was drawn to Kimberly for more than just physical attraction. He aimed to use this time to fully capture her heart, or at least to alter her perception of him.

Chris was aware that Kimberly had grown far beyond the naive young woman she was just out of college. She was skeptical of mere declarations of love. He knew he had to demonstrate through his actions that his feelings for her were real.

However, he was concerned that if he proposed extending their agreement even further, she might not accept, so he reluctantly agreed to the current terms.

When they had finally come to a decision, Kimberly's eyes shaped into a smile. "Then it's settled, purely physical, no strings attached. Mr. Howard, you better not withdraw your word."

She said this half-jokingly because she hoped they wouldn't end up in an awkward position after six months, possibly even unable to maintain a friendship.

A shadow passed through Chris's eyes, and he swallowed hard. "Understood. I'll prepare a contract for us later. Ms. Holden, are you ready to start fulfilling your role as a lover now?"

As he said this, he couldn't resist pulling Kimberly into his embrace. Gazing down at her as she rested against him stirred his desires.

Kimberly's pulse quickened, her cheeks warming. She could feel his growing excitement. "Not now. You haven't yet kept your promise to me."

Chris's gaze lingered on Kimberly's slightly open lips, his voice low and full of yearning. "But I want to..."

Before he could finish, her finger pressed softly against his lips, and Kimberly looked at him with serious eyes. "No, you don't."

Chris found her denial somewhat amusing, raising an eyebrow. "Can't I

have just a little preview?"

Without waiting for her reply, he leaned in and captured her lips, forcefully parting them and cradling the back of her head to deepen their kiss.

"Mm..."

Kimberly resisted briefly before surrendering allowing him to take what he desired.

As he looked down at Kimberly with her eyes closed, lying in his arms, a deep sense of ownership filled Chris's gaze.

Kimberly belonged to him, and only to him!