Intern 61

Chapter 61

The room felt emptier after he left.

Not quiet-she'd lived with quiet before. But hollow. Like something had shifted, some invisible cord pulled taut, then cut clean through.

Maya lay still for a long time, barely breathing, staring at the closed door as if it might open again. As if he might return.

But he didn't.

And the longer she waited, the more impossible it became to believe he'd been there at all.

She pressed her fingers against her lips, not knowing why. They tingled. Like they'd tasted something dangerous. Like they'd spoken something they shouldn't have.

Damien.

She'd said his name. She'd breathed it like it belonged to her.

And he let her.

No. Not let-wanted her to.

That name wasn’t supposed to belong in her mouth. Not outside work. Not whispered like a secret.

But she’d said it.

And something in her had come alive when she did.

Morning arrived too soon.

Ms. Janice and Jamie returned with breakfast-warm soup, soft bread, gentle words. Maya tried to smile through it all, but her body was slow, her mind slower. Her thoughts kept catching on things she couldn’t say out loud.

On eyes that burned.

On promises spoken like orders.

On the soft, dark edge of his voice when he told her:

“If I let someone in… they’re mine.”

Mine.

By afternoon, she was alone again.

James had stopped by earlier to check on her and collect her signature for Jamie’s medical records transfer. Maya had tried to argue-softly but firmly-that it wasn’t necessary, that they couldn’t afford care at a hospital like this.

But James had remained composed, almost gentle. “There’s nothing you need to worry about,” he’d said. “Everything’s already been arranged. We just need your signature-as Jamie’s legal guardian.”

Jamie, seated beside Ms. Janice with his hoodie half-zipped and a smile tugging at the corner of his lips, had looked more alive than he had in weeks.

“For real?” he’d asked James, eyes wide. “Like… no more clinic waitlists? No more bouncing around?”

James nodded once. “You’ll be under Dr. Anderson’s care full-time.”

He turned to Maya, his expression steady.

“He’s a senior specialist in congenital heart defects-one of the best in the country. Dr. Brown will be based here too, going forward. Mr. Blackwood insisted. He wanted Jamie to have someone familiar through the transition, someone he already trusts. Everything’s covered.”

Jamie turned to Maya then, grin breaking free. “This means I can get the surgery sooner, right? I can.. I can actually do it.”

Ms. Janice had squeezed his shoulder gently, her own eyes misty with quiet relief. “You will, sweetheart. And after that, it’s going to get easier. A real chance. Thanks to Mr. Blackwood…”

She leaned closer and whispered softly,

“You’re a good person, Maya-with a pure heart. That’s why you’re blessed. You’re lucky to have an employer like Mr. Blackwood. He’s a good man. You don’t see men like him very often, darling. Not ones who give without expecting anything in return. That man… he’s something else.”

Maya’s mind echoed the words-“give without expecting anything in return?” Not yet. “That man… he’s something else.” He was more than that.

He stirred something inside her she hadn’t known existed. He had shifted the steady course of her life, upended her carefully guarded emotions, and left her standing somewhere

unfamiliar-vulnerable, yet oddly alive.

She simply nodded, too stunned to speak, her heart full and aching all at once.

Then he'd left with Jamie and Ms. Janice to meet Dr. Brown for his follow-up check and discharge clearance.

The room was quiet again.

But Maya wasn't.

Her phone dinged softly.

She glanced down, unlocking the screen. Two new emails from HR.

The first read:

Subject: Congratulations on Completing Your Internship at Blackwood Enterprises

Dear Ms. Thompson,

We are pleased to inform you that you have successfully completed your internship at Blackwood Enterprises. Your completion certification has been signed off and sent directly to your university. We congratulate you on this achievement and welcome you to the next chapter of your career.