Intern 104

Chapter 104

They stood there, just letting themselves float in the silence-foreheads touching, breathing the same air. The space between them pulsed with tension and tenderness, the kind that made time feel suspended.

So close she could feel the warmth of his breath.

So still, it felt like time was holding its breath too.

Then-slowly-Damien began to lean in. His breath brushed her lips, their mouths only inches apart. Just as Maya's eyes fluttered shut.

When suddenly-

BANG.

The door swung open.

"Hey D! I've been looking for – Oh… shit!" Ashcroft's voice cut through the room like a whip

crack.

Maya jerked back like she'd touched fire, cheeks flaming. Her hands flew to her sides, eyes darting, desperate for the floor to swallow her whole.

Ashcroft blinked at the two of them, then grinned like a devil.

"Damn. I totally interrupted something, didn't I? But hey-glad you're both still fully dressed. Not in the mood to see yacht porn before lunch."

Maya's face turned double red, enough to power a lighthouse.

Damien growled, "What the hell are you doing here?"

But before Ashcroft could answer

–

"Oh my god, I told you!" a voice squealed from behind Ashcroft.

Harper.

Maya blinked. Harper. Was. Here. Too.

The PR ‘superstar’ poked her head around Ashcroft’s shoulder, eyes wide, mouth already curled into a grin like she’d just walked into a real-life episode of her favorite drama.

Ashcroft glanced back at her with a lazy smirk. “Me and Miss Lin over here were just talking

Chikamba Mascara Motion and Mayhem !

about Daya.”

Harper gasped, clasping her hands like a fangirl at a concert. “It’s happening. It’s actually happening!”

“Daya?” Damien said flatly, one brow arched, jaw visibly tightening.

Maya groaned, covering her face with both hands. Please let this be a nightmare.

Harper, undeterred, beamed. “Oh, come on. Damien and Maya? Daya. It’s elegant. Sophisticated. Totally brandable.”

“I told her it sounded like a designer yacht,” Ashcroft added helpfully. “Or a champagne line.”

Harper nodded eagerly. “Exactly! Smooth. Luxe. Expensive.”

Damien pinched the bridge of his nose. “Get out, both of you. This is not a vacation. It’s a work trip.”

Ashcroft strolled in like he owned the room. “Yeah, yeah, whatever. Work trip, yacht trip- same difference. It’s boring as hell upstairs. Everyone’s talking about stock performance and quarterly targets while sipping mojitos. I mean seriously-we’re on a yacht. Work should be the last thing they’re talking about.”

He threw his hands up. “I need a break. Found Ms. Lin. Got some quality intel on the hottest love team this side of the Pacific. So I thought, ‘Why not track you down so I can share the news?’ And guess what I found?”

He pointed between Damien and Maya, eyes gleaming. “Daya. In action.”

Then his gaze landed squarely on Maya, and his tone shifted-lazy and brotherly. “Hey there,

sis.”

Harper leaned in with a stage-whisper that carried across the room. “Told you! He’s into you!”

Maya was seconds away from crawling under the carpet and dissolving into mist.

Damien muttered under his breath, “I’m going to kill both of you.”

Ashcroft clapped a hand on his back. “Love you too, bro.”

Harper placed a hand on her chest with mock solemnity. “Now, now, Mr. Blackwood. As the self proclaimed official Maid of Honor to Queen Maya of Daya, I have sacred duties to uphold.”

She stood straighter, like she was about to raise a national flag. “I solemnly pledge my

legiance and eternal loyalty to the royal ship of Daya. I vow to protect Queen Maya from all

hollow Barbie dolls in the PR department-whose brains are powered entirely by mascara fumes. I will defend her honor against gossip, bad coffee, and I will personally body-block any man who tries to come near her.”

She turned to Damien, eyes sparkling with mock solemnity. “Except the King, of course. And Jaime. Monroe. Lee. Mr. Horton. Oh-and Mr. Ashcroft here.”