Intern 108

Chapter 108

“Taken care of.”

Then his tone shifted-quieter. More deliberate.

“But… it’s best if he’s the one to tell you about it.”

He held her gaze.

“All you need to know right now is that he will never bother you again.”

A chill traced down her spine.

There was something dark-undeniably sinister-in the way Ashcroft said it. But strangely, Maya didn’t feel afraid. No guilt. No pity.

Only a steady, unshakable sense of safety.

Like someone had drawn a line in blood around her-and dared the world to cross it.

A beat. Then his voice dropped lower, just for her.

“You know… D and I, we’ve been through everything. All the wars. The wins. The losses. And through it all, he’s always kept people at arm’s length.”

Maya glanced up at him.

Ashcroft’s smile faded into something quieter. Steadier.

“But with you… he’s different. I’ve never seen him like this, Maya. Ever.”

He spoke more seriously.

“There’s a vulnerability in him that scares the hell out of me and I don’t scare easy. Not because he’s weak. Not even close. It’s because I know him. And I know that when Damien cares about something…”

His eyes sharpened.

“…he’ll do whatever it takes to protect it. No matter the cost. And I mean literally everything.”

Maya’s throat tightened.

“I know you’re hesitating,” Ashcroft said gently. “And I get it. You’ve got questions. Doubts. Maybe a thousand insecurities clawing at your chest. But don’t let that stop you.”

He paused.

“I see it-the way you look at him. The pull between you two. You’ve got something real, and that’s a rare damn thing. So take the risk. Give him a chance. Give yourself a chance.”

Her breath hitched.

“And if it ever gets too heavy,” he added, voice steady, “just remember-you’re not alone anymore. It’s not just you and Jaime now.” He smiled, a little crooked.

“You’ve got me. I like you, Maya. I like you for D. And I can tell-you’re strong. Maybe you don’t realize it yet, but you are.”

His hand gave a reassuring squeeze on her shoulder.

“We’re family now. Okay?”

Maya blinked fast. Then nodded.

A quiet promise passed between them, warm like sun on skin.

Then Harper broke the moment-by thrusting a fruit skewer between them.

“Okay, enough with the therapy circle.” She grinned.

“Let’s get back to pretending this is a casual company retreat and not the set of Dynasty.”

Ashcroft laughed. Maya shook her head with a soft smile.

But the moment didn’t last.

“Ashcroft!”

All three turned toward the voice.

Damien stood a few feet away, his gaze sharp-especially with how close Ashcroft was standing beside Maya. Almost leaning in.

He saw it.

Ashcroft's hand sliding onto Maya's shoulder-a casual, reassuring squeeze.

He should look away. He tried.

But her laugh-his laugh-was too close to hers. And that damn hand…

That was all it took.

Something ticked in Damien's chest like a time bomb. Slow. Dangerous. Inevitable.

His jaw locked. A muscle twitched. And that glint in his eyes? It wasn't just territorial. It was

warning.

Ashcroft raised a brow, amused.

"Uh-oh. Your possessive boyfriend might kill me soon," he muttered playfully.

“I better walk away while I still have a face.”

He winked at Maya, knocked back the last of his drink, and sauntered off.

“Later, ladies!”

As he passed Damien, he held both hands up in mock surrender.

“Relax, brother. I was just bonding with my sis.”

Damien didn’t respond, but the muscle in his jaw ticked.

Maya flushed while Harper beside her beamed like she’d won a jackpot.

Half an hour later, the yacht finally pulled into dock.

The deck buzzed with movement: team members taking selfies with the ocean backdrop, Trina handing out orientation schedules, someone already asking about Wi-Fi.

Lee had taken care of Maya's luggage-efficient, as always.

Harper, on the other hand, looked like she was moving in for three months, not a week-it took two crew members and creative maneuvering to load her suitcase.

"You brought your entire closet?" Maya whispered.

"I believe in options," Harper replied smugly, adjusting her sunglasses.

"Options? You brought heels that could stab a man."

"Exactly. Vacation chic and emergency self-defense."

Maya smiled softly. "This isn't a vacation," she reminded her breathlessly.

"It's an ocular visit."

"Try telling that to my rolling closet," Harper muttered under her breath.

Maya shook her head, half laughing, as they stepped off onto the sun-warmed dock.

The salty breeze kissed their skin, and in the distance, the resort loomed-an architectural masterpiece nestled between cliffs and ocean, all glass and luxury.

“Welcome to paradise,” Harper murmured, voice dripping with irony.