



Melting the Heart of the CEO

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Category: Romance, Adult, Lesbian Romance

Description: Can she melt the icy heart of the demanding CEO?

This is an Age Gap, Rich Girl/Poor Girl, Different Worlds, Boss/Employee Lesbian/Sapphic Romance. Super spicy, super sweet and as always with Emily Hayes, a Happy Ever After.

Sofie Rosswell is a fashion school graduate working in a coffee shop when she is confronted with a difficult, demanding and very glamorous customer- the fashion mogul and CEO of the biggest New York Fashion Magazine- Gabriella Galena.

Sofie is intimidated by Gabriella, but entranced by her and finds herself very attracted to her.

When Gabriella offers Sofie a job, all of Sofie's dreams of working in the fashion world might come true.

But, Gabriella looks at Sofie with hungry eyes, and Sofie likes it.

Sofie can't risk her dream job by sleeping with the boss, can she?

Total Pages (Source): 39

Tucking her silver-colored hair behind her ears, Gabriella Galena gently inserted a pair of sparkling diamond studs to complete her look. She gazed intently at her reflection, studying the lines of the Chanel suit, ensuring that the garment complimented the silhouette of her body. Okay, yes, that looks perfect. I hope Deluxe is ready for my return because I'm ready to raise a little hell and make another million. And this time, nothing is going to stand in my way.

Gabriella felt a slight pang in her chest as she looked around her Manhattan penthouse, contemplating her fate. It had been exactly one year since Gabriella Galena sat in her corner office, representing the famous magazine that had been setting trends in New York fashion since 1941. It was owned by the billionaire Rutherford family, with Tempest Rutherford as the Chairperson of the Board.

Reflecting on her career and the catalyst that resulted in a leave of absence, Gabriella knew she would never be the same woman she was last year. But during her personal break, Gabriella decided to cultivate a new and more powerful sense of self that would take no mercy. After existing on a steady diet of grief and devastation, a new CEO would enter the Deluxe Redux's office this morning.

Gabriella slipped on her red-bottom Louboutin heels, click-clacking across the marble floor to the penthouse elevator that would bring her to the private parking garage. Her iPhone buzzed, noting a text from her driver informing her that he had arrived. She checked her rose-gold Omega watch and thought to herself: Perfect, right on time. I want to be at the office early to review the design of the new May issue. From what I've seen in the emails, I'll be demanding a lot of corrections and possibly

administrating some disciplinary action as well.

Riding down to the garage, Gabriella was greeted by a silver Jaguar with her uniformed driver in the front seat. Sliding into the back, she was whisked to the Garment District, heading towards the Tuxedo Plaza, home to Deluxe Redux. While it was only 7:05 a.m. when Gabriella arrived at the building, the streets were already energized with pedestrians hustling and bustling through the New York streets.

Stopping at the front of the building, she paused outside the main entrance, breathing in the morning air. This time, nothing is going to stand in my way of success. I'm lucky to have been granted a year-long leave of absence without losing my prestigious position. Taking a deep breath, Gabriella centered herself. I will never ever allow anyone to rob me of my power and ambition. That's a promise. Her emotions turned dark and heavy as her blue eyes narrowed. Gabriella hoped that the staff at Deluxe were ready for her return because if not, there would be hell to pay, and the CEO was ready to collect.

Gabriella waited outside the elevators until the doors parted. A few suits joined the ride, with bodies coming and going until she exited the elevator on the 36th floor. Taking a deep breath, Gabriella squared her shoulders and tightened her face into an on-nonsense expression, and she flung open the heavy glass door that was etched with the magazine's logo.

The agency was ominously quiet, and for a moment, Gabriella flashed back to her last day at Deluxe before her leave of absence. She felt her heart constrict in her chest, and her core began to crumble before Gabriella remembered that she would no longer succumb to weak emotions. I'm not fucking weak. I can do this! This is my magazine agency, and I will fight for my place and power here. Don't you dare fucking cry! After a harsh pep talk to herself, Gabriella moved past the empty reception desks to the coveted corner office, complete with a view of the Manhattan skyline.

Slowly, she opened the door. The morning sun shone through the sheer drapes, creating a beautiful glare that suggested new beginnings of hope. But Gabriella's aspirations were now fueled by a hunger for authority and an insatiable greed that felt like a monster that needed to be constantly fed. Shaking her head as she scanned the room, Gabriella said aloud, "Nope, I'm definitely not the same person anymore, especially not here. But I'm determined to make that a positive attribute towards the business."

As the CEO began to unpack her belongings, rearranging her workspace, she heard a knock at the door. Startled, Gabriella answered, "Hello? Who is it?" She wasn't ready to entertain any greetings from the current employees yet, preferring space to get organized and focused.

"Gabby, it's Samson. Welcome back!" Gabriella softened; if there was anyone she was glad to see, it was Samson Ableman from the art department. Samson was a flamboyant and highly creative team member of Deluxe with an eye for detail. Gabriella had been a fan of his snarky, sarcastic humor and take-no-shit attitude from the moment they met.

Samson was also a loyal employee, and while Gabriella's trust in humanity had plummeted since last year's personal incident, Samson was the one person that Gabriella could rely on and confide in. She knew that, as a team, they would be able to take back control of Deluxe Redux.

"Oh yes, of course, come on in," Gabriella called out. Samson opened the door, carrying a magazine that Gabriella assumed was a sample of the upcoming May issue.

"Darling, oh my god, it's so nice to see you again. The magazine needs to get whipped into shape, so I'm glad my favorite bitch is back!" Samson beamed at the CEO, waiting for a hug. But Gabriella held back, studying Samson's outfit.

“My goodness, what are you wearing? Is that a dress shirt from last year’s Haute collection?” Gabriella frowned slightly, maintaining an icy distance. For Gabriella, the staff needed to reflect the latest fashion trends in their wardrobe when coming to the office. Hmmm, it looks like Samson may be slipping a bit in his appearance.

Appearing confused, Samson frowned. “Um, well, yes, but it’s linen! The material is pure quality.” Samson ran a manicured finger over the expensive material before pointing it in Gabriella’s face. “You told me a few years back that you loved this shirt.”

Gabriella shook her head and sighed. “It’s fine, don’t worry. Let’s start over.” Smoothing her silver bob over her ears, the CEO mustered a smile, returning Samson’s embrace. Gabriella saw that she had hurt Samson’s feelings, and while she wasn’t one to apologize at the office, Gabriella recognized Samson as proficient and skilled. It was in her best interest to make peace. “It’s good to see you as well. Let’s see the sample.”

Visibly relieved, Samson passed the periodical to Gabriella. Outside her office, she could hear the staff beginning to enter; there was rustling of bags and murmuring voices. Deluxe was coming alive, as it always did, at 8:00 am sharp.

Taking the sample from Samson’s hand, Gabriella studied the cover model. At first glance, Gabriella immediately disapproved of the image. “No, this won’t work. I thought we weren’t going to work with this model again. Isn’t that what was discussed just before my leave?” Pursing her lips, Gabriella scowled. “And why on earth is she wearing a babydoll dress? This is the May issue! She should have been in a bikini or at least something sexy!”

“I know, but when you left, Ms. Rutherford wanted some authority in the magazine’s decision-making. She approved of this model, and the dress was her suggestion,” Samson replied nervously. The tension in the office was thick, and Gabriella could

practically hear her assistant's restless heart beating.

Gabriella was indignant. Narrowing her gaze, she retorted, "Samson, I am the CEO of Deluxe Redux—not Tempest. This office is to follow my rules and my standards. Now, I understand if she needed to step in temporarily, but I never quit my position. And now that I'm back, things will be going back to normal. Understood?"

Appearing flustered, Samson backtracked. "Yes, of course. I understand. I'm sorry; we just didn't know what to do without your direction. I'll speak to the photographer about booking a new model." The director paused before gently asking, "How are you feeling since everything happened? I know this past year has been rough on you."

Gabriella was grateful for Samson's kindness, but she didn't have the emotional capacity to share her feelings or to discuss the reason for her absence. In fact, Gabriella had only become more hardened throughout the months, and she wasn't about to soften anytime soon. "I'm fine, thank you for asking," she replied curtly, returning the sample.

"Alright, I'll leave you to settle in. And I'll get to those edits right away." Samson turned to leave when someone knocked on the office door. "Hello? Is Ms. Galena in?" Gabriella responded impatiently, "Yes, I'm here. Come in."

An unfamiliar red-headed woman entered the office with a handful of envelopes and files. Gabriella immediately noticed her beauty; the stranger had a pin-up-inspired look with an arm sleeve full of tattoos. "Hi, I'm Romi, the new photographer. I was hired after Madison left. I was also put in charge of collecting your mail." Romi handed the large stack to Gabriella, whose heart crumbled upon hearing Madison's name.

Gabriella took the envelopes from Romi, eyeing her suspiciously. "Thanks. Were you

the photographer in charge of shooting the model for the May issue?”

Romi bobbed her head, adjusting her patterned headband. “Yup, I was. She was great, too, and very easy to work with. It’s nice to meet you, by the way. I’ve heard so much about you, and it’s great to have you back in the office.”

Gabriella gave Romi a stern look. “I don’t like the cover. We need to reshoot it with a different model. I just spoke to Samson about this as well. You’ll need to work with him on styling, as I also dislike her outfit.”

The CEO eyed Romi. “Also, when you come to work, I’d like you to look more polished. This look,” the CEO emphasized with a pointy finger, “is great for a rock concert, but it doesn’t work inside the Deluxe office. Understood?”

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Romi paused for a moment, maintaining a calm expression. “Sure, no problem. I’ll, um, take care of that right away.” Gulping nervously, Romi added, “Is there anything I can help you with before I leave.”

Gabriella crossed her arms in front of her, exuding an air of authority. “No, that’s it. Just shoot a new cover; that’s a priority. And moving forward, I want to see the unedited photos before anything goes to print. I understand we haven’t worked together much, but this is how I like things done.”

“Got it, no problem.” Romi backed away from Gabriella. “Oh, and I’ll be sure to send you the marketing images for the gala. You’ll want to approve those, too, right?”

Gabriella blanked, furrowing her brow. Gala? What gala? Suddenly, it hit her. She had forgotten about the annual Pink in the City Fashion Gala, which Deluxe Redux sponsored. The high-end affair also served as a fundraiser for breast cancer awareness. Gabriella knew that the event had to be perfect, and she needed to be in attendance.

Rather than be corrected by a strange, new employee, Gabriella quickly recovered. Sternly, she nodded. “Right, yes. I’ll need those by noon today—no exceptions. Oh, and make sure that my car is booked for that night. I’ll also need an appointment to get my hair done.”

“Um, well, okay. I don’t really handle personal matters at the magazine. But I’m happy to take care of that for you because I’m sure you have a lot to catch up on,” Romi explained. “Do you have an assistant? Maybe they could help you?”

Gabriella was becoming overwhelmed. She realized that there would be much to deal with upon her return, and at this time, she did not have an assistant. Fuck! She's right. I'll need to figure that out. "Don't worry about it. Just make sure I get those photo proofs today. I'll handle the rest myself."

Gabriella was aware of her snappy tone, but it was important for her to assume her territory at the magazine. Having an efficient team was crucial for the brand's success, but Gabriella preferred to rule with an iron fist rather than soothe the staff with a gentle approach. God, it feels like things are already falling apart here, and I'm facing an avalanche of work. I need a moment to regroup and to grab a coffee.

Once Romi had exited the office, Gabriella threw on her elegant Burberry overcoat to head over to Sunny's Coffee for a morning break. They better not mess up my latte; I'm definitely not in the mood.

2

"One mocha chip, iced latte for Sam!" Sofie Rosswell called out from behind the counter. As the morning rush began, Sofie was working her usual Monday shift at Sunny's Coffee. Because she needed to wake up at five a.m., Sofie was grateful for the clatter and energetic atmosphere, which helped her stay alert. And Monday mornings at Sunny's were always busy, welcoming high-powered fashion moguls, photographers, and other industry types as customers into the shop.

Just as Sofie placed the drink on the counter for the customer, she felt a tap on her shoulder. "Hey, I'm going on my break in five; want to join me?" Sofie turned to her friend Marlee, nodding quickly.

"Yup, let me finish these orders, and I'll head down to the staff room." She was glad to be working with Marlee today. Sofie got along well with all of Sunny's employees, but she and Marlee had become close friends, and they always tried to time their

breaks together. Marlee patted Sofie's shoulder and headed towards the back of the store while Sofie completed the orders, placing more beverages on the counter.

Wiping her hands on her apron, Sofie removed the coarse fabric over her head, shaking her long, dark ponytail. Notifying her manager that she was taking a break, Sofie moved into the staff room through the back of the store, down a short flight of stairs.

Marlee was already sitting at the communal table with a muffin and a cup of coffee in front of her. Sofie grinned at her friend, sitting in the seat next to Marlee. She sighed as the exhaustion caught up to her. Sofie wasn't usually a morning person, but since she started working full-time at Sunny's, she had learned to adjust her internal body clock. Still, some mornings were more demanding than others, and Sofie felt a wave of fatigue hit her as she sank down into her seat.

"So, how's Jess?" Sofie asked Marlee, referring to Marlee's new girlfriend. Like Sofie, Marlee was a lesbian, and it was one of the first things the friends had bonded over.

Marlee beamed. "Oh man, things are so good. I really think that she could be the one." Marlee pointed at her muffin. "She made these for me; isn't that sweet? Do you want to try a piece?"

Sofie shook her head. "I'm good, but thanks for offering. I can't eat anything until at least noon. It's weird, but I've never been a breakfast person." Sofie wanted to sound light and carefree, knowing there were other reasons for her waning appetite.

Marlee studied her friend, making eye contact. "How are you doing? I mean, you know, with everything that's been happening."

Sofie looked down and shook her head. "Um, I don't know. Fine, I guess. I'm trying

not to think about it at work. I just want to focus and slap a fake smile on my face. Strangely enough, the ‘fake it till you make it’ concept actually works.” She tried to joke with Marlee, but Sofie’s heart was heavy.

“Look, I know how hard breakups can be. I was heartbroken over my ex for at least a year before I was able to date again.” Patting Sofie’s hand, Marlee added, “Don’t worry, you’ll get there. It just takes time.”

Sofie nodded, grateful for her friend’s empathy. “I know, you’re right. I just thought that Charlie and I would be together forever, you know? I understand that three years isn’t the longest period of time, but she was my person.”

Taking a deep breath, Sofie continued, “And it’s not just the breakup. I’m just frustrated that I still haven’t found any work in fashion. Last night, I was up until one a.m., searching for jobs. I graduated top of my class. It just sucks that I have to work so hard to survive when others have everything handed to them.”

Marlee bobbed her head. “I totally get it. Like you, I’ve had to work my ass off too. But I’ve still got my dreams. I am going to own a lesbian coffee shop one day. That’s why I’m working towards the manager position. I want to learn this business inside out so that I can create my own business.”

Sofie’s friend looked so proud and determined that it inspired Sofie to stay true to her own goal of becoming a fashion journalist. Normally, Sofie was optimistic about her future, but the breakup with Charlie caused her emotions to shift, resulting in feelings of self-doubt.

Grabbing Marlee’s hand, Sofie squeezed it with gratitude. “Thanks for being here. I love when we get to work together. And you’re right. I want to focus on myself and my dreams. And it’s hard to be lonely when I’m living with two other roommates,” Sofie quipped, referring to her new living situation since leaving Charlie’s apartment.

The coworkers joked together for a few moments until Sofie noticed the time. She notified Marlee that their break was over, and the employees headed toward the front of the store. Upon her return, Sofie noticed a long line forming, so she took her rotating position in front of the cash register.

Just as Sofie finished serving an Earl Grey tea to a regular named Sarah, she noticed a striking customer enter Sunny's Coffee. The woman's elegance immediately captivated Sofie, causing her to blush. She was tall and lean and mid 50s with a silvery bob and a beautiful Burberry coat that had to be the new season's. Sofie clocked her classic Louboutin heels and swooned. She adored Louboutin heels. Confidence and power oozed from this woman's every pore. Sofie felt her insides go to mush. Attractive women entered Sunny's all of the time, especially those working in the Garment District. But there was something magnetic about this woman that made Sofie flustered.

"Um, here you go," Sofie stammered as she handed back change from Sarah's payment. From her peripheral vision, Sofie kept an eye on the stylish woman, who was next in line.

The customer looked at the coins in her hand and chuckled. "Thanks, Sofie, but I think you gave me too much back."

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Sofie snapped out of her reverie and checked the amount. “Oh gosh, I’m sorry, you’re right. Thanks for being honest.”

Sarah replied, “Don’t worry about it! I don’t want you to get in trouble if your till is off or something. Have a great day!” The customer grabbed her hot tea from the counter and turned to exit the line.

The woman in the Burberry coat approached the register, and Sofie felt her face grow warm. She had the most luminescent silvery hair color Sofie had ever seen; her stylish bob was platinum, offsetting her olive-colored skin.

Standing six feet, she was draped in expensive fabrics under the Burberry and dripping with tasteful jewelry that Sofie could tell was definitely the real deal. She towered over Sofie’s five-foot-two frame. Tasteful makeup highlighted her gray-blue eyes, and while Sofie admired her cheekbones and her dress sense she felt sure the woman was someone famous.

An ex model, maybe? Maybe she is still a model? I should know who she is. Ugh.

But what fascinated Sofie the most was how she carried herself; she had a royal air about her, like a queen. Sofie was a sucker for older powerful femmes. Immediately her heart began to beat.

“Good morning, welcome to Sunny’s. What can I get for you?” Sofie asked, trying to appear calm. The woman loomed over her, and Sofie caught a whiff of her perfume, which Sofie recognized immediately as Chanel.

“I’ll take an almond-milk latte with two shots of espresso, very hot and very little foam.” The woman was unsmiling and specific with her enunciation, emphasizing her latte preference with a direct attitude. To Sofie, her tone sounded more like an order than a request, but Sofie was used to dealing with all types of personalities, particularly grouchy morning patrons.

“Of course, coming right up,” Sofie replied, offering a warm smile. The woman remained in front of Sofie’s register with her arms folded in front of her. “I’m in a hurry, so be quick.”

Hoping to hide her attraction and blushing skin, Sofie turned her back, crafting the latte using the espresso machine. She made sure to heat the almond milk to a higher temperature than usual and strained much of the foam so that only a thin layer lay across the top of the takeout cup. Carefully placing a lid over the drink, she whirled around to face the customer, proudly presenting the latte.

“Here you go, just as you asked; an almond-milk latte, two shots of espresso, extra-hot, little foam.” Sofie grinned and considered winking at the woman as a way to flirt. But unlike other women that Sofie could be coquettish with, this woman appeared intimidating, so Sofie held back.

With a snobbish expression, the woman peeled back the lid and looked at the latte with disdain. “I said little foam, not no foam. And are you sure this is almond milk?” The woman sniffed the cup. “It smells off, like cow’s milk. I think you made a mistake.”

“Um, but no, I-I used almond milk. Look, the carton is still out.” Sofie smiled, trying to lighten the conversation. “It was a new container, so I know the milk is good.” Sofie recognized a difficult customer when she saw one. But Sofie knew she was good at customer service and she always took pride in her work.

Impatiently, the woman snapped, “Isaidthe milk smellsbad.It’s rotten, and there is no foam. Make it again.” The customer’s icy-colored eyes seemed to permeate Sofie’s soul, drawing her in and, at the same time, repelling Sofie. In the nine months she had worked at Sunny’s, she had never been spoken to by a customer like that. However, as frustrating as she was, she had hypnotized Sofie. The women held each other’s gaze for a moment; the customer seemed to challenge Sofie to look away. The tension was high, and for a second, Sofie considered getting her manager. But she also refused to back down from a challenge, and it was obvious that the older woman was testing her.

Taking a deep breath, Sofie replied evenly, “Of course. I’ll make you a new latte.” The woman smirked arrogantly. It was clear to Sofie that this customer was used to getting her own way. Turning her back again, Sofie repeated the same steps as last time because there was no other way to create the drink the customer ordered. Sofie knew she got it right the first time. But Sofie valued her self-control and job, so she knew to suck up the attitude and redo the order.

Sofie politely offered the woman a new latte. “Please let me know if this one is okay for you.” The woman eyed Sofiesuspiciously as she lifted the lid to inspect the beverage. Taking a cautious sip, the woman gave a curt nod. “That’s better.”

Sofie exhaled, thankful that she had made a satisfying drink. Shaking slightly, she entered the latte into the POS system, and the woman paid, adding as she left. “Next time, don’t fuck it up. I’ll be back for the same thing tomorrow.”

Sofie froze at her register as the woman stormed out of Sunny’s coffee. She was filled with adrenaline, which was arousing and confusing. Sofie was apprehensive about seeing her again, but something inside her made her desperate to please this woman. The way the woman had fixed her in her icy gaze kept playing through Sofie’s head.

Does that make me a masochist? God, how can someone be so beautiful and such a

bitch at the same time?

And why on earth does that turn me on so much?

3

Gabriella sipped her almond milk latte, savoring the brew's robust flavor. Gabriella was well-aware that she had given the barista at Sunny's a hard time, but in her mind, she felt justified.

If you don't demand perfection from people, you are settling for mediocrity. I will never settle for mediocrity.

And this is how a latte should be done.

Setting the cup on her desk, Gabriella focused on her morning tasks, which consisted of getting caught up over the past twelve months. She knew returning to the office could be overwhelming, but Gabriella was determined to prioritize the success of Deluxe Redux.

The nutty scent of espresso tickled Gabriella's nostrils, and she thought about the woman who had served her latte. Allowing her mind to wander, Gabriella remembered her innocent beauty and fresh, clean skin.

She couldn't be any older than 25; god, I'm old enough to be her mother! But she was certainly attractive. It's too bad she was wearing the hideous uniform. I'll bet her body is youthful and perfect...mmmm...small perky breasts, itty-bitty nipples. I'd love to have her serve me and obey my every command...

Gabriella shook her head, shaking off her sexual arousal. She felt deliciously devious, fantasizing about the woman who worked at Sunny's. It had been over a year since

Gabriella had been intimate with another woman, which was more than she could say about her now ex-wife.

Maybe I'll visit the little barista tomorrow to test the waters. She's probably straight anyway.

No, I should concentrate on work. Come on, Gabriella—focus!

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella skimmed through past editions of the magazine, released throughout the year, to review the work that had been done in her absence. “Fuck, why did the editorial assistants choose that font for the header? Now the whole look is off,” Gabriella muttered to herself, becoming frustrated as she examined the previous issues. Sighing, she looked away from her computer screen, rubbing her temples.

“Hello? Ms. Galena?” Gabriella heard a knock at her door. It sounded like Romi, the newest photographer at Deluxe. “Do you have a moment?”

“Yes, come in,” Gabriella replied curtly. Gabriella had not yet interacted with Romi, save for their conversation earlier that morning. She knew that Romi had replaced Madison, but by the time a replacement had been found, Gabriella had already started her leave. Internally, she felt conflicted. It was strange not to have Madison at the office, but at the same time, there was no way that Gabriella would allow the former photojournalist to keep her job, not after such betrayal.

“Thanks; I know you are busy. I just wanted to show you something quick.” Gabriella squared herself at her desk to give Romi her full attention. “Sure, let’s see,” Gabriella motioned to the photographer.

Romi brought over an 11x17-inch square-shaped board. “I know you want to be hands-on with all of the designs, so I wanted your approval on the invites for the gala.” The photographer placed the board on Gabriella’s desk, standing back a few inches, waiting for a response.

Gabriella frowned. “Wait, isn’t the gala in less than a month?” She felt tension growing in the back of her neck. Romi paused before answering, “Um, well, yes. It’s

in three weeks, actually.”

“And are you telling me that we have not yet sent out the invites? This is one of the most important fashion events of the year!” Gabriella’s voice rose in the office, causing Romi to flinch.

“Yes, I understand. We are sending the invites out today; we just needed your approval first.” The photographer looked helpless, which infuriated Gabriella further. One of her biggest pet peeves in business was when someone appeared incompetent.

“So, instead of getting the invites out 60 days in advance, which has always been our standard, you decided to wait until three weeks before the party?” Gabriella fumed. The office standards were slipping, which alarmed her. Deluxe Redux was known for its polished sophistication and fine attention to detail. Gabriella had only been back to the magazine for a few hours, and already, it felt like things were falling apart.

Romi tried to reason with her. “Look, I know we are behind. But when you left, no one hired an office manager, so we’ve been directing ourselves. I’m not blaming you or anyone else, but we need some guidance, Ms. Galena.”

On the brink of losing her temper, Gabriella pursed her lips before she said anything unprofessional. Taking a deep breath, she sneered, “Give that to me. I’ll put together the invites myself.” The photographer sighed, handing Gabriella the sample board. “Okay, whatever you prefer.”

Romi turned to leave the office, with Gabriella calling after her, “And don’t forget about that new cover photo too. I want that on my desk by noon.” After the door was shut, Gabriella crumpled in her chair, feeling overburdened. In the past, Madison had handled such projects efficiently and accurately. Not only was Gabriella unfamiliar with some of the new staff hired in her absence, but she was also concerned about their abilities to adhere to the magazine’s standards. This is not going to be easy. I

didn't realize how far we had fallen behind.

Suddenly, Gabriella heard a ding, notifying her of a new email in her inbox. Peering at her screen, she noticed the sender was from the Board of Directors, Tempest Rutherford. Ms. Rutherford was Gabriella's nemesis, although, in public, they behaved more like frenemies.

Good afternoon, Gabriella;

On behalf of Deluxe Redux Magazine, we are pleased to have you back at the company following your leave of absence. I trust that you are eager to return to your position as CEO.

As Chairperson of the Board, it is imperative that I share feedback regarding the magazine's structure and the advertising sales from the last quarter.

Upon reviewing the data, it has come to my attention that advertising is down 20% from last year and that a few key advertisers have decided to cancel their contracts with Deluxe Redux. As well, the overall quality of the magazine has declined, which has created concerns regarding employment at the head office.

Please arrange a formal staff meeting to discuss these matters with your team. In addition, please see the attached recommendations regarding the branding of Deluxe Redux, which will help elevate the magazine to its full capacity.

I trust that you will handle this situation with immediate attention and care.

Best;

Ms. Tempest Rutherford

Chairperson of the Board

Deluxe Redux Magazine Inc.

While Gabriella assumed a powerful position as CEO, ultimately, the chairperson had the final say. Tempest and Gabriella had always butted heads, but until Gabriella had taken her leave, Ms. Rutherford had left Gabriella alone. But as Gabriella scanned the email, it was evident that Tempest was taking charge.

“Well, she’s not wrong about the structure,” Gabriella mused to herself. Gabriella had not been impressed by what she had seen since her return. “But Tempest has always wanted me out of that position, and now, she has a reason to remove me as CEO. I’ve got to get these sales up and fix the issues at the office.” Sighing as she re-read the message, Gabriella decided to review the branding suggestions that Tempest attached to the email. As she reviewed the PDF document, her stomach sank.

According to Ms. Rutherford, there was an issue involving LGBTQ+ advertising in the magazine, and “all content must remain neutral when it comes to identity politics and sexual orientation.” Furthermore, the chairperson stated, “all photography and graphics must not convey or suggest sexual deviancy or practices that are considered outside of convention.”

Gabriella was aware that the Rutherfords were strict Republicans and that their businesses were often backed by powerful, fundamentalist Christian organizations; Deluxe Redux was no exception. And Tempest herself was aware that Gabriella Galena was a lesbian; Gabriella had always been open about her sexual orientation.

Over the twenty years that Gabriella had been with the company she had never experienced any homophobia at the magazine. Tempest had given Ms. Galena creative license, and Gabriella appreciated the trust and respect.

But upon reading the letter and reviewing the branding suggestions, it appeared as though Tempest wanted to take Deluxe Magazine in a different direction, which concerned Gabriella.

If she thinks I am going to turn this beautiful fashion magazine into a bland, heteronormative “Good Housekeeping” rag, Tempest Rutherford has another thing coming!

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Squaring her shoulders, Ms. Galena considered her plan of attack. Hmmm, I definitely need more staff right now, possibly interns, where they can learn the ropes and gain experience. Interns would save on the budget as well. Oh, and I should hire a personal assistant as well.

Gabriella realized that if she could whip the magazine back into shape and increase advertising for this next quarter, Tempest would most likely back off. Thinking aloud, she said, "Okay, I can do this. I've conquered higher mountains, and I have been successful throughout my career. I need to develop the right team and, from there, launch a campaign to reach potential sponsors."

The afternoon had proven difficult for Gabriella, and she needed a quick power nap to recharge her energy. She rose from her desk, locking the office door. Gabriella sauntered over to a small couch and decided to lie down and close her eyes for a few moments. As her mind filtered through the happenings of the day, Gabriella's thoughts wandered to her coffee break at Sunny's, where she had encountered the attractive barista.

Gabriella remembered the beauty and innocence of the barista; her kind brown eyes shone with patience. Gabriella imagined the young woman at the Deluxe office as her personal secretary, friendly, polite, and eager to serve. Gabriella's imagination removed the tacky uniform, instead dressing the lovely brunette in sexy office attire with a skirt that landed just above the knee.

Hmmm! Maybe I should pay her a visit again, at Sunny's. I do not doubt that she'll remember me as a demanding bitch. But if she knows how to handle my personality gracefully, she might make a great addition as my personal assistant at the

office. Gabriella stirred on the couch as a smoldering arousal crept into her body.

4

“Can you take over the register? I’ll move to the espresso machine and handle the flood of orders. You’re better on cash anyways,” Marlee suggested to Sofie, who was more than happy to trade places. Sofie was efficient at completing coffee orders but working the old and worn machine was not her favorite task. Plus, Sofie had a bad habit of spilling hot liquid on herself, especially when there was a morning rush at the coffee shop.

This morning, Sofie had chosen a colorful top that she had sewn herself, wanting to keep herself looking stylish. Sofie’s clothing choices were one way that she would express her enthusiasm for fashion, anchoring herself to the hope of a career in her graduate field.

Sofie switched places with Marlee. “Sure, no problem. We make a better team this way.” The coworkers winked at one another before resuming their focus. Sofie stood at her station, eyeing customers in the line as the next patron approached her till Sofie greeted the customer with her signature smile and warm welcome.

Between 6:30 am and 9:30 am were considered rush hours at Sunny’s, and while Sofie knew that the line would eventually die down, she currently felt the pressure of guests waiting for their morning brew. This morning felt especially endless. One by one, a patron would square off in front of Sofie’s till and communicate their order. Sofie would then type in the request, provide the order to the customer and accept payment.

Sofie was grateful for the consistent work and the regular hours, especially now that she was saving for a new place to live. She considered the situation with the new roommates to be only temporary and having a purpose every morning was better than

moping around, heartbroken, after her breakup with Charlie. But Sofie's passion was a career in fashion, and it felt unfair that she continued to struggle, especially after graduating from her program at the top of her class.

But whenever she would feel discouraged, Sofie would remind herself to stay focused and to remain open to opportunities within her field. She knew that if she committed to her goals, she would achieve whatever she desired. Sofie was the first and only person in her family to go to college; she was well aware of her capabilities.

As her eyes scanned the line, she recognized the difficult woman in the Burberry coat from yesterday. The one that had turned her insides to mush. Sofie's eyes were drawn to the woman's lean, statuesque physique. She definitely looked like a model, wearing a this season Chanel dress cinched at the waist. Her silver bob was perfectly coiffed, and her mature skin was luminous despite the fine lines that had appeared. Sofie was captivated by her.

I wonder what she looks like when she smiles. Would anything make this woman smile?

Feeling slightly intimidated, Sofie avoided eye contact with her as she approached the front of the line. Thanking the customer in front of her before addressing the woman, Sofie took a few seconds to lower her eyes and clear her throat, taking a nervous breath. Sofie caught a whiff again of the Chanel perfume, it was intoxicating and seductive.

"Hi, good morning. Nice to see you again!"

The tall woman peered down at Sofie, eyeing her intensely. "Hmmm, mmm. I'm sure it is. If you recognize my face, do you remember my drink order?" The woman seemed to be toying with Sofie, challenging her to speak up. The woman didn't sound as irate as she had the previous day. Still, her poise and sense of command made

Sofie nervous, and she wasn't sure if this was some cruel test.

Thinking quickly, Sofie tried to recall the drink order. There was something wrong with the milk; oh yeah! It was almond. Beaming proudly, Sofie replied, "I do! It was an almond latte. Um, extra hot and, ah, extra—" The woman cut Sofie off before she could finish.

"Very little, not extra; you were about to say foam, weren't you?" The woman's blue eyes pierced through Sofie, making her feel pinned to a wall. But there was playfulness in her tone; it was as though the woman was teasing Sofie while still maintaining an air of dominance. Sofie felt something stir within her, a sensation that felt a lot like arousal.

Until this moment, Sofie had not yet experienced any attractions at her job. There might be the occasional patron that Sofie would notice as cute, but no one had thrown her off balance like the woman standing in front of her. Gulping while she played with her ponytail, Sofie giggled like a schoolgirl. "Um, yes, I was. You're right, little foam."

She locked eyes with the older woman in front of her for a moment, daring herself to stare back. A bolt of excitement shot through her core, bursting in her stomach. The corner of the older woman's mouth curled into a grin as she raised an eyebrow. Maintaining her gaze on Sofie, the woman responded simply by nodding. Sofie felt desire pooling in the pit of her stomach.

That half smile. Fuck.

Sofie went to punch in the order when she heard the woman comment, "I like your blouse; the color is quite fetching on you. Is it Ralph Lauren?" Sofie looked up from the register, blushing slightly. Touching the salmon-colored, polyester-blend material, she shook her head slightly.

“No, it’s not. I-I made it, actually.” Sofie cleaned her throat, trying to project her voice. She was always shy to share her fashion projects, knowing that her humble nature could sometimes impede her success. Still, she was excited that the older woman had noticed. This woman’s dress sense was clearly exquisite and Sofie felt a warmth inside that she had noticed Sofie’s blouse. “And see? I made this skirt too. The material is stretchy, so it’s easy to work in.”

Sofie stepped back and lifted her apron to show off her skirt.

As soon as the words escaped her mouth, Sofie immediately felt embarrassed, as though she had shared too much.

Shut up, Sofie; this rich lady doesn’t care that you made a shirt from your tiny, shared one-bedroom apartment. Avoiding the woman’s stare, Sofie communicated the order, “Okay, so, one large almond milk latte. That will be \$5.50, please.”

Keeping her eyes on the register, Sofie waited to receive payment, but the older woman paused. Inhaling, Sofie glanced up to see the woman smiling down at her, almost as if she was checking Sofie out. Sofie sensed a thrilling tension between them that was also confusing.

Is she flirting with me?

The older woman wore an amused expression, and her face softened. “Is that so? It’s not exactly my style, but I do like it. It works well on you. And it looks well-made. I can see from here the cut is beautiful and the stitching is very well done.” Pulling out a Gucci wallet from her Chanel purse and handing Sofie her credit card, she asked, “So, I sense you have an interest in fashion?”

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Sofie took the card from the woman's beautifully manicured hands, noticing her short neat fingernails.

Lesbian nails?

Or conservative and sensible?

Before Sofie could reply, she heard Marlee call out the latte order. Leaving her quickly, Sofie turned to grab the coffee, presenting the order to the customer. "Here you go. Yes, I do. I'm a recent graduate of the New York Fashion Institute." She completed the payment and returned the credit card to the older woman. Assuming their exchange was over, Sofie breathed a sigh of relief, having avoided any attitude from the customer. Sofie concluded, "Thanks, see you soon."

But the woman remained in front of Sofie, her index finger slowly circling the top of the coffee lid in a seductive manner.

Her fingers...

She appeared to be thinking about something as her eyes traveled hungrily down Sofie's torso. Sofie felt the examination of her body, and it was exciting yet nerve-racking.

She has to be flirting. She's undressing me with her eyes. I feel naked.

The woman licked her lips, keeping her eyes on Sofie. She carefully pulled out a small square card from her purse. "Here is my business card. My office is only a

block from here. I have an opportunity for you that you won't want to pass up, believe me. If you are as passionate about fashion as you say you are, then you need to call me."

Feeling slightly shocked, Sofie was at a loss for words. Wide-eyed, Sofie took the card from the customer. "Oh, wow, okay! Thank you, I will." The woman merely grinned and nodded. "I expect to hear from you soon. Opportunities like this have an expiration date." The woman turned on her heel and exited the coffee shop, leaving a trail of expensive perfume in her wake.

Once she had left, Sofie glanced over at her coworker, her eyes wide with disbelief. She held up the business card, her face squeezing into a joyous expression. Marlee wrinkled her brow, looking confused as she asked, "What is that?"

Gabriella Galena

CEO

DELUXE REDUX

Sofie felt sheer excitement flooding through her veins as she held the expensive looking card. The CEO of the biggest fashion magazine in New York. Of course.

Oh my god!

5

"Oh wow, what a day!" Gabriella muttered to herself as she unlocked the door to her penthouse. While she was grateful to return to her luxurious and spacious environment, Gabriella felt a painful sting in her heart; she was not yet used to returning home alone.

Checking the clock, Gabriella noticed it was 8:13 pm. Gabriella's mind was racing, and she wanted to unwind, but a restless energy coursed through her veins. As she suspected, returning to the magazine would be difficult, but she needed to prepare for many changes and disruptions to the company's processes.

Gabriella had worked hard for the success of Deluxe Redux Magazine, and it was frustrating to see it start to split at the seams. Furthermore, the email she received today from Ms. Rutherford caused an anxious reaction in Gabriella. No, no. I refuse to feel guilty. I have done everything correctly, and this is what my therapist recommended. I needed this time away to heal.

Gabriella swore to herself that she wouldn't let a much-needed break impede the company's continued growth; she just needed to exercise a little creativity and a healthy amount of authority.

Cascading across the ample marble floor, Gabriella traveled toward the bar at the end of the living room. Pouring herself a neat glass of scotch, she sank into her cream-colored leather couch and distracted herself with a television show. It had been months since Gabriella had clicked on the remote. And the simple act of selecting a show caused her chest to ache.

For the past two days, she refused to think about Madison, although it was challenging, especially when speaking with Romi, her replacement. But now that Gabriella was alone, thoughts of her ex-wife flooded back. Over her leave of absence, Gabriella was able to train her mind to allow some distance between the memories of her marriage and the devastating incident that catalyzed her divorce from Madison. But there were some nights when it seemed impossible to escape her pain.

Taking a sip of the amber-colored liquid, Gabriella breathed in the potent vapor, allowing the liquor to soothe her insides. She marinated in a sea of strong emotions, imagining the valves of her heart muscle clenching and expanding with sorrow and

disbelief.

“And the shittiest part was that you were an excellent photographer, the best that Deluxe had ever seen. The best the fashion world had ever seen. Why did you have to fuck it up?” Gabriella asked aloud, aware she was addressing a clear glass of booze. Shaking her head, Gabriella tried to erase the gut-wrenching memory from her psyche, which was the last time she had seen Madison.

After a few fidgety minutes on the sofa, Gabriella realized that she wasn't going to relax this evening. Even after a year, the divorce still felt too fresh and painful. These days, Gabriella's emotional relief came only through her work, so she decided to switch gears.

Moving to her home office, Gabriella switched on the laptop, searching for business distractions. Given the multiple issues, she wasn't even sure what she wanted to focus on. I hate to admit it, but Romi was right; I do need an assistant. Gabriella also recognized that her resistance was rooted in her addiction to work. She didn't want to free up her time so much that she was left with nothing but her thoughts about her broken marriage.

As Gabriella tried to immerse herself in various tasks, including catching up on details of the upcoming gala, she thought about the beautiful young barista from Sunny's Coffee. Gabriella couldn't help but salivate at the thought of the young woman's warm smile and petite physique. Mmmm, I could eat her up; I'll bet that she tastes as sweet as fresh strawberries on a summer's day.

Being in the fashion industry for as long as she had, Gabriella had always been surrounded by gorgeous women, including her ex-wife; it was one of the perks of being a mogul within the business. But to Gabriella, the young barista was different; there was an innocence and humbleness about her that was unlike the bratty models and entitled fashion-industry types she had encountered.

Gabriella sensed a lack of ego from the young woman and a keen interest in serving. Regarding her sexual appetite, Gabriella always preferred submissive energy; she had always seen herself as an alpha both in business and within the bedroom. And now, Gabriella was faced with the issue of offering the barista a job at Deluxe; she realized now that it had been an impulsive offer, which stemmed from sexual attraction rather than a planned and rational decision.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Bah, she's probably forgotten about the offer. And that's fine; she wouldn't have been a great fit anyway. She seems too sweet, and one needs to be tough in this industry. Gabriella put the thought out of her mind as she continued to scan the notes on her laptop.

Ring! Gabriella looked at her phone and then at the time, which read 9:05 pm. Huh, it's pretty late for someone to be calling me. I wonder who it is? Picking up her iPhone, Gabriella answered gruffly, "Yes, hello?"

"Um, hello?" A soft, breathy voice echoed through the line. "Is this, um, Ms. Galena?"

Gabriella furrowed her brow, recognizing the voice. Is this the girl from the coffee shop? Wow, no way. I didn't expect her to call. As surprised as Gabriella was to hear from the girl, she wasn't about to let down her guard. Taking a deep breath, Gabriella sat up straight in her chair, the phone poised in her hand.

"Yes, this is her. May I ask who's speaking?" There was a pause on the other end before the woman answered. "Oh, good, okay. Um, my name is Sofie Rosswell, and I work at Sunny's Coffee Shop in the Garment District. You had given me your business card and told me to call you about an opportunity?" The young woman sounded uncertain, almost shy.

Sofie Rosswell. Mmmm.

Gabriella found her tone endearing, but she also knew that if this Sofie wanted to work for her, she needed more confidence.

“That’s correct,” Gabriella replied curtly. While she had no idea how she was going to work with this young woman, she didn’t want to come off unprepared or the kind of person who made impulsive hires because she found younger submissive women attractive. “As you may have guessed from my business card, I’m the CEO of Deluxe Redux Magazine. I’m assuming you have heard of it?”

Sofie answered with enthusiasm. “Oh yes! As a New York Fashion Institute graduate, Deluxe was one of my favorite fashion magazines; I’ve been absolutely inspired by your content. And yes, I am very interested in the position. May I ask, what does it entail?”

Gabriella could hear the eagerness in Sofie’s voice, and she found it arousing. There was nothing that Gabriella loved more than a woman who was keen to please and follow orders. However, Gabriella hadn’t even really considered a position for Sofie; she was merely flirting with her at the coffee shop. But in considering Sofie’s sense of style and her education in fashion, Gabriella decided to make a spontaneous decision and take a chance.

Pausing to collect her thoughts, Gabriella answered, “Well, before I can get into the details, I’ll need you to quit your job at Sunny’s and report to my office at eight a.m. on Monday. All will be revealed, then.”

Gabriella heard a moment of silence on the other end of the line. She considered whether her response was too mysterious for the young woman. But then Sofie spoke up. “Oh, okay. So, do I have to wait until Monday? Do I need to quit my job immediately, or can it wait until we meet at eight a.m.?”

“No. You must quit your job before you report to me. The position will require one-hundred-percent commitment on your part; it is not the type of office where you can work casual or even part-time hours,” Gabriella replied haughtily. “If you are actually interested, you’re going to have to trust me and give me 100% of you.”

Gabriella was as yet unsure if the 100% was just a work capacity or whether she wanted the girl beyond that, but she enjoyed leaving the weighted sentence hanging in the air for Sofie's response.

Sofie breathed out a sigh. "Okay, alright, I understand. Okay, sure, I'll do it—I'll meet you at eight a.m. on Monday." Gabriella could sense that Sofie was nervous, and for a split second, Gabriella felt bad; she knew how intimidating she could come off. But she was also correct in noting that, to be successful in the fashion industry, one must be 100% committed. Regardless of what she would have Sofie do, Gabriella wasn't prepared to share Sofie's time between Deluxe and Sunny's; Sofie would need to choose.

"Excellent. I expect you to be on time. If you are late, don't bother coming in," Gabriella commanded. "Also, I'd like you to wear a nice button-up blouse tucked into a fitted pencil skirt. Make sure you look professional and feminine, with a touch of sexiness. Don't show excessive skin but try not to look like a boring librarian. Understood?"

"Yup, understood. I think I have just the outfit in my closet," Sofie replied. "Will I be in the office all day? Or is it more like an interview? I'm asking because I'm curious if I should pack lunch?"

Gabriella grinned on the phone, charmed by Sofie's innocence and naivety. She is so cute and green; I almost feel bad for her. But I'm sure she will toughen up after a few days. Hiding her softness, Gabriella responded, "Don't worry about lunch but be prepared for a potentially long day. Oh, and wear heels. Always wear heels for me. I will ask you to leave if you show up in anything else. Good night, Sofie Rosswell; see you on Monday."

Gabriella ended the call abruptly, maintaining her dominance and authority. She was slightly suspicious that Sofie may not show up at all, but Gabriella was fine to take a

chance. Besides, if she doesn't show up, I'll hire a new assistant regardless. There are plenty of eager post-graduates that would love an internship at the magazine.

Sofie's phone call provided enough distraction that Gabriella was no longer caught up in her sorrow and loneliness from earlier that evening. Preparing for bed, Gabriella decided to take a long, hot shower, which always relaxed her. She stripped out of her office clothes, peeling away the beige-colored stockings, and removed her panties, which had become moist during her brief conversation with Sofie.

She knew she made Sofie nervous and she revelled in it. She still had it. Of course she did. Gabriella Galena wasn't finished yet.

Gabriella peered at her reflection in the bathroom mirror, admiring her body.

She had always taken care of herself, enjoying various forms of exercise and weight training. Besides sex, fitness was Gabriella's second favorite physical activity, and even at 55 years old, Gabriella possessed strength and endurance; her body would be coveted by women half her age. She was more wiry now, for sure, and her skin had lost elasticity, but she didn't mind that.

She entered the shower, enjoying the warm water as it cascaded down her body. A tingling thrill rose deep from within her core, and Gabriella immediately recognized that she was horny. She had not had sex with another woman since Madison, which was over a year ago. During the initial stages of their separation and divorce, Gabriella completely lacked any form of sexual desire.

It had not been until a few weeks ago that she noticed the familiar urges returning, which brought Gabriella some relief. She had always enjoyed a healthy, sexual appetite, so it was comforting to Gabriella to feel human again. As she washed her skin with a soapy sponge, Gabriella's thoughts turned to Sofie and her outfit at Sunny's earlier that morning.

Biting her lip, she thought, I wonder if Sofie was wearing any panties under that skirt? She seems like such a good girl; I wonder what turns her on. Does she ever sneak off to the bathroom to get herself off when she's horny?

Imagining Sofie being naughty at work pushed Gabriella further towards arousal. Rinsing off the shower gel, Gabriella's hands began to wander as she moved towards her vulva, gently massaging her outer labia. She pressed harder against her pubic bone, touching her clit.

Is Sofie even gay—what if she's straight? No, she wanted me. Maybe she is curious to feel a woman's touch, to feel someone taste her. Fuck, I want to see her naked, to explore the landscape of her body.

Gabriella leaned against the tiles to maintain her balance as she continued to rub her clit, circling her fingers in a slow, rhythmic motion.

As the pleasurable sensations grew, Gabriella's breath began to quicken. Her nipples hardened as the warm water began to cool, pelting against her skin. Thrusting her hips against her hand in tandem, Gabriella achieved perfect friction to stimulate herself. It felt like forever since she had come, and tonight, Gabriella was primed and ready.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Returning to the memory of Sofie, a primal instinct rose within Gabriella. Her knees began to weaken as erotic energy bloomed within the depths of her.

Rubbing harder and faster, Gabriella grunted with pleasure, massaging her clitoris with fervor. Gabriella had crossed the threshold of ecstasy, and she would not return without an orgasm.

Oh fuck, yes. Open your legs for me, little Sofie...

Worked up into a frenzy, she imagined Sofie knocking on her office door, dressed like a sexy secretary. Gabriella fantasized about bringing Sofie into the room, lifting her up on her desk, and raising Sofie's pencil skirt to reveal her sweet pussy, sans underwear.

Suddenly, an explosion burst from within Gabriella as she moaned with delight.

Oh my god, oh my god! Oh, oh, oh yes!

Her body spasmed with pleasure, and for a moment, Gabriella felt as though she had blacked out. Closing her eyes, Gabriella felt like she had traveled to another dimension for a second, only to come back down to earth with the water spraying from the shower head.

Exhaling a deep breath, Gabriella felt lighter and more joyous than she had in months. Giggling to herself, she said under her breath, "Whew! I guess I really needed that!" But while Gabriella had provided herself with sexual relief, scandalous thoughts about Sofie continued to play out like a movie. Gabriella wasn't sure how

her Monday would go, but she was eager to see if Sofie would show up for their appointment. I think that girl is going to be trouble for me. But what the hell? I need some fun in my life!

6

“Oh my god,” Sophie exclaimed as she put her phone on the kitchen table. Stunned, she stared at Rory. “I think I might have found a job in my field!”

Her roommate’s jaw dropped in surprise. “No way! How? Where did you apply?” Since her breakup with Charlie, Sofie had been living with Rory and Ash. The trio shared a two-bedroom apartment in Bushwick. The space was a bit cramped for Sofie’s style, but she was lucky to have an affordable place to live after leaving her girlfriend of three years. Sofie had met Charlie at the Fashion Institute in her first year and almost immediately formed a romantic connection. Charlie’s wealthy family had rented her a beautiful, one-bedroom apartment, and during their relationship, Charlie had invited Sofie to live with her.

When they broke up, Sofie was in a panic over her living situation. Sofie’s family had always struggled financially, and they couldn’t afford to support her. Luckily, Sofie was able to attend the New York Fashion Institute on a full scholarship, but the funds did not extend to her personal circumstances. Sofie was concerned that she may need to leave the state due to the high cost of living.

But one night at her favorite lesbian bar, she met Rory and Ash, a couple looking for a third roommate. The trio got along beautifully. Soon after, the couple invited Sofie to live with them. While Sofie enjoyed her roommates’ company, she sometimes felt like a third wheel and was eager to begin her career in fashion so that she could eventually find a place of her own.

“It was the strangest thing,” Sofie mused. “I was working my shift at Sunny’s, and

this very beautiful powerful looking older woman walked in. Rory, I swear, she looked like a model—she was stunning!” Sofie thought back to the moment when she had met Gabriella. “To be honest, she wasn’t very nice. She was impatient and demanding, but, I don’t know, there was something intriguing about her.”

Sofie continued. “Anyways, she came in again yesterday and gave me this.” Sofie handed the business card to Rory, who studied it carefully.

“Whoa! Gabriella Galena. That’s pretty serious,” Rory remarked in an impressive voice. “How did she know you studied fashion? Did she ask you to come in for an interview?”

“Well, not exactly. It was weird; I was serving her coffee, and we were chatting a bit—she was actually a bit nicer this time. It came out that I had studied at the Fashion Institute.” Sofie recalled a key moment. “She complimented my outfit, and I told her I had made it myself. The next thing I know, she pulls out her card and tells me to call her.”

Rory raised an eyebrow. “Maybe she was just hitting on you? Don’t get me wrong; you are an excellent seamstress, and your fashion designs are amazing, but maybe she just wanted to toy with you.” Inwardly, Sofie rolled her eyes. She appreciated Rory’s suspicion as she knew that Rory was only looking out for her. But sometimes, she wished that Rory would give her some credit. Sofie wasn’t as naive as her roommates assumed, and she knew she possessed the skills and talent to make it in the industry, given the chance.

Ignoring Rory’s comment, Sofie continued. “I just called her tonight, and guess what? She told me to quit my job at Sunny’s and to come into the office at eight a.m. on Monday!” Sofie stared at Rory, waiting for a reaction. “Isn’t that amazing? I mean, what are the odds!”

But Sofie noticed that Rory looked skeptical. “So, what’s the job, exactly? How much are you getting paid? Are you signing a contract or something?”

Sofie blinked at her roommate and shook her head. “Well, I don’t know. She didn’t explain the position to me yet. But she said that she would need me to commit and that I couldn’t work both jobs. So, it sounds like a full-time gig. I think it is a test of my commitment.” Sofie wanted to sound confident because the offer felt like a dream come true. But in the face of Rory’s incertitude, she began to feel nervous.

“So, you’re going to find out more at the interview? Or is she hiring you on the spot?” Rory shrugged doubtfully. “Sofie, listen. I’m happy for you. But I’m just concerned that this woman might be taking advantage of you. She is asking you to quit Sunny’s, but she isn’t giving you any information about this new gig. I don’t want you to make a mistake and be screwed out of a job.”

“Is this about the rent? You know I’ve always paid you on time.” Sofie’s emotions began to heighten. “I know this sounds weird, and of course, I don’t want to fuck myself over and then be unemployed. But there was something tangible about this offer; I can’t explain it. I think you needed to be there to understand.” Sofie noted in a dismissive tone.

Rory shook her head, responding in a kinder voice. “No, it’s not about the rent. You know Ash and I adore you; you are a great roommate. I’m just sharing my concerns because I care. But if you feel positive about the offer, then go for it! I want you to succeed in your industry—just be careful.” Rory leaned in to hug Sofie in a truce.

Sofie took a deep breath, grateful for Rory’s support. “I’m not going to lie. I am nervous. Besides being one of the most beautiful women I’ve seen since Charlie, she is also a powerful figure in the fashion industry. She could make or break my career. You should have seen her sweep into Sunny’s; she had total boss bitch energy.” Sofie grinned at her roommate. “I’m excited and intimidated at the same

time.”

Rory gave Sofie an encouraging smile. “So, I guess the big question is: what will you wear? Do you want to go shopping this weekend?”

Sofie’s eyes widened. “Oh my gosh, I didn’t even tell you the craziest part. When I was on the phone with her, she explained exactly how she wanted me to dress.” Sofie thought back to the conversation. “I’m supposed to wear a nice blouse, a pencil skirt, and heels. She told me to look professional but not boring. What does that even mean?”

Rory chuckled, shaking her head. “Girl, it sounds like she wants you to dress like a sexy secretary. Are you sure she wasn’t hitting on you? I feel like she wants you in the office as eye candy.”

Sofie shook her head, brushing off Rory’s comments. God, sometimes I feel like she doesn’t take me seriously! I graduated at the top of my class. Clearing her throat, Sofie responded coolly, “Well, lucky for her, I’m a double threat; beauty and brains. And so what? I can dress like a sexy secretary and still kick ass at my job.”

Regarding her looks, Sofie was confident but not arrogant, and she was passionate about her field of study. The institute gave her a taste of the superficiality and toxicity surrounding the fashion business. If Sofie’s beauty gave her an advantage in the industry, she was okay with that.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Resolute in her decision, she turned to her roommate. “I’m going to do it; I’m quitting Sunny’s and taking the plunge. And yes, let’s go shopping. I can’t afford anything too extravagant, but maybe we can check out that thrift vintage store on 5th?”

Rory nodded. “You got it; I know Ash wants to go as well. And listen,” her roommate leaned in, “I am proud of you, and I know you’re going to succeed. I’ve got your back.”

Sofie grinned at her roommate, grateful for the support.

Taking a deep inhale, she rolled back her shoulders. “Alright, wish me luck. I’m going to call the store manager at Sunny’s to let her know I’m quitting.” Sofie’s stomach flip-flopped in a combination of nerves and anxiety. Oh my god, I can’t believe this is happening!

7

“Good morning, Ms. Galena. I have a woman named Sofie Rosswell to see you. She says she has an appointment?” Gabriella’s receptionist, Evangeline, echoed through the phone.

Mmmm. Little Sofie, the coffee shop girl!

I didn’t expect her to actually show up. I wonder if she had the guts to quit her job and commit to the position.

“Thank you. Please send her to my office,” Gabriella replied as she struggled to hide her surprise.

Within seconds, Gabriella heard a knock, followed by a familiar-sounding voice. “Hello? I’m here for the eight a.m. meeting.”

In a brisk tone, Gabriella answered. “Yes, come in.” Squaring her shoulders at her desk, Gabriella sat tall, exuding power and grace. The door slowly opened to reveal the beautiful brunette from Sunny’s Coffee. Gabriella noticed she was as lovely as ever, exquisitely dressed in businesswear and heels- as directed. Without the coffee shop apron and the ponytail, she looked entirely different.

Shit, she fits the role.

“Hi, good morning. We never formally introduced ourselves, but I’m Sofie Rosswell. I hope you recognize me out of my usual coffee shop clothes,” Sofie awkwardly quipped, appearing both eager and nervous. Gabriella scanned her from top to bottom. Sofie’s long, dark hair was immaculately pulled into a high bun, making her facial features more pronounced. To Gabriella, Sofie appeared much more sophisticated, polished, and mature.

Her gaze traveled to the gentle slope from where the pencil skirt hugged the woman’s waist, expanding slightly to highlight the curves of her hips. While Sofie was petite in height, Gabriella noticed her shapely legs that seemed longer than the rest of her body. Sofie’s raspberry-colored blouse was silky and subtly sexy, although Gabriella suspected it was more of a polyester blend. Still, she was impressed with how Sofie presented herself and, more so, her attention to direction.

“Good morning.” Gabriella stood from her desk to take Sofie’s hand. “I am Gabriella Galena, the CEO of Deluxe Redux Magazine. I believe I remember you saying that as a recent New York Fashion Institute graduate, you are familiar with this publication,

correct?”

Sofie bobbed her head, beaming with enthusiasm. “Oh yes! It was practically my bible when I was in college. In fact, our instructors encouraged us to follow the trends set by your magazine, and many of my own designs have been inspired by your pages.”

Upon hearing Sofie gush, Gabriella’s ego soared. Especially since her personal life had experienced such turmoil and feeling overwhelmed at the office upon her return; it was nice to have an appreciative fan whom she found so attractive. “Excellent to hear; please, sit down.” Gabriella motioned to a chair in front of her desk.

Sofie appeared uncertain as to what to expect. “So, um, I’d love to hear a little bit about the position. It wasn’t clear from our phone call. But I wanted to let you know that I’ve quit my job at Sunny’s, so I’m ready for full-time work,” Sofie emphasized, her disposition cheerful.

“Good, I’m glad to hear that. I expect that my staff at Deluxe are fully committed to the success of the magazine. And that sometimes means long hours and taking on additional responsibilities when required.” Gabriella sat back in her chair. “Of course, you will be compensated fairly for your work. But a Deluxe employee can’t have another job if they are working for me. I expect 100% dedication.”

Sofie nodded, fiddling her hands in her lap. Gabriella was charmed by her seemingly innocent demeanor. She seems so sweet, so gentle. A little nervous, mmm, I like that. She looks like a porcelain doll in her outfit; I love how the skirt clings to her hips, emphasizing every curve...

Gabriella blinked, pushing away her deviant fantasies as Sofie responded. “Sure, yes. Understood. I am excited to be here, and I would love the opportunity to contribute to Deluxe Redux. I’m willing to commit my time and skills completely and to grow

with the company, hopefully.”

Gabriella felt confident that Sofie would give the position her best efforts.

Now, I need to come up with some tasks on the spot; I didn’t think this through. But there’s no way I will pass up having this lovely woman in my office every day. Oh yeah, this is going to be fun!

Gabriella inhaled, placing her hands on her desk. Leaning in, she began, “Good. The position involves being my personal assistant. I need someone who enjoys receiving instruction and carrying out my orders with efficiency, excellence, and grace.”

Eyeing Sofie, Gabriella asked slyly, “Do you like being directed, Sofie? You don’t have an issue being told what to do, do you?” Gabriella knew her tone was playful, although she was serious about the requirements. But Gabriella also wanted to tease Sofie, to get inside her head.

“Oh no, not at all. In fact, I get a lot of satisfaction from meeting my goals and doing my best work. And I love being a team player; if I can help with the success of a project, I feel that we all win in the end.” Sofie shook her head, appearing so pure and sincere that Gabriella couldn’t help but grin.

Gabriella smiled slowly at Sofie with her index finger propped against her chin. “When I first noticed you at Sunny’s, I thought to myself, Now, there is a woman who seems dedicated to her job, to serving others. But she’s too stylish to be a barista! No, she looks like she belongs in fashion. And that’s why I wanted to give you my business card.”

Gabriella could sense that Sofie was flattered. These days, Gabriella felt more sour on the inside than sweet, yet she still knew how to enchant and seduce. But nothing she had said was false; Gabriella sensed that Sofie would make the perfect, passive

personal assistant who was responsive to praise.

Sofie gave Gabriella a wide smile. “Oh really! Oh my gosh, that’s amazing to hear. Thank you. Believe me; I am ready to be your assistant. Tell me what you want, and I’m your girl!” Upon hearing Sofie’s enthusiastic response, Gabriella felt a tingle of arousal; Sofie’s words were music to Gabriella’s ears.

Clearing her throat, Gabriella explained the tasks. “As my assistant, you will report to my office every day at eight a.m., except Sundays. Typically, you will work from eight a.m. until seven p.m., but as I mentioned, some days will be longer than others.”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella slowly stood from her desk, accentuating her languid movements. She strolled towards Sofie, pausing to stop behind her. Gabriella then paused, placing two hands on Sofie's chair. "Most office work will include administrative duties, such as filing, answering emails, sending packages, and corresponding on my behalf. But sometimes, I may need your help with other tasks outside the office."

Sofie crammed her neck to glimpse at Gabriella. "Sure, I can handle administrative responsibilities. But what would I be doing outside the office?"

Putting her hands on her hips, Gabriella circled Sofie's chair, coming face to face with the young woman. Wearing a Cheshire grin, Gabriella continued. "Well, sometimes, I may have you run some personal errands for me. I demand your absolute discretion with any assignments. You may get to know my life more intimately, so I expect your absolute loyalty."

While maintaining eye contact, Gabriella moved to her chair, slowly lowering herself down. "And other times, you may be expected to accompany me to fashion galas and events as a representative of the magazine. How does that sound?" Gabriella loved the idea of having Sofie by her side at an event. She imagined dressing the young woman in new season designer dresses, a gorgeous doll at her beck and call.

Sofie squealed with affirmation. "Oh my gosh, that sounds like a dream job! I am committed to the role and whatever you need from me. And I can't thank you enough for the opportunity! When do I start?" Gabriella studied Sofie's expression, which was one of gratitude and joy. Her skin seemed flushed with excitement, and Sofie's glow thrilled the CEO. She hadn't seen a woman that happy in a while, and it inspired a softness within Gabriella.

“You already have,” she offered. “That is, unless you have something better to do today?” Gabriella assumed that Sofie would jump at the opportunity and that she would not have other plans for the day; her asking Sofie to quit Sunny’s was a test of Sofie’s commitment. But Gabriella also knew that she had given Sofie very little information about the position, so she needed to manage her expectations.

Surprised, Sofie answered, “Um, okay! No, I don’t have any plans today. I’m just not sure where to start?”

Gabriella nodded. “Good, that’s great to hear. Don’t worry; we will spend the day working together, and I will set you up in the office. Later on, I’ll send you to Lynn from HR so you can sign the appropriate documents.”

Gabriella turned to her phone and paged Evangeline. “Hi, Evie. Can you arrange for a second desk in my office? I’m hiring a new assistant. Thanks.”

Curtly, Gabriella hung up the phone, noting to Sofie, “You’ll be working alongside me in my office. That way, I am here for any assignments that come up or in case you have any questions. I think it’s essential that we remain in close proximity.”

“Alright, works for me!” Sofie beamed. Within a few minutes, there was a knock at Gabriella’s door, with two men dragging in a desk. Gabriella and Sofie stood, moving out of the way. The workers placed the extra desk near Gabriella’s. Thanking the crew, the men exited, leaving the women alone.

“There you go, please get comfortable. You’ll receive a computer from HR tomorrow.” Gabriella invited Sofie to sit. “Once you get settled, I have an assignment for you. I’d like you to handle the invitations for the upcoming ‘Pink in the City’ fundraising gala.”

Sofie lowered herself in front of her desk, placing her purse on top. Excitedly, she

said, “Wow, I’ve been hearing about that gala for years; I’ve always wanted to go. But I’m just as excited to be a part of the process.”

“You will be attending. With me,” Gabriella responded, ensuring that her tone indicated an order, not a question. From the corner of her eye, Gabriella watched Sofie’s reaction. The young woman turned to look at Gabriella, wide-eyed. “What? Are you serious?”

Gabriella smiled coyly. “Absolutely—consider it part of your job. Mind you; I expect that you will focus on assisting me. I can tell that you enjoy submitting to others, Sofie; you get great pleasure from being in a service role.” Glancing nonchalantly at her manicured nails, Gabriella added, “And I mean that as a compliment. In fact, I find women who are naturally submissive so captivating, you know? I get great pleasure from being served.”

Gabriella wasn’t exactly sure where she was taking this conversation, only that she wanted Sofie to recognize the position as one that was submissive to her.

Sofie looked momentarily like a deer caught in the headlights. She blinked, nodding slowly. “Um, sure, I think I know what you mean. Personally, I’ve always preferred more decisive and empowered women. It’s just easier when people speak their mind and let me know what they want.” But Sofie then looked away, shyly adding, “I meant that in a professional way, of course. It’s nice to have a boss who is powerful, successful, and direct. I would happily follow your lead.”

Gabriella did not outwardly react to Sofie’s statement, but her mind was racing inside. Regardless of how Sofie worded her statement, Gabriella felt she was addressing more than just professional power dynamics. Sofie may have a self-conscious demeanor, but Gabriella felt that beneath the surface, Sofie was curious to explore more than just her career. But Gabriella knew that she couldn’t rush anything, and most of all, her focus was getting Deluxe Magazine back on track. Anything that

happened outside of that was merely a bonus, but for now, Gabriella wanted Sofie properly trained to be her best assistant.

“All in due time,” Gabriella replied evenly. “For now, I’ll have you work on these invitations, but I’ll keep you posted on more ways that you can serve me.” With a playful wink, Gabriella settled into her desk while Sofie began to go through the invitations.

Unbeknownst to Sofie, Gabriella kept one stray eye on her as she worked. Her gaze traveled down Sofie’s body, taking in every inch of it’s loveliness and imagining her naked.

8

Sealing up the box that contained the invitations, Sofie glanced up at Gabriella, who was focused on her laptop screen. She had completed addressing all 500 invitations, many of which were for sponsors and media figures attending the Pink in the City Gala. Sofie was still reeling from her morning, still in disbelief that she was sitting in the legendary Gabriella Galena’s office with a brand-new job. She knew it would take a few days to process the change, and for now, Sofie wanted to concentrate on doing her very best to please her demanding boss.

“All done. I’ve completed the invitations. What should I take care of next?” Sofie eagerly asked, waiting for direction from Gabriella. Gabriella remained silent for a moment, almost as if she didn’t hear Sofie speak. Unsure of whether she should repeat herself, Sofie waited patiently. Hmmm, she looks busy. Maybe I’ll organize my desk in the meantime. I don’t want to annoy her with too many questions.

As Sofie began rearranging her belongings, organizing various files that Gabriella had left on her desk, Sofie considered what her boss was referring to regarding Sofie’s desire to serve. She picked up on the nuances of Gabriella’s tone, which was

suggestive and coy. She wasn't sure if Gabriella was also a lesbian or bisexual or even single and google had been no help on that front. Although it was being made super clear to Sofie was that Gabriella was giving off vibes that implied she loved submissive women and not just in the workplace. And Sofie had caught Gabriella's eyes on her body on more than a couple of occasions now. But Sofie didn't want to jump to conclusions. Don't overthink anything, Sofie. You've scored the gig of a lifetime and must focus on your work.

After what seemed like an excruciating amount of silence, Gabriella finally spoke, keeping her gaze on her laptop. "Good. You'll need to find the mailroom to drop off the invitations. Do that now," Gabriella ordered, void of warmth and gratitude. "Once you're back, I'll have another task for you."

Sofie slowly stood from her desk, grabbing the white cardboard box. Uncertain about where to go, she gingerly asked, "Sorry, where is the mailroom?"

Gabriella stopped typing, turning to stare at Sofie. With an impatient sigh, she replied, "That is a question for the receptionist, not for the CEO. Please speak to Evangeline at the front. And hurry, I've got a lot for you to do today."

Gulping nervously, Sofie bobbed her head. "Yes, of course. I'll be quick."

Feeling out of her comfort zone, Sofie left the office to ask the receptionist for directions. She approached a stunning blond, who was perched at her desk. Wow, everyone here is so beautiful. I guess that only makes sense, considering it's a fashion magazine. The environment was different from anything else that Sofie had experienced. The women at Deluxe were sophisticated and polished, nothing like the casual and liberal atmosphere that Sofie was used to.

"Hi there. I'm the new assistant to Ms. Galena." Sofie approached Evangeline. Holding the large box, she asked, "I'm supposed to drop these off in the mailroom."

Do you know where that is?”

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

The receptionist looked up and smiled knowingly. “Ah, so you’re the new hire, huh?” She looked Sofie up and down. “I can see why she hired you. You are exactly her type. Sure, I can tell you. Just take a right down this hall until you see the elevators. It’s one floor down; you can’t miss it.”

Sofie screwed her face up. It was becoming increasingly clear that she only had this job because Gabriella Galena seemed to be a fan of how she looked in a tight skirt.

She felt frustrated by this, but only more and more determined to prove herself.

“Thank you, yes, it’s my first day, so I’m just figuring out where everything is.” Sofie thanked Evangeline as the receptionist studied her curiously. “Have you ever worked at a fashion publication before?”

Shaking her head, Sofie indicated no, to which Evangeline replied in a hushed tone, “Just a word of advice. Gabriella—or, I mean, Ms. Galena—is tough to please. She is demanding and will not accept anything less than excellence from her staff. But she is also very powerful and can make or break your career in fashion.”

Evangeline surveyed her area, ensuring no other staff were listening before adding, “If I were you, I’d listen carefully and follow her orders. She isn’t the monster that people make her out to be, but you’re going to have to work hard to earn her faith and trust.”

Sofie nodded, processing the information, grateful for the suggestion. “Alright, thank you. I appreciate you telling me this. I want to do a good job and help the team as much as possible.”

The receptionist appeared amused. “Oh, I have no doubt, honey. You look so eager to please. I’m sure that Ms. Galena is going to love you. Just stay on her good side, and you’ll be fine.”

Sofie waved to Evangeline as she left the reception desk on her way to the elevators. Okay, this is good to know; of course, I want to impress my boss. But as Sofie rode to the mailroom, she couldn’t help replaying the conversation with Ms. Galena from earlier in the office. The CEO seemed to suggest that Sofie herself was submissive by nature and not just within the context of her position.

Sofie had never thought about how her eagerness could be interpreted, but as she considered Gabriella’s comments, Sofie began to wonder about her identity on a personal level.

It was true that Sofie enjoyed being of service to others, and she was deeply fulfilled by praise. Sofie’s mind began to wander to more salacious instances where she expressed a more submissive role within sex. While she had never experienced anything literally, when it came to submission and BDSM play, if she was honest with herself, Sofie was curious to surrender under power.

Maybe that explained why she was always most attracted to bossy older women.

Whoa, girl! You are getting way ahead of yourself! Your boss never mentioned anything about sex or kink; you’re letting your imagination run wild. Sofie pushed away her intrusive thoughts, which were making her head spin. Just focus on getting your work done and impressing Ms. Galena.

“Hi, I’m Sofie, Ms. Galena’s new assistant. I have a box to deliver.” Sofie knocked on the mailroom door, which was left ajar. Inside, she could see a young man who looked like a teenager.

“Oh, cool, thanks.” The employee swung the door open wider, grabbing the box from Sofie. As her hands freed up, she mentioned, “These are invitations to the Pink in the City gala. So I think they need to go out today.”

The guy grinned, nodding. “Yup, I’ll mail them out. Oh, and by the way, I have some photo proofs that were couriered this morning. The photos are for the upcoming May issue, but Ms. Galena wasn’t expecting them until later this week. They were delivered early and were supposed to go to the Art Department first. But if you want, you can take them up now.”

Immediately, Sofie bobbed her head, knowing this was an opportunity to impress Gabriella. She was excited to surprise her. “Yes, of course. I’ll take the proofs to Ms. Galena. Thank you!”

Beaming, Sofie left the mailroom, riding up a floor to return to Ms. Galena’s office. Strolling past the reception desk, Sofie gave Evangeline a wave, showing her a manila envelope. Sofie commented, “I think I have something that will make her day. Wish me luck!” The receptionist shrugged and smiled. “With your attitude, you won’t need any luck. You’re a natural at this; I can already tell.”

Hmmm, am I? Yet another reference about my eagerness. I feel like I’m a walking billboard for submission. Sofie furrowed her brow as she decided how the comment made her feel. But as she considered her demeanor, she faced the truth. I want to do a good job and receive praise for my job! I don’t think that’s a bad thing. If that’s who everyone thinks I am, but Ms. Galena likes it, then so be it.

Excited to present Gabriella with the package, Sofie quickly swung open the door, only to have Gabriella bark upon her entry. “Next time, I need you to knock. This isn’t your office—it’s mine. I don’t just want anyone bursting into my space. In the future, announce yourself before barging in.”

Slightly shocked by the greeting, Sofie stopped in her tracks, stammering, “Oh! Um, I’m so sorry. I was just excited to bring you something; it’s from the mailroom.” Sofie froze in her tracks as Gabriella rose from her seat. The assistant was in awe of Gabriella’s presence; her lean statuesque figure emanated a fierce goddess-like energy.

Every aspect of Gabriella’s appearance was immaculate; her designer clothes were tailored to perfection, and her neatly short manicured fingernails had been painted a blood-red color. While Sofie could tell that her boss was much older, Gabriella’s skin was luminescent. Expensive yet tasteful jewelry decorated her ears and neck, emphasizing her wealth and success without appearing garish. Something about this woman made Sofie want to fall to her knees.

Approaching Sofie, Gabriella held out her hand impatiently. “Yes?” Maintaining eye contact, Sofie handed her boss the thick, padded envelope. She waited wordlessly while Gabriella opened the package.

Gabriella slowly pulled out a series of 11x17 black and white photographs. Sofie watched her boss’s expression turn from irritation to delight; Sofie marveled at how drastic the change made Gabriella look; she seemed to radiate, which immediately comforted Sofie, making her proud.

As her boss gazed down at Sofie, she noticed a slight twinkle in Gabriella’s eyes as the corners of her mouth smoothed from a frown. “Excellent, I was waiting for these. I didn’t realize they had come so soon.” Gabriella gave Sofie a quick nod, which she interpreted as approval. Yay, I’ve cheered her up. Hopefully, she continues to have faith in me.

With few words spoken between the women, she returned to her desk to work on the assignments given by Gabriella. At one point again, Sofie felt a pair of eyes on her. She noticed Gabriella studying her body when she turned to her boss’s desk. Was

Sofie right in what she thought Gabriella was looking at?

“Is everything okay? Do I have something on my blouse?” Sofie quipped. But her boss merely tilted her head, concentrating on Sofie’s body unashamedly. “Stand up, please,” Gabriella commanded. Without a word, Sofie slowly rose from her desk, keeping her eyes on Gabriella.

“I like that skirt on you; it fits you nicely. But I think for tomorrow; I’d like you in a dress, not a skirt and blouse,” Gabriella mused. Sofie watched as her boss’s gaze traveled down her body, giving Sofie delightful shivers. There was something about how Gabriella watched her that made Sofie feel peculiar, as though she was being undressed.

The sensation also excited Sofie, especially when coming from someone as powerful as Gabriella. Sofie felt seen in a way she hadn’t before; not even her ex-girlfriend looked at Sofie like Ms. Galena did. She admitted to herself that she enjoyed the attention.

Nodding obediently, Sofie replied, “Of course. I have a floral print dress that I can wear tomorrow. Does that sound okay?”

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Ms. Galena shook her head. “Floral? No. I’d like you to wear a black dress. And be sure it’s fitted, just like that skirt.” Crossing her arms in front of her, Gabriella added, “Will that be an issue.”

“No, no. I’ll make it work.” Sofie smiled confidently, but her thoughts raced in the back of her mind. Shit! I don’t have a black dress. But I think Ask does! I’ll have to check with her as soon as I get home. Sofie was committed to impressing Ms. Galena, and whatever the solution and whatever games Gabriella was playing with her, Sofie knew she would show up the next day in a fitted black dress.

9

“Ahem,” Gabriella cleared her throat, summoning Sofie’s attention. She knew she didn’t have to try too hard; her assistant was naturally responsive whenever Gabriella needed her. Sofie’s mindfulness was impressive, and Gabriella appreciated how well-suited she seemed for this position.

Sofie turned towards Gabriella, asking sweetly, “Yes? What can I help with?”

“I looked at your Pink in the City Gala seating plan. I’m pleased that you were able to take on this responsibility, especially with such short notice. But you need to fix some things.” Gabriella held a copy of the seating chart in her hand, placing it face up on the desk. Curling her finger towards Sofie, Gabriella ordered, “Come here.”

Sofie stood and approached the Gabriella’s desk upon command. Gabriella’s gaze was transfixed on Sofie’s shapely body. Today she looks particularly fetching; I love that red color on her. But I wish the outfit was a better fit.

Sofie's lovely glossy dark hair was loose, cascading down her shoulders with her hairline pulled back by a hairband. Gabriella greatly enjoyed being able to admire her lovely assistant from day to day, and it brought Gabriella joy to observe Sofie following orders regarding her appearance in the office.

But as much as Gabriella noticed Sofie's valiant efforts, she was sparse with her praise. In her experience, too much appreciation eventually made people lazy and apathetic. For her, this was true in both business and personal matters. No, it's best to keep Sofie guessing; that's the only way she is going to continue to try. Besides, she gets a lot of pleasure from pleasing others as is, so I don't need to overextend myself.

Gabriella commented with Sofie in front of her, pointing at the document, "See this section? This is all wrong. We can't have our most valued event sponsors sitting near the band. They won't be able to hear anything."

Gabriella's eyes traveled across the page. "And look, you have some of the top models seated with random magazine staff. No, no, no. The girls need to be seated with guests of their caliber. Please correct this immediately."

Gabriella impatiently pushed the seating chart towards Sofie, who graciously addressed the comments. "Absolutely, I will take care of that right now. And thank you for the feedback. I understand what you are saying."

Wordlessly, Gabriella nodded, motioning for Sofie to return to her desk, considering her comments. If Gabriella was being completely honest, Sofie had created a great first draft of the seating plan. But Gabriella knew even before she had seen it that she would find fault with it. She needed to keep Sofie trying for her.

The edits noted were not as dramatic as Gabriella made them seem, but Gabriella enjoyed pushing Sofie's buttons to see how far her assistant would go to achieve perfection. For Gabriella, it was a test of loyalty and determination; it amused her to

see Sofie squirm a bit.

Over the past few weeks, Sofie had impressed Gabriella with her work and commitment to excellence.

I know I'm tough on her. To be fair, she is a perfect fit for this role. She is intelligent, creative, and responsible. She hasn't given me any attitude and follows exact orders. And I'm not going to lie; it's quite a turn-on to have this beautiful woman at my beck and call.

"Oh, I forgot to say; remember when you asked me to look into details of the upcoming staff meeting?" Gabriella heard Sofie ask. Gabriella had assigned her assistant to explore location options to host the group. She had provided Sofie with a basic outline and budget but did not provide much detail. Gabriella was curious to see how Sofie would handle the task without a lot of direction and how self-sufficient she could be.

"Mmm, hmmm?" Gabriella murmured; her eyes glued to her computer screen. "What about it?"

Gabriella heard a pause before Sofie answered. "Well, I hope you don't mind, but I found the perfect location; it's a small loft space only a block away from the office. Apparently, the owners of the space specialize in day rentals and particularly team meetings."

Once Gabriella had realized that she needed to get her staff in shape, she decided that an off-site meeting was best. Her reasoning was that by pulling employees from the office, the group could enjoy a fresh environment where they could brainstorm and communicate more effectively. Considering that Deluxe was a trend-setting scripture of the fashion industry, a day away from the office could help get those creative juices flowing.

Sliding her reading glasses to her nose, Gabriella turned to face Sofie. “Is that so? Go on.”

She watched as Sofie inhaled nervously, seeming to brace herself. “So, I didn’t want to bother you, and since you had given me a company credit card, I—” Sofie hesitated. Her expression was one of trepidation, which both amused and irritated Gabriella.

“What? What did you do?” Gabriella asked Sofie impatiently. “What happened?”

Sofie looked away, shrugging her shoulders. “I reserved and paid for the location. I had to—it’s perfect for what you were looking for, and from what I read, the spot is in high demand.” Anxiously biting her lip, Sofie added, “Is that okay? I have all of the information, and the photos of the space are gorgeous. Here, look.” Sofie rushed over to the boss’s desk, handing Gabriella her tablet.

Instantly, she knew why Sofie was nervous. Sofie had assumed that maybe Gabriella would be upset at Sofie for making a decision on the spot without asking for permission. But to Gabriella, that is precisely what she wanted Sofie to be confident in; making certain decisions that didn’t require emotional labor from Gabriella.

Taking the device, Gabriella perused the images of the office space. She’s right; this is absolutely perfect. Oh, and I love the French windows. It’s the perfect combination of stylish and serene. Keeping her face expressionless, Gabriella waited a few seconds before responding. Gabriella wanted to make Sofie sweat a bit but was pleased with her choice.

Finally, Gabriella asked, “So, you paid for this on the company card and booked it without checking with me?”

Wide-eyed, Sofie froze; Gabriella could tell she was intimidated and she liked it. In a

meek voice, Sofie replied, “Yes, I did.”

She didn’t want to torture Sofie any further, so Gabriella responded, “Excellent. This is perfect for our staff meeting. I’m glad that you had enough confidence and foresight to make a decision on your own. Good work.”

Sofie sighed audibly; it was clear that she had been harboring concern over her choice, but Gabriella saw that as a positive attribute. She liked that Sofie cared about her job and, more so, about Gabriella’s opinion.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Oh my gosh, thank you! I was worried that maybe you wouldn’t like it, but the space had all the amenities we discussed, and I didn’t want to bother you with something menial.” Sofie beamed with joy, as though elated by Gabriella’s praise.

Fuck, she is so beautiful when she smiles.

Stop it, Gabriella.

Leaning forward at her desk, Gabriella noted, “Sofie, you know, I never want to be cruel to my employees. Yes, I will push them hard and strive for success. And I’m never going to sugarcoat anything. But I’m not a mean woman. I want you to apply the same confidence that you had in this assignment to everything else you do for me.”

Gabriella’s gaze ran over Sofie’s body and she added, “You can always ask me if you have a question. But sometimes, I will assume that you already have the answer or that you are capable of finding an answer without my assistance. The key to this position is knowing the difference between the two scenarios. Does that make sense?”

“Oh, yes, it does. And thank you for having faith in me. Also, I booked catering for the staff meeting as well. I sent a group email to the employees to see if anyone is vegan or vegetarian so I could order appropriately,” Sofie further explained. “So, I think we are ready to go for the 16th.”

Gabriella nodded, pleased with Sofie’s work. She appreciated how Sofie went above and beyond to make her boss happy. But there was just one thing that Gabriella

wanted to address with Sofie.

“That’s great, Sofie. Thank you. I thought that I’d like to give you a clothing allowance, partially to reward your efforts but also because, as my assistant at Deluxe, you must always present yourself with impeccable style.” Gabriella leaned back in her chair, surveying Sofie’s reaction.

As suspected, Sofie smiled, clapping her hands with joy. “Are you serious? Wow, thank you! The clothes here are so lovely and trendy. I can’t believe it!” Sofie seemed thrilled, and Gabriella loved to see her expression. However, unbeknownst to Sofie, it also gave Gabriella complete control over Sofie’s wardrobe.

“You’re welcome. Since you’ve been hired, I’ve noticed that you’ve tried your best to dress for this environment. And I appreciate that because it shows you care. But, my dear,” Gabriella shook her head, “your dresses don’t properly fit your body. And not to be harsh, but the materials are cheap. You have such a beautiful figure and graceful posture. The outfits that I choose for you, for the office, will elevate your style. Remember, I want everyone who works for me to look polished and professional.”

A look of dismay came over Sofie as she responded, “Oh, I’m sorry, don’t you like this dress? I also wore my hair down for you because you mentioned that you liked it that way.”

Sofie’s pout and her need to gratify stirred something primal within Gabriella. To Gabriella, the dynamic between her and Sofie was becoming complex and complimentary. Sofie’s commitment to the magazine manifested through her patient demeanor, attention to detail, and willingness to go above and beyond her responsibilities.

For Gabriella, hiring Sofie turned out to be a godsend, even though her initial

approach was less than genuine. Gabriella was beginning to see how much Sofie brought to the office, which she needed, although she would never express that explicitly. Gabriella was also conscious of Sofie's need for approval; Gabriella was willing to dole out sparse amounts of praise in exchange for Sofie's loyalty, and so far, the arrangement was working beautifully.

Gabriella gazed at Sofie, secretly admiring her creamy, porcelain skin and deep, dark brown eyes.

"I said that I love the color of the dress, and yes, your hair is so lovely." Her eyes traveled down the curves of Sofie's body, tracing the twin slopes of her breasts and then down past her waist. "But the fit is slightly off. Do you mind if I show you what I mean? I'll need to gather the material around your waist."

Sofie smiled at Gabriella, nodding her head to indicate consent. "Yes, please. Sure, it's fine if you touch my waist."

"Come," Gabriella grabbed Sofie's hand, leading her to a full-length mirror behind the office door. Placing Sofie in front of her, Gabriella stood back so that she could see her reflection. "See? The material should be gathered here." Carefully placing her hands on Sofie's waist, Gabriella pulled back the polyester material to emphasize her middle.

"And the dress should expand slightly, right here. Can I show you?" Gabriella asked again to ensure she wasn't crossing any lines with Sofie. She wanted Sofie to feel comfortable with her.

And perhaps turned on by her... hmmm...

Sofie bobbed her head as she gazed at the mirror. Gabriella ran her fingers down to Sofie's hips, feeling her body. She wanted to be respectful and professional, so the

touch was short-lived, but it gave Gabriella a taste of something she ravenously craved. She saw gooseflesh run across Sofie's bare arms.

Maybe she is as turned on by me as I am by her?

The women shared a moment where their eyes met in the mirror before Gabriella dropped her hands from Sofie's body and quickly stepped away.

She knew if she didn't pull back now, she would rip the dress right off of Sofie's lovely body.

"Understand? That's how a dress should fit." Knowing that she was entering tempting waters, Gabriella assumed her usual dismissive attitude and moved toward her desk.

"Thank you. Yeah, I get it. I appreciate you showing me," Sofie said sweetly. "I'll keep that in mind when trying on outfits with the allowance." Sofie stood still, waiting and watching Gabriella, presumably for direction.

"Good. Now get back to work. I need you to finish those corrections on the editorial, and I want the redo on my desk in thirty minutes. So, hurry." Gabriella snatched away her attention, leaving Sofie to complete her tasks.

Fuck, I want her so much.

10

"Okay, perfect. That looks good," Sofie muttered to herself as she scanned the edits. Earlier that day, Gabriella had given Sofie a list of tasks to complete, which included reviewing the size and placement of photos that were to be included in the magazine. While her boss' lists were often not exhaustive, Sofie always remembered her

responsibilities. She loved the opportunity to work in her field, and it appeared as though Gabriella found her capable.

These guidelines are strange; I'm not sure why such a trend-setting fashion magazine needs to be so conservative with its images. Does Gabriella decide these things, or is another force in place? Sofie thought to herself as she read over the rules for magazine editing at Deluxe Redux. But considering how her role at the office had grown over the past few weeks, Sofie was not about to criticize. Her primary focus was pleasing her boss and providing solid and efficient work.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Smoothing down the fitted jersey silk dress, Sofie appreciated the quality of the material, silently grateful for the generous clothing allowance. In addition to expanding her experience and knowledge in fashion, Sofie also found her style evolving. Since being exposed to the designer looks, and with guidance from Gabriella, Sofie began to see herself as less of a financially struggling student who slung coffee for a living and more of a mature and elegant woman on her way to a promising career.

There was no denying that Sofie was intimidated by her boss; Gabriella was often harsh and uncompromising. Her demand for excellence was unwavering. Sofie was frequently asked to redo projects or change her accessories if Gabriella felt that any jewelry did not compliment her outfit.

She had to admit that some days were a struggle; she wanted so badly to hear praise from her; it was almost an obsession. Beyond wanting to be an outstanding employee, Sofie was drawn to her boss in a way she couldn't explain. Well, perhaps she could, but she wasn't totally prepared to confront her feelings for Gabriella beyond just wanting to please her at work.

Reviewing her list, Sofie began to see a pattern that her responsibilities were becoming more complex. Her next task was to examine the entire draft of the upcoming May edition of Deluxe Redux and assess the chosen designs to ensure they met the standards of the magazine. Sofie was aware of the grand nature of this task, and she was proud that Gabriella trusted her with it.

Often, it was difficult for Sofie to tell as Gabriella provided more critiques than praise. But occasionally, she could catch Gabriella's expression flash from irritated to

impressed. While her boss never directed too much positive energy to Sofie, she had an idea that Gabriella was overall pleased with her work.

Sofie was so engrossed in her task that she didn't notice Gabriella return to the office. It was nearing nine p.m., which was hours past her usual workday, but Sofie had committed to staying late to finish what she was working on. "How are you doing?"

Startled, Sofie jumped in her seat upon hearing Gabriella's voice. "Goodness! I'm fine; sorry, I was reading this editorial and didn't hear you come in." Gabriella chuckled lightly. "I'm glad to hear that you are so focused. How is the review coming along?"

Sofie bobbed her head. "So far, so good. I'll have it completed by the time I leave." From the corner of her eye, Sofie noticed that her boss had removed her suit jacket and that she was wearing a beautiful emerald-colored silk dress highlighting her physique. Sofie was always impressed with how her boss appeared so effortlessly polished and elegant.

Until she got hired at Deluxe, Sofie's social circle mainly consisted of other lesbians her age that were either tomboys or dressed-up nightclub femmes. She had never really noticed older women of this calibre until she met Gabriella Galena. This woman is unlike anyone I've met. I wonder if she is gay. Either way, she sure does set a high bar when it comes to style and beauty. She is absolutely captivating.

Sofie knew Gabriella kept looking at her body, but she couldn't decide whether it was in lust or in contemplative appraisal of her attire. On a few occasions when Sofie thought Gabriella was seconds from making a move on her, which had turned Sofie on furiously, Gabriella had pulled away and left Sofie to get on with her work.

"Excellent. I ordered us some take-out. I know it's late, and you've been working so hard. Are you okay with Chinese?" Gabriella asked, which surprised Sofie.

“Wow, thank you! Sure, that sounds awesome. I didn’t get a chance to take a break, so I appreciate it.” Sofie beamed just as her stomach rumbled.

“It’s imperative that we complete the draft of the May issue, as the publication date is tomorrow. So, I’d rather have you eat with me in the office, so we can get everything done.” Gabriella approached Sofie’s desk, putting a hand on her chair. Sofie could smell her boss’s perfume and feel the intensity of her closeness as she leaned in, peering at Sofie’s laptop.

Sofie thought back to the moment when Gabriella showed Sofie her reflection in the mirror, remembering her hands on Sofie’s waist. She had thought about that touch for the rest of the day and into the night. Her favorite moments in the office were when Gabriella paid Sofie attention, whether to correct a mistake or to comment on her outfit. But Gabriella’s gentle grasp on her body gave Sofie a memorable thrill, and she would fantasize about it happening again.

“Hmmm, no. I don’t like this version.” Gabriella indicated an image on the right-hand corner of the draft. “I think we have a better photo with a different angle of the model. Can you find it and replace it?” Sofie nodded, appreciative of the direction.

As Gabriella stepped away from the desk, there was a knock at the door, with a voice reporting, “Good evening Ms. Galena. Your take-out is here.” Gabriella turned to grin at Sofie. “Looks like it’s time for that break.”

Sofie’s stomach fluttered with excitement. I’ve never had a chance to relax around Gabriella. Trying to appear cool, she kept her smile contained. “Sure, that sounds good. It will be nice to take a breather.” But inside, Sofie felt a nervous thrill as though a crush had approached her. Gabriella pulled over an extra chair, placing it in front of her desk. “Here, grab a seat. Could you set up dinner for us?”

Sofie could feel Gabriella’s intense gaze on her as she removed the food containers

from the large, brown paper bag. Sofie then unwrapped the cutlery packages, separating the sets to divide them between her and Gabriella. “How’s this?” Sofie waited for approval.

Gabriella raised an eyebrow in amusement. “Sofie, it’s just take-out. Save your perfection for the magazine. Honestly, you need to be more confident around me.” Grinning, Gabriella added, “It’s not like we are in some kind of Domme/sub relationship—if you even know what that is?” She gave Sofie a playful wink, and Sofie felt herself blushing and desire pooling in her stomach. Sofie knew that Gabriella was right; she was often too self-conscious for her own good.

Red-faced, Sofie nodded her head with a slight laugh. “Of course I do. I know that was silly of me.” Keeping her eyes low, Sofie lowered herself in the chair and picked up a small container. She removed morsels of broccoli and beef, placing a portion on her boss’s paper plate, serving herself second. Picking up their chopsticks, the women began to eat, and Sofie felt a curious tension between them.

“So, tell me,” Gabriella began, between bites, “how was your experience at the fashion institute? Obviously, from your transcripts, I can see you were successful. But what was it really like for you?”

Sofie was delighted but surprised that Gabriella wanted to know more about her. Gabriella’s general attitude was usually dismissive, so Sofie limited any conversations strictly to work matters.

Sofie replied, shrugging her shoulders, “Um, well, I was there on a full scholarship, so I was mainly focused on my studies. But it was fun; I met some cool people and learned a lot in my field.” Sofie kept her answer light to avoid any personal conversations.

But judging by the look in her eye, Sofie knew that Gabriella wasn’t about to let her

off so easily. Maintaining her piercing gray-blue stare, Gabriella continued, “That wasn’t what I was asking. Sofie, you seem exceptionally hungry for success, more so than I’ve seen in other employees. You are different—special, even—and I wouldn’t say that to just anyone. So, I’m curious as to why.” Tucking a strand of silver hair behind her ear, Gabriella added, “But don’t feel obligated to answer. You don’t have to share anything with me if you aren’t comfortable.”

Sofie thought to herself how beautiful Gabriella was when she looked at Sofie like that—with kindness. Sofie felt her stomach flip.

“No, no, I don’t mind,” Sofie said hurriedly. Sofie was shocked to hear that her successful and beautiful boss wanted to know anything about her. Sofie didn’t see herself as unique, so it was flattering to hear such a compliment. “Well, I guess my ambition was the result of growing up poor. I lived with my family in Bushwick in a two-bedroom apartment. Even though I did well in school, my parents didn’t have the money to send me to college, so it was great that I got a scholarship.”

“Were you always passionate about fashion?” Gabriella interrupted, her gaze intense, but still soft. Sofie felt as though she was being examined under a microscope, but she didn’t mind. She loved that Gabriella was paying her attention, and for the first time since she had been hired, Sofie felt really seen.

“Mmm, hmm,” Sofie nodded in between bites. “I think my interest grew because we didn’t have the money to buy new clothes, so I began sketching outfits when I was a child. For me, it was mainly a form of escape. But one day, I found a second-hand sewing machine for five bucks and taught myself from YouTube tutorials how to make simple outfits.” Sofie grinned at Gabriella “From there, the rest is history. And now I’m here.”

“Do you have a partner? What do you do in your spare time?” Gabriella asked, adding slyly, “I mean, it’s not like you have a lot of it working for me. But still, I’m

curious.”

Blushing slightly, Sofie answered, “Um, I had a girlfriend for a while, but we broke up recently. We used to live together—she was a lot wealthier than me. But when we split up, I moved in with some friends until I could save up for a place.” Sofie felt self-conscious confiding in her boss because she didn’t want to come across as fragile or to have Gabriella pity her. Brightening her tone, she added, “So, I’m glad to be working here because it’s given me hope that I can achieve my career goals. And I love to be of service; I find it completes me, especially during hard times.”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“I see. I’m sorry to hear you went through a breakup. But don’t worry; you have plenty to do to distract you. I feel that relationships get in the way of success, so you are better off this way, trust me,” Gabriella commented, with Sofie noticing a bitter tone in her voice.

In dealing with her own struggles and heartbreak, she was beginning to appreciate her boss’s cynical nature and toughness.

The women finished their dinner, and Sofie took it upon herself to throw away the empty food containers. “Here, I’ll take these to the garbage chute down the hall.” Leaving the office briefly, Sofie returned a few minutes later to find Gabriella sitting comfortably on a leather couch. To Sofie, she appeared as poised and elegant as though she was waiting for something or someone.

Her legs were long and lean and beautifully sculpted, her feet elegant as ever in their Louboutin heels.

Gabriella looked up at Sofie as she closed the office door. “Listen, I want to tell you that I’m very happy with your work tonight; thank you for staying late. But before you leave, may I ask you something?”

Sofie nodded. “Sure, what’s up? Do you need me to do anything else?” It was nearing ten o’clock, and this was the latest that Sofie had stayed at the Deluxe office, although she wasn’t worried about that- she had nowhere important to be.

Narrowing her eyes and licking her lips, Gabriella looked coyly at Sofie. “I wanted to ask if you might want to serve me in a different way?” Her seductive expression

caught Sofie off-guard, but the hunger in her eyes left no room for confusion.

“What do you mean?” Sofie asked, just to be clear. Sofie felt an electrifying thrill run through her blood. She could hear her heart pounding.

Gabriella locked her gaze on Sofie and leaned forward on the couch, placing her hands on her crossed knee.

“I want you to do something for me, but only if you consent. If you don’t, it will be fine, and all will be forgotten. I will never ask again.” Bringing her hand to her chin, Gabriella carefully continued, “I want you to strip naked, get on your hands and knees and crawl towards me.” Gabriella remained perfectly composed, as though she was asking Sofie to fetch a cup of coffee.

Sofie froze, her eyes wide with shock. What?! A deafening silence filled the office, and again Sofie could hear her heart pounding loudly in her ears. She was speechless. Part of her couldn’t believe the request that had come out of Gabriella’s mouth. But at the same time, in the back of her mind, Sofie had known that Gabriella wanted her badly. As her mind processed the command, Sofie became lit with an undeniable desire, a fierce wanting that was unfamiliar yet intoxicating.

She stood for a minute, staring at Gabriella, who maintained her gaze. Sofie felt Gabriella’s eyes boring through her clothing anyway. Sofie felt undressed by Gabriella’s gaze anyway. Feeling transfixed, Sofie gulped, and found herself nodding slowly. She wanted to. She wanted to take her clothes off for Gabriella.

She knew Gabriella needed to hear the words of consent. “Okay. Yes, I will. I want to.” Feeling like she was in a dream, she lifted her dress past her knees. The jersey knit material grazed her thighs, exposing her black thong. The dress traveled up Sofie’s waist until it had nowhere else to go except past her shoulders and over her head.

Gabriella watched Sofie in silence; her eyes seemed to devour Sofie. Sofie stood in her bra and panties, feeling her heartbeat race. She felt vulnerable yet brave; she had never done anything like this before. Sofie had only ever been naked with girlfriends and only in private. What am I doing? And better yet, why does this excite me so much?

“Very lovely; I could look at you all night,” Gabriella murmured as her eyes scanned Sofie’s half-naked body. “Are you comfortable being completely nude? I’d love it if you were, but I’d even take you like this.” Gabriella chuckled, but her admiration fueled Sofie’s courage to strip bare.

I’ll bet she thinks I won’t do it.

Sofie felt a sudden rush of confidence wash through her.

I want to do it. I want her praise.

Sofie unhooked her bra from the back and watched as Gabriella leaned further forward. Gabriella seemed entranced by her body.

Sofie knew she wanted to continue.

Bending from the waist, Sofie slid her panties down and gingerly stepped out of the material bunched around her ankle.

Gabriella wore a coy expression as she bit her lip. Sofie could tell that she was becoming aroused, although she was clearly trying to maintain her cool.

Sofie wasn’t sure what any of this meant or where it was going, but she allowed herself just to live in the moment.

She felt exposed and vulnerable in the best of ways. She had never done anything like this before.

She felt tingling in her pussy. She had never felt more turned on.

“Good. Now crawl,” Gabriella ordered, and Sofie lowered herself to her hands and knees. The carpet felt scratchy underneath her skin, faintly smelling of disinfectant. Sofie realized that while she could have felt freaked out by this oddscenario, inside, she felt calm and serene, almost as though she had performed this action many times before. It feels...natural.

Sofie started to crawl, keeping her eyes lowered, but Gabriella commanded, “No. Look at me.” Sofie raised her eyes to meet her boss’s steely gaze. Slowly, she made her way towards Gabriella’s long, lean legs, stopping at her feet.

“May I touch you?” Gabriella asked, holding her hand to stop Sofie from moving closer.

That is what I want more than anything.

Sofie felt wetness and desire leaking from her. She nodded her consent.

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella placed her palm on Sofie's head, smoothing her hair. "That was very good. You look absolutely perfect, naked at my feet," Gabriella purred. "How do you feel?"

Really really turned on...

"I feel... um... good. Really good."

As though reading Sofie's thoughts, Gabriella asked in a cunning tone, "I think you feel very turned on. Do you want to try something else?"

Licking her lips, Sofie nodded, captivated by the moment. "Yeah, I do. I-I, um, I want, um..." Sofie's face turned beet red as she kept her eyes on the ground. But Gabriella had little patience for stuttering, replying, "Use your words, Sofie. What do you want?"

"You. I want you." As soon as her desire was vocalized, there was no turning back. The words were out, and Sofie was shocked that she dared to express her passion. She lifted her head to look at Gabriella, noticing her eyes brightening and her face breaking into a smile.

"That is music to my ears, beautiful. I want you as well, as long as you are consenting, of course. I don't want you to feel pressured in any way."

"No, I don't, I swear. I just didn't really know that anything like this might happen." Sofie explained. "You are just so beautiful and put together. I've never met a woman like you."

Gabriella didn't comment but instead grinned like a Cheshire cat. She stared at Sofie for a few minutes before handing her a pillow. "Here, put this under your knees. It will be more comfortable."

Sofie took the plush cushion and did as she was told. Sitting up on her knees, she watched as Gabriella lifted the hem of her dress, carefully peeling off her underwear. Gabriella stood slightly, adjusting her posture until her pelvis was tilted further towards the edge of the couch. Sofie watched in silence, waiting for her next move.

With the panties in her hand, Gabriella brought the warm, silky material to Sofie's face. Sofie didn't need instructions, she desperately inhaled the earthy scent. Gabriella's musky smell immediately intoxicated Sofie, intensifying her craving.

"Do you like that?" Gabriella whispered as Sofie closed her eyes, bobbing her head.

"Good. Come and please me with your mouth then, sweet girl." Spreading her legs, Gabriella exposed her neatly waxed vulva that was glistening with wet.

Sofie felt her mind absolutely blow. She moved herself between Gabriella's legs. She breathed in the sweet scent of Gabriella's sex.

Oh my god, I can't believe this is happening!

Bringing her face closer, Sofie dragged her tongue along the soft folds of skin of Gabriella's vulva.

Sofie felt Gabriella's hand on her head, holding her in place. She could hear the soft moans that escaped from her and as her grip tightened, Sofie quickened her pace, alternating between pointy licks and soft, sucking motions.

Giving oral sex had never been top of Sofie's list of favorite sexual acts until this

very moment. Right now, it was better than anything else Sofie could imagine. Hearing Gabriella's moans of pleasure was the best thing Sofie could imagine.

Sofie was intuitive when it came to reading body language and Sofie could tell by how Gabriella pushed and grinded her pussy against Sofie's mouth that she was enjoying Sofie's tongue.

As they found a rhythm, Sofie wrapped her arms around Gabriella's legs, caressing the backs of her thighs, her hands cupping the Gabriella's ass. Gabriella was urgently thrusting against Sofie's mouth, breathing hard. "Mmm, yeah, oh god, yes. Just like that, oh fuck, oh my god." Suddenly, Sofie felt Gabriella's fingers through her hair, tugging hard as she bucked, arching her back. "Oh my god, I'm coming!"

Sofie held her face in place, sucking Gabriella's engorged clit as she felt her whole body tense with an incredible spasm and hot liquid gush. Gabriella bellowed with pleasure, "Sofie, oh my god! I wanted this so very much." Sofie backed away slightly, watching Gabriella catch her breath. She was amazed by Gabriella's transformation; she was luminescent, her face flushed with a glow. But most of all, Gabriella Galena appeared suddenly veryhappy, which made Sofie's heart soar with pride.

Sofie waited patiently, wiping her mouth with her hand and remaining on her knees until Gabriella gained composure. Sofie wasn't sure what was going to happen next, but she was too aroused to remove herself from the situation. She craved more attention from Gabriella, whose breathing had finally returned to normal. Appearing slightly disheveled, although still fully clothed, save for her panties, Gabriella looked down at Sofie and said, "Good girl, little Sofie. Good work."

Sofie leaned forward, with wanting, desperately happy with the praise. "Thank you," she murmured.

“Come, stand up.” Gabriella rose from the couch, holding out her hand. “I’m not done with you yet.” Sofie felt herself grow wetter with desire, her head spinning with disbelief. She wasn’t sure what Gabriella had in store for her, but Sofie was transfixed with arousal and the uncertainty and the promise was driving her crazy.

Gabriella brought Sofie to the full-length mirror, the one they had stood in front of a few weeks prior, only this time, Sofie was obviously nude. Gabriella positioned herself behind Sofie, so much taller than Sofie, especially still in her Louboutin heels, and ran her hands over Sofie’s bare skin, giving her delicious goosebumps. “Look at your reflection; I want you to see how beautiful you are, especially when you submit and please me.” Sofie gazed into the mirror. She felt particularly small and oh so very turned on. She could see her small brown nipples hardening under Gabriella’s touch.

As Gabriella continued to run her fingertips over Sofie’s small breasts, inching down her tummy and towards her pubic bone, Sofie felt as though she was melting. Gabriella’s touch was incredible. Wordlessly, Sofie continued to stare when Gabriella whispered in her ear, “I’m going to make you come very hard, and you are going to watch yourself orgasm in the mirror.” Sofie felt electricity running through her body. Gabriella’s words in her ear were the most seductive thing she had ever heard.

“Uh.. yes... please, I want that so very much,” Sofie gasped.

Sofie couldn’t quite believe what was happening, but she was so lost in the moment, she couldn’t have turned back now. Everything in her just wanted more and more. Gabriella locked eyes with Sofie in the mirror’s reflection, giving her a devilish grin. “Oh, I am going to see to ALL of your wants, don’t worry, little one.” Gabriella leaned down to paint artful kisses along Sofie’s neck as she bumped her knee against the back of Sofie’s thighs. “Open your legs, so I can feel your desire.”

Sofie obeyed, watching Gabriella slowly slide her fingertips, tickling Sofie’s soft skin, increasing the wetness between her legs. Sofie had never felt so aroused; she

was dizzy with desire.

Gabriella grabbed her hips, murmuring, “I wanted to do this so badly a few weeks ago when we were standing in front of this mirror. And now I finally get the chance. I am lucky. Very lucky indeed.” Before Sofie could respond, she felt two fingers running down the cleft of her ass. She felt herself opening her legs further instinctively and pushing back. She felt Gabriella’s fingers running down, teasing her anus momentarily, before delving lower and then pushing firmly inside her vagina. Sofie gasped with pleasure as the fingers entered her with ease, arching her back to push against Gabriella, who gripped Sofie’s left hip firmly with her left hand while the fingers of her right hand started to do magical things inside of her. “Oh my god!”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Watch yourself,” Gabriella commanded as she pushed Sofie’s upper body forward slightly and her fingers began to thrust inside of Sofie. She paused to devour Sofie’s neck in a burst of love bites and kisses. Sofie leaned forward further to allow greater access, placing her hands on the mirror to keep her balance. As Gabriella ordered, Sofie watched intently in the mirror, staring deep into Gabriella’s hungry eyes.

“Do you like how it feels when I fuck you, little Sofie?” Gabriella uttered between thrusts. Sofie breathed hard as she felt ecstasy rising within her. She felt Gabriella’s fingers hitting her G spot with each thrust. She heard her own moans and saw her own body in the mirror as it moved with the force of the thrusts.

“Yes, yes, oh god,” Sofie exclaimed, “Oh god, please don’t stop. Yes, I love the way you fuck me!” Sofie noticed Gabriella’s left hand reaching around her front to stimulate Sofie’s clit while her right hand paused a second to add what felt like a further finger or maybe two? Sofie felt Gabriella stretching her open from behind and she knew she was very close to orgasm. She felt the familiar heat building inside of her. “You are so wet and open for me, baby; This is exactly how I imagined fucking you would be. Exquisite.”

The fingers began to thrust again and Sofie felt an electrifying bolt of pleasure as an orgasm burst deep inside of her. She felt her own pleasure splashing down the inside of her thighs. She felt her mind going to another world as her orgasm continued to run through her. She heard herself calling out as body tensed before crumpling over, still holding the mirror to keep her from falling.

It was the most incredible orgasm Sofie had ever had, or could ever imagine having.

Gabriella, still fully dressed and immaculate, held Sofie's naked torso, laughing playfully. "Good thing I'm holding you; I think you would have fallen to the ground by the sheer force of that orgasm!" As Sofie tried to catch her breath, she couldn't deny that Gabriella was correct.

Sofie's eyes met Gabriella's in the mirror.

"Good girl, sweet Sofie. Good girl," Gabriella growled.

11

Gabriella remained seated on the couch as Sofie reentered the office from using the ensuite washroom. She allowed Sofie to tidy up after their sexy tryst. Gabriella wanted Sofie to feel comfortable and welcome to clean up, although she wasn't much for post-sex pillow talk.

I can't believe how hot that was! God, I really lucked out with this girl. She's a good assistant, sexy as hell, and knows how to get me off. How did I get so lucky?

Oh, and fucking her and feeling her come was just as exquisite as I had imagined.

"Hey, thanks for letting me use the facilities," Sofie said, appearing shy but relaxed.

"Did you enjoy that, Sofie?"

Gabriella watched as Sofie bent to pick up her belongings on the ground, "Yes, I loved it." Sofie responded looking up, meekly, just as beautiful as ever with her hair and make up mussed up by the sex.

Gabriella grinned. "Me too. You're great, Sofie. I hope you were comfortable with me."

Sofie stood to look at Gabriella, nodding her head. “I definitely was. I just don’t want this to affect my position here at the magazine. I loved tonight, and I will be into doing it again, but I know you are my boss, so—”

Understanding that Sofie was nervous about her job, Gabriella was quick to assure her. “Don’t worry, what happened tonight was between us, and I promise you will not get into trouble. We need to separate business and pleasure.”

Approaching Sofie as she was ready to leave, Gabriella asked, “Can you do that? Because when we are working, everything must be professional. Understood?”

Sofie bobbed her head emphatically. “Oh, of course! Don’t worry; maintaining a professional working relationship is also important to me.” Gabriella felt cautiously optimistic as Sofie showed a grounding maturity, although, to Gabriella, Sofie seemed a bit naive.

Sex always made things messy. Crossing lines always got difficult in the end.

Gabriella was mildly frustrated that she hadn’t been able to control her own desires for Sofie, but at the same time, she had enjoyed it so much, she couldn’t bring herself to regret her decision to seduce her assistant.

Regardless, Gabriella was confident that their tryst wouldn’t interfere with the business.

Would she do it again? She could feel the heat of lust rising within her as she watched the movement of Sofie’s hips in the tight dress she was wearing. Of course, she really wanted to.

“Good,” Gabriella replied politely, albeit abruptly. “I’ll see you tomorrow, then.” She walked Sofie to the door, placing a hand on her back.

“Yeah, see you tomorrow.” Sofie gave Gabriella a lingering, lustful look, but Gabriella held back on kissing her goodbye. At this moment, Gabriella needed to establish a boundary of personal space and kissing goodbye definitely did not fit with that.

But as soon as Gabriella was alone in the office, her body became filled with energy. Gabriella’s head was spinning from the erotic encounter, and even though it was close to midnight, Gabriella knew she would be too wired to sleep.

Picking up her iPhone, Gabriella texted her best friend, Blair Cunningham, a wealthy and powerful financial advisor who worked on Wall Street. She knew that if anyone in her social circle were awake and working downtown, it would be Blair.

During Gabriella’s leave of absence, she and Blair had lost touch, mainly because of the incident involving her best friend’s sister and Gabriella’s now ex-wife Madison. But Gabriella knew better than to blame Blair for her sister’s actions.

Gabriella and Blair had been friends since they were children, attending private school together; they even came out to each other simultaneously as teenagers. Most of all, Gabriella appreciated Blair’s ambition and tenacity; she was a powerful professional in her own right, and Gabriella felt as though she and Blair were alpha equals.

Page 18

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Hey-it's been a while! I'm downtown at the office, getting ready to leave. Do you want to meet at Le Papillon, in the lobby? I'd love to grab a drink and catch up.

Gabriella wasn't sure if Blair was available, as they hadn't made prior plans. But as Gabriella threw on her designer coat, ready to exit her office, she heard her phonedingingindicating a new message.

Oh, my goodness-I've been wondering about you! I'm just finishing up as well. Grab us a table; I can meet you in 30.

Gabriella grinned upon reading the message. She was vibrating from her sexual encounter and wanted to share the details with someone she trusted. She also missed her talks withBlair; it was time that the two friends cleared the air and rebuilt their bond.

After cascading down the elevator to the main floor of the grand building, Gabriella turned the corner to enter Le Papillon, a posh lounge that was open until four a.m., attracting late-working business people and a sophisticated crowd who enjoyed an opulent atmosphere. Gabriella had been a regular customer for years, and once the host noticed Gabriella standing at the podium, she immediately rushed over.

"Good evening, Ms. Galena. It'slovelyto see you again. Would you like the corner table?" Gabriella gave the hostess a generous smile, purring in response, "That would be wonderful, thank you. I'm meeting a friend; you may send her over when she arrives."

The host nodded, bowing slightly. "Absolutely, Ms. Galena, right this way."

Gabriella followed the uniformed server to a private section in the corner of the lounge. Taking a drink menu from the server, Gabriella got comfortable in the plush seated chair and ordered a dirty vodka martini. “With extra olives, please. I like it very dirty!” She couldn’t help but flirt with the attractive host, still fueled by a residue of arousal from the sex with Sofie. She could still smell Sofie’s sex on her fingers and she liked it.

Gabriella had only been sitting for fifteen minutes when she noticed a tall, short-haired elegant woman in a designer suit being escorted by a host. A mixture of excitement and anxiety filled Gabriella’s heart as she waved to her friend.

Blair Cunningham caught Gabriella’s eye and waved back as she approached the table. As Blair got closer, Gabriella stood, parting her arms slightly to appear welcoming. Even with everything that happened between Blair’s sister and Madison, Gabriella still cherished Blair’s friendship and wanted to show her enthusiasm.

“You look amazing! I can’t believe it’s been months since we’ve seen each other.” Blair approached Gabriella, who embraced her friend.

“I know, and that’s been my fault. I just needed time to process everything, you know?” Hugging Blair tightly, Gabriella reassured Blair, “I never had anything against you. But I needed space to heal. But I knew we would see each other again soon.”

Blair took a seat in front of Gabriella, who marveled over Blair’s outfit. “I love this ensemble. Anne Taylor?” Blair nodded, smoothing the lapels. “You know it! They make the best power suits.” The women engaged in small talk as their cocktails were delivered until Blair reached out her hand, placing it on Gabriella’s.

“Listen, I know we talked about it a little when everything first happened. But Gabby, I am so sorry from the bottom of my heart. I’m not responsible for Lauren’s actions,

but at the same time, I still feel guilty, like I should've known sooner." Gabriella's best friend leaned in closer, her gaze intense. "I just don't want you to think I was keeping anything from you."

Gabriella squeezed Blair's hand. "I know, I understand. I think I was just so angry and shocked that I couldn't talk to anyone at that time. But after a while, I realized Lauren betrayed you as much as Madison betrayed me." Feeling a wave of emotions, Gabriella inhaled, maintaining her composure. "I don't blame you, I just want our friendship back, and I believe you when you say you didn't know anything."

"I really didn't, and the craziest part was that I thought Lauren and I were closer as well. I mean, she was at your wedding, for god's sake! I was positively floored when I learned about Maddy cheating on you with my sister."

Gabriella observed as Blair shook her head with disgust, taking a long sip of her drink. "Honestly, we haven't spoken in months. I think she took off to Berlin to pursue her artistic career. I know she's my sister, but I don't respect how she treated you; Lauren should've known better. I just can't accept it."

She didn't like to see Blair so distraught, but at the same time, Gabriella felt the dark emotions were justified. Madison's actions may have torn apart their marriage, but at least Gabriella could maintain her friendship with Blair, especially because Blair did not condone Lauren's behavior either.

In wanting to change the subject, Gabriella leaned closer. "Listen, I know you and I are good; that's what matters." Gabriella raised her glass to clink Blair's before moving on. "But I asked you to meet me tonight because I have to tell you something." Gabriella was filled with excitement, her body still tingling with erotic sensations.

"Go on, I need to catch up on all the gossip." Blair's eyes twinkled, but Gabriella

shook her head. “No, it’s not like that; I don’t even talk to many of our mutual friends anymore, especially since Maddy and I divorced. The gossip is about me.”

Gabriella looked around the crowded lounge to ensure no one was eavesdropping. Gabriella Galena was a high-profile woman who was sometimes followed by the press, and maintaining privacy was imperative. Cupping a hand over her mouth, Gabriella confided, “I fucked my assistant in the office tonight. And oh my god, it was so hot!”

Blair’s eyes widened as her jaw dropped. “You didn’t! Oh, you’re so bad; I love it! Wait, I didn’t know you had an assistant. What’s she like?” Gabriella remembered that Blair loved a good scandal, although the CEO trusted her friend to keep her secret safe.

“After I found out about the affair between Madison and Lauren, I took a leave of absence to deal with the betrayal and also the divorce. But when I returned to Deluxe Redux magazine, there were so many things to catch up on. So, I decided to hire an assistant.”

Gabriella paused, biting into the salty olive resting against the martini glass. “I first noticed her working at the coffee shop a block from the office; she was an absolute beauty. She seemed submissive and docile, which is the perfect attitude to have as my assistant. As it turns out, she’s a recent New York Fashion Institute graduate, so I poached her from Sunny’s Coffee and got her a job at Deluxe.”

Grinning widely, Blair nodded her head. “Wow, that’s impressive. I’ve always admired what a go-getter you are. I suppose that’s why we’re friends, though. I’d probably do the same!” The women cackled knowingly, understanding their vulturous ways.

Gabriella continued, feeling herself swoon. “At first, I hired her because I thought she

was cute, and she seemed like someone who knew how to take direction. But I've been very impressed by her work ethic, and she always goes beyond my expectations. And she absolutely loves to please others; it's like she was born to serve or something."

Coyly eyeing her friend, Blair commented, "I'm sure you love that, right? When it comes to women, I know your type. But I have to say, you look amazing. You seem to be glowing! When was the last time you hooked up?"

In trying to hide her goofy smile, Gabriella bit her lip. She couldn't remember the last time she had felt so giddy. "We've only hooked up once so far; it was just tonight, literally a few hours ago. But oh my god, I want more of her. She is so sexy in this innocent way, but she definitely knows how to eat my pussy—the sex was fire!" The more Gabriella thought back to the evening tryst, the more she craved Sofie. Their chemistry was authentic and passionate; it had been years since Gabriella felt such a natural and primal connection.

Blair held up her glass to cheer Gabriella again. "Congrats! I'm so happy to see you living life again. And enjoy this affair for as long as you can. All the money and success in the world is nothing if we can't have some fun along the way, right?"

Raising her cocktail, Gabriella nodded. "Absolutely. It's time I embrace my desires and sexuality again and make the most of my time with this sexy minx." Gabriella wasn't sure how things would play out between her and Sofie, but she felt that it wouldn't be the last time she would be enjoying some private time with her assistant.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Before entering Gabriella's office, Sofie checked out her fitted, cashmere dress in the hallway mirror; it was an item she had purchased with her clothing allowance. She loved how the soft material hugged her body, and Sofie was grateful for her boss's generosity, knowing she could never afford such a luxury item.

She always wanted to look her best at Deluxe, but this morning, Sofie was particularly anxious to greet her boss, especially after being intimate with her the night before. She had an urgent desire to impress Gabriella, and her attraction to her left Sofie with a mixture of excitement and nervousness.

What was this that was happening between them? Would it ever happen again? How would Sofie get through the day when she knew damn well she would be wishing she was on her knees for Gabriella again?

Sofie struggled with her internal dialogue before opening the door. To Sofie's surprise, Gabriella wasn't in the office yet, which allowed her to relax. Sofie liked to be settled in the office before her boss arrived, mainly because it allowed her to get organized.

Sofie settled at her desk to prepare form letters to procure more advertising dollars. According to Gabriella, the well-known magazine was undergoing a transformation due to critiques from the chairperson, Tempest Rutherford. In addition to adding more advertisers, Sofie was also responsible for reviewing any imagery that didn't align with the magazine's new vision. She found this new development confusing as Deluxe Redux had always been a cutting-edge publication, highlighting the trendiest fashions and designers.

To Sofie, it seemed as though the chairperson wanted to move the magazine in a more conservative direction, but Sofie knew better than to speak her mind. Sofie's focus was on assisting Gabriella to her best abilities, lending itself to the praise that Sofie so desired. As she flipped through various laminated pages, showcasing models in haute couture, Sofie thought to herself I wonder if Gabriella would be interested in seeing my designs. Maybe I'll bring in my portfolio one day.

"Good morning, you're here early." Startled, Sofie jumped in her seat, unaware that Gabriella had entered the office. Sofie's heart raced, suddenly feeling self-conscious. Gabriella breezed into the room, wearing a sophisticated linen suit, and briefly acknowledged Sofie. Sofie was mesmerized by her boss's effortless style and beauty. She always appears so put together, so stunning. It would be a dream to design an outfit for her.

"Oh, hi, good morning. Sorry I didn't hear you open the door." Sofie laughed nervously, feeling her face blush. Unsure of how to start a conversation, Sofie offered, "Can I get you anything? A coffee?"

Maintaining a cool demeanor, Gabriella casually replied, flipping through unopened mail on her desk, "No, I'm fine." Gabriella barely looked at Sofie, which confused her. She wasn't sure what to expect, but Sofie felt an overpowering need to be of service. She wasn't sure whether she should bring up the sex from the night before.

Probably not.

Sofie's body tingled with explicit arousal upon remembering how Gabriella fucked her from behind, facing the mirror.

She felt her face flush and her panties growing moist.

Pull yourself together, Sofie.

Sofie couldn't deny her attraction to Gabriella; the way that her boss had possessed her body was mind-blowing; she had never been fucked so deeply or passionately.

Gabriella was so confident, so dominating!

Will she bring up what happened?

God, focus on what you are doing, Sofie.

Sofie furrowed her brow, trying to concentrate on her computer screen, but her mind was racing. Minutes passed, and neither woman spoke until Sofie heard Gabriella ask, "Could you do me a favor?"

Take off all my clothes and get on my knees for you?

Sofie's heart fluttered. "Yes, yes! Of course. What do you need?" She looked up from her desk, excited to have a request. Gabriella looked calmly at Sofie, a slight smile on her face. To Sofie, her boss appeared as normal as ever, seemingly unaffected by last night's tryst. Curling her finger ever so slightly, Gabriella beckoned Sofie. "Come here."

Rising from her seat, Sofie smoothed her dress, hoping Gabriella would notice the outfit. Sofie chose the dress in a red hue, as Gabriella had noted that she loved that color on her. Shyly, Sofie walked over, noticing Gabriella's eyes scan her frame, finally meeting Sofie's gaze. Gabriella gave Sofie a nod, which Sofie interpreted as a look of approval, but there was no praise this time.

"Sofie, you look so nervous. Are you okay?" Gabriella grinned slyly at Sofie, chuckling, "I'm not going to bite you." The women locked eyes, and suddenly, Sofie yearned to feel Gabriella's touch. I wish you would!

Sofie gulped, answering with a nervous smile. “Sure, I’m fine. Everything is great. What can I do for you?” Sofie took a deep breath, trying to relax. Well, she doesn’t seem too affected by last night’s sex. Maybe it wasn’t a big deal after all.

Appearing amused, Gabriella continued to smile politely at Sofie. “Good, I’m glad to hear that. I need you to visit the Art Department and speak to Samson about the new logo design. Ms. Rutherford expects it from me in a few days, and I need to know the status.” Turning towards a nearby drawer, Gabriella leaned down to grab her purse.

As Sofie stood, Gabriella placed a twenty-dollar bill in her hand. “Also, could you grab me a coffee and a breakfast sandwich from Sunny’s?” As Sofie took the money, she confirmed, “Did you want a coffee or a latte?” At this point, Sofie and Gabriella had worked together long enough that the assistant was familiar with her boss’s morning order.

Gabriella lightly placed her fingers on Sofie’s hand, which sent shockwaves through the assistant’s body. Sofie felt like she might explode there and then.

The connection instantly elevated Sofie’s mood. Gabriella looked at her intensely, her blue eyes focused on Sofie. “No, this morning, I want coffee.” Licking her lips, Gabriella added, “No sugar, extra cream. Sofie felt a light squeeze from Gabriella’s hand as she emphasized the order. Sofie bit her lip, slightly overwhelmed.

She looks like she wants to eat me.

Oh god, I want her to eat me.

Bobbing her head, Sofie responded with a shy smile. “Sure, of course. I’ll be right back.” As Sofie returned to her desk, she heard Gabriella say, “You can grab something for yourself if you want. Just make sure you hurry back.”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Sofie turned her head as she approached the door. “No problem. I’ll go to the Art Department first.” With the crumpled bill in her sweaty palm, Sofie slung her purse over her shoulder and left the office.

A second later, Sofie heard her name. “Oh, Sofie?” Opening the office door slightly, she stuck her head back inside. “Yes? Did I forget something?”

Gabriella sat at her bureau with manicured hands poised on the keyboard. Without looking at Sofie, she remarked, “I’m glad you chose that dress with your clothing allowance. Your hair would look better in a high bun, though.”

Sofie nodded, her head halfway out of the door. “Um, okay, sure. No problem. I’ll, um, fix it in the washroom before I come back.” Gabriella looked up from the keyboard with a neutral expression. “Good girl. Now go.”

Good girl. Oh, fuck.

Sofie felt her panties moistening further.

Sofie padded down the hallway, exhilarated by Gabriella’s approval. At least she noticed what I was wearing without too much criticism. In fact, she seemed to like it! She clung to the twenty-dollar bill, thinking back to how Gabriella looked at her when she gave Sofie her order. The way Gabriella squeezed her hand seemed so subtle yet intentional at the same. Sofie found it impossible to read her boss, but she was captivated, regardless.

A few minutes later, Sofie found herself in front of the Art Department, with the door

slightly ajar. Hearing voices towards the back of the room, Sofie tiptoed so as not to interrupt. Sofie had been introduced to Samson a few times, and she loved the energy of the flamboyant and unfiltered employee.

“Hello?” Sofie softly called out. While she had been an assistant at the office for almost a month, Sofie still felt shy when approaching other staff at the magazine. As she moved further inside the room, Sofie heard murmurs from a few of the team gathered in the back.

“I wonder if Ms. Galena is aware? I mean, she was gone for quite a while.” Sofie heard the words come from an unfamiliar voice. Sofie became aware that the staff working in the art department were gossiping, and since no one had realized that she had entered the room, Sofie decided to eavesdrop for a minute.

“Well, who could blame her? When I heard the news about the affair, I couldn’t believe it—how mortifying!” a young woman vocalized, sharing thoughts with her co-workers. “I’m impressed at how she bounced back so quickly.”

“I’m not so sure,” a snarky voice added to the conversation. “She seemed pretty bitchy the other day. And with the changes the chair wants to make with the magazine, I wonder how long she’ll be in charge.”

Sofie stood far enough away that the employees, who had their backs to the assistant, didn’t know someone was listening in on their chat.

The same woman who spoke minutes earlier replied, “I don’t understand why the Rutherfords want to alter the design of Deluxe Redux. And with Ms. Galena being an out lesbian and the magazine CEO, you wouldn’t think she would step up to this homophobia.”

A team member commented, “Well, maybe she doesn’t know? I’m wondering if the

leave of absence hurt her position here.”

Wide-eyed, Sofie realized that the staff was talking about Gabriella; comments about the chairperson and changing the magazine suddenly made sense to the assistant. But what do they mean by an affair? What happened to Ms. Galena? And why doesn't she know more about this situation? She's supposed to be the boss!

Feeling like a spy, Sofie knew it was time to let her presence known. I don't want to hear any more of this confusing gossip; it's making me anxious. Clearing her throat, Sofie spoke up, “Hello? Hi, I'm Sofie Rosswell, Ms. Galena's assistant. Is Samson here?”

The small group of coworkers jumped in their place, startled to know someone was in the room. A team member turned to face Sofie, exclaiming, “Oh my god! I had no idea someone was here.”

“Yeah, sorry, the door was open. I'm supposed to talk to Samson about a new logo design?” Sofie feigned ignorance, pretending that she didn't hear any previous comments.

The coworkers exchanged glances, with an employee replying, “Um, yeah, Samson just stepped out for a minute. But I'm pretty sure he has it ready. Do you want to come back? He won't be long.”

Sofie paused, scanning the group. Hearing the strange news that wasn't intended for her, she felt uncomfortable. “Sure, no problem. I'm running errands for Ms. Galena anyway, so I'll return in about an hour.”

“Cool, sounds good. I'll let him know that you stopped by.” The employee waved at Sofie as she exited the room. Holy shit, what did I witness? Sofie thought. I need to grab Gabriella breakfast, and I still need to fix my hair, so I guess I'll do that first.

As she made her way to Sunny's, Sofie felt bad for Gabriella. From what the team was talking about, it sounded like Ms. Galena had suffered a betrayal.

But another interesting piece that Sofie learned was that Ms. Galena was indeed a lesbian.

I mean, maybe it should have been clear from last night?! This knowledge that she was out and proud excited Sofie, inciting arousal. No wonder she knew how to satisfy me so well! But Sofie was also confused by the other comments she heard. Should I bring this up to Ms. Galena? No, I'll probably get in trouble for eavesdropping.

Sofie ordered her boss breakfast, quickly returning to the magazine. On returning to the office, Sofie stopped at the staff washroom to fix her hair into a tight, high bun. She studied herself in the reflection, feeling a transformation within her. For Sofie, the sex last night was more than just physical pleasure.

Gabriella introduced a power dynamic that resonated deeply with Sofie's sexual psyche. To be under the control of a dominant, powerful woman had been an abstract fantasy of Sofie's for years; she didn't know how to vocalize it or even recognize her needs. It was as if Gabriella intrinsically knew what Sofie desired, which was utterly intoxicating to her.

"Hi, I'm back." Sofie entered Gabriella's office with the breakfast order. Her hair was pulled back precisely as her boss had asked.

Gabriella, poised at her desk, looked up as Sofie came inside. "Good, I'm starving. And I desperately need that coffee." Sofie brought over the small paper bag, resting the coffee on the wooden surface.

"Here, have a seat." To Sofie's surprise, Gabriella pulled a chair in front of her while she sat. "I want to have a better look."

Page 21

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Feeling giddy yet confused, Sofie slowly sat, facing the CEO. “Um, a better look at what?” She giggled nervously as Gabriella studied Sofie’s face, her eyes orbiting around her hairline. Gabriella’s eyes did not meet hers; it was as if Gabriella was examining her hair. “May I touch your hair for a sec?”

Sofie nodded, enthralled to receive more attention. She sat patiently as Gabriella fingered the sides of Sofie’s hair, her hands softly brushing against her cheeks. Sofie licked her lips and tried to remain nonchalant, but the touch of her fingers gave her delicious goosebumps. Sofie couldn’t help remembering where those fingers had been last night.

Gabriella held Sofie’s chin with one hand while delicately pulling out a few side strands of hair from her bun. Her gaze lingered on Sofie’s face for a few tense seconds before she commented, “Ah, much better. The bun was perfect, but I always love when a few strands frame the face.”

She then looked Sofie dead in the eye, hypnotizing her with authoritative energy. “So beautiful. Go, look and see for yourself.”

Uncertain, Sofie stood up and made her way towards the reflection, the same mirror where she witnessed herself orgasm hard from Gabriella’s hands. Sofie couldn’t speak but she nodded.

It turns me on so much when she likes how I look.

Gabriella remained in her chair, wearing an amused grin. “Hmmm, mmm. I know. Did you talk to Samson from Art?”

Sofie reeled around to face her boss; she wasn't sure what to say based on the gossip from earlier. "I tried, but he wasn't in when I stopped by. I'll try again right now."

Gabriella bobbed her head, circling her chair towards her laptop, her face away from Sofie. Sofie went to leave the office once more before she heard Gabriella call out.

"Oh, and Sofie, if you are going to wear a dress like that, it's best not to wear underwear. I can see your panty lines; it's unbecoming."

13

"Yes, I received the new logo the other day," Gabriella replied to Tempest Rutherford, the chairperson of the Board for Deluxe Redux Magazine. "Of course, yes, you will receive it in time for review before the next issue goes out."

Impatiently, she rolled her eyes as Tempest proceeded to outline the magazine's new guidelines. Gabriella Galena was not one to take orders, but when it came to her position, unfortunately, Tempest Rutherford was the ultimate authority. Oh god, she sounds like a broken record. And what's wrong with the design as it is?

Being the consummate professional, Gabriella politely thanked Tempest for her call, and continued her workday. But the conversation troubled Gabriella. Ever since she returned to the magazine after her leave of absence, she disagreed with specific changes to the publication. These new modifications left Gabriella wondering what it would be like to start her own magazine without the Board. Hmmm, I wonder if I could do it. Sure, it would be nice to retire in a few years, but I also love my work. I should think about it because I don't like this new, conservative direction.

She was also concerned that the authority of Tempest was slowly dimming her leadership and influence. Gabriella thrived on control and power—particularly after her divorce. This was one of the reasons she found herself enjoying Sofie so much.

Sofie Rosswell was a conduit for Gabriella's expression of dominance, and their opposing energies complemented each other. And with Sofie being of great service to her, Gabriella felt an equilibrium between her position at the magazine and needing to answer to the Board.

As Gabriella waited for Sofie to return to the Marketing and Sales Department, her thoughts revisited the amazing sex they had a few days ago. As she recalled visions of Sofie nude and crawling towards her on all fours, Gabriella became instantly aroused. Mmmm, my hot little submissive. She is so beautiful and eager to please! I need to have her again if she is willing.

Gabriella wasn't in the habit of sleeping with her staff; Sofie had been the first. And after their first encounter, Gabriella was concerned that it may cause a rift; it was imperative that she and her assistant maintain a professional, working relationship. But Sofie handled herself well, even with the increasing sexual tension. Even Gabriella found it hard to control her desire; she would admire her beautiful assistant dressed in sophisticated outfits every day. As she thought about fucking Sofie again, Gabriella's mouth began to salivate as devious fantasies formed in her imagination.

"Hi, I'm back." Sofie breezed in, catching her off-guard. Gabriella had been lost in thought, pondering the ways in which she could enjoy Sofie's body. "I submitted the forms for new sponsors." Gabriella had assigned Sofie to procure new advertisers to help increase sales in response to the report sent by Ms. Rutherford.

"Good. And do you feel ready to supervise the upcoming photo shoot on Friday? That's a big responsibility, so I am counting on you." As Gabriella emphasized the gig's importance, she thought, Hmmm, maybe I should give Sofie a few pro tips on how to angle her body. She would make the perfect muse!

Sofie moved towards her desk, settling into her chair. "I think so. I've participated in photo shoots before, mostly with school projects." To Gabriella, Sofie seemed

confident, but she wanted to ensure that Sofie knew what to look for with the models. As if reading Gabriella's mind, she asked, "Is there anything in particular that I should be aware of? Do you have any advice to share?"

Gabriella's thoughts raced as her imagination grew deviant. She was eager to show Sofie many things, although not all were work-related. And judging by Sofie's keen expression, Gabriella could sense that she was more than willing. Swiveling in her chair, Gabriella powered off her computer before turning to Sofie.

"Sure, but I think my advice would be best illustrated through role-play." Suggestively, Gabriella licked her lips as she focused her attention on Sofie. She looks so professional and polished in that short Valentino skirt and silky blouse. I can't stop looking at the lines of her hips and the way the outline of her small breasts and little nipples can be seen through her blouse. I'll bet she would look so hot for me, posing in various positions. "Is that something that you want to try with me?"

As Gabriella looked intensely at Sofie, she noticed her assistant blush, biting her lip coyly. In her experience, that was usually a sign of arousal from a woman who was too shy to express herself fully. But Gabriella required explicit consent before she would make a move. "Don't worry; if you don't, that's okay. We can continue our day as usual."

Sofie giggled, averting her gaze. "Yes, please. No, I mean, I do. I-I want to try different things like this." Sofie's face went beet red. "I'm just so inexperienced; I've never role-played in my life. But I want—I want to, you know, do it properly."

"Ah, I see; you're a bit of a perfectionist. Somehow I already knew that about you." Gabriella playfully remarked. "Do you trust me to show you what I like?" She stood and slowly moved toward her assistant, who sat self-consciously at her desk. Gabriella placed a hand on the surface, cocking her hip to one side as she gazed down at Sofie's lovely face.

The flush on her cheeks only turned Gabriella on more.

Slightly smiling, Sofie looked up with her warm, innocent eyes. While she appeared shy, her body language seemed open and willing. “I do,” Sofie replied softly. “I feel like you would know exactly what to do with me.”

Upon hearing Sofie’s eagerness, Gabriella instantly became even more horny for her. A plan formed in her mind as circled Sofie’s desk. As her mouth curled into a devious smile, Gabriella said, “Alright then, let’s begin. I want you to lock the door and turn down the lights in the office.” She pointed in the direction of the light fixture as Sofie rose from her desk, smiling hopefully. Gabriella watched Sofie’s lovely little figure cross the room, obeying her orders. She felt bolts of desire running between her legs. She knew she was getting wet. What a good girl; am I ever lucky to have found her!

“Now, we are going to pretend that I am the photographer and you are the model. Role-playing this scenario will help you know what to look for at the shoot.” Gabriella added slyly, “Of course, things may get a little explicit between us, and this will require some nudity on your part. Are you game?”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Sofie nodded wide eyed and enthusiastic, and Gabriella pointed to the couch, indicating that Sofie should sit. “Yeah, I’ve— um, you know...,” Sofie’s voice trailed off before Gabriella cut her off. Amused, Gabriella slightly chuckled, “No, I don’t know. Why don’t you use your words and say exactly what you mean?”

Sofie paused nervously before clarifying, “I’ve been waiting for the next opportunity to explore with you. Is that better?”

Gabriella knew that her assistant was eager but shy. “Sure, that will do for now. It’s extremely important to vocalize what you want and don’t want.” As Sofie sat gingerly on the couch, Gabriella loomed over her young assistant. She could sense how scared and yet turned on Sofie was and she liked it. “I trust that you will tell me if you want to stop or slow something down; I will always honor your request, but you must express any discomfort immediately, understood?”

“Yes, I do, and I can handle that.” Sofie looked up at Gabriella. “How do we start?”

Gabriella thought for a moment, narrowing her gaze before pulling out a digital camera from her desk. “Now, I’m going to use this camera as a prop but don’t worry; I’m not taking any photos. Pretend that I am the photographer and you are my muse.” As she approached Sofie, her eyes traveled up the full length of her body.

Fuck, her body is exquisite.

“First, I want you to unbutton your blouse very slowly, and while you do that, look up at me.”

Gabriella crouched so that Sofie's frame was in line with the camera. As she promised, Gabriella wasn't taking actual pictures, as much as she wanted to, but she did want the Sofie to pose for her. The images would be indelibly printed in Gabriella's mind. Her eyes were transfixed on Sofie's fingers as they fiddled with the tiny buttons; every snap exposed more of Sofie's creamy skin, like the sun rising with the morning light.

"Like this?" Sofie asked, her wide brown eyes begging for approval. Gabriella continued to aim her camera as Sofie began to angle her body, showing a hint of shoulder, as the material cascaded down her back. "How do I look for you?"

Gabriella was amazed at how natural Sofie was, as a model. She hardly has to try; the camera loves her! But, mmmm, this needs to get a bit more scandalous. "Yes, that's perfect. Your face is exquisite but try giving me a slutty glance, letting me know that you aren't so innocent!" Gabriella moved in front of Sofie, camera in hand, adding "Now, I want you to lose the blouse and the bra. But don't stop modeling. I want you to own your body, own your sexuality!"

Sofie smiled nervously as she readjusted her expression to something more sensual. Gabriella noticed as she became more confident and playful in her skin. Removing the blouse and lacy bra, Sofie sat poised on the sofa, topless from the waist up. Gabriella's mouth salivated as she admired Sofie's small breasts, topped with perfect little nipples. The skirt and heels were a perfect compliment to Sofie's nude upper body, as she cupped her bosom with her hands.

"You look like a model, Sofie. And that pose is perfect. Yes, like that, crossed legs at the ankle. Pout at me, make love to the camera." As Sofie continued to follow Gabriella's orders, Gabriella wanted to push the boundaries even further. Gabriella was aware of how much Sofie wanted to expand her sexual repertoire and based on her growing boldness, Gabriella knew it was time.

“Do you know who Helmut Newton was?” Gabriella asked. Sofie shook her head, arms spread across the couch, exposing her breasts. “No, I don’t.”

“He was a very influential fashion photographer, known for making his models appear as amazon goddesses. Stand up and take off your skirt and underwear.” Gabriella ordered. “Then, spread your legs and put your hands on your hips. I want a strong and confident pose.” As expected, Sofie did as she was told, soaking up the praise doled out by her boss.

There was still a slight unsureness to Sofie’s eyes, but her body obeyed the orders. She looked striking. Gabriella admired her lovely little body, the curve of her hips, the neat dark pubic hair.

“How do you feel?” Gabriella asked her.

Sofie smiled wide, squealing. “Wow, I feel really powerful, like I’m a different person. I thought I would feel shy, like I want to hide my body. But this is great, I almost wish you were taking actual pictures.”

Gabriella chuckled and shook her head. “Not this time, but I’m glad you like the exercise. See? This is exactly how you want the model to feel in a photo shoot. You need to help guide them, instill confidence and empowerment.” But Gabriella wasn’t done with Sofie; more kinky thoughts were racing in her imagination.

“Continue to stand, just like that, hands on hips. And don’t move.” Gabriella circled the young woman, close enough that her skin brushed against Sofie’s. She stood behind her assistant, allowing her fingernails to rake up the backs of Sofie’s thighs gently. She noticed goosebumps forming on the woman’s skin as Sofie softly hummed. Gabriella continued to caress Sofie’s naked body from behind. “Do you want to explore something else?”

“Yes,” Sofie moaned, “I do. Please.”

Gabriella melted at Sofie’s begging; desire from her submissives fueled Gabriella’s arousal. But she also loved to tease and deny, to bring out the most of Sofie’s passion. Gabriella remained behind Sofie as she carefully wove her fingers into Sofie’s luscious locks. Once she had a handful of Sofie’s hair, she tugged from the scalp, assuming dominance over her.

“How’s that?” Gabriella tugged at Sofie’s hair, causing her to gasp with pleasure. “Now, we are going to illustrate control and discipline. As I mentioned, you can tell me to stop anytime; I promise I won’t be upset. But if you don’t, I’ll assume you are fine.” Giving Sofie’s hair another playful yank, Gabriella commanded, “Walk over to my desk.”

As she approached the desk, Gabriella held on to Sofie’s ponytail like a leash. Still standing behind her, Gabriella ordered, “Put your hands on the desk and bend over. I want to feel your lovely round ass with my hands. Have you ever been spanked?”

The back of Sofie’s head shook right to left. “No, I haven’t.” Her body quivered in anticipation.

“That’s okay; I like being your first.” Ms. Galena chuckled deviously. “I’m going to ask you a series of questions, and when you give the right answer, I will spank you as a reward. How does that sound?”

“Mmmm, yes... please...” The assistant’s voice was thick with lust, and Gabriella could tell that Sofie was enjoying herself.

Positioning her body and keeping her stance fairly wide, Gabriella began. “What is my favorite type of latte? By the way, you have five seconds to answer.”

“Um, um,” Sofie searched for the answer while Gabriella ran her lips down the back of Sofie’s neck. “Um, an almond-milk latte, two shots of espresso. Very hot!”

Gabriella paused for effect, whispering in Sofie’s ear. “You forgot little foam.” She noticed Sofie’s body immediately sag with disappointment. “But that’s fine; you were correct enough.” Gabriella swung her hand back and swatted Sofie’s bare ass with an open palm, carefully striking the fleshiest part. Sofie’s ass began to pink where she had hit it. Her body ran with gooseflesh. Gabriella smiled to herself. Purring, she remarked, “Mmmm, Good Girl!”

“Alright, name two employees that work for this company besides me,” Gabriella hissed playfully, enjoying the game. Damn, she looks so good bent over my desk like that. I don’t know how much more I can hold out!

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Oh, that’s easy,” Sofie said, but not before Gabriella tugged hard on her ponytail. “Oh, is it? I don’t want to make this easy on you, Sofie.”

Sofie interrupted, “No, no, please, let me. I want another one.” Sofie leaned forward on the hard surface, exclaiming, “Oh, Samson Ableman from the Art Department and um, ah, Romi! Romi, the photographer!”

Gabriella laughed out loud, amazed by Sofie’s eagerness to participate. “Correct.” Again, Gabriella waved her hand, planting it firmly on Sofie’s behind. As Sofie received her spanking, Gabriella wanted to change direction. All of this playfulness is making me so horny. I need to be inside of her.

Gabriella pulled Sofie’s ponytail hard so that she would stand up straight. “Do you want a reward, little Sofie? You’ve been so good, so willing. I think it’s time for you to have some fun.” Sofie nodded, adjusting her posture. “Hmmm, mmm, yes, please.”

Gabriella felt a twinge in her pussy as Sofie pleaded.

“Turn around and face me.” Gabriella stood back, allowing Sofie to reposition her nude body against the table. “Good, now give me your leg and rest your weight behind you to keep your balance.”

“Oh, okay.” Sofie leaned back, awkwardly lifting her right leg, which Gabriella caught with her hand. Placing Sofie’s leg around her waist, the CEO moved closer, putting her face against Sofie’s. “I’m going to fuck you with my fingers until you come, and don’t you dare look away.”

Wide-eyed, Sofie kept her gaze on Gabriella's while she reached down, slowly entering Sofie's vagina with her fingers. "God, you are so wet for me aren't you, sweetheart. Wet and wanting. It turns you on to get naked for your boss, doesn't it?"

Sofie's lovely brown eyes were wide and she nodded. Her mouth was slightly open. She had never looked more beautiful. Partially holding up Sofie, Gabriella began to penetrate her, stimulating her G-spot with two fingers as the third rubbed carefully against Sofie's clitoris.

She felt wet and warm and welcoming and her head tipped back as she moaned. Gabriella added another finger inside of her.

Fuck, she is so beautiful.

Sofie loudly moaned, arching her back, her body moving to the rhythm of Gabriella's hand. Gabriella continued to thrust, keeping her eyes on Sofie's, refusing an escape. Sofie's body began to tense and her skin began to flush. Knowing that she was about to climax, Gabriella quickened her pace, three of her fingers thrusting against Sofie's G spot, her thumb grazing Sofie's clit.

"Come for me, my sweet little slut."

Sofie cried out loudly as she came. Gabriella felt the hot gush of liquid flood the palm of her hand and she smiled to herself.

Oh god, yes. Making her come for me is just so much fun.

She stepped away to survey the erotic mess she had made of Sofie's body, noting how much hotter she looked, completely undone and unpolished.

Sofie lay on the couch, contemplating the other night with Gabriella at the Deluxe office. She was grateful for the beautiful Sunday afternoon from which she could take time off from work. But as much as Sofie wanted to relax and tend to her personal errands, she felt restless and distracted. Something strange was stirring within her; Sofie was filled with an unfamiliar yearning that pulled at her heart.

Flipping aimlessly through an old edition of Deluxe Redux, Sofie waited for Rory and Ash to return so the three roommates could have Sunday dinner together. It was a tradition in their apartment that Sofie appreciated, considering the rift in her own family unit. As she turned the glossy pages, Sofie couldn't help but notice how different the 2012 issue was from the magazine that she began working at this month.

This is so much edgier; the designs, the models, even the advertisements are different. I didn't realize Deluxe was moving in a more conservative direction. I've always wanted to start my own fashion magazine. Sofie had always been interested in advancing her creative abilities within the industry and challenging herself with related projects. It's still a cool environment and good for my career, but how does Gabriella feel about this? She's a pretty kinky woman and definitely queer. I'm sure these new guidelines by the Board are limiting her.

Sofie caught herself; Gabriella had been consuming Sofie's thoughts ever since their first hook-up. The kinky nature of their fiery sex had opened up something in Sofie that she couldn't quite explain; she felt more alive than ever and yet, also confused. It was unlike Sofie to have sexual affairs, as all her intimate experiences occurred within a monogamous relationship.

Furthermore, she had never explored power dynamics through sex. Sofie never thought she was someone who was drawn to deviant forms of play, but through passion and the physical connection with her boss, she was beginning to understand the depth of her arousal.

“Hey!” Sofie heard Rory’s voice as the couple returned to the apartment. “Sofie, we picked up some steaks from the butcher up the street. Wanna have a barbecue on the balcony?” Rory and Ash’s apartment was tiny, but one of the selling points was the small, enclosed balcony that provided an excellent view of their eclectic neighborhood.

Sofie rose from the sofa to help her roommates carry in their groceries. “Yeah, that sounds cool. I haven’t eaten steak for ages.” Ash handed Sofie a twelve-pack of beer. “Sof, can you throw these in the fridge? They were warm off the shelf, so I want to cool them before dinner.”

“Sure, I’ll take them.” She grabbed the small case, placing the beverages at the bottom of the refrigerator. As Ash began to prepare dinner in their cramped kitchen, Rory turned to Sofie. “What did you do all day? The weather has been beautiful; please tell me you got outside at least.”

Sofie cringed, biting her lip. She had been too caught up in her thoughts to leave the apartment, instead distracting herself with Netflix programs. “Um, no, I didn’t. I just wanted to relax and do nothing, you know?” In reality, Sofie couldn’t stop thinking about Gabriella. She wondered what her boss was up to and how she spent her free time.

Until now, Sofie had kept her sexual encounters a secret, not daring to tell anyone.

But tonight, she felt getting her roommates’ advice might be helpful. Rory and Ash were a few years older; in particular, Rory had more life experience. I should tell them what’s been going on. I know they won’t judge me.

Ash chimed in as she pulled out a cutting board. “I find being outside is the best way to relax. It’s too bad that you missed the sun. Why didn’t you go to the park up the street?” Pulling out a lettuce head, she added, “I’m making a salad to go with the

steak if anyone wants some.”

“I don’t know. I’ve been feeling a bit restless, I guess.” Sofie sighed, taking a seat at the kitchen table. She fidgeted with the tablecloth material, tracing the raised pattern with her fingertip.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“You sound a little down. Is everything okay?” Rory asked. Sofie adored both of her friends, but she was closer to Rory, and her roommate could always tell when Sofie was preoccupied.

Sofie ran her fingers through her hair as she thought about mentioning that she was sleeping with her boss. “Um, can I tell you both something? But it’s a big secret, so you have to swear not to tell anyone—especially Charlie.”

“Oh gosh, you don’t have to worry about either of us telling Charlie, right, Ash?” Rory reassured her roommate.

Ash said, “Girl, we stopped talking to Charlie as soon as you both broke up. You can trust us, but only if you want to share. Babe, can you hand me a big plate for the steaks?”

Rory passed a ceramic platter to her girlfriend while patting Sofie on the shoulder. “What’s going on? Are you secretly seeing someone that we aren’t aware of?” While Rory’s tone was playful, Sofie couldn’t help but think to herself, Seeing someone? Well, not exactly. I don’t know what I would call it!

Taking a deep breath, Sofie confessed, “No, I’m not really ‘seeing’ anyone but, um, I’ve been spending a lot of time at the office and, well, my boss and I have gotten close and...,” As Sofie trailed off, Ash interrupted, “Oh my god, no way! You’re sleeping with your boss, aren’t you?!”

Rory teasingly swatted Ash, giving her a stern look. “Let her finish!” Turning to Sofie, Rory asked, “Is that true? Are you hooking up with your boss?”

Sighing, Sofie replied, “Well, yes, I am, but this is different. It’s not just sex; there’s more to it. It’s hard to explain, but I’m drawn to the power that Ms. Galena has over me, and that’s what’s so arousing.” She looked around the kitchen, shrugging while trying to find her words. “The sex is kinky, as though Ms. Galena is my Domme and I’m her submissive. I’m turned on because I can serve her and receive praise. I’ve never felt anything like this, it’s confusing me.”

“The Gabriella Galena! Oh my god!”

“Let me ask you this,” Rory pulled up a chair, sitting closer to Sofie. “Do you like it? Are you having fun?”

Sofie began to grin as she thought about the last time she and Gabriella were together, her body tingling with passionate memories. “I do. It’s so hot! I think part of the appeal is that I’m discovering what turns me on, and I enjoy serving her sexually and in the office. It resonates with me in a way I can’t explain.” Glancing at Rory and Ash, Sofie added, “And I also like that we’re sneaky; it’s so wrong, but it feels so right. Does that make sense?”

Ash chuckled wryly. “I feel like I used the exact same expression on my Catholic mother when I first came out. No, I’m kidding. Seriously though, I fully support office hookups. But so that we’re on the same page. Do you feel it’s consensual? Like, your boss isn’t taking advantage of you or anything?”

“Oh no, no, it’s not like that at all.” Sofie shook her head vehemently. “I’m absolutely into her. And it’s not like I’m just at the office for sex, either. Gabriella has increased my responsibilities to where I’m taking on bigger projects. I’m learning a lot at Deluxe Redux Magazine. But I think I’m just torn.”

The couple exchanged glances, with Rory asking, “Can I give you some feedback? I feel two major issues are going on here.”

Sofie nodded. She desperately wanted advice from an outside party, and Rory was the perfect person to provide insight. “Yes, please. I’m confused by all of this, but at the same time, I don’t want it to stop.”

“So, first of all, I think you’ve just discovered that you are submissive. Do you know what that means?” Rory questioned Sofie, and she replied, “Of course I do. But I never thought I was a kinky person; I’ve never had any experiences like this. All I know is that I crave her attention, her praise. I feel complete whenever Gabriella compliments me or I’m given orders to follow. Does that make sense?”

Rory nodded. “Oh, definitely! It sounds like you are drawn to service, both sexually and in other forms. And it’s not weird; in fact, it’s very common.” Sofie felt grateful for the reassurance from her roommate. Rory then added, “And did you know something else?”

“What’s that?” Sofie shrugged. Rory leaned in excitedly. “They say that submissives are the ones that have the most power in a Domme/sub scenario. And that’s because, without consent from the sub, the Domme can’t act out their desires for control. So, even if you sometimes feel subservient, Ms. Galena could never be who she is around you without your consent.”

Wide-eyed, Sofie asked, “So, are you saying that I’m the one providing Ms. Galena with an outlet to be in Domme mode, so to speak?”

“Yes, exactly. She can’t express her true, kinky nature without you embodying yours,” Rory explained, leaving Sofie astonished by this new piece of information. Sofie shook her head and commented, “Wow, I never looked at it that way before. And what was the other aspect? You mentioned there were two aspects to this situation?”

Rory looked at Ash and then turned to Sofie. “I think you are catching feelings for

Ms. Galena. Do you think that's true? I'm referring to the fact that you haven't been yourself in a few weeks like you are preoccupied with something. I sense that you've developed a crush on her."

Sofie's face flushed red. She was aware of how attracted she was to her boss. Sofie didn't want to become emotionally involved, especially at a new job and after her recent breakup. But Sofie knew she was struggling with keeping her feelings to herself; her admiration and desire towards Gabriella was becoming all-encompassing.

"Maybe? But I'm also aware of how unrealistic it would be to fall for her. Gabriella is a powerful, wealthy, and successful woman in her early 50's. I'm just a young fashion graduate working at Sunny's Coffee before we met." Sofie shook her head and added, "Even if I did have feelings for Gabriella, it's better that I keep it to myself and focus on work."

"Not a bad idea!" Ash expressed as she added dressing to a salad bowl. "I think you should have fun while you can but don't get attached. You're right; she has the power to break your heart, and you have a career to build."

Rory rolled her eyes, chuckling as she turned to Sofie. "And I think you should realize that your kinks are perfectly normal. Also, keep in mind that you are discovering these things about yourself for the first time. Of course your emotions are going to be heightened. Ash is right about focusing on your job, but don't be so disciplined that you miss an opportunity to explore intimacy and kink with another person." Standing from the table, Rory stretched her arms. "That's just my advice, anyway."

"Thanks so much. I really appreciate you both listening to me without judgment. You're right; this is all new to me. But it's exciting and passionate. I'm going to try to compartmentalize these experiences so that I don't get too distracted." Sofie spoke aloud, while in the back of her mind, she wondered if it was truly possible to continue

this affair with Gabriella unscathed.

15

Gabriella eyed Sofie, who was typing fashion editorials as her newest assignment. Gabriella was impressed with how far her assistant had come since starting at Deluxe Magazine. Gabriella watched as Sofie went from helping with simple tasks to creating visual displays, assisting with photo shoots, and maintaining on-brand content for the fashion publication.

As she observed Sofie, Gabriella's desire continued to grow. She loved the way Sofie's long eyelashes fluttered over her big brown eyes. She was hoping that Sofie might want to indulge in some after-work intimacy.

"Ms. Galena? Did you want me to stay late tonight?" Sofie's sweet voice echoed through the office; the question was music to Gabriella's ears.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Would you like to stay late?” Gabriella replied in a suggestive voice. “I’m sure I could find something for you to work on.”

Lately, the women were falling into a routine where Sofie would ask if Gabriella needed anything later that night, and depending on Gabriella’s mood, she would mention that there would be tasks for Sofie if she desired. But all of this was a code for sex; both women knew what the other was talking about, and Gabriella appreciated Sofie taking the lead. For Gabriella, it made their hookups feel more balanced, with Sofie expressing desire in her own nuanced way.

“I would love that. And I brought some things I’d like to show you, if that’s okay?” Still slightly timid, Sofie seemed to be coming out of her shell sexually while respecting the power dynamics of Gabriella’s authority.

Beaming, she answered, “Well, that sounds intriguing! You’ve certainly piqued my curiosity. Yes, I’d be delighted to see it. But I need you to finish the editorials first, and I have a meeting at 6:00 pm. So, let’s meet here at 8:00 pm?”

Sofie grinned while her face blushed, a quality Gabriella found more endearing by the day. Gabriella had a thing for younger, bashful women who were sexually reserved but curious by nature. Sofie fit the bill perfectly, and Gabriella loved remembering when Sofie fell happily under her domination.

Given the pressure of the magazine and the heartbreak of the divorce from her cheating ex-wife, the time she could spend alone with Sofie was as healing to her psyche as it was arousing to her body. The pair had developed a passionate Domme/sub arrangement, created by Gabriella and maintained on her terms.

“Yup, okay. I’ll be here. Did you want a hint?” Sofie asked to which Gabriella shook her head.

“No. I want you to surprise me when I return.” As Gabriella gathered a few belongings on her desk to take to the meeting with Ms. Rutherford, she said, “I hope it’s something fun that we can both enjoy.”

Sofie remarked, “No problem. And yes, I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised. Have a good meeting.” Gabriella gave Sofie a quick wink before leaving the office to meet with the chairperson.

She is so sweet and sexy; I can barely contain myself! I know she is young enough to be my daughter, but she seems enthusiastic and consenting, so it’s okay, Gabriella thought to herself as she tucked into an empty elevator. I hope we can keep the arrangement as it is. I love fucking Sofie, but considering my life and career, I don’t have the capacity for more.

Gabriella recalled a few age-gap affairs that started off passionate but fizzled as soon as a young lover wanted to form a relationship. She knew that part of the reason now was because of the betrayal from Madison; Gabriella’s trust had been destroyed, and now she was only on a hunt for erotic escapades, where she remained in charge. I know it’s not the best way to approach intimacy, but this is what works for me now. I can’t ever give my heart to another woman again.

Pushing the intrusive thoughts back in her mind, Gabriella prepared for her discussion with Tempest Rutherford. A rift was forming between the CEO and the chairperson, leaving Gabriella in a potentially dire situation. She hoped to reason with the Board and encourage them to retract the new guidelines that seemed too conservative—even homophobic—for the long-standing, trend-setting publication.

If worse comes to worse, I could always start a new magazine on my own. Would

Sofie come on board with that? I'm sure she would. Although, that is certainly not my primary concern.

Get it together, Gabriella.

Gabriella shook her head, free of her negative internal dialogue. She didn't want to approach the important meeting by projecting negativity.

A few hours later, Gabriella left the board meeting feeling conflicted. She had hoped to return to her office in great spirits, but instead, her mood was murky. But knowing that Sofie was waiting for her was enough to distract her from her concerns. I wonder what my assistant has in store for us! I'd love to work out some frustrations with my little minx!

Upon her arrival, Gabriella noticed Sofie had placed a black plastic bag on her desk. Grinning coyly, Sofie stated, "So, as you know, I've wanted to explore more Domme/sub dynamics with you. I purchased a few items that I thought we could incorporate into play. What do you think?"

Gabriella was impressed by Sofie's curiosity and foresight. "Oh, is that so? Sure, let's see what you brought." Gabriella strolled to Sofie's corner, peeking her head inside the parcel. Sofie sat back, waiting for approval, as she always did. Shyly, she offered, "I hope you like them. But it's no big deal if it's not your thing."

Gabriella extrapolated a collar and metal chain leash from the bag, a purple silicone dildo, and a leather strap-on harness. As she pulled out the toys, her eyes widened. Wow, okay! She is kinkier than I thought. Gabriella was no stranger to sex toys, but she was pleasantly surprised by Sofie's choices.

"Oh my! And what did my submissive have in store for us tonight?" Gabriella leaned over Sofie's desk, positioning a thumb and forefinger around her chin. Gabriella drew

Sofie forward as she brought her mouth closer, teasing Sofie with her breath.

Maintaining eye contact, Sofie replied, "I thought it could be fun to have you lead me around the office by the leash while you wore the strap-on dildo. And then, I, um..." The pretty brunette blushed, looking away shyly.

Fuck, I absolutely will.

Gabriella felt the animal inside of her awakening and growling.

Immediately, Gabriella demanded more clarity. She gently squeezed Sofie's chin, fingers pressing into her cheeks. She was careful not to cause discomfort, but she wanted to exert her authority. "No, don't look away. Tell. Me. What. You. Want." As she focused on Sofie's gaze, she added softly, "It's the only way that you'll be satisfied."

Sofie squeezed her eyes shut, scrunching her face for a second before responding, "So, even though I'm a lesbian and I've never been with a man, I've always wanted to give a strap-on blow job. The idea of being praised for my oral skills sounds so hot, and you know how much I love to serve and please." Blinking innocently at Gabriella, Sofie asked, "Is that something you want to try with me?"

Gabriella slowly grinned. I like the way Sofie thinks! But even though she was game for some kinky power play, Gabriella preferred to temper her enthusiasm. Over the past year, Gabriella found that holding back emotionally seemed to serve her well, especially after being betrayed in her marriage to Madison.

Shrugging slightly, she appeared cool. "Sure, that sounds fun. But I'm certainly not doing anything until you get naked first. I want to watch your body. As much as I adore clothes, I adore your nude form more." Gabriella gave Sofie a suggestive look, to which she stood, understanding Gabriella's cues. Lifting her dress, she revealed a

lace bra and panty set, different from her usual cotton underwear.

“Very nice! Did you wear that just for me?” Gabriella cooed, hoping to assuage her ego.

Sofie nodded. “Hm mm. Do you like it?” Gabriella recognized the designer; the set was an expensive brand with intricate detailing.

“You look exquisite, but I did say naked.” Smiling shyly, Sofie unhooked the bra from behind, exposing her breasts to Gabriella. Then, she slowly hinged from the waist, sliding her panties down.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella smiled to herself. There was nothing more fun lately than watching lovely little Sofie obediently taking her clothes off and showing off her lovely pert little body.

“Perfect. Now, let’s try this collar and leash. Turn around and put your hair up.” Gabriella ordered as Sofie whirled, exposing her back and luscious ass. Gabriella expertly placed the collar around Sofie’s neck. Snapping her fingers, Gabriella commanded, “Face me.”

Sofie turned as Gabriella hooked the metal chain to the O-ring in the front. With the collar and leash in place, she appeared transformed from a timid office worker into a full-blown submissive, ready to serve her boss. Sofie’s look instantly aroused Gabriella, who tugged lightly on the chain.

“I have a better idea. I think I’ll have you undress me so that you can attach the strap-on dildo.” Pulling Sofie closer, she added, “And I’m going to keep my hands on your leash the entire time so you don’t get away.” Gabriella was more so playing the role and wasn’t concerned that Sofie would leave. But she thought a touch of menacing attitude would give her a thrill.

Nodding wordlessly, Sofie began to unbutton Gabriella’s blouse. Gabriella noticed how her assistant’s hands were slightly trembling. “Is everything okay?”

Sofie looked up, laughing softly. “Oh yeah, I’m just excited; nervous but excited. And I’ve never gotten to undress you before, so it’s an honor for me.”

Sofie’s words made Gabriella melt inside, although she didn’t show it. Wow, it’s nice

to feel so appreciated. Sofie is a true gem! Straightening her posture, Gabriella kept her hand on the metal chain as Sofie slipped off her silk blouse, revealing Gabriella's large, firm breasts. With a low gaze, she watched her assistant's expression as Sofie eyed her chest. She looks hungry for my nipples but she's still so timid. I'm sure we can fix that!

"Now, take off my skirt, but leave my panties. It's more comfortable with the strap-on that way." Sofie obeyed, carefully sliding down the side zipper of Gabriella's skirt, placing the item on the desk.

Sofie looked up at Gabriella like a loyal dog and Gabriella enjoyed every second of her devotion. "Okay, I think you're ready for the harness now. It slips on like underwear." But as Sofie handed Gabriella the harness, she shook her head. "No, I want you to slide it on me, yourself." As Gabriella lifted one leg, then another, Sofie slipped the harness over her limbs, raising the gear to Gabriella's waist.

Sofie then slipped the end of the purple dildo through the O-ring, attaching it firmly to the harness. "Oh wow, look at that cock between your legs!" Gabriella watched as Sofie grabbed it, squeezing it in her hand, making Gabriella feel invincible.

Gabriella rolled her shoulders back, placing her hands on her hips. If my beautiful Sofie wants to be bossed around, she had better get into position. Taking a few steps back, she made room for Sofie. "Now. Kneel. I want you to serve me; show me what you can do with your mouth."

Squealing with delight, Sofie brought herself to her knees, closing her eyes. "No," Gabriella ordered. "Look up while you're pleasing me. I want to see your eyes." She wanted Sofie to give all her energy to the scene, not just enact a physical action.

"Yes, ma'am," Sofie replied obediently. The women eyed each other as Gabriella watched Sofie wrap her lips around the purple material, slowly taking the dildo in and

out of her mouth. Gabriella was mesmerized; over the many decades of enjoying lesbian sex, Gabriella had actually never had any woman suck her in that way. She didn't know why she had never done it before. Sofie's eager eye contact created a bond between the recipient and giver, arousing Gabriella to the point of no return. Her pussy began to throb, and she desperately wanted her clit to be stimulated; but not before she decided to fuck Sofie with the dildo.

"Mmmm, you are such a good girl. Oh yeah, I love how you please me with your mouth." Gabriella stroked the top of Sofie's head, tilting her hips towards Sofie's face.

"You are getting meso hot." Sofie looked up at Gabriella, smiling gratefully at the praise while she continued to gag and drool.

Gabriella enjoyed the sweet sound of her gagging as she pleased her.

Mmmmm, why have I never done this before. Her pretty face with my cock in her mouth. Very nice. Very very nice.

Feeling ready to fuck, Gabriella yanked hard on Sofie's leash. "Stand up and turn around. I want you face down, ass up on my desk." Devotedly, Sofie allowed Gabriella to lead her over to her corner of the office, pushing away folders that littered the surface of the desk. Untangling the leash, Gabriella placed her hands on Sofie's hips, spinning her around so that Sofie's backside was facing her.

Oh my god, that ass! I just want to bite it!

"Lay flat with your stomach on the desk; you'll be more comfortable that way." Running her hands down Sofie's bare skin, Gabriella's fingers moved towards Sofie's ass, noticing goosebumps on the flesh. Giving into her primal sexual instinct, Gabriella pulled Sofie's cheeks apart so that she could lick Sofie's anus.

As soon as her tongue touched the sensitive area, Sofie gasped with pleasure. “Oh! Ohwow!”

Gabriella sensed the surprise in her voice.

Oh, sweet innocent little Sofie. I have so much in store for you.

“Do you like it?” Gabriella asked, her voice thick with desire. “Are you okay?” Eating ass was something Gabriella loved to do when she was really into someone. And clearly, she was really into Sofie. Sofie’s soft, round ass looked like a peach she couldn’t resist. But Gabriella also didn’t want to violate any boundaries.

“Mmmm, yes.” Sofie moaned and pushed back slightly with her ass. Gabriella pulled at the back of the collar. “I didn’t hear please. I give the orders around here, not you.”

“Please...” Sofie gasped and Gabriella went straight back to work with her tongue on Sofie’s anus. Long slow strokes. Then she ran her tongue delicately around the rim of Sofie’s ass smiling inside as she heard Sofie’s deep guttural moans.

“Let me show you a whole new world, sweetheart.” Gabriella growled and continued to work Sofie’s asshole with her tongue. Around it, over it, pushing her tongue into it.

Mmmmm. Fuck. Yes.

Gabriella stood up to admire the lovely girl bent over her desk.

“Anyway,” she purred, “I want to fuck you now. Your pussy will do to start off with. You are glistening with juices. Although I will be taking you anally at some point too. Do you want it, Sofie? Do you want me to fuck you?”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella saw the back of Sofie's head nod. "Please! Oh yes, please," Sofie gasped.

She didn't seem at all phased by Gabriella's anal suggestion and Gabriella appreciated that.

"Oh, the games we will play, Little One." Gabriella could hear the hunger dripping off her own voice.

The combination of Sofie's gratitude and pleading was precisely what she wanted to hear. Taking the tip of the dildo in her hand, Gabriella teased the entrance of Sofie's vagina, circling the silicone material around and coating it with her wetness. But before she dived deeply inside of her with the dildo, Gabriella was sure to grab Sofie's hair from behind to reiterate who was in charge.

Sofie cried out as Gabriella pushed deep inside. She had always enjoyed a good strap on fuck, although it had been a while since she had worn one, she hadn't forgotten how.

"Oh god, yes, just like that. Oh my god, that feels so good!" Sofie was calling her delight from her position face down on the desk.

Gabriella found a rhythm with her thrusts, and Sofie's body responded; the women moved in an erotic tandem. Gabriella was fixated on watching the dildo slide in and out of Sofie, with the toy becoming slick and milkier with every plunge. As she quickened her pace, she noticed Sofie hanging on to the corners of the desk to keep her footing. Beads of sweat gathered at the base of Sofie's bare back as her skin's surface flushed red.

“Come for me, little slut,” Gabriella growled. “Your orgasms belong to me!” Gabriella pumped harder and faster and slid her right hand under Sofie’s hip until her fingers slid against Sofie’s clitoris. It was merely seconds later when she felt Sofie tense up as her back arched. “Oh, oh, oh my god, yes, oh my god, please.”

As Sofie’s climax wracked her little body, Gabriella withdrew the dildo, causing a spray of ejaculation to escape from Sofie. Proper squirting. Fucking fantastic!

With a smile on her face, Gabriella stepped back, giving Sofie room to recover. But their playtime wasn’t over yet.

Caressing Sofie’s back as she evened out her breathing, Gabriella commented softly, in a sing-song voice, cooing in Sofie’s ear. “Once you return to earth, it’s your turn to fuck me with your mouth. But I don’t want to wear a dildo; I want your tongue to suck and flick my clit until I squirt in your face.”

Sofie turned to look at Gabriella, her eye makeup smeared from the sex. “Oh, absolutely. I can’t wait to taste you again.” Gabriella narrowed her eyes, giving Sofie a sexy grin. “And you are going to lick up every drop like the thirsty, little slut you are!”

As her strap on and panties hit the floor and Gabriella watched Sofie’s lovely mouth open to pleasure her, Gabriella felt her heart pulsing as loudly as her pussy was.

She felt feelings for Sofie that she didn’t need tempting to join in. She shook her head to shake herself free of them.

She focussed on Sofie’s tongue pushing eagerly inside of her. She gripped the back of Sofie’s hair with her hand and thrust her pussy further into Sofie’s lovely face. She knew her own orgasm wasn’t far away.

“Mmmmm. Good girl.”

16

Sofie slowly untangled herself from Gabriella's arms, propping herself on an elbow. “Can I have a glass of water?” As the women lay together in a blissful, sweaty mess, Sofie sensed a tingling euphoria coursing through her body. A small part of her psyche felt a twinge of confusion, but for now, Sofie was content to enjoy the post-sex glow after her illicit romp with Gabriella.

“Of course,” Gabriella purred. “After the way you came and squirted all over me, I have no doubt that you need to replenish some fluids. I have some mugs in my desk drawer; help yourself to the water cooler at reception.” While Sofie was parched, she didn't want to leave the office; she was elated to spend this time with Gabriella.

Sofie nodded, giggling softly. “Oh my god, that was so hot! I have never come so hard in my life. It's like you know my body inside and out.” She pulled herself to a seated position and looked around the room. Around her was a chaotic mess of sex toys and packets of lube. The women had made great use of the items Sofie surprised them with, and inside, she felt proud to have taken the initiative, elevating their intimacy with an array of silicone-based products.

Rising to her feet, Sofie looked down at Gabriella, who remained lying on the ground, her eyes closed. The CEO wore a serene expression; Sofie had never seen her boss look so relaxed. It was the first time Gabriella had gotten completely nude, as she typically fucked Sofie while wearing clothes.

Sofie admired her long lean limbs and full breasts.

She is so beautiful; she looks like a sexy sculpture in a museum. I wonder what would happen if I kissed her softly on the lips?

The sex that had just occurred between them was more intense than before. Sofie felt a genuine connection with Gabriella; they had devoured one another with incredible passion. Still, Gabriella had yet to kiss Sofie; that was one aspect that remained a wall between them. Her boss was sexually skilled in every way, knowing Sofie's most intimate desires. But when it came to kissing on the mouth, Gabriella held off, instead placing her lips everywhere else.

"Would you like some water?" Sofie asked as she traveled towards Gabriella's desk. The Deluxe office was now closed, but she dared not open the door fully nude. Sofie was aware of cameras throughout the building and would never risk getting caught naked in Ms. Galena's office.

"That would be wonderful; thanks, little one." Stretching her limbs like a cat, her boss rose from the ground. "Actually, I'm a bit hungry. Would you like to grab a bite at the restaurant downstairs?"

While holding a small red mug, Sofie turned to look at Gabriella. Aside from the first time they met at Sunny's Coffee and the odd work meeting outside Gabriella's office, Sofie had never spent time with her boss in public. Part of her was excited about sitting with Gabriella in public but didn't want to push it. Gabriella had put strict boundaries between the two of them, and she didn't want to come off needy for attention.

"It's almost 10:30 pm. Would it even be open right now?" Sofie asked. We've never spent any time together post-sex. I wonder what that would be like. "But now that you mention it, I'm also hungry, so I wouldn't mind joining you, if that's alright?"

Gabriella chuckled, stretching her arms as she rose to stand. "The kitchen is open until midnight. Trust me, I'd know. I've spent many a late night at Le Papillon. And this way, we can drink something more interesting than stale water from the cooler."

Thrilled, Sofie bobbed her head enthusiastically. “Okay, sure. I’d love to. But let me get us some water first. I feel so dehydrated, I could crumble into pieces!” Sofie threw her dress over her head, sans underwear, and tiptoed out the office door into the dark reception area. She filled two mugs with water, returning quickly to the room. Sofie heard a faucet running, noticing that Gabriella had snuck into the en suite bathroom in her office.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Hey, Sofie, I’m just cleaning up,” Sofie heard her boss call out from the half-open bathroom door. “You can use the washroom after me, and then let’s head downstairs.”

After Gabriella came out, Sofie dashed inside to wash her hands and between her legs quickly. Peering at her reflection, she felt a metamorphosis had occurred while she and Gabriella had sex. To Sofie, this time felt different, but she didn’t want her emotions to get the best of her. Just enjoy this time with her, don’t overthink anything. You know the deal. She is older than you and she’s your boss. If you get attached, you’ll only be disappointed. But as much as Sofie’s logic tried to interfere, her feelings towards Gabriella only intensified.

“Okay, I’m ready. I just need to find my panties,” Sofie remarked as she exited the bathroom. Already dressed, Gabriella gave Sofie an amused look as she towered over the assistant. “You don’t need underwear to grab a bite downstairs. What would happen if I chose to finger you under the table?”

Sofie knew that Gabriella was teasing, but the idea made her blush. Shaking her head, Sofie replied, “I’m not sure. That sounds hot, but what if someone were to see us?”

Gabriella came closer to Sofie, peering into her eyes. “Of course, I’m not being serious. But I’m glad you like the thought. You can grab your underwear if you wish; I won’t hold it against you.” Sofie loved the way her boss played with her, teasing her. The way that Gabriella joked made Sofie feel seen, as though they were friends and lovers instead of a boss-and-employee dynamic.

As Sofie bent over to grab the bunched panties from the ground, she heard Gabriella

add, “By the way, we’ll need to act professionally at the restaurant, okay? It is way too close to the office to risk us being obvious. I joked about fingering you- and indeed there are plenty of public places I would happily finger you in, but in this particular restaurant, we can’t behave like we just fucked. Understood?”

Sofie nodded. “Yes, of course! I would never want to cause any drama, especially on your turf.” The women gathered their belongings and quietly snuck out of Gabriella’s office. Her boss led them down the elevator to the lobby. To the right, Sofie noticed a pink neon sign that read *Le Papillon*.

She followed Gabriella into the darkly lit bistro as the host led them to a corner table towards the back. Taking a seat, Sofie faced Gabriella, her hands folded in front of her. Looking around, she recognized a few models who had shot for the magazine enjoying cocktails at the bar. Older, seemingly wealthy couples were scattered throughout the circumference of the restaurant.

“Wow, I didn’t expect it to be so busy this late at night,” she commented as she picked up a menu left on their table by the hostess. Gabriella agreed, “Yes, this is my after-work haunt. I even have my own table, so to speak. This is when the city comes alive, little Sofie.”

Sofie’s eyes widened. Gabriella knew so much. About everything. “Really? Wow, that’s wild! I’ve never been to a restaurant so late at night.”

Gabriella looked intently at Sofie. “So, tell me a little about yourself, like the more personal stuff. Where did you grow up? And why did you choose a career in fashion?”

Taking a deep breath, Sofie prepared herself. She had briefly mentioned this before, but she had the sense her boss was paying closer attention this time. She didn’t like to talk about her childhood, although she was proud of the person she became through

her struggles. Most of all, she didn't want Gabriella to judge her. "Um, well, I grew up in Bushwick. I was an only child; my mom always told me I had a creative streak. I used to love to draw and create sketches of outfits." Looking away, she casually added, "I think that's why I wanted to be in fashion."

But Sofie noticed a slight frown from Gabriella. "Really? Huh. That seems like a rather basic reason. Fashion is a highly competitive, cutthroat industry. Are you sure that's the whole story?" Her boss leaned forward. "Sofie, you don't have to share anything with me if you choose. But I'm trying to understand you, and I'd like to get to know you better."

Sofie gulped; she knew that Gabriella could see right through her. Sofie was thrilled to be in her boss's presence, and if she was being honest with herself, Sofie didn't want the night to end. What's the harm? Maybe this conversation will bring us closer.

"Okay, you're right. I-I grew up very poor. Both of my parents struggled with their issues. It was good that I was an only child because they didn't have the resources for multiple kids. They could barely care for me, although I know they tried their best."

Sofie squared her shoulders, daring to look into Gabriella's eyes. "I wanted to be in fashion because my parents couldn't afford to buy me new clothes. Everything I wore was second-hand from a relative or a friend. I remember, as a kid, wearing shoes that didn't fit properly and the smell of recycled fabric on my skin. When I would sketch my designs, I could create anything I wanted—sexy outfits, gowns, accessories; through my art, I could design the perfect look. I was living in a fantasy."

Her boss interrupted. "Goodness! I wasn't aware of that. That's fascinating, Sofie. What a passion it has given you." Gabriella's blue eyes were intense in their gaze and Sofie felt herself yet again dizzy with desire.

In being acknowledged by Gabriella, her confidence rose. "So, when I started to think

that I could make my art into a job, I threw myself into fashion programs and spent my free time drawing, creating, sewing, and rummaging through various fabrics. I taught myself as much as I could. My grades and college application earned me a full scholarship to the New York Fashion Institute, which was amazing because I am the first person in my family to attend college.”

Sofie watched the enigmatic and beautiful Gabriella Galena lean back in her chair, crossing her arms. Shaking her head, Sofie’s boss commented, “That is truly remarkable, Sofie. You should be so proud of yourself for your resilience and commitment to success. Those are admirable qualities that I respect in a person.”

Inwardly, Sofie squealed with delight. She wanted to express how much Gabriella’s words affected her, but she didn’t have the language; Sofie was careful not to gush or become overly emotional in her boss’s presence. “Thank you, I appreciate that.”

“So, I’m curious about something” Gabriella surveyed the room before asking, “Why do you think you’re drawn to being a submissive? What about that turns you on?”

“Oh geez, I’m not entirely sure! I’ve never before experienced any of the types of things we’ve done together. But, well, with you, it just feels right in a way that it never has before.” Sofie answered wide-eyed. Gabriella was correct that Sofie tended towards more docile behaviors. “Ah, maybe it’s because I love to hear that I’m doing a good job and worthy. Growing up, the only cheerleader I had was myself. My parents didn’t have the capacity. So, whenever I’m subjected to praise, it does something to me.”

Feeling more brave in her boss’s presence, she added, “I’ve also recently realized that I am totally attracted to older dominant women. Powerful women. Well, one in particular.”

To Sofie’s surprise, Ms. Galena cracked a genuine smile. Unlike her sultry or

intimidating expressions, her face appeared soft and sincere. Just when I thought it was impossible to believe she could be any more beautiful! “Well, thank you, Sofie. I suppose I could say the same thing about submissive and beautiful younger women. I think their generosity is sexy and authentic. And I’ll add that you are perfect in that role.”

Feeling herself blush, Sofie decided to turn the tables. “So, I also want to know you better, if that’s okay?” Leaning on her elbows, she moved forward, asking in a calm voice. “Why are you so drawn to power and control? What made you into a dominant person?”

Gabriella laughed out loud, causing Sofie to frown.

“My dear, I have always been an alpha woman; it’s not something you become; it’s just who you are. But with power comes responsibility, and I try to manage my influence not to overpower a situation. But since we’re getting personal, I’ll share something with you.” Sofie settled in her seat, giving Ms. Galena her full attention.

“You wouldn’t know this because you were hired upon my return, but I took a leave of absence just before you met me. I was once married for 15 years. My now ex-wife, Madison, was the lead photographer for the Arts Department at Deluxe Redux Magazine. In fact, we actually met at the magazine. I was starting as Junior Editor, and Maddy had been there for about a year,” Gabriella explained to Sofie.

She continued, with Sofie glued to her every word, “So, one night, I caught Maddy in bed with my best friend’s sister, Lauren Cunningham. Blair, my friend, is actually a high-powered financial advisor. Luckily, we are still friends to this day; I don’t hold Blair accountable for Lauren’s actions. But naturally, it was completely devastating, and I needed to take some time away from the magazine.”

“Oh my god!” Sofie gasped. “I’m so sorry to hear that! I couldn’t imagine being in

that position.” While Sofie felt horrible for her boss, Gabriella’s harsh attitude began to make sense to Sofie. It was clear that she had been through a heartbreaking situation.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Thank you for saying that, but it’s okay,” Ms Galena quickly brushed off her story. “But now, I’m only interested in succeeding at the magazine, maintaining my wealth, and ensuring creative control within Deluxe. And that’s a whole other issue because I’m currently in a battle with Ms. Rutherford over the current magazine guidelines.”

That’s right! So, that’s what’s happening!Sofie thought back to the conversation she walked into in the art department. However, she refrained from digging too deep so as not to appear nosy. But before Sofie could ask another question about her cheating ex-wife, a server suddenly appeared at their table.

“Good evening, ladies! Did you want to hear about tonight’s specials?” Ms. Galena looked at Sofie and nodded. “Oh, definitely. We’ve got quite the appetite tonight!”

17

Gabriella blinked as she stirred half-awake in bed. It was an early Sunday morning, and she was lucky enough to have a free day to herself, a rarity since she had returned to Deluxe Redux Magazine. Stretching her limbs underneath the Egyptian cotton sheets, Gabriella was happy to have slept in, attributing her weekend freedom to Sofie’s efforts as her assistant.

As her consciousness became clearer, Gabriella reflected on her time with Sofie. Since being hired, Sofie had shown tenacity, patience, and efficiency. As an employee of the magazine, Sofie was a perfect fit.

It wasn’t ideal that Gabriella was fucking her employee, but she was certainly enjoying herself there.

As a secret lover, Sofie had blown Gabriella's mind with her openness and curiosity, always willing to please and serve. Her submissive energy was a perfect compliment to Gabriella's authoritative nature. Our sexual dynamic is absolute fire. I haven't had this much fun in a while! As her thoughts resurrected the sexy memories of her and Sofie in her office, Gabriella felt a sense of joy that instantly alarmed her.

Wait, no! I can't have actual feelings for Sofie. No, no! She is my assistant, and she's young enough to be my daughter. She is just a pretty little fun plaything.

Suddenly, Gabriella felt her throat constrict with panic. Since her divorce, Gabriella had spent time entertaining dalliances with younger women, but these trysts were always short-lived. Gabriella loved the youthful and liberated energy of her sexual, age-gap affairs, but she never considered a formal relationship with any of her temporary lovers.

Gabriella felt that she had become too bitter and suspicious to give her heart authentically. Participating in frivolous yet erotic encounters, she could enjoy a mutually satisfying sex life without having to be vulnerable. Gabriella was aware of the transactional nature of her flings but did not believe she had the emotional capacity to be generous with her heart.

Sitting up in bed, Gabriella looked around her master bedroom. Since Maddy had left their home, she never acclimated to the current silence and emptiness of the penthouse. Rubbing her temples, she said aloud, "God, I hate having free time. What am I going to do with myself?" It was rare for Gabriella to be temporarily free of responsibilities, and even after a few months of being back at the magazine, she could never get used to being alone.

Rising from her king-size bed, she traveled to the kitchen to make a pot of coffee. Her housekeeper always took Sundays off, so Gabriella was left to her own devices. The morning sun shone through her large bay windows. Hmmm, it looks like it's going to

be a beautiful day! Maybe I'll take a dip in the pool and catch some sun. In the divorce, Gabriella was fortunate enough to keep the penthouse, which included a private rooftop pool and hot tub.

When Madison and Gabriella had been married, the two would spend sunny days suntanning naked as the height and seclusion afforded them privacy. Over the past year, the divorcee had avoided that section of her home, leaving the pool to be cleaned by hired help. But lately, as the oppressive summer took over Manhattan, Gabriella wanted to rediscover the rooftop pool, to claim it as hers instead of a space she shared with Madison.

Gabriella struggled with herself as she poured a cup of pitch-black brew. Gabby, you've worked too hard and have been through too much to abandon one of your favorite aspects of this suite! You have this day to yourself—why not enjoy it?

It then occurred to Gabriella that if she had the day off, so did her assistant. Delicious, deviant thoughts began to form, causing an internal conflict. She and Sofie had never taken their affair outside the office except for enjoying a late, platonic dinner at Le Papillon. I wonder what she's up to today. Wait, no. Sofie is young; she probably had all kinds of cool plans with her friends.

Gabriella hemmed and hawed, weighing her options. Without wanting to admit it, she felt lost, by herself, in the large penthouse. Her mind felt like it was grasping for distractions. After mulling over her thoughts, she decided to call Sofie. "What the hell, why not? If she's not free, then fine," Gabriella muttered to herself. "But I might as well try. I've got nothing to lose."

"Hello?" Sofie answered the call brightly after the second ring.

"Good morning, how are you? I hope you don't mind me calling on a Sunday." Gabriella wanted to sound professional, though she felt tentative.

Sofie's voice seemed animated. "Oh gosh, no. Don't worry! What's up? Did you need anything from me today?"

Oh, it sounds like she is free! Gabriella pursed her lips, not wanting to sound too excited. But she also wanted to make her intentions known. Gabriella wanted sex, and she didn't want to lure Sofie over under false pretenses. Besides, it's important that she wants to spend time with me and that my request is transparent.

"Well," Gabriella began, her voice smooth as honey. "As you know, I have the day off, and I thought it might be fun for you and me to spend some alone time together outside the office. What do you think?"

There was a brief pause before Sofie responded excitedly, "Um, yes! I'd love to!"

Gabriella heard a small giggle before her assistant asked, "Ah, should I bring anything? Is there anything you want me to wear?"

Astonished, Gabriella's eyes widened. Wow, she's good—I didn't even need to ask! I almost can't believe that Sofie has never explored D/s dynamics before. She is a natural! Keeping her tone even, Gabriella replied, "That's a great question. Actually, I'd like you to bring the harness and dildo from the other night. But don't worry about dressing up too formal. We'll be spending most of the time at my penthouse suite." Gabriella hoped she sounded suggestive without being crass.

Sofie responded mirthfully. "No problem. Thanks so much for asking me. When should I come by? Where do you live?"

Checking the time, Gabriella replied, "Give me about an hour, and I will call a car to pick you up. Does that give you enough time?"

"Oh, definitely! I just got home from the gym and have been awake for a few hours.

But I should give you my address,” Sofie answered, and provided Gabriella the details. Moments later, they ended the call with Gabriella informing her car service of a pickup for 11 a.m. to Sofie’s home address.

A little later, Gabriella was notified by her driver that Sofie had arrived. Texting her assistant the code for her private elevator, she waited at the entrance for Sofie to arrive. Hearingading, Gabriella knew the elevator was about to deliver Sofie to her threshold.

Sofie knocked, and Gabriella opened the door. She was excited to see Sofie, out of her office, within the confines of her gorgeous home.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“Good morning,” Gabriella gave Sofie the once-over. “Wow, you look so fresh and sporty. I have to say that I love this look on you.” Usually, Sofie would be dressed in fitted, designer office wear. But today, her beautiful assistant wore her hair in a jaunty ponytail paired with a comfy, one-piece romper. Gabriella also noticed the lack of makeup, which made Sofie appear more youthful and innocent than her twenty-eight years.

Sofie grinned, shrugging as she looked down at her outfit. “Thanks, yeah, this is me on a Sunday! Don’t get me wrong, I love dressing up for you, but I also love days where I can throw my hair in a ponytail and skip the makeup.” Looking up at Gabriella, Sofie asked, “Are you sure I look okay?”

Gabriella resisted the urge to come off too sweet, but in reality, she wanted to scoop Sofie up in her arms and kiss her deeply; to tell her that she looked perfect. Instead, she licked her lips and said in a low, sly voice, “You look delicious, but I always prefer you without clothes! Please, come in.”

Gabriella waved Sofie inside. Noticing a backpack on her shoulders, Gabriella asked, “Did you bring what I asked you?” Sofie nodded, sliding the bag off her shoulders. “Yup, it’s in here.”

“Good. Because today, I want to show you something. But first, let me give you a tour.” Gabriella led Sofie throughout the massive penthouse. She guided Sofie through the entire area, with the exception of her bedroom, which was Gabriella’s private domain. She had created a rule for herself where she refused to bring any sexual flings into that space, considering it too intimate.

As the women approached a small staircase, the CEO swung open the patio door. “And here is the rooftop. The pool is heated, and over there is the hot tub.” Gabriella pointed in the direction of the amenities. She watched as Sofie surveyed her surroundings, obviously impressed.

“Do you have the pool and hot tub all to yourself?” Sofie asked incredulously. Gabriella nodded, chuckling at her assistant’s amazement. “Of course, my dear! I own this place; everything is mine. Well, I shared this space with Madison at one point, but as you know, not anymore!”

Gently grabbing Sofie’s hand, Gabriella led her to a canopy cabana bed draped in soft fabric. She sometimes liked to nap outside, and the curtains provided privacy, but the bed was also great for sex. “Here, why don’t we get comfortable? Show me the toys you brought.”

Sofie smiled flirtatiously at Gabriella, becoming noticeably more comfortable. “I brought exactly what you requested: the strap-on harness and the dildo. They are the same ones that we used a week ago.”

As Sofie emptied the contents of her knapsack, Gabriella brought her body closer, bringing Sofie’s legs around her waist. Part of her wanted to kiss Sofie on the lips, which Gabriella had avoided—the thought of being intimate versus sexual terrified her. I can tell that Sofie wants to kiss me, too, but I should stick to my comfort zone.

“Now, I want you to fuck me with the strap-on. We haven’t tried that yet, and I feel it’s your turn to learn how to fuck me properly with the dildo,” Gabriella ordered, her tone playful yet firm. She knew what she wanted from Sofie, and Gabriella wanted to be direct, given her shyness.

Looking excited, Sofie clapped her hands together. “Okay, that sounds fun! But what if someone sees us?” Sofie looked around the circumference of the rooftop.

Gabriella chuckled as she slowly began to roll down Sofie's romper, planting kisses along her clavicle and inching her mouth towards Sofie's lovely little nipples. "Oh, you don't have to worry about that! We've got plenty of privacy; no one will see us." She heard Sofie sigh softly as she ran her hands over her skin, peeling the romper off entirely.

"Now, put this on," Gabriella ordered as she lay back on the chaise lounge, loosening her bathrobe. Knowing that Sofie was coming over, Gabriella didn't bother getting dressed in clothing. She was very ready to fuck. She could feel her own wetness growing as she watched Sofie's lovely body. Stretching her own body, she watched Sofie slide the harness over her hips, attaching the purple dildo so it rested against her pubic bone.

Once Sofie appeared ready, Gabriella brought her closer, positioning Sofie between her legs. "Have you ever used a strap-on before?"

Sofie smiled shyly, averting her eyes. "Well, yes, a few times. But I've always been more of a bottom. My past girlfriends were always tops, so most of the time, they would wear it." The assistant looked eagerly at Gabriella. "But I've always wanted to try more, you know, to be good at it."

"Well, now's your chance. I can guide you. But you need to warm me up first," Gabriella purred.

"Oh, course, I was just about to do that," Sofie grinned, her confidence beginning to increase. Sofie brought her mouth to Gabriella's vulva as she started to gently lick the soft folds of skin that surrounded Gabriella's clit. Feeling Sofie's tongue part her lips, she moaned as Sofie began to dab and suck at her clitoris. "Mmmm, yeah. That's fucking beautiful, little one. Yes, just like that."

Sofie briefly looked up all wide eyed and beautiful, Gabriella's wetness around her

mouth; Gabriella could tell that Sofie was becoming excited from her praise. Eagerly, she continued to lick and suck obediently at Gabriella's pussy and then slowly inserted fingers inside of her.

"Fuck, yes. Just like that, sweetheart."

Sofie had not penetrated her before, and it thrilled Gabriella to have this gorgeous creature pleasing her sexually at her command.

I need to taste her, too!

"Come here for a second. I want to eat your pussy." She lay her back on the furniture as Sofie raised herself to rest her lower body on Gabriella's face. She breathed in Sofie's musky scent, lapping up the sweet juices. As she continued to trace her tongue in swirls around Sofie's clit, Sofie arched her back so that she could finger Gabriella at the same time.

By this point, Gabriella wanted to be filled up; her arousal was almost unbearable.

Fuck, I need to come so bad!

"Sofie, I want your cock. Put it inside of me, right now," her voice thick with desire. Sofie moved back, positioning the dildo between Gabriella's legs. As she grabbed Sofie's hips, Sofie slowly guided the purple silicone material inside Gabriella, causing her to gasp with pleasure. "Oh, yeah! Mmmm, yes, slide inside of me. You feel so good!"

With Gabriella's guidance, Sofie began to thrust deeper as she found the proper pace.

"How's that?" Sofie asked breathlessly as her hips rocked against Gabriella's pubic bone.

“So good, yes, Sofie, don’t stop. That’s so perfect!” Gabriella moaned, thrusting her lower body to meet Sofie. Bucking together, Gabriella felt an orgasm building inside of her body. Reaching down, she fondled her clit as Sofie continued to fuck her.

“Oh god, yes, harder, please! I’m going to come, please don’t stop!” Sofie increased her pace, pounding hard at Gabriella’s command. Their intense movements caused the furniture to creak as the outdoor lounge shook underneath their bodies. Gabriella noticed Sofie becoming flush; a dewy sweat formed on her body. Finally, Gabriella bellowed as a fierce climax exploded from within. “Oh, oh, Sofie, oh my god, yes!”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Panting, Gabriella threw her body back on the furniture as a post-orgasm glow left her tingling with ecstasy. She felt dizzy with desire and a longing to hold Sofie close. “Mmm, come here. I want to hold you.” She pulled Sofie against her as the women melted into each other’s arms.

While holding Sofie, Gabriella briefly dozed under the hot afternoon sun. She awoke to Sofie gently whispering, “Hey, are you okay? Did you want me to leave you?”

Blinking, Gabriella looked around lazily, “Oh! Goodness, I didn’t realize I fell asleep for a minute.” Untangling herself from Sofie’s limbs, she brought herself to sitting. “No, you’re fine. Sorry about that. I guess you wore me out!”

Sofie giggled, appearing pleased. “Don’t worry; I napped for a few minutes as well. I was up early for the gym, so I guess I needed some rest. Are you sure you still want company? I can go if you are tired.”

Gabriella gave Sofie a playful look. “I may be old enough to be your mother, but I still have enough energy to enjoy the day. It’s beautiful outside; do you want to take a swim? The pool is heated, so I promise it won’t shock your system.”

Shrugging, Sofie replied, “Sure! I don’t have any other plans today. Well, actually, that’s not exactly true. I was thinking about working on some fashion designs, just my own personal stuff, for fun.” Leaning into Gabriella, she placed her hand on Gabriella’s knee to emphasize, “But I’m happy to hang out with you. I want to.”

“Hmmm, that’s interesting! I didn’t realize you were still designing.” Gabriella stood up, stretching as she looked to the sky. “Honestly, I think it’s great that you are doing

your own thing on the side. It's important to maintain your vision and creativity."

Sofie rose from the lounge, taking a few steps towards the pool. Gabriella watched as Sofie dipped a toe. Her body looked beautiful in the sunlight. Her skin was luminous. She turned over her shoulder, remarking, "I learned that from you. Your work is so inspiring, and you've been my mentor. I really look up to you, Gabriella."

"Please, while we're here, call me Gabby. We aren't in the office right now." Gabriella's tone was light rather than scolding, and she was grateful for Sofie's company. As she sauntered over to join Sofie by the edge of the pool, a thought suddenly occurred to her. "Listen, let me ask you something. And please, be honest."

Sofie bobbed her head. "Yes, of course. What's up?"

Keeping her eyes on the water, Gabriella asked, "What do you really think of the magazine's new guidelines? I'm talking about the new points put in place by our chairperson, Ms. Rutherford. Do you think that will help the magazine succeed or not?"

Gabriella shifted her glance to study Sofie's face. Sofie appeared conflicted, pausing before answering, "Um, well, I don't understand the reasoning for the changes. Deluxe Redux had always been such a cutting-edge magazine, pushing societal boundaries that paved the way for creative genius. But these new guidelines seem so conservative, almost backward. Do you know if these are permanent? Will there be more restrictions to come?"

Gabriella sighed and shook her head, her gaze returning ahead. "I'm not sure. I didn't even see them coming. It all happened while I was on my leave of absence." Turning to look at Sofie, the CEO commented. "You know, I've wondered what it would be like to start my own magazine from scratch. No investments; it would be funded independently by me. I've got the money, and now that I'm on my own, with no wife,

no kids, and no dependents, I think it could be a viable venture for me.”

Sofie put her hand on Gabriella’s shoulder. “What? Are you serious? Are you planning on leaving Deluxe?”

“No. I mean, not now. It’s just something I’ve been toying with in my mind.” Realizing that her statement could alarm Sofie, as an employee of the company, she reassured her assistant. “Don’t worry. If I ever was to leave, you’d have ample notice. And my departure wouldn’t mean the termination of your job. You would report to the next director.”

Gabriella watched as Sofie furrowed her brow. “But I don’t want to work for someone else. I want to work for you.” Something in Sofie’s voice tugged at Gabriella in a way she couldn’t fully process. Without thinking, Gabriella blurted out, “You could always join me if you want!”

A gasp of surprised laughter emitted from Sofie. “What? Are you serious? I mean, I don’t want to quit the magazine. But, of course. I would follow you anywhere. You are incredible.”

Until the words had left her mouth, Gabriella wasn’t even sure she was serious. But the thought of sinking her teeth into a new project, with the help of her creative and devoted assistant, was highly appealing.

Feeling slightly overwhelmed by her excitement, she decided to scale back the conversation. “Listen, I have no doubt that we would make an excellent team. For now, there is a lot for you to do at Deluxe, and I still need to run this company. It’s merely a thought I had, but I’m glad you would be on board. But let’s keep this chat between us, okay?”

Nodding, Sofie agreed. “Of course. Now, didn’t you mention something about

swimming? The sun is hot today! Do you have a suit I could borrow?"

Turning to face Sofie with a wicked grin, Gabriella replied, "Oh, you don't need a suit to swim in my pool, darling. In fact, bathing suits are banned!"

Bathing suits are certainly banned for women who look like you, that's for sure little Sofie.

18

By the time Sofie returned home, the sky had turned dark. Holding a takeout food container, she unlocked the apartment door, quietly entering their shared space. Checking her iPhone, Sofie was shocked that it was already 11:30 p.m. Knowing she and her roommates needed to get up early Monday morning, Sofie tiptoed into the kitchen to put her food in the refrigerator.

"Hey! You're home late. What did you do all day?" Startled by Rory's voice, Sofie jumped from where she stood, still holding the refrigerator door open.

Clutching her chest, Sofie exclaimed, "Oh my god, you scared me! Sorry, I hope I didn't wake you when I came in."

Rory chuckled, "No, I was still awake, although Ash is sleeping. Did you have dinner somewhere? I see you've got some leftovers."

Blushing slightly, Sofie shook her head, looking away. "Um, yeah, I was, um, out for a while, and we decided to grab a bite. I couldn't finish all of it, though. Did you want the rest of my pasta?" She hoped to skip over her afternoon's details, but her roommate was curious.

"I'm fine, thanks. But wait, I want to hear about your day. I last saw you at 6:30 a.m.

this morning, before you left for the gym.” Sofie watched Rory grab a seat at the kitchen table, knowing she was in for a friendly interrogation. Sofiewantedto talk to Rory about her afternoon with Gabriella, but she felt as though her head was spinning; Sofie had yet to sort out her feelings about the day. Still, it felt good to know that Rory was there for support, so Sofie joined her at the table.

With a sigh, Sofie began, somewhat sheepishly. “So, I ended up spending the day with Ms. Galena. It wassoamazing!” Grabbing Rory’s arm, she leaned in with a lowered voice. “We had the most incredible sex on the rooftop patio of herpenthouseand then enjoyed the afternoon. We swam in the pool, and later, we stopped for a bite to eat.” Shaking her head in disbelief, Sofie added, “I had the best day; I didn’t want it to end.”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

She watched Rory's expression; Sofie could tell that her roommate wanted to interject, albeit mindfully. "Can I ask you something?" Sofie nodded, knowing what was coming next. "Sure."

"Do you think you might be catching feelings for this woman? You seem positively elated whenever you talk about her." Rory paused to add, "I'm just curious if you think this could turn into something more serious. Or is it just a fling?"

Sofie considered the question. "You know, I never expected to be so drawn to her. At first, it was some fun and kinky sex; Gabriella taught me some interesting things! But today," the assistant shook her head, "I don't know, today was different. I didn't feel this imbalance between our identities, you know? She spoke to me like an equal, like a friend, rather than a boss."

"Sofie, you are an equal. Just because you are younger and only just starting your career doesn't mean that you don't possess the potential to be as successful," Rory noted. "Do you know how she feels about you? Did you discuss it?"

Shaking her head, Sofie replied, "No, we didn't. I didn't have the guts. And besides, I'm not even sure I know how I feel. I know that I love being around her, I love talking to her, and, of course, the sex is absolute fire. But she's my boss. How could I even start a conversation like that?"

Thoughtfully, Rory commented, "True; that does complicate things. But considering all of the personal and intimate time you've spent together, I don't think it would seem out of line, you know?"

“Mmmm, maybe you’re right.” Sofie furrowed her brow, chewing on her bottom lip. Her stomach felt like it was in knots. The truth bubbled like bile from within, and if Sofie was being honest with herself, she knew their connection was beyond employer and employee. Rubbing her temples, Sofie confessed, “Rory, I think I love her. Ah! It’s so scary even to say those words out loud!”

Her roommate rose from her seat to put an arm around Sofie. “It’s okay! Obviously, spending that much time with someone can deepen the connection, particularly if you are hooking up.” Reassuring Sofie, Rory looked into her eyes. “And who knows? Maybe she feels the same about you.”

“Do you think I should tell her how I feel? Honestly, every day gets harder between her and me because my heart is so drawn in. But there is definitely something between us; I can feel it,” Sofie emphasized.

Shrugging, Rory answered. “Sure, why not? I think it’s the only way that you’ll know for sure. I guess the only question is whether or not you think it will affect your job.”

Sofie shook her head. “I don’t think so. Ms. Galena has always remained professional when it comes to that sector of our relationship. In fact, she is amazing at compartmentalizing our intimacy from our work.”

“Well, then, maybe you already have your answer. I think you should do it. Why waste any more time?” Rory remarked. “At least this way, you’ll have an answer from her, and I think it’s possible that she feels the same way. And if she doesn’t, you can move on, right?”

Sofie weighed her options. She knew that Rory was right; Sofie didn’t want to waste any more time or remain confused by her feelings. But she was slightly intimidated; Gabriella Galena was a force of nature, and Sofie didn’t want to risk losing her if her boss didn’t feel the same way. “Yeah, I agree. It’s been hard on me over the past few

weeks. I think by telling her, I'll at least get some clarity."

"That's the spirit! I fully support you. When do you think you'll talk to her?" Rory asked as she stepped away from the table.

Mashing her lips together, Sofie shook her head. "I'm not sure. I know she'll be away from the office tomorrow, so maybe the day after?" Her roommate approached Sofie, offering a hug. "Don't worry, girl. You've got this. But I need to get to bed now. Goodnight."

Embracing Rory, Sofie nodded, feeling more confident after her talk with Rory. "Yeah, you're right. I do, and it will be fine, no matter what. I really need to know how she feels."

As soon as the words came out of her mouth, Sofie felt assured in her decision. And who knows? Maybe she feels that exact same way about me. There's only one way to find out!

19

"Oh my god, that was incredible!" Gabriella threw her head back on the pillow, patting Sofie's hair as her assistant lay between her legs. At Gabriella's request, the women had gotten together for another late-night tryst after work. But instead of their usual location of fooling around in the office, she had insisted that they return to Gabriella's penthouse.

Sofie looked up to gaze at Gabriella with an accomplished grin. Wiping a smear of wet from the corner of her mouth, Sofie remarked, "Wow, yeah, I could feel the orgasm erupt from your body. My pussy is still tingling by how good you fucked me, too."

“Come here; I want to feel you against me,” Gabriella urged, desiring to feel Sofie’s warm skin upon her own. Beside her head lay the discarded dildo that she had used on Sofie an hour before; she pushed it out of the way as Sofie crawled on top of her. As she wrapped her arms around Sofie, Gabriella felt a sense of peace.

She and Sofie had fallen into a comfortable sexual groove that felt utterly satisfying; her worries and anxiety melted away whenever they could enjoy each other physically.

As Gabriella’s breathing returned to normal, she heard Sofie whisper something inaudible. “Sorry? What was that?”

Clearing her throat, Sofie repeated herself. “I asked if I could kiss you. Would that be okay?”

Gabriella chuckled nervously. “Um, I-I don’t know. I’m not really much of a kisser, to be honest. That is more of a personal act with me.” She felt at a loss for words, but Gabriella didn’t want to hurt Sofie’s feelings. As she continued to stroke Sofie’s hair, she asked, “Is that okay? Sorry, it’s nothing personal.”

She felt Sofie’s head nod, although the assistant didn’t verbally reply. Suddenly, Gabriella felt a twinge of discomfort; the energy seemed to shift within the confines of her massive bedroom suite. Unsure of how Sofie felt, Gabriella persisted, “Hey, are you okay? You’re so quiet right now.”

Gabriella felt Sofie take a deep inhale as she moved out of her embrace. Sofie raised herself on her elbows to look at Gabriella.

“Um, yeah, I’m okay. But, I, um, I wanted to talk to you about something.” Sofie was careful with her words, which worried Gabriella. Wow, she sounds so serious! What’s going on? But she knew it was important to be patient with her.

“Sure, tell me what’s on your mind,” she said, coaxing Sofie to open up. Gabriella was still in the post-glow of her explosive climax and felt light and relaxed.

Appearing slightly hesitant, Sofie gazed at her with warm, brown eyes. “Okay, sorry, I’m just a bit nervous.” Taking another breath, she began again.

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“You know, I’ve loved our times together so much. We have incredible sexual chemistry, and I’ve learned so much from you.” Pausing, Sofie bit her lip, maintaining her gaze. “I think you are an exceptional woman and love spending time with you. I know you’re recently divorced and are busy running a company. But I have to tell you that I’m starting to fall for you. I don’t want these moments to end, but I was curious if you’d ever consider dating me for real. Like outside of these secret sexual flings. Because if I were given the chance, I’d love to date you. I really like you, Gabriella.”

Gabriella felt her heart drop to her stomach; this was not what she expected Sofie to say. She felt totally unprepared. At a loss for words, Gabriella stared, her mouth slightly agape. In the moment of silence, Sofie prompted her with a skittish laugh. “Well, what do you think? Please, say something.”

Gulping hard, Gabriella’s heart raced; she felt like she had been pinned to a wall. Blinking, she tried to formulate a reply. “Um, wow, okay. I—um—listen, Sofie. I also love our time together. You are a beautiful woman and an amazing lover. Our sexual energies complement each other, and you are so sweet; we do have great chemistry. But, I, um...” Gabriella trailed off, not sure how to craft her words.

She was totally unprepared for this.

“What? Why do you say but?” Sofie urged, looking confused. “We had an amazing afternoon last week, remember? We checked out the Farmer’s Market in Chelsea, and we went out for dinner. How is that not dating? We didn’t just fuck; we spent the entire day together.”

Gabriella could tell that Sofie was becoming upset; she hated to see Sofie worked up. But her revelation was too much for her to process. Trying her best to explain, Gabriella replied, “Yes, I know we did, and it was a beautiful day. I like spending time with you. But Sofie, you’re over twenty years younger than me. I could be your mother!”

Feeling like she was drowning, Gabriella sat up in bed. Grabbing Sofie’s hand, she continued, mindful of her tone, “Look, I don’t have the emotional capacity for a serious relationship right now. And if I did, I couldn’t be in a relationship with someone so young; we don’t have anything in common outside of fashion and sex. I’d be happy to continue this affair as it is, and I love fucking you. But, I’m sorry, Sofie, that’s all I can give you.”

Gabriella noticed tears forming in Sofie’s eyes. Fuck! I don’t want to see her upset; I don’t want to hurt her. But it is what it is; I can’t have a relationship with my 20 something assistant. That would be crazy! Besides, my heart is broken; I have nothing to give Sofie but sex.

Sofie blinked, shaking her head slightly. “Alright, okay, I understand. I feel silly for bringing it up; of course, we are too far apart in age. Yup, all of that makes sense.” The assistant looked away, obviously embarrassed. A deafening silence filled the room as Sofie loosened her embrace. Gabriella thought quickly. Maybe I can turn this situation around with my powers of seduction. I can’t change our reality, but I can distract Sofie from her bad feelings.

“Come here, look at me,” Gabriella coaxed, “Make no mistake, Sofie. I really like you. And if you are willing, I’d love to continue what we have. It would be a shame to lose our sexual connection.” Gabriella caressed Sofie’s cheek, bringing her chin closer. “Let’s compromise, okay?” Planting her lips softly on Sofie’s, she kissed her deeply, holding her mouth against Sofie’s soft lips.

Sofie's eyes shuttered open; Gabriella could tell she was surprised by the kiss on the mouth. But she maintained her gaze, comforting the young woman by lightly stroking her arms. She felt Sofie soften as she leaned in to kiss Gabriella again.

"See? We can share these exquisite moments together without being so structured or official. I know how to please you, Sofie; will you let me?" Gabriella asked as Sofie nodded, her expression turning from unsettled to neutral. "Yeah, I'd like that. I love the way you make me feel."

"Lay down on your back and spread your legs for me." As Sofie lowered herself on the mattress, Gabriella stretched her naked body on top of the assistant, planting kisses down her neck and moving towards her tiny, raspberry-colored nipples. As the CEO's mouth traveled lower towards Sofie's navel, she had convinced herself that this was all she needed from Sofie, that sex without commitment was the only situation that made sense for her life.

20

"Girl, I am sorry. I didn't see that coming from what you've told me." Sofie was being consoled by Rory, with her and Ash joining Sofie on the living room couch. "If I did, I never would have encouraged you to say anything."

"Wow, what a bitch," Ash chimed in. "Like, who does she think she is? She doesn't want to have a relationship with you because you are her assistant, but she doesn't mind fucking you in her office?" Shaking her head, Sofie's roommate fumed, "That doesn't make any sense to me."

"Look, I know it's weird. And yes, I'm upset. But everything was consensual, and I wanted to have sex with her. She didn't coerce me; I just didn't think I'd fall so hard for her," Sofie explained, trying to make light of her disappointment.

“And Rory, I don’t blame you for encouraging me; I needed to say something to Gabriella. I guess it’s just the cost of being transparent, right? I took a chance, and now, I must accept her answer.” She wanted to save face in front of her roommates, but Sofie felt humiliated and heartbroken.

“I understand; I shouldn’t be so judgmental,” Ash replied softly. “So, what are you going to do? Are you going to continue the affair?”

That is the million dollar question!

Ash’s question was one that Sofie had been mulling over in her mind. She had briefly considered maintaining the sexual relationship with Gabriella. But something inside of her felt that could be a destructive move. Sofie had never felt so torn. She wanted Gabriella more than anything, but she could see that the more she got involved, the more she was going to get hurt when it ended. “I don’t know. I mean, the sex is mind blowing, but now that my feelings are involved, I’m not sure I can continue this affair, knowing it will probably end badly- for me, at least.” Sofie screwed up her face.

“But what about your job? Would it be weird to continue working there if you weren’t fucking your boss?” Sofie saw Rory give Ash a reprimanding look; even Sofie sometimes wished that Rory’s partner wasn’t so harsh. But Ash had a point; she hadn’t even considered the environment of her workplace.

Shrugging, Sofie shook her head. Even though these questions were overwhelming, she was passionate about her fashion career and never considered herself a quitter. “I love my job! And I’ve been given a lot of great opportunities by Gabriella. I’ve been growing with the magazine and don’t want to leave. Regardless of the sex, I know that she values me as an employee.”

“Of course; we aren’t saying she doesn’t, Sofie,” Rory jumped in. “We’re just

concerned for your comfort. We know how hard you've worked in school and how passionate you are about your role at Deluxe." Slinging an arm around Sofie, she added, "What if you stopped sleeping with her but kept everything else the same at the office?"

Sighing deeply, Sofie considered that was her best option. Her heart ached at the thought of never touching Gabriella again, never tasting her again, never feeling Gabriella's hands on her body again, but she felt that her roommates were right; she would have to change her dynamic with Gabriella to try and maintain their professional relationship. "Yeah, I think I'm going to send her a message. I'll let her know that I want to keep working there, but the sex has to stop. It's becoming too confusing for me, and I don't want to get distracted and mess up any responsibilities."

Hugging Rory and Ash, Sofie moved from the kitchen to the oversized couch in the living room, where she kept her laptop. Opening the device, Sofie considered how she would word her request. I hope I can still work at the magazine, but I wonder how things might change between us. Obviously, she can't fire me because I don't want to hook up. But maybe I will feel different, too. But I can't keep doing this to myself; I care for her and won't settle for empty sex.

Once Sofie thought about her wording, she crafted an email to Gabriella, reading it over a few times before she felt it was ready to send.

Good evening,

I hope you don't mind the personal nature of my email, but I felt it was important to reach out to express my feelings about our last conversation.

I understand your point about the age difference between us and the point that we come from different environments and experiences. In telling you how I felt, I never wanted to make you feel uncomfortable, and I want you to know how much respect I

have for you—not only as my superior but also as a woman.

Page 34

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

I have greatly enjoyed our passionate times together. You've opened my eyes to incredible erotic experiences, and I feel I've learned much about myself. I truly think you are an exceptional person, and spending time in your company has been an honor.

However, I feel that it's best if we stop having sex altogether. My feelings for you go beyond physical pleasure. I understand that you are limited in what you can give emotionally. But I can't continue to be sexually intimate, knowing I'll be deprived of an authentic connection.

That said, I'd love to continue to work as your assistant for Deluxe Redux Magazine. I'm grateful for the experiences you have provided me over the past few months, and I want to continue to provide the magazine with excellent work and support you in my role.

Please let me know what you think.

Respectfully,

Sofie Rosswell.

After pressing the send button, Sofie felt as though she had fallen off a cliff. Her thoughts raced with a dozen scenarios, including a few where Gabriella changed her mind, realizing she was also in love with Sofie. Trying to distract herself, Sofie surfed a few of her favorite online pages until she received a notification informing her of a new email.

Oh my god, that was a quick response! Opening the message, Sofie scanned the email response from Gabriella.

Good evening, Sofie.

Thank you for your message. While I feel your choice is unfortunate and disappointing, I understand and respect your boundaries.

You are still employed as my assistant at Deluxe Redux Magazine and, as such, will continue in your role with no changes to your responsibilities.

I will see you in the office tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m.

Gabriella Galena

CEO, Editor-in-Chief.

Deluxe Redux Magazine Inc.

Blinking, Sofie was shocked. The robotic-sounding response was void of emotion; she didn't expect Gabriella to come across as cold. Well, at least I still have my job! But even as she soothed herself with that fact, her heart broke, realizing in that moment that Gabriella was incapable of vulnerability and empathy.

21

Riding the elevator, Gabriella was careful to maintain a neutral expression. She prided herself on her ability to have an extraordinary poker face, regardless of her emotions. But this morning had proved challenging as she remained tight-lipped and alert, carefully greeting others as they rode to their respective floors.

But inside, Gabriella was crushed. Upon reading Sofie's email the night before, she felt like she had been slapped across the face, although part of her couldn't blame Sofie. Gabriella was aware that her emotional limitations tended to push other women away and previously, that had suited her well. Sofie deserved to exercise the right to keep herself respected and safe.

Gabriella was surprised at how hard the news had hit her, given that she was the one to put a wall up with Sofie. But to know that they would never touch again or enjoy the pleasures of each other's bodies was hurtful; Gabriella Galena felt an immediate loss.

Wanting to arrive before Sofie entered the office, Gabriella unlocked her door promptly at seven a.m. It was important that she was settled and focused to detract from any vulnerability. After all, I'm still the boss around here and don't have any time for drama or mixed emotions. Sofie and I have a job to do, and hopefully, she is set on maintaining her responsibilities. Gabriella's ego attempted to assuage her feelings of regret and sadness, although the core of her being had yet to catch up with the twisted logic.

Almost an hour later, Gabriella heard the door slowly creak open. From her peripheral vision, she noticed Sofie sneak in quietly. Keeping her eyes on her laptop, she responded coldly, "Good morning. I'd like a coffee, please."

There was a pause before her assistant replied, "Um, sure. Let me put my stuff on my desk, and I'll grab that right away. Did you want something to eat as well?"

Gabriella still couldn't look directly at Sofie, instead choosing a more arrogant approach. Sighing impatiently, her eyes remained on the keyboard. "Did I ask for something to eat? I try my best to be clear with my words. I hope that's not a problem for you."

Gabriella could sense that Sofie was frozen in place. Part of her wished she hadn't been such a bitch, knowing well that her assistant didn't deserve any venom. After a few seconds, Sofie's beautiful eyes were wide and hurt. She responded, "No, that's fine. I should know by now that you are a direct person. One coffee, coming up." Sofie quietly left Gabriella's office, closing the door behind her.

Tears formed in the Gabriella's eyes; she felt trapped. Part of her wanted to pull Sofie in close, feel her gentle curves, and smell the scent of her sweet skin. But in knowing Sofie's desire for more than just sex, Gabriella held back; she didn't want to confuse Sofie or herself. I guess neither of us is going to budge on what we want or what we can give. So, it is what it is. But rationalizing didn't take away the feeling of deprivation. This morning, she and Sofie were worlds apart, divided by a schism that could not be repaired.

Moments later, Sofie returned with a small styrofoam cup filled with hot, black brew. Yeah, I expected she would go to the building cafeteria rather than my favorite coffee shop. I probably deserved that. Wordlessly, Sofie settled the cup on Gabriella's desk, moving away to her corner of the room. But before Sofie could get out of the line of sight, Gabriella caught a glimpse of the pain etched in her lovely face.

Fuck! Was she crying? Oh my god, this isn't good. Why is this so hard for us? If I look at her too much longer, I'm going to start crying too. Quickly thinking about handling the situation, Gabriella carefully asked, "Are you okay? You seem upset."

Sofie stood in front of Gabriella with her hands on her hips. Gabriella couldn't help but notice a change in her. Sofie no longer seemed meek but instead possessed an air of self-assurance, almost impatience. Gabriella had never seen her assistant so stressed and frustrated, and it caused a pang of guilt in her heart.

"Yeah, sure. Everything's fine. Why?" Sofie unapologetically snapped. Blinking as she wiped her eyes, Sofie added, sniffing, "I got some bad news from, um,

myroommatetoday. So, yes, I'm upset. I have a whole life outside this office; not everything is about our affair, you know."

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Gabriella was taken aback; she had never seen a combative side of Sofie before. Instinctively, she could tell that Sofie was lying, but she chose not to question her assistant's words. I guess I can't blame her. I'd act the same way. In fact, I already have. Still, Gabriella refused to entertain any attitude from her employees.

Keeping an even tone, Gabriella stared directly at Sofie, challenging her with a serious gaze. "I'm glad to hear that you have a life outside of this office; balancing work and personal life is important. But unfortunately, this magazine doesn't have the capacity to host a poor attitude." As Gabriella paused; the tension between them was thick. Their opposing energy suggested unspoken words and unresolved conflict, but neither Sofie nor Gabriella budged from their stubbornness. Sofie remained undaunted and silent as she looked down at the seated Gabriella.

After a few strained seconds, Gabriella leaned back in her chair, surveying her difficult employee. "You know what? I think it may be more comfortable for you to work in a different location. I'll ask Evangeline to assign you a desk in one of the spare offices on this floor. I think we have at least one or two. Would that be a better arrangement?"

Without averting her gaze, Sofie shrugged, replying, "Sure. But do I still have the same role at the magazine? Or are you demoting me?"

Shaking her head, Gabriella replied, frustrated with the morning's events, "I've already told you your job and responsibilities will remain the same. There is no reason to demote you unless you can't do your job. You've proven to be a valuable employee, so I don't want to lose you at the company. But you have to decide if you want to stay here. And if you do, then you need to move to a different office.

Understood?”

“Got it. So, what should I do now?” Sofie was challenging and bitter. “Do you want me to wait in the lobby until you figure out my seating? Or do you want me to stay here? I mean, you’re the one in charge, right?”

The fashion mogul felt paralyzed by Sofie’s vitriol. Who the hell does she think she is? Clearing her throat, Gabriella narrowed her eyes and leaned forward. “I have an idea. Why don’t you take the day off and go home- fully paid of course? I’ll speak to Evangeline, and by tomorrow morning, you’ll have a new workspace.” Turning away from Sofie, she added dismissively, “Oh, and it wasn’t a question. Enjoy your free day.”

Without argument, Sofie marched to her desk, grabbing her purse. Snatching her belongings, she hissed at Gabriella on her way out, “Sounds great to me. Have a good Monday.”

As Gabriella’s door slammed, her heart sank as the tears she tried to hold back slid down her cheeks. Dammit! That’s not how I wanted this to go. God, this whole thing has become a nightmare, and it’s all my fault. Had to go and fuck my pretty young assistant, didn’t I?

When will you learn, Gabriella?

22

Sofie looked out the window of her tiny office; she could see the Manhattan skyline with bodies scurrying around on the pavement like ants. She wanted to be grateful to have a private space of her own to complete her work tasks at Deluxe Magazine, but Sofie was painfully lonely.

The room afforded her a large desk with a comfortable, ergonomic chair, with Sofie situated only a few doors down from Ms. Galena. She remained on the same floor of the building since she was hired, so the change in work location wasn't technically drastic. Nonetheless, Sofie felt displaced and abandoned by her boss, with whom she was still communicating, albeit in a limited capacity.

The last time they had shared a workspace was weeks prior, and while Sofie regretted losing her temper at Gabriella, she felt justified in her anger and hurt. That woman thinks she can demand anything she wants without putting in any effort or compromise. Maybe that works in her position as CEO, but I deserve more than that. And god, what is with her attitude?!

When the women argued, Sofie knew her boss wouldn't receive her combative behavior well, and she was lucky to keep her position. At first, she hoped having separate offices would eventually help repair their working relationship. But the separation soon proved isolating for Sofie, who had spent all of her time in Gabriella's office from the start of her job.

She was still assigned all of her usual tasks. On occasion, Sofie would be called into Gabriella's office to review a fashion editorial or to be called upon for a mission offsite from the office, such as attending a fashion show to write a review for the magazine. But anytime Sofie would enter Ms. Galena's office, another staff member would be present, removing any chance for the women to discuss personal matters.

Worst of all, Sofie felt that she never received any closure; she was merely sent off to another room to work alone without an apology or the occasional warm conversation from her boss. Sofie sighed audibly as she tried to concentrate on organizing a photo layout for the July issue. "This sucks. I hate working alone with no one to talk to or to bounce ideas. And these guidelines are so strict. I can't believe Ms. Galena has agreed to follow these; it will ruin the magazine completely."

Now that Sofie spent most of her days alone in the office, she was beginning to pay more attention to the new standards of the magazine, set by the chairperson of the Board, Tempest Rutherford. When Sofie was working closely with Gabriella, she was so enthralled by this powerful, attractive, and sensual woman that she became blind to the slow shifts seeping into the publication.

But now, Sofie was more aware of the homophobic undertones and the conservative sponsors and advertisements being onboarded into the magazine. Last week, Sofie had been reprimanded for including a photo set of male models designed to emulate drag queen fashions and culture.

One afternoon, while at her desk, Gabriella called Sofie's extension to express her disapproval. "I received word from Ms. Rutherford that your selection of editorial photos did not meet the magazine's standard and, in fact, appeared as a deliberate rebellion and a conscious choice to include the photo set. Is this true?"

Shocked, Sofie was speechless. In the past, she and Gabriella would commiserate together over the new and stifling changes. They would spend hours chatting about the state of the magazine, with Gabriella sharing past experiences of when Deluxe Redux was at the height of success. But now, since Sofie left Gabriella's office, it felt that her boss was now in alliance with Ms. Rutherford, accusing Sofie of insubordination.

"No, of course not! I honestly didn't consider those photos to breach the guidelines. And I would never purposely go against policy," Sofie defended herself. What the hell is her problem? Why should she assume these types of things from me?

"Fine. But be careful next time. You've been working here for over three months now, and you should know better," Gabriella replied curtly, immediately hanging up.

The conversation stuck with Sofie, and slowly, over the week, her confidence and

self-esteem began to erode. Instead of looking forward to coming to work, Sofie dreaded her work days, often waking up in the middle of the night filled with stress. This is no way to live. I didn't work my ass off in school to be treated like this. I care for Gabriella, and I wish things had worked out. But I can't be here anymore—I just can't!

Staring blankly at her screen, it became more difficult for Sofie to concentrate by the minute. She considered strolling into Gabriella's office to see if they could clear the air. Maybe we need to talk things through. I should apologize for my attitude; perhaps we can smooth things over. Rising from her desk, she approached her boss, knowing it was the only way Sofie could stay happy and productive at the magazine.

Opening the office door, Sofie peered her head into the hallway. She noticed Evangeline sitting at her desk and approached reception to ask to speak with Ms. Galena.

"Hi, Sofie! How are you making out in the new office? It must be nice to have some privacy, huh?" The attractive blond gave Sofie a genuine smile, making her feel more at ease.

Nodding her head, Sofie agreed, trying to save face. "Oh sure, yes, it's great. I'm more productive. It's nice to have peace and quiet, especially during Fashion Week."

"Are you coming to the gala tonight?" Evangeline asked. "Myself and Ms. Galena are going together. She didn't mention you, but I assume you'll be there, right?"

Gala? Gabriella didn't mention anything to me! So, she is taking Evangeline instead? Wow!

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

While stunned, Sofie didn't want to convey that she was surprised. Thinking fast, she replied, "Oh, um yeah, I actually can't make it. My, um, my mom is really sick." As Sofie spoke, it felt as though she was in a nightmare. Not only had Gabriella banished her to an isolated office, but she had kept the gala event from Sofie, instead asking the receptionist to accompany her.

"Oh goodness, I'm so sorry to hear that! Well, I hope she feels better soon," the receptionist replied warmly, unaware of Sofie's hurt feelings. "Sorry, I didn't ask. Did you need anything from me?"

Sofie mashed her lips together, trying not to cry. Shaking her head back and forth, she murmured. "No, I'm fine. I'm going to head back to my office now. I just wanted to say hi." Feigning a smile, Sofie shuffled down the hall as tears formed in her eyes.

Sofie arrived at her office just in time; she shut the door and began to cry. She felt utterly betrayed by Gabriella and hurt that the receptionist accompanied Gabriella to the gala. As much as she had tried to make this new arrangement work, Sofie was completely miserable, and in a fit of emotion, she decided to craft her resignation to Ms. Galena.

Good afternoon.

After much consideration, I've decided it would be best for me to leave Deluxe Redux Magazine. I have greatly appreciated all of the experience you have provided, and it was an honor to work as your assistant.

But the time has come for me to move on to new endeavors. My resignation is

effective immediately. I will be leaving the office at four p.m. today.

Sincerely,

Sofie Rosswell.

23

Gabriella Galena pulled the curtain back, gazing out of the large bay window in her penthouse. It was three p.m.; typically, she would enjoy lunch at her desk, brought in by the lovely Sofie. But for the past four days, Gabriella remained home alone after deciding to take a week away from work.

Upon receiving Sofie's resignation, she was stunned. It had been unbearable for her too, working together, but the thought of never seeing Sofie again, broke Gabriella's heart. However, in the recesses of her mind, Gabriella realized it was her fault; her harsh attitude finally took a toll on Sofie. What have I done? I've pushed away the most beautiful and caring person; Sofie was a true gem. How did I not appreciate her enough? This is all my fault.

Gabriella was racked with guilt and shame. Even while at the gala with the beautiful Evangeline, Gabriella couldn't concentrate on her surroundings. While she had initially wanted to bring Sofie, upon hearing Sofie's confession of her feelings, Gabriella thought it might be best not to lead Sofie on, thus deciding at the last minute to bring Evangeline. But upon reflection, Gabriella realized it was a selfish and cruel move, especially after banishing Sofie to another office.

The truth was that Sofie's confession had terrified Gabriella because she had also developed feelings towards Sofie.

I love her.

But due to the betrayal of her ex-wife, the messy divorce, and the pressure from the magazine, Gabriella imploded. Now was no time for love for her. Was she even capable of love anymore? It had become easier for her to react dismissively and cruelly rather than examine her own feelings and show vulnerability to Sofie.

“Wow, you really fucked up this time. There is no way she is going to forgive you.” Gabriella shook her head, muttering to herself. “And with another leave under my belt, I’m sure Tempest Rutherford will further her conservative influence over the magazine.” She felt as though her career was ending, and Gabriella had never felt more alone, confused, and regretful over her behavior; Sofie’s resignation was a sign that Gabriella had gone too far.

Suddenly, she heard the buzzer announcing Blair’s arrival. Her friend had asked Gabriella to have lunch this week, but Gabriella didn’t want to be in public at the moment. Instead, she asked Blair to join her at the penthouse, where the friends could enjoy privacy on the outdoor patio. Quickly, she moved from the view to greet Blair at the front door.

“Hey! How are you doing?” Blair Cunningham was exquisitely dressed as usual. Her crisp dress shirt was paired well with a jaunty necktie. While Gabriella’s preference had always been toward femme women, she was always so impressed by Blair’s impeccable, masc-presenting style.

Embracing her friend, Gabriella replied, “Ugh, not great, to be honest. This is the fourth day I’ve been miserable and alone at home.” Gratefully, she added, “Thanks for coming over. I really needed to talk to you today.”

“Of course, no problem! And look, I brought us a surprise.” Blair held up a large paper bag. “I picked us up some sushi from Yubari Suki; I know it’s your favorite.”

“Oh, thank you! I had no energy to cook, so I figured we could order takeout when

you arrived. But this is perfect.” Gabriella took the bag from Blair’s grip, guiding them towards the terrace. “It’s another beautiful day, so I thought we could eat outside.”

The women sauntered to the patio as the afternoon sun provided a golden hue.

Gabriella remembered the last time she was out here with Sofie. They had spent the most perfect day together, and now, panged with guilt, Gabriella realized that ruined everything between them. She wanted to be a lively host to Blair, but inside, Gabriella was racked with grief. I’m never going to see Sofie again!

As the women settled into their patio seats, Blair looked intently at Gabriella. “So, what is going on? I still don’t understand why you took a week away from work; you just returned from your leave three months ago.”

Sighing, Gabriella rubbed her temples. “I’ve been having some issues with my assistant. I told you about her the last time we met up. Things have become tense with us, and last week, Sofie quit the magazine.”

“Oh no, that’s awful! I thought you and her were getting along at work and personally. What happened?” Blair asked as she removed the sushi containers from the large paper bag. “I hadn’t seen you so happy in years.”

Gabriella paused, her heart aching upon hearing Blair’s words. It was true; Sofie had made her feel calm, relaxed, and joyous. She almost felt embarrassed sharing the story, but Blair was her best friend, and Gabriella knew she could trust her confidence.

“So, one night when Sofie and I were in bed, she revealed that she had strong feelings and asked if I would consider having a real relationship with her.” Gabriella leaned in across the table from Blair. “Now, you know how much the idea of falling for someone and dating them terrifies me—especially because of everything that

happened between your sister and my ex-wife. My trust is completely gone. Sure, I can enjoy dalliances with cute women sometimes, but I can't give my heart away again; I just can't." Gabriella shook her head as tears formed in her eyes.

Blair nodded with understanding. "Of course, I know how much Madison's betrayal affected you. And I'm still not talking to Lauren, either. So, then, what happened?"

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

“I explained my limitations as far as what I could give her. At first, it seemed like she was accepting of that. And I still wanted to share a level of intimacy with Sofie. I loved the times we got to spend with each other. I didn’t want it to end altogether,” Gabriella explained. “But I just can’t get emotionally involved.”

Blair gave Gabriella a knowing look. Raising an eyebrow, she commented, “But aren’t you already emotionally involved? You honestly look devastated, and considering you needed to take a week away from work, I think you’re more invested than you realize.”

Gabriella took a deep breath; she knew that Blair was right. The loss of Sofie was emotional for her; it wasn’t like ending things with a fuck buddy. Sofie fulfilled her life in other ways aside from sex. But why do I keep my walls up? Why can’t I give her what she wants?

“Yeah, maybe. But it’s too late now. We had a few squabbles at the office, and I was probably harsher with Sofie than I needed to be. I regret that.” Gabriella closed her eyes, feeling a lump grow in her throat. “But now she’s gone, and I don’t know what to do.”

The friends shared a moment of silence before Blair carefully approached the subject. “Listen, hear me out. I know you don’t like to be vulnerable, and I understand that you have trust issues; anyone would be in your position. But what if you spoke to her about how you felt?” Gabriella could feel Blair’s eyes boring into her, reading her like a book. “If you want my opinion, I think you’re in love with Sofie but don’t want to admit it.”

Gabriella shook her head, feeling on the spot. Blair's interpretation hit her like a ton of bricks. She's right, I am. But there is nothing I can do about it. Trying to challenge the uncomfortable truth, Gabriella retorted, "Okay, so even if you are right, what good would it do now? Sofie is furious with me, and with good reason. I fucked up, and now, here we are."

"First of all, you're already miserable, so I don't see how being honest with your feelings will make anything worse," Blair pushed back, refusing Gabriella the opportunity to feel sorry for herself. "Second, what if Sofie forgives you? Honestly, you are a brilliant and successful woman, but you are stubborn as hell. So what if you made a mistake and hurt someone?"

Gabriella's best friend passionately continued, "You can make amends by being honest and asking for forgiveness. And you never know; maybe things between you and Sofie would work out for the best. But by denying yourself that chance, you are causing your own misery."

Gabriella sat frozen in her seat. Part of her was upset with Blair for being so pushy. But then Gabriella remembered why they were friends in the first place. She and Blair shared the same tough-minded temperament, and if Gabriella was being honest with herself, she knew Blair was speaking the truth.

"I don't know; I need to think about it. You're right, I need to ask for forgiveness, and yes, I'm in love with Sofie. But there is so much that I need to work through to be in a relationship." Gulping, Gabriella averted her eyes. "What if I'm not ready?"

Gently, Blair suggested, "Why don't you seek a therapist? I know of an excellent one; her name is Barbara Skye, and she is highly recommended, especially in the lesbian community. You indeed have a lot to work through, but regardless of Sofie, I think that could help."

Slowly nodding, Gabriella felt overwhelmed. She had considered therapy at the beginning of her leave of absence, but instead, Gabriella procrastinated. Maybe now is the time to get my life back in order and really allow myself the chance at happiness again. But for now, she needed to change the subject and enjoy her visit with Blair.

“Thank you for listening, and all of this is great advice. But I think I need to move on from this conversation. Plus, I’m starving.” Passing Blair a plastic container of premium sashimi, the women began their lunch as the sun shone, providing a much-needed positive light on the afternoon.

24

“Hey, I’m back from my break now,” Sofie called over to her manager as she grabbed her apron hanging from a hook. Marlee looked at Sofie, giving her the thumbs up. It was almost noon, and already a line of customers formed as the lunch rush began.

“Can you take over the till? I’m going to move the new girl to the espresso machine; she needs more practice,” Marlee instructed as Sofie nodded, positioning herself at the front of the shop.

“Sure, no problem. I prefer the till anyway.” Sofie signed into the POS system and counted the change in the drawer. Returning to Sunny’s Coffee wasn’t what she had in mind for her future, but for now, Sofie found it a familiar and comfortable environment. Since leaving Deluxe Redux Magazine two weeks ago, Sofie needed to heal her heart and process the happenings before deciding on her next move.

When she asked for her job back, the business was happy to have her return, which provided Sofie a silver lining amidst the drama that clouded her assistant position. At first, she felt like she was regressing in her profession, but after speaking with her roommates, Sofie realized that she craved the simplicity of her former workplace. I

may not be going anywhere in fashion right now, but at least the coffee shop job is predictable and doesn't require any emotional labor. I show up, I clock in, and when my shift is over, I clock out—easy-peasy.

However, as much as Sofie tried to forget her time at Deluxe, her heart ached at the absence of Gabriella.

Sofie was a shell of her former self.

Late at night she would allow herself to think about Gabriella. Was she so wrong to think there was something else between them that was more than just sex?

She knew they would never work as a couple, but Sofie was still convinced of their incredible connection. And she was no longer angry at Gabriella, only sad that they couldn't form the relationship that Sofie craved. Her feelings for Gabriella were still present, but Sofie had muted them in order to move on with her life.

“Hi there, what can I get you?” Now ready to serve the busy line of people, Sofie assumed her best customer service voice, which was a welcome distraction from her heartbreak. It's true what people say, fake it till you make it. And boy, am I laying it on thick! It's wild how I can become a different person by changing my attitude and forcing myself to smile. I swear this job is just like therapy.

As Sofie continued to address each person in line, swiftly preparing their order, she fell into a rhythm where any complex emotions were temporarily swept to the side. She was so focused on her role that she didn't notice a familiar face entering the coffee shop.

“Hey, Julie? Can you please remake this latte? The customer asked for it unsweetened.” Sofie had turned her back to address the new employee after a complaint about a guest's drink order.

Julie nodded nervously. “Oh, I’m so sorry! Yes, of course, I’ll correct that right now!”

Sofie gave Julie a sympathetic grin. She knew what it had been like to be chastised at work, and even though Julie was slow at putting the orders together and quick to make mistakes, Sofie wanted to be patient and encouraging. “All good, no worries. Just bring it to the gentleman in the red jacket, sitting at the window.”

But once she turned around to face the front, Sofie’s jaw dropped. Frozen in place, she could barely get the words out. “What are you doing here?”

Gabriella Galena stood in front of Sofie, looking as stunning as ever. As usual, she was dressed impeccably; her hair was perfectly coiffed, and her makeup was elegant. But her expression was shy and cautious. Gone was the arrogant attitude and the sense of self-importance. To Sofie, she looked sheepish and worn; her face was thinner and more drawn than usual. Underneath the makeup, Gabriella Galena looked ill. Sofie was shocked to see such a transformation.

Nervously, Gabriella replied softly, “I’m sorry to bother you at work; I know you’re busy. But I was wondering if we could talk for a moment. I’m parked at the side of the building; could you spare me a few minutes?”

Source Creation Date: July 13, 2025, 3:32 am

Sofie gulped; the surprise visit didn't give her time to prepare. Over the past few weeks, Sofie fantasized about what she would say if she ever ran into Gabriella; she had practiced her soliloquy in her mind.

But now, as Gabriella stood before her, beautiful as ever, exuding a humble grace, all previous thoughts vanished. Blinking in disbelief, Sofie replied, "Sure. I have to check with the manager because I just returned from a break, but, it isn't too busy in here, um, hold on."

Sofie's heart was beating as she approached Marlee. Keeping her voice low, she murmured, "Gabriella is here, and she wants to talk to me. I'd really like to hear what she has to say. Do you mind if I take a few minutes away? I'm sorry; I know I just returned from my break. But this is important to me."

Marlee was supportive because she was Sofie's friend and had learned about her affair with Gabriella Galena. "Sure, I don't mind, it isn't busy, but can you keep it to fifteen minutes? I know how much this means to you. I'll need to send Julie on her break soon, too, so be quick, okay?"

"Thanks so much; I promise I will," Sofie replied gratefully. "I'm not sure why she is here, but I need to hear her out." Marlee patted Sofie on the arm. "Let me know what happens after your shift. And good luck!"

Nervously, Sofie bit her lip as she removed her apron. Moving to the customer side of the shop, she met Gabriella at the front. "Alright, I'm ready. But I only have fifteen minutes."

The women quickly strolled to Gabriella's silver Jaguar, parked outside Sunny's Coffee. With a click, Gabriella unlocked the passenger seat, motioning for Sofie to sit inside. Once settled, Sofie looked at Gabriella with a challenging expression, unwilling to waste time. "So, why did you want to talk to me?"

Gabriella gazed at Sofie; it was a different look than usual, her blue eyes were soft. To Sofie, Gabriella usually stared like she wanted to devour her. But today, Gabriella Galena appeared to be a different woman.

"Sofie, I've made a huge mistake and owe you an apology. I don't know why I couldn't tell you this before, but," Gabriella paused, grabbing Sofie's hand, "I love you, truly. I am in love with you and am sorry I let you down. I think I was overwhelmed by your desire to have a relationship with me, and I didn't handle it well."

She loves me!

Sofie's eyes grew wide; she was stunned by Gabriella's revelation. Surprised by the tough businesswoman's show of emotion, she could only blink, jaw agape, with her heart beating quickly.

Gabriella continued, "I also owe you an apology for how I treated you at the office. I was a bully, and I know that wasn't acceptable. I wanted to come here to tell you that in person, but I also wanted to put myself out there and be as vulnerable as you have been with me."

Taking a shaky breath, Sofie could tell Gabriella was trying to hold back her tears. "I couldn't let another day pass before asking you if you would be willing to give me another chance. We have a special connection, and I'm an asshole for not recognizing it. Please?"

Sofie was overcome with emotion. Part of her wanted to embrace Gabriella on the spot, but the other half felt guarded. “Oh my god, I always loved you, Gabriella. Right from the start. I still do, but I’m also, I don’t know, scared, I guess. You really hurt me, and although I want to forgive you, I just don’t know how easy that will be.” She squeezed Gabriella’s hand and added, “I want to be with you too. Of course I love you! But how do I know you won’t turn cold on me again?”

Gabriella nodded emphatically. “I understand your trepidation, and I would feel the same way. I think what has held me back was the fact that my ex-wife had betrayed me so deeply. I’ve never fully processed that, and I need to heal. My best friend Blair recommended a therapist named Barbara Syke, and I just started seeing her.”

Gabriella leaned towards Sofie, emphasizing, “I know I have work to do on myself. And I am doing that, regardless of what happens between you and me. But I couldn’t live with myself if I didn’t apologize and tell you how I really feel. I am hurting over the loss of you, and I know you are hurting, too.”

Sofie couldn’t hold in her tears any longer. With a small cry, she replied, “Of course I want to be with you. I accept your apology and I’ve missed you so much; I’ve been miserable without you.” The women grabbed onto each other, hugging tightly. They shared a few sobs before Sofie broke away, asking, “So you’re really in therapy? Do you think I could join you in a session some time? I want to help you heal, and your happiness is worth it. I want to be there for you.”

Gabriella nodded, her impeccable makeup slightly smeared. “Of course. I want you in my life in every way, Sofie. Thank you for accepting my apology. I can do better, and I will, for us.” The women embraced again before Gabriella planted her lips on Sofie, magical kisses. Their mouths collided, tongues hungrily intertwined, and Sofie was elated. She’s never kissed me like this before, oh my god!

The pair continued to kiss, finding the perfect rhythm until Sofie slowly broke away.

Breathlessly, she murmured, “I have to get back to the shop. Can I see you later tonight?”

With a loving gaze, Gabriella stroked Sofie’s cheek. “You can see me tonight, tomorrow night, and every single night. I’m yours, Sofie. I want to make this work.” Adjusting the power controls, Gabriella unlocked the passenger door. “Go on, I don’t want to make you late. Can I take you to dinner after work?”

Beaming, Sofie replied, “Oh my gosh, yes! I can’t believe you came by today. I love you, Gabriella!” Sofie opened the car door, sliding out of the seat. Wearing the biggest grin, she waved to her lover and approached the front door of Sunny’s Coffee to complete her shift.

Epilogue

3 years later

“Come here; I’m not ready to get out of bed yet,” Sofie cooed as Gabriella lay tangled in her arms. “It’s not even nine a.m. yet! Don’t worry, we have lots of time.”

Gabriella stretched out her lean body, willing to give in to her girlfriend’s charm. She knew that there was no point trying to argue when Sofie was in the mood. Ah, I guess she’s right. The launch party doesn’t begin until noon. I wonder what Sofie has in store this morning!

Rolling over to face her partner, Gabriella gently kissed Sofie as their naked bodies mashed together. “Mmmm, alright, you win. But we must be out the door by in two hours—no exceptions!” While she tried her best to sound stern, Gabriella couldn’t have been happier. The past three years with Sofie had been a dream come true; she never imagined being so happy at this stage in her life. While Gabriella was close to 60 years old, she felt lighter and more youthful than ever; her relationship with Sofie

had given Gabriella a new lease on life.

“Good, I knew you couldn’t resist me!” Sofie whispered seductively. Gabriella felt Sofie’s fingers traveling from her clavicle across her breasts. Her nipples stood at attention as though receiving orders from Sofie’s touch. “Lay back. I know you have an important day, and I want to make sure you feel relaxed and happy before the launch event.”

“Mmmm, you mean we have an important day. But sure, I’ll obey,” Gabriella sighed, allowing Sofie to slide her body on top as their pubic bones pressed together. As soon as the words came out, she couldn’t help but smile at the irony; Gabriella never imagined herself submitting to anyone, but Sofie had won her over, so occasionally, Gabriella allowed her to switch, and when she did, it was a pleasure to have her take control.

Slowly, Sofie rose to straddle Gabriella; she could feel Sofie’s wetness as she hugged Gabriella’s body with her hips. Leaning forward, Sofie gently began to suck on Gabriella’s nipples, first the right and then the left. Gabriella felt electricity sparking through her body. Closing her eyes, Gabriella arched her back, moaning softly, “Mmmm, yeah, oh, I love that.”

Sofie’s tongue traveled down Gabriella’s torso, tickling and teasing her belly. It was amazing how confident Sofie had become in bed; Sofie had gone from a quiet submissive to embracing her sexual prowess. Gabriella still exuded her natural dominant qualities but allowing Sofie to take charge on occasion was thrilling. She kept her gaze on Sofie, who was now between her legs, her eyes twinkling with sexy mischief.

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“I can’t wait to taste you; I’m addicted to the taste of you,” Sofie murmured, her voice thick with desire. Gabriella leaned back, focusing on the sensations of Sofie’s mouth. Her tongue darted, lightly teasing Gabriella’s hardening clit before it began to part the delicate folds of Gabriella’s vulva. Sofie then began to suck on Gabriella’s clitoris, her tongue swirling around with varying movements.

Gabriella’s body tingled as her muscles contracted with a growing ecstasy. Grabbing Sofie’s head, her hips thrust against Sofie’s face, grinding against the rhythm of her girlfriend’s mouth.

She could hear Sofie’s muffled sounds as her tongue licked and sucked fervently as Gabriella’s legs began to shake. Gabriella moaned, crying, “Oh god, Sofie, oh my god, mmmm, yes, I’m going to come!”

“Uh... please..” Sofie murmured as she took a second to breathe before going back to work.

Gabriella felt Sofie’s finger pressing, teasing and then pushing inside of her ass. It felt electric and Gabriella knew she was only seconds away from a mind-blowing orgasm.

“Fuck, oh god! Yes, oh my god, don’t stop, holy shit!” Gabriella’s body spasmed with a powerful orgasm, her muscles contracting with ecstasy. Her hips squeezed against Sofie as she struggled out of the hold. Laughing, Sofie remarked, “Ow! Wow, that was quite the climax. You almost crushed my skull.”

Knowing that her girlfriend was only joking, she reached down to pull Sofie closer,

kissing her lips glazed with Gabriella's come. She savored the taste of her own sex on Sofie's lips.

As much as Gabriella wanted to stay in bed with Sofie for the rest of the day, she knew the couple needed to prepare for the launch party. It was a big day for her and Sofie, something the two women had worked on for the past three years. And this afternoon, they were about to unveil their project, which was a labor of love. But more importantly, Gabriella had a surprise for Sofie that she couldn't wait to share.

After the couple showered and changed, they drove to Lobby, a high-end boutique hotel on the Upper West Side. It was important for Gabriella to choose a location rich in culture and elegant design. The pair strolled into the conference room featuring the most influential fashion media personalities and New York's top models.

"Oh my gosh, this is so exciting!" Sofie whispered as she clutched Gabriella's hand. "I can't believe we made our dreams a reality!"

Gabriella grinned lovingly at her partner, squeezing her hand in return. "We did it, and together, you and I make the best team. I love you, Sofie."

The couple shared a quick kiss before taking their seats for the press conference. The launch party included interviews with the media, followed by a reception party. Anyone important in the fashion industry was in attendance, which relieved Gabriella. After leaving Deluxe Redux Magazine, she was uncertain about her future in fashion. But her long-standing influence, combined with Sofie's fresh take on industry trends, was well-received by the industry, and today, DyKon Magazine will be unveiled to the public.

With Sofie by her side, Gabriella faced the flash of cameras and interviewees. One by one, journalists fired inquiries to the couple. A reporter from the New York Times asked, "Why did you think it was important to create a magazine especially for lesbians? Do you feel that exclusivity will help you achieve financial goals?"

Clearing her throat, the fashion mogul replied, “First, I want to address the fact that lesbian inclusion and visibility have always been important to me professionally and personally. But unfortunately, many publications have restricted imagery and diversity, especially in our political climate, which is becoming increasingly conservative.”

Gabriella was careful not to name Deluxe Redux as one of these magazines. However, anyone close to Gabriella and Sofie knew precisely why the couple had decided to start their own magazine.

“Second, I believe you are asking me if I think a magazine like this would make money. Well, one only needs to look at the profits we’ve gained in the first quarter. The demographic we cater to is women just like us,” pointing to her and Sofie. “Educated, sophisticated, with a disposable income.”

Sofie chimed in, bringing her mouth close to the microphone. “That’s right. And we also believe that queer women have an eye for more creative and interesting style. We do not design or promote looks for the male gaze. We are pushing fashion forward and bringing something new to our community.”

The attendees applauded, and Gabriella smiled at Sofie, grateful to have a supportive partner at her side. Since her sessions with Dr. Barbara Syke, Gabriella had transformed into a softer, more empathetic woman who could now take more accountability for her actions. This self-awareness allowed her to heal, but it also allowed her to create a deep, emotional connection with Sofie based on mutual respect and solid communication. Without therapy and Sofie by my side, I would never be where I am now. I can’t wait to show her how much I love her. Today is the day!

After fielding a few more questions, Gabriella grabbed the microphone. “Thank you all for being here today to celebrate the launch of DyKon Magazine. We have lots of exciting features in store for you, including a fabulous runway show featuring models

and designers specifically from the queer women's community. But first, I want to make a special announcement."

Gabriella pulled out a small jewelry box from her designer purse and stood to face Sofie, who was confused and furrowing her brow. "Sofie, you've been such an important person throughout the last four years of my life. You've seen me at my worst and supported me throughout this venture in our lives. You've helped me to believe in love again, and my life isn't complete without you."

As she opened the box, the lights from above shone on the diamond, causing a brilliant sparkle. Gabriella noticed Sofie's jaw drop as she realized what was happening. Gabriella pulled out the engagement ring, a stunning four-carat. Reaching her hand to Sofie, she pulled her partner from her seat. "Sofie, this ring symbolizes my devotion and appreciation for you and us. I want to love you every day for the rest of our lives. Will you marry me?"

Sofie grabbed Gabriella's waist, mouthing the words Are you serious? Gabriella blinked, with tears in her eyes, nodding with confirmation. The crowded conference room fell silent until Sofie leaned toward the microphone. "Yes, I will. You are my everything, and the future is ours."

The crowd cheered as the couple kissed deeply. Gabriella began to cry with tears of joy, embracing her fiancé. She felt a new freedom surge through her body; love had conquered even the darkest days, and now, she and Sofie would be together forever.