Intern 109

Chapter 109

As they began to disembark, the tropical breeze carried the scent of salt and orchids. Down on the shore, resort staff stood in a neat welcoming line-dressed in crisp uniforms with warm island smiles. Each held chilled, lemon-scented towels, woven flower necklaces, and trays of frosted pineapple juice in halved bamboo cups.

James was the first to step off the yacht. He moved with quiet authority, his eyes scanning the surroundings before he leaned in and murmured something to the island's resort manager. The manager nodded quickly, replying just as discreetly, before adjusting his earpiece.

Lee followed next, carrying a duffel in one hand and Maya's suitcase in the other, his eyes sharp and alert as he scanned the area like he was running security himself.

One by one, the rest of the group made their way down the ramp-Trina and her small PR team, the HR and finance reps, moving with curious eyes and hesitant steps.

Maya and Harper brought up the end of the group, Harper chatting excitedly about her plans to scope out the beach bar while Maya trailed quietly beside her, taking everything in.

Behind them, just stepping off the ramp, were Damien and Ashcroft.

Maya could feel the shift in energy when they did. The staff straightened instinctively. There was something about their presence-like the tide itself took notice.

They all began walking toward the open-air lobby-a beautifully designed space with high thatched ceilings, polished teak floors, and a sweeping view of the ocean beyond. While the rest of the team gathered near reception to collect their room assignments, Damien, Ashcroft, and James veered off toward the far side of the dock, where the sand met the edge of the water just beyond the beachline.

And then-just as the sun emerged fully from the clouds-six sleek black speedboats appeared from the horizon, slicing through the water in perfect formation.

Maya stilled.

The boats pulled up smoothly to the adjacent private dock. From each, two men climbed out -twelve in total. All were dressed in black tactical gear, discreet yet unmistakably military-grade. Big. Sharp-eyed. Quiet. And deadly calm.

The lead man approached Damien and Ashcroft immediately, his movements crisp and precise, radiating disciplined control. He gave a sharp nod to Ashcroft first, then to Damien- silent respect passing between them. Ashcroft returned the gesture with a single nod, and

without a word wasted, the three of them fell into low, serious conversation. Their tones were quiet, clipped. Whatever they were discussing wasn't casual-it was calculated. Intentional.

Just a few minutes later, the man gave a sharp salute, then turned to his team. With a series of clipped hand gestures, they broke formation and melted into the surrounding terrain like shadows in daylight- some moving toward the villa perimeter, others fanning out across the hills and along the coast.

Unseen by the men, just a few feet away, Maya stood at the entrance of the lobby, watching. Her brow furrowed. This wasn't regular security. These men moved like predators-silent, calculating, deadly.

Harper edged closer beside her, her voice low. "Um… was that normal?"

"No," Maya said softly, pulse quickening. "I don't think so."

What she didn't know-what most of the team wouldn't know-is that those were Ashcroft's elite. Quiet muscle. Ghosts trained for the unseen.

Damien already had men stationed here, placed discreetly the day before under James' direction. These weren't replacements.

They were reinforcements.

As the three men began walking back toward the lobby, Maya's gaze lingered on Damien. Hands in his pockets, his expression unreadable as always. But something about the angle of his jaw… the stillness in his posture…

He wasn't just protecting a business interest here.

There was something more.

Something colder. Deeper. Personal.

Beneath the golden sunlight and postcard-perfect scenery, an invisible net was being cast.

Not one made of silk or hospitality-

But of steel.

James looked up from his tablet just as Damien and Ashcroft continued discussing something in low, serious tones-and immediately spotted Maya.

She hadn’t meant to stare. But her eyes had lingered too long, fixed on the black-clad men disappearing into the trees like ghosts.