

The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 21: The Truth Unfolds-1

Jamie didn't expect a knock this early.

He had just finished putting the dishes away, wiping down the table, and taking the morning meds

Maya had set out for him before she left – barely two hours ago, when a soft, deliberate knock

echoed through the apartment. He frowned, tossing the dish towel onto the counter as a flicker of

unease crept into his chest.

When he opened the door, his breath caught. He recognized James immediately – and behind him

stood another man, taller and bulkier, someone he didn't know but who looked intimidating.

"Mr. Horton?" Jamie's brows furrowed.

"What-what are you doing here? Is Maya...?" His voice cracked before he could finish. The panic was already setting in.

"Is May okay? Did something happen to her?!"

The sharpness in his voice turned brittle. His protective instinct surged faster than logic, heart

thudding in his chest.

James was about to speak when the sound of plastic bags rustling interrupted them.

Ms. Janice had just returned from the market, arms full of fresh produce and worry etched into her aging features.

“Jamie?” she called from across the hall, her brows furrowing. “Everything okay? Who are these

gentlemen?”

James turned toward her with calm composure and gave a polite nod.

“Good morning, ma’am,” James said with calm authority. “I’m James Horton, from Blackwood Enterprises. And this is Monroe – our head of security.”

Ma. Janice froze.

Her eyes widened slightly. “Blackwood Enterprises?” she echoed, then paused. “Is this about Maya?”

The air shifted. Something unspoken passed between them—he could feel it in James’s silence, the heavy way Monroe stood behind him like a wall.

Jamie stepped forward, his voice cracking with urgency. “Mr. Horton, please. Answer me. Is my sister okay?”

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Chapter 21 The Truth Unfolds-1

+25 Pots

James met his gaze. “Ms. Thompson didn’t report to work today. I’m here to check on her. Just to make sure everything is alright.”

Jamie’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“No-no, that’s impossible!” Jamie blurted, panic rising in his voice. “May left around seven! She said she was going to work. She even told me not to wait up – she’s got classes tonight. She... she asked if I needed more books...” His voice faltered, cracking. “She was fine.”

A sharp breath escaped him, panic climbing.

Ma. Janice, still holding her bags, fell silent for a moment... then slowly nodded.

“Actually...” she murmured. “I saw her this morning.”

James’s gaze snapped to her.

“She got into a dark vehicle,” Ms. Janice said cautiously, eyes narrowing in thought. “It was parked across the street. There was a man... he waved at her. I couldn’t see clearly at first... but then...” her face paled. “Right! That man. I recognize him.”

She shivered slightly.

“That’s the creepy doctor from the hospital,” Ms. Janice said slowly, her brows drawing together.” The one who kept bothering Maya during your checkups. We always tried to steer clear when he was around.” Her voice dropped, laced with unease. “I never trusted him. He looked at her like... like she was something to own. Not a person. Like she was his.”

Jamie went stiff. “Beckett?!!”

Ms. Janice nodded grimly. “Yes. That’s him. I didn’t get to stop her-she was already getting into the car. But that was just after seven.”

James exchanged a look with the tall man behind him.

Monroe, tall and broad-shouldered, gave a brief, tight nod. His jaw clenched ever so slightly, and his eyes darkened with an unreadable weight.

“I’ll check the building’s footage,” he said, voice low and steady, before turning on his heel and disappearing down the hallway with purposeful strides.

Jamie’s fists clenched at his sides. His voice trembled as he spoke, eyes fixed on the floor.

“We have to find her. I knew something was wrong with that guy... That day at the hospital, he looked at her like she was already his.”

Cedella

The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

ter 21: The Truth Unfolds-2

James turned to face him fully. “What happened at the hospital?”

+25 Points

Jamie swallowed hard, voice low and uneven as the memory came flooding back.

“He showed up out of nowhere, with that stupid rose and takeout like it was some kind of peace offering. Maya told him no – clear, firm. But his smile... it wasn’t right. It twitched like something

snapped behind it. Cold. Like rejection was a thing he couldn’t accept.”

James said nothing, listening intently.

His hands clenched at his sides. “I told her he was trouble. She tried to laugh it off, but I saw it in

her eyes. She was scared.”

By the time Monroe returned, his jaw was tight.

“We have it,” he said, holding up his tablet. “Footage shows Ms. Thompson leaving the building just after 7:00 a.m. Beckett was already waiting across the street. They talked. She looked hesitant-

uncomfortable. But after a few minutes... she got in.”

Jamie looked like he was about to be sick.

Ms. Janice’s voice lowered, grim. “He was waiting for her.”

Monroe’s face darkened. “That’s not all. I pulled footage from last night too.”

He turned the screen toward James.

Monroe's voice dropped to a near whisper as he swiped through the footage on his tablet.

"Look here," he said, tapping the screen.

Maya's figure appeared under the flickering streetlight-shoulders hunched, footsteps quick and

uneven. She kept glancing over her shoulder, eyes wide, breath shallow.

Minutes later, a sleek black car rolled silently down the street, then parked across from her

building. The engine's hum was almost a whisper in the night. The car stayed there. Waiting. Watching.

"He planned this," Monroe said grimly.

James's voice dropped to a grim whisper, heavy with warning. "He never boarded that flight."

Jamie's voice broke, disbelief and dread tangled together. "What flight?"

James's eyes darkened with resolve as he met Jamie's.

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Chapter 21 The Truth Unfolds 2

+28 Points

“Mr. Blackwood saw how uncomfortable Maya was that day at the hospital. He has zero tolerance for anyone who crosses his people. So he ordered a deep background investigation on Dr. Beckett -and what we found was worse than we imagined. Beckett's been involved in things that are absolutely intolerable. Because of that, he was ordered transferred-banished far away. He was supposed to be gone before sunrise yesterday. The flight manifest says he was on it... but he wasn't. He deceived us all. He has other plans.. he's still out there. And he's dangerous.”

Jamie's breath hitched. His hands shook uncontrollably, fingers digging into his hair as if to hold himself together.

"He took her," Jamie whispered hoarsely. "What if he hurts her? What if she's terrified and alone and ... His voice broke, tears pricking the edges of his eyes. "I should've stopped her. I should've

known. She's all I have..."

His shoulders trembled as fury and helplessness collided in a storm of silent screams.

Ms. Janice stepped closer, placing a gentle hand on Jamie's shoulder. "Relax, sweetheart. They're going to help find Maya. Don't get too worked up, okay? That's not good for you. If something happens to you, Maya would be heartbroken."

Jamie nodded, but his knuckles were white. "She's all I have."

James met Jamie's fierce gaze with a steady, unwavering look. "I swear to you-we will find her. No

matter what."

He pulled out his phone, quickly saved Jamie's and Ms. Janice's numbers, and promised, "I'll keep you both updated the moment we know anything."

Before they left, Monroe gave Jamie a subtle nod – an unspoken promise of protection and respect.

Ms. Janice lingered by the doorway, her eyes heavy with silent prayers as she watched them disappear down the hall.

Back in the car, James exhaled hard as he slipped into the front seat. The air inside was thick with

tension.

He picked up his phone and hit Damien's private line.

It rang once.

"Talk." Damien's voice was sharp, clipped.

James didn't hesitate.

"It's Beckett. He never took the flight."

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 21 The Truth Unfolds 3

25 Points

Chapter 21: The Truth Unfolds-3

A beat.

"The manifest says he boarded, but it was a decoy. He's still here."

There was a harsh intake of breath on the other end. Then a violent curse –

“That son of a bitch.”

Damien’s voice dropped to a dangerous, guttural tone.

“He’ll pay for this.”

Then, lower: “Where is she?”

James forced himself to stay level.

“Last confirmed sighting was at 7:05 this morning. Outside her apartment.”

He swallowed.

“We’ve got footage. She looked hesitant. Uneasy. But she got into his car.”

Damien didn't respond immediately.

Damien's silence was a steel trap, the weight of it pressing down like a physical force. When he finally spoke, his voice was ice- sharp, cold, and deadly.

"Send me everything. Every frame Monroe pulled. High-res images. Timestamps. License plates. I

want a dossier-airtight."

James hesitated. "There's more."

Damien stilled on the other end.

James continued quietly.

"Monroe reviewed the building footage from last night, too. Maya was being followed. You can see it-she's tense, walking fast, looking over her shoulder."

He paused.

“And then... minutes later, the same vehicle shows up. Parks across the street and stays there for

hours.”

Damien didn’t speak.

James finished it.

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“It was Beckett. He was watching her. He planned this.”

The silence that followed was a storm barely restrained.

Then Damien’s voice came through, low and deadly: “This wasn’t random.”

“No, sir.”

“This was a fucking hunt.”

When he did, his voice was ice. “Find him.”

“We’re tracking traffic cams now. Monroe’s team is on it.”

“Tell them to move faster.”

A pause.

“And The boy?”

“Shaken. Trying to keep it together, but you can see it’s eating at him. He was the last person to see her. He’s blaming himself.”

Another pause. Damien’s voice was quieter now, but colder.

“Send someone to watch him. No noise. No panic. I want eyes on that kid until we know she’s safe. If Beckett so much as circles back-”

“He won’t get close,” James promised.

Damien growled under his breath, low and raw. “Keep me posted every hour. No detail too small. I want to know everything.”

Damien’s voice went flat-devoid of tone. “He laid a hand on her?”

There was a pause. Then, low and lethal-

“I’ll bury him myself.”

The line went dead.

James lowered the phone slowly, the weight of the moment heavy in his chest.

Silence hung in the car for a beat.

Then Monroe, who had been uncharacteristically quiet, spoke.

“Forgive me for asking...” His eyes flicked briefly to the road ahead. “This intern... she’s not just another employee, is she?”

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+28 P

James didn't answer right away.

But the flicker in his expression was answer enough.

Monroe gave a tight nod, lips pressed together. "Then we'll find her. No matter what it takes."

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

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Chapter 33: Ruin, Not Release-1

Damien's POV

The door clicked shut behind James, sealing Damien in a silence that pulsed with heat.

The city stretched beyond the windows-cold, bright, indifferent. But inside his office, everything burned.

He stood still, fists flexing at his sides, jaw clenched as Monroe's voice echoed in his head.

But his mind was no longer in the room.

It had drifted-back to the hospital. Back to her.

Maya.

He remembered the sterile hum of machines, the antiseptic chill that did nothing to touch the heat she stirred in him. The way she looked sleeping-lashes casting shadows over flushed skin, her mouth parted slightly, as if whispering secrets even in dreams.

One arm curled beneath her cheek.

The other resting near her heart.

She had looked fragile – beautiful.

And his.

He hadn't planned to stay. Just ten minutes, a check-in, then he'd leave.

But the moment he saw her, all that control slipped. Every rule he lived by blurred.

The memory struck sharp as glass-the moment he sat across from her, the air thick with unsaid words and raw, brittle tension.

“You were never supposed to be dragged into my world.”

He had said it carefully, as if confessing a secret he could never take back.

“I told myself you were just another intern. That I didn’t care.”

But the lie had been clear in his voice.

“I lied. I care. Too much.”

His words had landed between them like a claim, a vow, a warning.

<Chapter 33: Ruin, Not Release-1

“You’re not just an intern, Maya.”

He had let the words hang, letting them sink into the quiet room-and into her.

+25 Points

He remembered the flicker of confusion and something softer in her eyes. The way her fingers clenched the sheets as if trying to hold herself together.

He almost reached for her. Almost touched her cheek, her hair, the curve of her jaw. But he

held back.

Not because he didn't want her.

But because the moment he touched her, there would be no going back.

Yet he saw it-the subtle way her body responded when he was near, the unspoken pull

between them.

When Jamie had returned, calling her name softly, Damien had stepped back into his role. But inside, something fierce and dark had taken root.

She was his.

And no one-no woman in red bikinis, no island trips, no fucking man-hunting fantasies-would change that.

The report from Monroe had been clear: the upcoming ocular, the flirtation, the threats.

None of it mattered if he wasn't there.

But it was Monroe's voice echoing that lit the fuse:

"She said they were, and I quote, 'ridiculously sexy'-and that the hospital gown did nothing to conceal her curves."

He gritted his teeth.

He wanted to see them for himself. All of her. Skin flushed and soft beneath his hands, her breath catching as he traced every inch she'd been too innocent to offer to anyone else.

No one else was allowed to look.

Not Lin. Not Monroe. Not a single man on that damn island.

“She’d look killer in a red bikini...”

He slammed a hand on the desk.

She would. And that’s exactly why she wouldn’t wear it.

Chapter 33 Ruin, Not Release-1

Not unless it was for him.

Only him.

“They’re going man hunting... she might meet the love of her life there.”

The fuck she will.

His hands twitched at his sides, white-knuckled. His blood roared in his ears.

He rose from his chair.

Tried to pace.

Failed.

+25 Points

All he could see was her-half-asleep, soft and warm beneath hospital blankets. Then in that goddamn bikini. Then beneath him, spread open and gasping, saying his name like it was

sacred.

His body responded instantly-hard, aching, desperate.

He yanked at his tie, tossed it aside. Poured a drink, downed it.

But whiskey wasn't enough. Nothing was.

She was everywhere.

In his blood. In his mind. In his goddamn soul.

He collapsed into the chair again, jaw tight, eyes shut.

His hand twitched.

Dammit.

He could still see her.

Still feel her.

He leaned back in his chair and let the image take over-Maya, flushed and breathless, whispering his name like a prayer she didn't want answered.

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<Chapter 33: Ruin, Not Release-2

+25 Points

Chapter 33: Ruin, Not Release-2

His hand slipped beneath the waistband of his pants, hard already, aching with the force of

his need.

He pictured her beneath him.

Her thighs trembling.

Her back bowing.

His name spilling from her in broken, breathless moans.

“Damien... please...”

His eyes shut tight.

Stroke after stroke, his breathing turned ragged-but no matter how fast, how deep, it wasn't enough.

It wasn't real.

And he couldn't touch anyone else.

Not anymore.

His breath caught-hips jerking, muscles tightening.

He came with a harsh groan, spilling into his hand-but even that didn't satisfy him. Not even

close.

His release was hollow. Unsatisfying. Almost maddening in its emptiness.

Because it wasn't her.

And nothing would be enough until it was.

He leaned back, chest heaving.

Stared at the ceiling like it might offer answers.

Then slowly, he stood.

If he couldn't have release, he needed ruin.

Below the Surface

Chapter 33. Ruin, Not Release-2

The air down here stank of blood and bleach.

+25 Points

The underground room was silent but for the occasional groan of the man chained to the wall. Beckett was barely recognizable-his lips cracked, his tongue gone. Three fingers missing. His wrists raw from the manacles. A doctor sat nearby, cold and precise, stitching fresh wounds and ensuring he stayed alive.

Alive. But suffering.

Damien walked in slowly.

Beckett whimpered. Tried to speak.

Only silence came out.

“You don’t get to speak anymore,” Damien said, voice calm as poison. “You lost that privilege the moment you laid eyes on her.”

He circled him like a predator. Unhurried. Controlled. Deadly.

“You think pain is punishment?” His lips curved-mocking. “Pain is nothing. What I’m giving you is memory. Every day you wake up will be another reminder of what you did. And what you lost.”

Beckett’s shoulders shook.

Damien leaned in, lips near what remained of the bastard’s ear.

“She will heal. She will rise. And you? You’ll be nothing but dust in the corners of her past.”

Then, without warning, he drove his knee into Beckett's ribs-hard and deliberate. A sickening crack echoed, followed by a choked wheeze of pain.

Beckett coughed blood, body jerking against his restraints.

Damien straightened slowly, eyes void of mercy.

"Keep him alive," he said to the doctor. "He's got ten more days left to learn what pain really means."

And then he turned to leave-coat sharp at his shoulders, the scent of blood and whiskey trailing behind him like a promise.

Ashcroft was already waiting, two glasses in hand, the rich amber liquid catching the dim light like fire.

"Hell of a date night," he said with a smirk, offering Damien one of the glasses.

Damien took it without a word, jaw tight.

+25 Points

Ashcroft tipped his glass toward the hallway Damien had just emerged from-the one that still stank faintly of blood, sweat, and Beckett's fear. "You gonna tell her how you feel?" he asked, casually. "Or just keep jerking off in your office and torturing people underground?"

Damien's glare could've killed a lesser man.

But Ashcroft just chuckled, unfazed. "Hey, I'm just saying-flowery might be cheaper."

Damien said nothing. Just threw the entire drink back in one sharp movement, the burn down his throat barely registering.

But even whiskey couldn't touch it.

Not the rage. Not the heat.

Not when every part of him still throbbed for her-mind, body, soul.

Not when the memory of her voice, her eyes, the way her fingers clutched the hospital sheets while she looked up at him like he was both danger and salvation-was burned into him.

Ashcroft leaned against the wall beside him, swirling his drink lazily. “You’re a goddamn menace when you’re in love.”

“I’m not-”

“Oh, please.” Ashcroft rolled his eyes. “You mutilated a man, D. Not because he was a threat to the company. But because he touched her.”

Silence stretched.

Damien’s grip on the glass tightened.

“She’s not ready,” he muttered. “Not for my world.”

Ashcroft looked at him, gaze finally softening. “Maybe. But she looked like she could survive it. And you... you looked at her like you couldn’t survive without her.”

Damien didn’t respond.

He couldn’t.

Because that part-that last part-was the one truth he couldn’t outrun.

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 22 Dark Pursuits-2

75 Points

Chapter 22: Dark Pursuits-2

Damien didn't even glance at the screen. He grabbed it in one swift motion, already knowing who it

was.

"Talk," he said, his voice like gravel over ice.

James's voice was tense but controlled. "We found a property registered under Beckett-hidden, undeclared, off the grid. It's a lake house outside the city. We're moving in."

"Send me the address. Now," Damien ordered, his voice a blade slicing through the quiet.

The moment the call ended, he was already shrugging into his coat. Sunlight poured through the floor-to-ceiling windows of his office, gilding the hard wood floors and casting long, sterile shadows – but nothing about the morning felt bright.

His jaw was tight. His stride, unforgiving.

The warmth of the late morning air didn't touch him as he stepped outside.

Only the fury did.

Damien stepped out of his office with purpose, his coat already in hand. The polished floors of the executive wing echoed under his shoes, but he barely registered the sound. His expression was carved from ice-jaw set, eyes sharp, and burning beneath the surface.

The elevator ride down was silent.

When the doors opened at the ground level, his driver was already waiting.

A sleek black SUV idled at the curb in front of the building's private entrance, engine humming, tinted windows glinting under the morning sun. As Damien approached, the driver stepped out immediately and opened the back door without a word.

Damien slid in, pulling the door shut with a sharp click.

Damien pulled out his phone from his coat pocket-the one that only had five numbers in it. The one he used when the law was an obstacle, not a solution.

He hit the speed dial.

One ring.

A familiar voice answered, casual and amused. “Thought you were dead. What’s the emergency- stock market crash or are we moving a body?”

“I need your help,” Damien said, his voice quiet. Tense.

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The joking vanished like smoke. “Talk to me.”

“She’s gone.”

A pause.

“Who?”

Damien hesitated, jaw clenched. “Maya.”

There was silence.

Then the voice said slowly, “Maya Thompson?”

Damien stiffened. “...You know?”

+25 Points

A low chuckle rolled through the line. “I know everything Blackwood. Don’t insult me. One of my guys flagged it. Said your man Horton was digging hard into someone named Beckett.”

Silence.

Damien’s grip tightened. “She matters.”

That was all.

But it was enough.

“You really care about this one, huh?” his friend asked, softer now. “Didn’t think we’d see the day.”

Damien didn’t answer immediately.

“Neither did I,” he admitted. “But if he lays a hand on her...”

“He won’t.” The voice turned to steel. “Because we’ll get to him first.”

Silence settled. Not empty. Just full.

Then, casually, like they hadn’t just discussed hunting a man down, the voice added with a smirk: Same place? I’ll have the boys warm the room. Chains, spotlight, plastic sheets—your usual welcome package? Or should I add rose petals and candles?”

A ghost of a smirk tugged at Damien’s lips. “Just make sure he stays alive long enough to

understand what he did.”

His friend gave a low whistle. “Shit. You’re serious. Haven’t seen you like this since...”

He didn’t finish the sentence. He didn’t have to.

Damien’s voice dropped to a whisper.

“He laid a hand on her.”

A pause, then softer: “I’ll handle this personally.”

Damien exhaled, tension still coiled like wire under his skin. “Thank you.”

25 Points

“Just remember,” the man added with a faint smirk, “you rule the empire everyone sees. But I keep the kingdom no one dares to whisper about. If you’re crossing lines again-be sure.”

“I crossed it the second he took her.”

His friend laughed. “Atta boy. I’ll see you soon, Blackwood.”

The call ended.

They had grown up together – brothers not by blood, but by survival. Where Damien built empires in the daylight, his best friend ruled the shadows, commanding a world where names could vanish, and lives could be erased without a whisper. They ruled different realms—one could crash economies with a signature; the other could collapse a kingdom with a bullet.

Damien stared out the window, the sunlight catching the sharp line of his jaw as the car slipped

into motion.

He didn't speak during the drive. Rage sat beside him like a living thing, breathing down his neck.

No one touched what was his.

Not without consequences.

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 23: In the Lion's Den-1

Maya stirred to the sound of birdsong-soft, distant, too peaceful to be real.

Her head pounded. Her mouth was dry. Her limbs felt like they were wrapped in lead.

+25 Punits

She tried to sit up, but her body resisted. Every movement was sluggish, like she was swimming through molasses. Her vision blurred, then slowly adjusted to the dim light filtering through unfamiliar curtains.

Wooden walls. A high ceiling with exposed beams. A fireplace.

She wasn't in her bed. Not even close.

The realization hit her like a jolt of electricity. Her breath caught in her throat.

She was on a couch. A blanket draped over her. Her shoes gone. Her coat folded neatly on a nearby chair.

Panic clawed at her chest.

Where am I?

Then –

Footsteps.

Maya froze.

The soft creak of floorboards grew louder until a figure appeared in the doorway.

Beckett.

He carried a steaming mug in his hand, his smile too wide, too calm. Like none of this was wrong.

“There she is,” he said warmly, as if greeting her in a dream. “I was starting to think you’d sleep all day.”

Maya’s heart thundered in her chest. She forced her lips to part. “Where... are we?”

Beckett crossed the room and placed the mug on the coffee table in front of her. “Just outside the city. My lake house. Quiet, peaceful-no interruptions. Just you and me.”

She flinched before she could stop herself.

Beckett’s expression softened, almost tender. “You were exhausted. You passed out in the car. I figured you needed rest.” He crouched beside her, his eyes scanning her face too carefully. “I made tea. Chamomile. Thought it might help you feel better.”

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Maya's gaze darted toward the front door-but it was too far, and Beckett was too close.

"Why did you bring me here?" she asked, her voice a hoarse whisper.

+25 Pents

Beckett tilted his head. "Because we needed this. Time. Space. Away from all the noise." He reached out, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear. "You're always running, Maya. Always working, always hiding behind something. But not anymore."

She flinched again, shrinking slightly into the couch.

“I don’t understand,” Maya said carefully, voice trembling. “You said fifteen minutes. Coffee. As friends. You said this was goodbye-that you were leaving.”

Beckett’s smile twisted, cold and empty. It didn’t reach his eyes.

“That was before I realized the truth,” he said, voice low and venomous. “Before I saw that you needed saving. From that place. From him.”

Maya’s stomach dropped.

“What are you talking about?” she whispered, fear creeping in.

Beckett chuckled-a sinister, dark sound that crawled under her skin. “Stop pretending, Maya. Stop acting like you’re some innocent, pure little girl. How else do you think you got the internship at Blackwood Enterprises? It’s a no-brainer. You used your body. You’re Blackwood’s newest... bitch.”

His voice tightened, thick with hate. “Like he owns you.”

Maya’s fingers clenched the edge of the blanket, knuckles white as ice.

“That’s not true! I don’t belong to anyone,” she said, forcing her voice steady despite the rising

panic.

Beckett laughed again, but it was hollow-no humor, only cruelty. “Liar. That’s what you want to believe. But he doesn’t see you, Maya. Not like I do. Not like I always have.”

She swallowed hard, heart pounding. “You don’t know anything about me.”

“I know enough.” Beckett rose and stalked toward the window, his silhouette sharp against the pale light. “I watched you for months before I even spoke. You’re different. Not like the others. You’re special.”

He turned, eyes gleaming with dark obsession.

“And now that I finally have you,” he whispered, voice low and dangerous, “I’m not letting you go.” Maya’s breath hitched, but she forced a faint nod, hiding the panic clawing inside her. Her instincts screamed: stay calm. Keep him talking.

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hapter 23 in the Lion's Den 1

Play along. Stay alive.

29 Ponits

“There has to be some misunderstanding,” she said quietly, voice steady but soft. “I just started my

internship a week ago. Today’s my official first day.” She swallowed hard, then added, “I’ve only

crossed paths with Mr. Blackwood three times... I don’t know him personally. I—”

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Vote

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 23: In the Lion's Den-2

Beckett's smile curled again, cruel and sharp, cutting her off mid-sentence.

+25 Points

"Three times? Three too many." His voice was low, dripping with venom. "And what did you two do during those times, huh? Did he fuck you hard in the break room? Bend you over that luxurious desk? Or maybe... you rode him hard inside the conference room after hours?"

His eyes blazed with jealous fire.

"You don't have to pretend anymore, Maya. None of it matters now. I'll erase every trace of his touch from your body. And you'll crave only mine."

He threw back his head and let out a dark, chilling laugh.

"From now on... it'll be just you and me," Beckett murmured, voice thick with obsession. "We'll start over. I don't care if you're not pure anymore... I still want you. Every inch of you-your body, your

soul. You'll scream only my name."

His eyes darkened with a dangerous hunger. “And when I’m done with you... when I’ve had enough... maybe I’ll send you back to Blackwood. Let him enjoy the leftovers.”

A cruel smirk twisted his lips. “Well... that is, if he even wants you back.”

The words hung in the stale air, a twisted promise and a threat wrapped in one.

Maya’s heart pounded fiercely against her ribs, a wild, chaotic rhythm of fear and revulsion. Panic clawed at her throat, tightening her chest like a vice. Every instinct screamed to run, to fight-to

scream until someone heard her.

But her body was frozen, trapped beneath his predatory gaze. The cold weight of his words seeped deep into her bones, threatening to suffocate the last spark of hope inside her.

He’s insane, she thought, twisting everything, trying to make me believe I’m already lost-already

his. But I’m not.

The tears stung at the edges of her eyes, but she blinked them back fiercely, refusing to give him

that victory.

Her voice was a trembling whisper, but filled with stubborn steel. “You’re wrong. You don’t own

1. Not now. Not ever.”

Beckett’s smile vanished, twisted into something violent, unhinged.

“No, Maya!” he snapped, voice cracking with fury. “You’re wrong! You’re mine-and you can’t do anything about it!”

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His eyes blazed with obsession, hands twitching at his sides.

+21 Puurs

“If I were you,” he growled, stalking closer to the bed, “I’d surrender and accept my fate. When I

return... we’ll move on to the honeymoon phase.”

He leaned down slowly, his breath hot and disgusting against her cheek.

“I can’t wait to taste you.”

Maya jerked back, heart thundering in her chest. “Don’t-!”

She pushed him away with trembling hands, her palms colliding with his chest. The contact was

weak, but sharp with intent. Her stomach turned as his touch lingered far too long before he let her

Beckett stumbled back half a step, and then-he laughed.

A low, delighted sound.

“Feisty,” he purred, straightening himself with an unsettling calm. “I love it.”

He smoothed down his shirt, adjusted the cuffs, then gave her one last, lingering look.

“That’s fine. We have plenty of time.”

Without another word, he turned and walked toward the door. The sound of the lock clicking shut

echoed like a gunshot in the silence that followed.

Maya stared at the door, her breath ragged, fury and terror clashing inside her like a storm.

But the flame inside her didn't flicker out.

I will survive this. I will fight. I have to... for Jaime.

Cedella

Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Outside the Lake House

The gravel crunched softly under the tires as James brought the black SUV to a slow stop beneath a thick canopy of pine trees. Beyond the brush, the lake shimmered quietly under the late afternoon light, but the house ahead stood still—its windows like blank, watchful eyes.

It was nearly 4:00 PM by the time they arrived. The lake house sat so far outside the city limits that

it had taken nearly three hours to reach from the urban center.

Monroe raised a pair of binoculars, sweeping slowly across the structure. “No movement. Curtains drawn. But the car matches Beckett’s-license plate lines up with what we pulled.”

James nodded grimly. “Then we’re in the right place.”

They didn’t exit.

Too risky.

Instead, they waited-watching, listening.

Five minutes later, the low rumble of engines echoed through the trees. Two matte-black SUVs came to a quiet halt behind them. The moment the doors opened, four men stepped out from one vehicle-dressed in tactical black, moving in fluid, practiced formation.

From the second SUV, a window rolled down smoothly.

A sharp-jawed man with slate-gray eyes leaned out, a cigarette dangling loosely from the corner of his mouth. His smirk was lazy, but the air around him tensed.

“Horton,” he said, voice casual-but carrying weight.

James stepped forward with a respectful bow. “Mr. Ashcroft.”

Ashcroft’s grin tugged slightly wider. “Been a while. Still running cleanup duty for the king?”

James’s mouth twitched, but he didn’t take the bait. “Yes, sir.”

Ashcroft exhaled smoke, his eyes shifting to the lake house in the distance.

“So. This is it?”

“Yes. Beckett’s vehicle is parked in the rear. No signs of guards. Just him and Ms. Thompson

inside, we assume.”

At the sound of Maya's name, Ashcroft's gaze sharpened.

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Chapter 24 Silent Perimeter 1

"Stand down, gentlemen," he said, gesturing lazily to James and Monroe. "This one's ours.
I

promised Damien a gift."

He winked, the smile never touching his eyes.

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He turned to his men, all shadows and steel. “Surround the property. Quiet. No gaps. Tree line to

shoreline. No one in. No one out. And no radio chatter unless it’s urgent.”

Without a word, the men moved-dissolving into the woods like phantoms.

The door opened and he stepped out-tall, lean, dressed in dark layers. The kind of man who

answered to no one and played by rules that didn’t exist on paper.

“Understood,” James said quietly, stepping back. He knew better than to interfere when Ashcroft

was involved.

The silence that followed felt thick-taut with the weight of what was coming.

Then, the final SUV arrived.

Sleek. Black. Deliberate in its approach.

It rolled to a stop beside Ashcroft's vehicle. Before the driver could even get out, the rear door

opened.

Damien stepped out-composed and cold, the storm inside him wrapped in layers of tailored steel.

James moved to meet him immediately. "Sir."

Damien's eyes never left the house. "Where is she?"

Monroe answered at once. "Inside. We didn't breach. Mr. Ashcroft advised we hold position."

Damien's gaze flicked to his oldest friend, now leaning against the SUV with arms crossed and the cigarette replaced by a blade-thin smile.

Ashcroft pushed off the vehicle with a low chuckle. “What-another boardroom full of boring suits

held you up?”

Damien didn’t blink. “And you spent the morning erasing names from ledgers no one dares

mention.”

Ashcroft whistled. “Touché.”

They exchanged a look-long, quiet. There was history there. Brotherhood, blood, and fire.

Then Damien’s focus snapped back to the lake house. “Any signs of struggle?”

Monroe gave a slight shake of his head. “None. It’s quiet. Too quiet.”

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Damien's jaw tightened. The silence didn't soothe him. It only stoked the fire burning in his chest.

Ashcroft followed his gaze. "We've got the perimeter sealed. My men are in the trees, dock, roofline-full coverage. But if he senses we're here, he could panic. We wait for sundown. Less risk,

better control."

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 24 Silent Perimeter ?

+25 Pomts

Chapter 24: Silent Perimeter-2

Damien's voice dropped, cold and clipped. "And if he touches her before then?"

Ashcroft's expression darkened. "Then we carve through that door before he finishes his breath. And I hand you the bastard-limbs optional."

A gust of wind stirred through the trees.

Damien's eyes burned. "No. I want him whole. I want him screaming."

Ashcroft grinned. "Now we're speaking the same language."

As the sun began its slow descent, stretching long shadows across the earth, the air shifted.

A storm was coming.

And when the light finally died behind the trees... Hell was coming with it.

Inside the Lake House

The lock clicked into place.

Maya didn't breathe-not yet. She listened. Waited. Counted the seconds in her head.

Ten. Fifteen.

No footsteps. No creaking floorboards. No return.

Just silence.

Her limbs still felt like lead, but she forced herself up, wrapping the scratchy blanket around her like a shield. Her knees nearly buckled beneath her, but she stayed standing. Her fingers dug into the fireplace poker beside the hearth-cold, heavy, awkward-but a weapon was a weapon.

She edged closer to the curtained window and carefully peeled back a corner.

Trees. Stillness. Shadows dancing in the fading afternoon light.

But something... shifted.

A flicker in the woods? She couldn't be sure.

Her heart pounded, but not just from fear. Somewhere deep inside, buried beneath the haze and the panic, hope sparked.

Someone was coming. They had to be.

Jamie needed her to come home.

Chapter 24 Silent Peameter 2

She swallowed hard, her throat dry.

Hold on, she told herself. Just hold on.

But Beckett's words circled like vultures in her mind.

"You're Blackwood's newest bitch."

The accusation hadn't just scared her – it had shaken her.

25 Points

She sank to the floor behind the couch, still gripping the poker. Her body trembled – not just from

adrenaline, but rage.

Where did he get that idea?

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How could he look at her struggling to make ends meet, barely hanging on for her brother,

working two jobs just to survive-and think she slept her way into anything

She didn't even know Damien Blackwood.

Three meetings. Barely any words exchanged. He was her boss. Intimidating, yes. Magnetic in a way that made her chest tighten-but utterly out of reach. And entirely uninterested. Wasn't he?

She shook her head. Now wasn't the time to think about that.

This wasn't about Damien.

This was about survival.

This was about Jamie – his thin shoulders, his worried eyes, the way he always checked the clock when she was late. If she didn't make it back... if Beckett did whatever it was he was planning to do

– No.

She pressed her fist to her mouth to muffle a sob, holding the tears in.

She couldn't break down now.

"I'm going to make it home," she whispered into the stillness. "No matter what."

She thought of Jamie's favorite cereal waiting in the cupboard. The sketchbook he left open on the kitchen table. The way he said her name when he was scared but trying not to show it.

I have to live. I have to fight. I have to get back to him.

A floorboard creaked above her. Her spine stiffened.

He was upstairs again.

Maybe preparing for whatever came next.”

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Chapter 24 Silent Perimeter-2

A cold shiver rippled through her. Her grip tightened around the poker.

Whatever happened when that door opened again... she wouldn't go quietly.

Upstairs – Beckett's POV

+28 Points

The water hissed from the faucet, echoing through the stark, wood-paneled bathroom as Beckett

rolled up his sleeves and washed his hands meticulously. Again. And again.

The sink was already spotless, but he scrubbed as if washing away something invisible.

Something impure.

Blackwood.

The name twisted through his mind like poison.

You touched her, he thought bitterly, fingers curling tight around the porcelain basin. Marked what

doesn't belong to you.

He leaned forward, staring into the mirror above the sink.

Dark eyes. Tousled hair. A smile that used to charm patients, colleagues... But now?

That smile had rotted.

His reflection looked back at him like a stranger.

He didn't blink.

"Soon," he whispered to himself. "Soon she'll understand."

He dried his hands carefully on a black towel and stepped out into the hall. The second floor creaked under his weight, and part of him knew-she'd heard him.

Good.

Let her wonder what was coming. Let her think about him.

Downstairs, Maya was no longer asleep. He could feel it. Like a current in the air.

He smiled again, this time to himself.

She'll come around. They always did.

He turned and entered the master bedroom.

The bed was already prepared-clean sheets, dim lighting, a vase of fresh wildflowers on the side table. He'd picked them on his last trip up here, before he'd even known for certain he would bring her. But part of him always had.

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Chapter 24 Silent Perimeter 2

She was made for this. For him.

It didn't matter what she said. Or how she looked at him with those wide, terrified eyes.

Fear was temporary.

Once she let go of the world that had used her up-once she stopped clinging to lies about Blackwood, about innocence, about being “untouched”-she’d see it clearly.

That they were meant to be.

She would thank him for saving her.

For freeing her from a man like Blackwood.

+25 Posts

Beckett opened the closet, revealing a row of carefully arranged clothes-some his, some not. His fingers brushed over the soft cotton of a folded sweater.

One of Maya’s. He’d taken it months ago, from the hospital.

He pressed it to his face and inhaled deeply.

His pulse quickened.

Soon, everything would be perfect. The two of them, hidden from the world. Far from the corruption of Blackwood Enterprises. From the cold city that had failed her.

Here, she would be his.

Only his.

He laid the sweater gently across the bed, then moved to the dresser. Inside, a set of unmarked syringes and sedatives gleamed under the soft overhead light-lined up with obsessive precision.

Beckett stared at them for a long moment, fingers trailing just above the glass vials.

Insurance.

In case she got too loud... too difficult.

His gaze flicked to the clock. Dusk was falling fast. Time was almost up.

He closed the drawer with deliberate care, then turned to look at the bed—at the flowers, the folded sweater, the silent promise of what came next.

A soft hum left his throat.

“Tonight,” he whispered to no one, voice reverent. “She becomes mine.”

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

Chapter 25: The Breach-1

The sun had nearly vanished beyond the trees, casting long, skeletal shadows across the cabin

walls.

Upstairs, Beckett stood motionless by the window, head tilted slightly as he peered through the

curtain.

Nothing.

Just trees.

Just the last breath of light bleeding from the sky.

But... something tugged at the edge of his awareness.

A sound? A shift? A whisper in the stillness?

He squinted harder, eyes scanning the fading treeline. For a moment, he thought he saw movement-something soft and unnatural against the branches.

But when he looked again, the woods were undisturbed.

Just wind. Just nerves.

Or so they wanted him to think.

His jaw relaxed as his smile twisted into something wild, triumphant.

“You’re nothing compared to me, Blackwood! I outsmarted you! My plan is solid. I won!”

Downstairs, Maya crouched behind the couch, her fingers locked so tightly around the cold fireplace poker that her knuckles burned white.

Her knees dug into the floor, her breathing shallow, controlled.

The temperature in the room had dropped with the setting sun. Shadows now pooled in the corners. The fire had long since died. But the cold that crept in wasn’t just from the air.

It was the kind that came with knowing something terrible was about to happen.

And then... Click.

The door at the top of the stairs opened.

Footsteps.

Slow. Calculated.

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Beckett descended like a man walking into a dream of his own making, the last slivers of sunset catching the edge of the syringe in his hand. His smile was serene.

“Oh, honey...” he purred, voice thick with something foul. “Are you ready?”

Maya’s breath caught. She didn’t move. Not yet.

Beckett moved to the center of the room, gesturing grandly with the syringe like a magician about

to reveal a final trick.

“Did you know the transfer story was actually true?” he said, laughing bitterly. “But it’s bullshit. Imagine this: out of nowhere, the director tells me I offended someone’-” he raised two fingers in mocking air quotes-“and suddenly I’m being reassigned. Humanitarian mission. Pfft. As if I’d waste my brilliance on that crap.”

His laughter rang sharp and ugly.

“They wanted me gone before sunrise, Maya. That’s what they said.” He leaned in slightly, his eyes gleaming. “But guess what? I’m not some pushover. I paid someone to take that flight-using my

identity.”

He stepped closer to the couch.

“And eventually, I figured it out. It all made sense. Blackwood.”

Her stomach clenched.

“You told your man-whore about me, didn’t you? That some good-looking doctor was chasing you? And of course, his ego couldn’t take it. He probably realized I’m better than him in every way. So he pulled strings. Had me erased. Ordered out.” Beckett spat the words.

“Hah! In his dreams!”

He licked his lips. “I always get what I want, Maya. And this time-it’s YOU.”

He was pacing now, unhinged, manic.

“You were so easy. I told you it was goodbye-and you believed me. God, you even smiled! Hahahaha... you sweet, tired little fool. All I had to do was turn on the AC. You didn’t even notice.”

He tapped his temple.

“I put something in the airflow. Enough to knock you out. Admirable, though-considering how sleep-deprived you were, I expected you to be out in minutes. But no-you fought it. I had to drink four liters of water just to keep myself upright!”

He howled with laughter.

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“You’re something else, Maya. Really. Didn’t expect you to sleep seven hours! SEVENI

His steps grew slower, darker.

“But now... it’s time.” His voice dropped. “Don’t worry-I’ll be gentle. I promise.”

He took one more step forward-

And Maya sprang from behind the couch with a cry of pure instinct, swinging the poker with everything she had.

Crack!

It connected hard with his thigh.

Beckett let out a monstrous, guttural scream, stumbling to the side and dropping the syringe.

LUCK DRAW >

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The Billionaire's Intern (Maya Thompson)

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Chapter 25: The Breach-2

“YOU BITCH!”

Maya didn't wait – she ran for the door, legs shaky, vision swimming. Her body was still weak, but adrenaline pushed her forward. She reached for the doorknob –

Only to be yanked backward by a brutal, inhuman force.

“No-NO!” she screamed, nails clawing at the floor.

Beckett dragged her back, panting, limping, rage transforming his face into something monstrous.

“You stabbed me?! Still playing hard to get? Let's see how long that lasts!”

He shoved her down and ripped the syringe from his pocket with shaking hands.

Maya fought wildly – kicking, scratching -but she was slower now, weaker, every movement

sluggish.

The needle plunged into her arm.

She screamed. He held her down.

Seconds passed.

And then the room began to tilt.

Her vision blurred. The shadows stretched. Her limbs went heavy.

“Mmm... that’s it,” Beckett whispered, brushing the hair from her cheek as she sagged against the

floor. “There we go...”

When she stopped moving, he let out a low, shuddering breath.

Maya's blouse had torn in the struggle. One of the buttons had snapped, revealing the curve of her chest, her black lace bra strained against her now-still form.

Beckett's eyes darkened with lust.

He crouched beside her, fingers trembling as they reached for the open fabric.

"So beautiful," he murmured. "So perfect."

He hooked a finger beneath the edge of her blouse and tore it wider, like a child unwrapping a long-awaited gift-eager, trembling, and disturbingly delighted.

He took his time, eyes fixed on her now bare chest-only the delicate black lace of her bra shielding what lay beneath. For a moment, he simply stared, drinking her in.

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Chapter 25 The Breach-2

His breathing deepened.

The hunger in his gaze sharpened, turning darker, hotter.

His fingers twitched with anticipation.

Just a little closer.

Just a little more.

+25 Party

He reached out-less than an inch away, his hand trembling with the need to touch, to know how

she felt under his skin-

When suddenly -

CRASH!

The door exploded inward.

Beckett turned -

Too late.

One of Ashcroft's men tackled him like a wrecking ball, slamming him into the ground.

Beckett screamed, struggling, snarling like a trapped animal as fists pummeled his face.

“Maya!” a voice thundered behind them.

Damien stepped inside – and froze.

His eyes locked on the scene.

Beckett – bleeding, wild-eyed, and pinned beneath the brute force of one of Ashcroft’s men.

And Maya – unconscious. Half-naked, Bruised.

His chest rose with a violent breath.

Something primal ripped through him.

And then-stillness.

Not around him.

Inside him.

The kind of stillness that came just before a man broke apart.

Outside, seconds earlier

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Chapter 25 The Breach 2

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Damien's ears caught it first-a scream tearing through the silence like a blade. Raw. Broken. The howl of a man undone, furious and desperate.

Beckett.

Then another cry, softer but no less desperate. Maya.

He didn't wait for Ashcroft's signal. He surged forward, heart hammering, eyes locked on the house. The rest fell in behind him without hesitation.

Leaves and mud tore beneath their boots, pounding like war drums as they charged through the underbrush toward the clearing.

Ashcroft's men, already stationed around the lake house, moved instantly at the first scream. No orders needed. Just a word on what must be done-and they executed with deadly precision,

knowing exactly when and how to strike.

Inside was chaos.

Beckett was on the floor, pinned beneath one of Ashcroft's men. His body had hit the hardwood with a sickening crash that rattled the walls. Now he was choking under a thick forearm, fists pummeling his face with bone-breaking force.

An empty syringe glinted on the ground-just inches from where Maya lay unconscious.

Damien's world narrowed to her.

Maya.

She was crumpled on the floor near the couch, limp-her limbs twisted unnaturally from where she must have fallen. Her blouse was torn open, black lace barely shielding her chest. A single button dangled uselessly by a thread. Her skirt had ridden up, likely during the struggle-exposing one thigh, her pale legs bare and motionless.

Her skin looked cold. Too cold.

And for a second, everything in Damien stopped.

His breath. His thoughts. His heart.

The room around him blurred. Blood thundered in his ears.

A sharp, tight sound-he realized too late-was coming from his own clenched teeth.

Then he crossed the room in three long strides, falling to his knees beside her. His jacket came off in one swift, precise motion-wrapped around her like something sacred. Shielded.

“Maya.” His voice was low, desperate. “Maya-look at me.”

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Chapter 25 The Breach 2

No response.

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He reached out-gently brushing hair from her face, checking her pulse, fingers trembling despite

his control.

Alive. Faint, but there.

His jaw clenched. A muscle ticked.

He turned his head just enough to speak to Ashcroft without taking his eyes off her.

“Don’t kill him.”

Ashcroft, who had just entered behind him, raised a brow.

Damien’s voice dropped-dark and lethal.

“Not yet.”

THO

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