Intern 101

Chapter 101

She froze.

Her mouth opened.

Closed.

Tried again. “Because I… I… no, I-”

But she didn’t get the chance to finish.

Damien crossed the final inches between them in a single breath-his presence overwhelming, his voice a husky whisper that slid down her spine like silk and smoke.

“I’ll tell you why,” he murmured, his lips so close she could taste the heat of them. “Because it should only ever be me.”

The air around them went still.

Thick with something electric. Breathless.

For one suspended moment, he didn’t move-just watched her.

And then, with a swift, fluid motion-he pulled her into him. Fierce. Full-bodied. Unapologetic.

Her head hit his chest, and the impact knocked the breath from her lungs.

Maya stiffened-caught between shock and something else. Something warmer. Deeper.

Safe.

Because this wasn’t like Ashcroft’s playful embrace earlier.

This was a claim.

Damien’s arms wrapped around her like he couldn’t let go. Like he wouldn’t.

And before she could think, her body responded-arms lifting, curling around him, holding tight.

Her cheek rested against his chest, her heartbeat tripping to match his.

“Just… let me hold you. Okay?” he whispered, voice low and strained.

Maya exhaled shakily, the last of her walls cracking.

She nodded.

Permission-silent, but sure.

And then… he inhaled against the side of her neck. Slow. Possessive. Like he was memorizing her scent. Like she was air after drowning.

“I missed you so much,” he murmured.

Then, lower… darker…

“And I hate seeing other men hug you.”

Her heart skipped a beat-then two.

Vulnerability. Jealousy. Need. It all tangled in the quiet space between them.

The world outside the suite faded, forgotten.

And in that moment, it was just the two of them-holding on, holding back, and holding something fragile that neither dared to name. – Yet.

Maya felt the weight of Damien's arms around her-the strength, the warmth, the unspoken promise of his presence.

His scent-clean, dark, undeniably him-wrapped around her like a second skin. She didn't want to move. Didn't want to break the spell.

She stayed there, held tight in his arms, letting the silence stretch-too full to speak, too sacred to break.

She knew she should say something. But everything inside her felt fragile.

When she finally found her voice, it was soft. Tentative. Almost afraid to disturb the moment.

“… How was your trip?”

For a moment, he didn’t answer.

His chin brushed her temple as he exhaled, the sound quiet… but heavy. Like her question touched something deeper than jet lag.

“Exhausting,” he murmured. “But necessary. Things had to be… put in order.”

He pulled back just enough to see her face, his hands firm on her waist-like he wasn’t ready to let her go.

“But mostly…” his voice dropped, eyes fixed on hers, “I just kept thinking about you.”

A flutter stirred in Maya’s chest.

“I kept wondering if you were eating,” he said, so softly it felt like a confession. “If you were sleeping. If Jamie was being careful with the stairs. If you were pushing yourself again when no one was looking.”

He hesitated, gaze lowering.

“…If you missed me.”

A jolt shot through her spine at the way he said it-like it meant more than he wanted to admit. Her fingers curled into the side of her dress, grounding herself against the sudden rush in her chest, her heart thudding harder, louder, betraying her calm.

“I…” she whispered, “I’ve been thinking about you too.”

But the second the words left her lips, she flushed crimson. Instinct kicked in-she pushed him back and turned away, hands flying to cover her face.

“Oh my God,” she groaned. “That just… came out.”

Damien didn’t laugh.

But his eyes darkened-not with anger. With something hotter. Slower.

He stepped forward, placing his hands gently on her shoulders.

“Maya,” he said, turning her around.

But she kept her head down, still mortified. Her hands stayed stubbornly over her face.

He chuckled under his breath and gently tugged them down, though her chin stayed tucked, eyes glued to the floor.

Then his fingers slid under her jaw and tilted her face upward.

“Look at me,” he murmured. “Look me in the eye, Maya.”

She resisted with a soft shake of her head, her voice a tiny protest. “Mm-mm…”

“Why?” he asked.

Her lips parted, but nothing came out. And when he brushed a loose strand of hair behind her ear, something in her chest crumbled.

Her hands tightened around the fabric of her dress. “Because…” she whispered. “Because it’s easier to miss you than to look you in the eye.”

Damien went utterly still.

Her words hit him like a spark to dry kindling-igniting something raw and primal in his chest. But beneath the hunger… something else stirred.

His breath faltered. His knees nearly buckled.

Because for all the nights he'd imagined her missing him, he hadn't been prepared for how it would actually feel-like she'd peeled him open with a whisper. Like he'd give up every wall, every defense, just to stay at the center of that soft, unguarded confession.

Then, slowly-reverently-he dipped his head. His gaze dropped to her lips, and it wasn't just desire. It was reverence. A silent ache.

Like he was already surrendering to the very idea of her.

His eyes darkened as they flicked to her lips-the place he ached to taste, to claim, to lose himself in. The wide king bed beside them waited like a silent promise.

But he didn't move closer. Not yet.

Not until she was ready.