**Intern 105**

Chapter 105

Ashcroft gave

smug little bow. “Naturally.”

Damien’s eyes narrowed. “What hollow Barbie dolls and gossip?” His voice dropped, sharp and cold. Then he turned to look at Maya “Is someone bothering you at the company?”

Maya opened her mouth, but Harper beat her to it-hands already waving, eyes wide with mock outrage.

“Oh, you know-those jealous Barbies. The ones blowing their whole paycheck on designer shoes and waterproof eyeliner, just to parade past the executive wing like it’s a catwalk. All of them hoping to catch the eye of the elusive Mr. Blackwood.”

Damien’s jaw clenched. His expression darkened.

Damien: “Who are they?”

Ashcroft let out a low whistle, backing up half a step with both palms raised.

“Uh oh… here we go. That’s the voice. The one that makes grown men sweat in boardrooms. Somebody light a candle for the PR girls-he’s about to go full execution mode.”

Harper smirked, already gearing up. “Well, there’s Kr-”

But she didn’t get to finish.

Maya darted forward and slapped her hand over Harper’s mouth.

“Don’t listen to her. It’s fine. I’m fine. Harper already handled them, and I’ve just been… ignoring it. I promise.”

Harper mumbled a muffled protest beneath Maya’s hand, then shrugged theatrically the moment she was released.

“It’s true. I gave them a good reality check. Told them to pick a lane-and stay out of Maya’s.”

Damien didn’t speak.

But his gaze lingered on Maya-sharp, unreadable.

Not because he didn't believe her.

But because he already knew-next time someone crossed her, they wouldn't get Harper's words.

They'd get his silence,

And that was always more dangerous.

Then Harper gasped, eyes twinkling. "Speaking of duties… can we use this yacht again for Maya's bachelorette party?"

Maya's eyes went wide. "HARPER!"

"What?" Harper blinked innocently. "I asked you earlier but you shushed me. So I'm asking the owner. Mr. Blackwood?" She batted her lashes dramatically. "Can we?"

Ashcroft snorted. "Well, as long as there's no male strippers. Right, bro?"

Damien: "Shut up!"

Ashcroft: "So mean. Don't worry, sis. You can use mine instead. It's just as fancy. No-wait! I'll just buy you a new one. That's better, right?"

Maya covered her face again. “Okay, nope-we’re leaving. Please excuse us.”

She grabbed Harper’s arm and marched her straight out the door.

Harper, completely unfazed, turned back with a grin. “See you on deck!”

Maya yanked Harper down the corridor, her cheeks still blazing. The wind whipped around them, tugging at their clothes and hair, but it wasn’t nearly strong enough to cool the fire burning on Maya’s face.

She spun around, her voice a frantic whisper. “Oh my God, that’s so embarrassing!”

Harper gave her a crooked smile. “Nope! It’s epic! One for the books! What’s so embarrassing about it?”

Maya turned away, leaning on the railing, her voice dropping. “You don’t get it. I can’t do this.”

Harper’s smile faded instantly.

“Hey.” She stepped closer, her voice low, fierce. “Yes, you can.”

Maya’s fingers curled tighter around the rail. “I’m not like them. I don’t belong on this yacht, in that room, in his world. I’m not rich. I’m not polished. I’m not…”

“You’re real,” Harper interrupted. “You don’t have to belong to their world. Because Damien Blackwood-your Damien-he’s building one with you in it.”

Maya’s voice cracked. “And what if I’m not enough for him? What if… what if I’m just the thing

that makes him feel human for a little while-until he remembers what he really needs? Someone who fits.”

Harper moved closer, gently turning Maya to face her. Her voice dropped into a whisper, dead

serious.

“If he ever forgets your worth, Maya, I will remind him. With a stiletto to the shin and a viral HR complaint ready to go.”