

The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 20: Missing-1

The morning sun bled gold over the skyline, but inside the car, the air felt strangely thick.

She didn't know where he was taking her.

But it wasn't to coffee.

+25 Pomta

Maya's throat tightened. Her fingers itched to reach for her phone, but it was buried deep in her

bag and her limbs felt too slow, too heavy. Her heartbeat thudded louder with every second, but her body... her body was slipping. Numb. Disconnected.

Outside the window, the buildings smeared into colorless shapes. Her stomach twisted.

Two hours of sleep. That had to be it. Or the stress. The fourteen-hour shift. The relentless

pressure.

Her hands rested in her lap like stone.

Beckett's voice floated from the driver's seat – casual, low – but the words scattered before they

reached her.

She turned her head toward him slowly.

He was sipping from a large water bottle, nearly empty now. She hadn't noticed it before – the way he drank from it repeatedly. The way he kept glancing at her like he was... waiting.

Something coiled in her gut.

“Maya?” he asked gently. “You alright?”

She tried to nod. She thought she did. But her head barely moved. Her mouth was dry. Her pulse – slow, almost sluggish.

The soft hum of the engine, the low vibration beneath the tires – it all blurred together, lulling her like a rocking cradle.

Then nausea surged up her throat. Not from nerves. Not from hunger.

Something was wrong.

Very, very wrong.

Her head lolled slightly to the side.

“Sleepy?” Beckett asked, not even glancing at her. His tone was too light. Too calm.

She forced a breath. “Y-yeah. Didn’t... sleep...”

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Chapter 20 Missing 1

+25 Powit

He took another long pull from the water bottle. It was nearly empty now. Whatever was in it... he had consumed most of it himself.

Or so it seemed.

“Just rest,” he murmured. “You’ll feel better soon.”

Her pulse skipped.

She hadn’t drunk anything. So why did her body feel like it was fading?

The air in the car was wrong. Sweet. Chemical. Too warm. Too still.

She blinked. Once. Twice.

But her vision blurred.

Her limbs wouldn’t move.

Her tongue was heavy in her mouth, and her thoughts – once sharp-faded into static.

She tried to lift a hand. Failed.

And then – just before darkness swallowed her whole – she saw it.

The twisted smile on Beckett's lips.

Not kind. Not casual. Not human.

Just satisfied.

“Jamie...” she thought faintly, the name floating in the fog before everything went dark.

8:30 a.m.

At Blackwood Enterprises, the day was already in full swing.

The glass doors of the lobby rotated steadily as the morning rush poured into the building. Elevators dinged. Heels clicked. Suits brushed past one another like pieces in a well-oiled

machine.

But one person was missing.

In the sleek halls of the west wing PR Department, James Horton stepped out of the elevator. In one hand, he held a neatly clipped procurement file. In the other, a tablet with Damien's handwritten notes and final sign-off.

He didn't usually hand-deliver these things himself, but Damien had been specific this morning: "

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Chapter 20 Missing-1

Give it directly to Trina."

James didn't ask questions. He never did.

+25 Points

He entered the PR department, pausing just beyond the glass partition. Trina was at her desk, mid-conversation with a junior associate, her tone brisk as she gave instructions and pointed to a series of marked-up documents spread across the desk.

Harper stood nearby, leaning against the edge with her signature lavender mug in hand, listening

His footsteps were quiet but purposeful as he approached.

Both women looked up as James neared.

"Mr. Horton," Trina greeted, offering a polite smile. "Is that the approval for the media procurement?"

James nodded once. "From Mr. Blackwood. Approved and signed. He asked me to deliver it to you personally. Please make sure to apply the adjustments per his notes – strict instructions."

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Trina accepted the folder, her brows lifting slightly at the formal handoff. “Understood. Thank you.”

James was about to leave when something caught his eye.

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 20 Missing 2

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Chapter 20: Missing-2

Maya's desk.

Empty.

The chair was perfectly tucked in. No coffee cup. No open notebook. No sign of her ever being there.

His brows pulled together. "Ms. Thompson called in sick today?" he asked, trying to sound casual.

Trina blinked. "No. Not that I know of."

Harper straightened, worry flashing across her features. “She’s still not here?”

James turned slightly. “Not that I can see.”

Harper’s brows furrowed. “That’s... really not like her.”

Trina shook her head. “Did she say anything to you?”

“No.” Harper pulled out her phone. “I’ve been calling her all morning,” Harper said, worry creeping

into her voice as she glanced at her phone. “She hasn’t answered. Hasn’t even read my messages.”

James frowned.

That wasn’t like Maya. At all.

“If she was sick, she’d have said something,” Harper added. “This internship means everything to her. Even if she were dying...” she caught herself, knocking twice on the desk “she’d drag herself here just to show up.”

Trina reached for her desk phone. "I'll call HR. See if we can get in touch with her emergency

contact. Maybe someone at home knows something."

James lifted a hand. "Don't... not yet."

Both women looked at him.

His voice was calm, but firm. "It's only been an hour. We don't want to cause unnecessary panic. If we call her emergency contact... we risk upsetting someone who might already be anxious."

Trina looked hesitant. "Mr. Horton, if something-"

"I know," he said quietly. "But we all know her emergency contact is likely her younger brother. I'd rather not cause panic unless we're sure."

Harper nodded slowly. "So what do we do?"

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Chapter 20 Missing 2

+25 Points

James's jaw flexed slightly, thoughts already moving faster than his voice. "Keep trying her phone. If she comes in, or calls back, inform me immediately. I'll let security know to flag her ID the second she badges in, or tries to enter the building. No need to escalate until we're sure."

Trina and Harper exchanged a glance, then nodded.

Harper nodded slowly. “Okay... but please keep us posted?”

James gave a tight nod. “I will.”

As James turned to leave, a strange coldness crept into his chest.

8:45 a.m.

Damien’s office was quiet when James returned, the soft click of his shoes muffled by

the

imported carpet.

The door was ajar.

Inside, Damien sat behind his massive desk, sleeves rolled up, laptop open. A high-level video conference with the European branches had just ended. The last window closed with a soft chime as James stepped in.

Damien looked up, his voice cool. “You gave Trina the instructions?”

“Yes, sir. Hand-delivered. She has everything she needs.”

Damien gave a short nod.

But James didn’t leave.

He hesitated.

That was enough for Damien’s sharp gaze to lift.

“What is it?”

James exhaled. “Ms. Thompson didn’t show up this morning.”

Damien stilled. “Excuse me?”

“She hasn’t clocked in. Her desk is empty. Trina and Harper both said she hasn’t called or responded to any messages.”

Silence fell between them.

His jaw clenched once before he masked it.

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+25 Porta

Chapter 20 Missing 2

Damien pushed back from his desk.

It wasn't just concern on his face now – it was a slow-burning fury beneath his calm.

She was never late.

Not once since she'd started.

Something wasn't right.

He didn't understand the feeling that surged through him. It was hot. Unwelcome. Sharp.

Worry.

He looked at James. "Find her."

James nodded, already reaching for his phone. "I'll contact building security. Traffic cameras. Work my way backwards from her last known location."

"Send someone to her apartment."

James was already one step ahead. "I'll go."

Damien's gaze flicked to him. "Take security if needed. Get information from the building. Cameras. Neighbors. I want to know where she is."

His voice dropped lower. "And who she was last seen with."

Damien's voice was quiet. Dangerous.

"If anything's wrong," he said, "I want to know who, where, and why."

James nodded once and turned to leave.

Behind him, Damien's fists curled against the edge of the desk.

He didn't understand the storm unraveling inside him.

Something sharp clawed at his chest – ugly, relentless.

This wasn't protocol. This was personal.

But he knew this: If something happened to her... someone would

pay.

Cedella