Intern 120

Chapter 120

Then, scrambling for control, he added, “Uhh… that’s not necessary. Actually-what if I peel some for you instead?”

She shook her head gently, offering him a real smile, one that reached her eyes. “It’s okay. I love doing it. I always do it for Jamie. He eats them faster than I can peel.”

Damien’s gaze lingered on her, something unreadable but soft moving behind his eyes. Alright,” he said, voice low.

She began peeling with practiced ease, her fingers moving with quiet familiarity. “Besides, I enjoy taking care of the people I…” she hesitated, just for a breath – then added softly, “.. care about.”

A silence bloomed between them-not awkward, just felt.

Damien didn’t move. Didn’t speak. Just watched her with that unreadable expression that had lost some of its sharpness-softened now into something almost fragile.

Across the table, Harper gently placed a hand over her chest, dramatically pretending to fan herself.

Ashcroft took a slow sip of wine and muttered under his breath, “Well, damn,” grinning behind the rim of his glass.

Maya gently placed a peeled prawn onto Damien's plate, glancing up just as he looked down.

Their eyes met.

And held.

There was no witty remark. No teasing smirk. Just the hush of something unspoken between them, lingering like the salt in the air-soft, undeniable, and a little terrifying.

Damien lowered his gaze briefly, then reached for the prawn with slow, careful hands. "Thank you," he said, voice quiet, almost… reverent.

Maya gave a small nod, her throat tightening. Why did that feel like so much more than just peeling shrimp?

For a moment, the sounds of the table blurred-the laughter, the chatter, even the waves.

Just him and her-and a silent exchange that said everything.

Damien picked up the prawn Maya had peeled and took a slow bite.

It tasted better than he remembered.

Sweeter. Softer. Like it had somehow absorbed her care. Ridiculous, he told himself. It's just shrimp.

But it wasn't. Not right now.

Across the table, Ashcroft leaned back with a smirk, watching the whole exchange unfold like premium entertainment. "Hey, sis," he called, grinning at Maya. "Do you mind peeling some for me too?"

Maya gave a light laugh, "Sure-"

"No," Damien said sharply, at the exact same time.

Everyone paused.

Damien cleared his throat, then added-far too quickly-"He can't. He's allergic. He'll die."

Maya blinked. "Oh! I-really?"

Ashcroft's smile faltered. He stared at Damien. Since when the hell am I allergic to prawns?!

love prawns.

Just as he opened his mouth to say so-

Whack.

Damien's foot connected squarely with his shin under the table. Ashcroft flinched, nearly choking on a laugh.

He looked at Maya with a wounded expression, then sighed dramatically. "Ah. Right. Forgot. Sudden-onset adult prawn death allergy."

Damien didn't even look at him. He just kept eating calmly, as if he hadn't just declared seafood a deadly weapon.

Harper silently slid a napkin over her mouth to hide her snort.

"More for us then," Maya said with a smile, reaching for another prawn.

She glanced to her left. "How about you, Harper? Want some too?"

Harper immediately shook her head, eyes wide. “No, no! I’m good. I love peeling them myself. You know-suck the shell and head,” she added dramatically, miming it with her hands. ” Mmm. That’s where all the flavor is!”

Maya blinked. “Umm… okay then.”

She turned to the other side of the table, still holding a half-peeled prawn. “How about you, James? Lee?”

Both men immediately stiffened-then shook their heads in perfect sync, like twin soldiers under sudden interrogation.

“No, thank you,” James said politely, letting out a small, awkward laugh.

“I’m good,” Lee added, already looking down at his plate as if hoping not to be asked anything else.

Maya glanced sideways, brows drawing together slightly as she looked at Damien- confused.