

Chapter 152 This Is Your Punishment

Kimberly felt a bit embarrassed when she looked into Chris's deep, entrancing eyes.

She hesitated to acknowledge it, but upon reflection, his points made sense.

"Are you upset?" she inquired her brows knitting together slightly.

She didn't believe she had done anything wrong; it seemed to her that Chris was making a fuss over minor issues. Still, she kept this thought to herself in his presence.

With a gentle, sweet voice, she smiled and added, "Mr. Howard, you're always so understanding. Surely you aren't bothered by such a small thing?"

Kimberly paused, then softly pulled at his sleeve, her tone still warm and persuasive. "Please, don't be angry, okay?"

Was she attempting to calm him?

A slight smile began to play on Chris's lips. Her attempts had brightened his mood, yet he feigned sternness, not ready to forgive her so quickly.

If he forgave her too quickly, might she not carelessly hurt him again?

He faced her silently, his look piercing

Kimberly's smile was becoming strained. She let go of his sleeve, rubbed her face, and inhaled deeply. "What must I do for you to forgive me?"

Chris laughed mockingly. "Ms. Holden, are you always this impatient?"

He tapped his phone screen gently, drawing her attention to the timer he had set covertly.

The timer read 2 minutes and 35 seconds.

"You tried to make peace for just over two minutes, and already you're losing patience. Is that really all your sincerity?"

Kimberly's smile dropped instantly, but realizing she still needed something from Chris, she quickly smiled again and softly said, "I was wrong. I shouldn't have embarrassed you like that in front of others."

Her rapid shift in expression left Chris inwardly impressed. His eyes twinkled as he tapped his lips.

"Kiss me, and all will be forgiven."

Kimberly hesitated for a few seconds before leaning in and lightly kissing him on the lips. As she started to pull back, his hand firmly held the back of her head, intensifying the kiss.

Her eyes widened in shock as she saw his handsome features so close. "Chris.."

His kiss was intense and insistent, pulling her into a deeply intimate moment.

Just as she was lost in the sensation, he suddenly nipped her lip sharply, then let her go.

Kimberly sharply inhaled from the pain, hastily grabbing a mirror from her bag to inspect her lip.

As she feared, it was bleeding again!

"Chris!"

Even in her anger, her beauty remained undeniable.

A mischievous and slightly vindictive sparkle danced in Chris's eyes as he subconsciously licked his lips, savoring the faint taste of her blood.

He exuded a wild, irresistible charm, uniquely captivating.

For a moment, Kimberly was spellbound by his allure, her eyes locked on his.

Chris moved in closer, trapping her against the car window with his arm. His emotive eyes lingered on her injured lip as he offered a small, knowing smile.

"Next time you try to push me away, it won't be so easy to make amends."

His rough thumb grazed her lips, pressing into the tender wound, which startled Kimberly back to the harsh reality as she flinched.

He murmured seductively into her ear, "Consider this your punishment"

What kind of man had she become entangled with?

A flicker of regret crossed her mind. She pushed him back and straightened up, composedly smoothing her dress.

"Can you explain now?"

"Explain what?" Chris played dumb.

Kimberly simmered with frustration. "How can you still act clueless?"

Chris just laughed softly, moved closer to the window, and crossed his long legs. He turned to look out the window, his face thoughtful and inscrutable.

How should he explain?

Should he disclose his deal with Caiden?

He had promised Caiden that he would keep his distance from Kimberly, yet he had broken that promise.

Admitting this breach was one thing but revealing their arrangement to Kimberly might make him appear utterly treacherous.

Chris found himself unable to confess. He could be truthful with anyone else but not with Kimberly. Some truths were better left unsaid.

Kimberly's frustration grew, morphing into a disdainful sneer. "Mr. Howard, I completely misread you! You're nothing more than a liar, manipulating my emotions!"

Chris's expression darkened, a slight twitch appearing on his lips.

He appeared indifferent, as though her words were just noise, pretending not to listen.

Filled with rage, Kimberly turned to gaze out the window, opting to ignore Chris in silence.

At the same time, the Holden family's cars moved smoothly toward the cemetery.

In the first vehicle, Archie was smiling widely, thrilled by what had just transpired and eager to discuss it with his youngest daughter. "Mabel, do you think Mr. Howard and Kimberly could end up together? It seems to me that Mr. Howard has taken a liking to Kimberly..."

"Dad!" Mabel cut him off with a sigh. "Kimberly just finalized her divorce, and you're already planning her next marriage? Surely, we can afford to have her stay with us for a while."

Archie puffed up his cheeks, giving Mabel a displeased look. "What are you implying? It's as though I can't wait to send her away."

Was there even a distinction?

A subtle smile flickered across Mabel's face. Without her deep understanding of how much her father cherished Kimberly, she might have thought he truly wanted to rush Kimberly back into marriage. After all, nobody would hurry to marry their granddaughter off like that.

She comforted Archie by patting his hand. "I didn't mean it like that. We should take our time with these things. Relationship matters should unfold naturally. Let them sort it out on their own."

After a brief pause, Mabel said, "Dad, I've been considering having William step back from his managerial role and proposing Kimberly as his replacement. Since the Howard Group has specifically asked for Kimberly to oversee the collaboration between our families, it seems right for her to take on more responsibilities within the Holden Group. What's your opinion on this?"

Mabel observed her father's face intently, oblivious to the fact that Archie was already aware of William's dealings.

Upon hearing her proposal, Archie's eyes narrowed, and he pondered briefly before giving a slow nod. "That sounds like a good idea. But I wonder if William will be on board with it."



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