

Chapter 1751 A Kiss

The thought of Mandy ever needing him had never crossed Locke's mind.

Yet, he met her gaze unflinchingly, ignoring Elizabeth's desperate plea from the side.

The intensity of his stare sent shivers down Mandy's spine.

"Sir, we could really use your help," Elizabeth pleaded, stepping forward. "We'd be eternally grateful."

Locke finally deigned to acknowledge her, adjusting his glasses with nonchalant grace. "My help is for Mandy. If she doesn't need it, then that's the end of it."

Mandy's lips twitched in irritation. He was doing this on purpose; she knew it.

Before Elizabeth could retort, Mandy raised a hand, dismissing her to face the immediate crisis with the remaining operations team.

"Thank you." For once, Elizabeth didn't find Mandy infuriating. With a nod, she hurried away with the team.

Alone with Locke, Mandy's voice hardened. "Locke, lend them a hand, alright?"

Anger still burned within her, but the situation demanded pragmatism. Asking for his help felt like swallowing her pride, but she had no choice.

Locke's continued silence gnawed at her.

"Get your people to manage public opinion. If these rumors run wild, even with clarification, W Marks' image will be tarnished."

Locke raised an eyebrow, nodded, and returned to his phone, apparently not planning to take any action.

Unease slithered into Mandy's gut. "Aren't you going to contact your team?" She frowned.

Locke met her gaze, a glimmer of cunning in his icy eyes. "I can offer my assistance, but what's in it for me?"

Mandy rolled her eyes. This was blackmail, plain and simple.

However, Mandy knew Locke owed Draco no favors.

She gritted her teeth. "Fine! What's your price?" she spat, eyes narrowed.

A smug smile crept across Locke's face.

He beckoned her closer, lowering his voice conspiratorially. "A simple kiss."

"What?" Mandy recoiled, eyes flying around to make sure no one saw their exchange.

Thankfully, the W Marks staff were engrossed in the crisis.

Fury flooded her fair face. "Locke, have you lost your mind?"

Unfazed, Locke shrugged. "Just stating my terms. If you don't agree, you won't get my help. My team's on holiday, and I won't disturb their peace."

"You..." Mandy faltered, speechless.

His eyes turned steely. "Mandy, let's be clear. I love you, but I don't want to get involved in Draco's mess." He raised an eyebrow. "Think it through. Those online vultures won't wait for your decision."

Mandy sighed, massaging her temples. "Isn't there any room for discussion?"

"None." A single word from Locke sealed her fate.