Intern 67

Chapter 67

And though he'd never say it aloud, the faintest glimmer of approval flickered across his features.

Maya pulled back slowly, brushing Jamie's hair from his eyes, then turned to James.

"Thank you," she said softly. Her eyes found his, and for the first time, she let herself really mean it. "For everything."

James gave a small nod-respectful, almost formal. But there was something warmer in the way he replied.

"Don't thank me, I'm just following orders." He paused, a slow smile curling at the corner of his mouth. "But if I'm honest, I wouldn't mind being the one to keep Mr. Blackwood's mood…

satisfied."

Maya's eyes widened. Heat rose in her cheeks before she could stop it.

James smiled like he'd just won something.

“By the way.. Ms. Janice asked to be dropped off at the apartment,” he said, stepping forward with a tablet in hand. “She said she wants to make Jamie’s favorite lasagna to celebrate. She’ll bring it over later for dinner.”

Jamie grinned wide at that. Maya’s heart softened.

James continued, voice calm and precise.

“All of Jamie’s medical records have been transferred. Dr. Anderson may stop by today or tomorrow to meet with the both of you and begin discussing the next steps.”

He glanced down at the tablet.

“Dr. Brown’s transfer is also in progress. He should be settled here by the end of the week.”

Maya’s lips parted in surprise. She hadn’t expected that.

But James wasn’t done.

“Jamie’s case has been placed on the hospital’s priority list. Mr. Blackwood personally requested it.” His gaze lingered on her just long enough to make the meaning clear. “You have nothing to worry about.”

He paused, voice lowering slightly-firmer, almost gentle.

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“He’s in good hands. Everything is covered. All you need to focus on… is getting better. Be strong-for yourself. For Jamie. Especially with the surgery ahead.”

Maya stood there, stunned.

It was too much-too fast, too generous, too surreal.

But it was real. It was happening.

Because of Damien.

There was a soft knock at the door.

Monroe peeked his head in, already smiling.

“Hope I’m not interrupting,” he said. “Came to see if the young man wanted anything from the canteen. They’ve got fresh pastries this time-not the dry kind, I promise.”

Jamie’s eyes lit up.

“Yes, please!” he turned to Maya quickly.

“Can I go, May? Just for a few minutes?”

She nodded, smoothing his hair again. “Of course. Go get your pastry fix.”

Jamie hurried to Monroe’s side, practically buzzing with energy. Monroe gave Maya a gentle nod, then glanced at James.

“I’ll keep an eye on him. Just text if you need anything.”

The door clicked shut behind them.

Silence settled in its place-quiet but heavy.

James moved to the window, checking something on his tablet. Maya stood still, arms crossed loosely over her chest, unsure what to say.

But the words pushed their way out anyway.

“Mr. Horton…” her voice was soft. Hesitant. “All of this… it’s too fast.”

James paused, looking up from his screen.

She swallowed, her throat tight.

“Why me? What does he want from me?”

Her voice cracked at the edge-just slightly-but James didn’t flinch. He didn’t offer comfort,

or lies, or flattery.

He simply held her gaze.

Measured. Steady. Unshaken.

say this-he “That’s something only Mr. Blackwood can answer,” he said calmly. “But I’ll doesn’t do anything without reason. If he chose to help you… it’s because he already decided you’re worth it.”

Maya looked down, the words heavier than she expected.

Worth it.

She didn’t feel it. Not yet.

Not when everything still felt like it could disappear.

But James’s voice remained level-solid.

“You don’t owe him answers. Just breathe. One step at a time.”

Maya’s voice trembled, barely a whisper.

“I… I’m terrified. Having his attention-it feels like walking on thin ice. I don’t know what he wants from me… or why. And… I’m so afraid. Afraid that if I let him in, I’ll only end up broken.”

James’s eyes softened, his voice calm but firm.

“You’re stronger than you think, Ms. Thompson. And you don’t have to face this alone. Take it slow. Trust yourself.”

“Mr. Blackwood is… different. Protective, possessive. He doesn’t let just anyone in-when he does, he means to keep them.”

“Sometimes you have to take a risk. Maybe this is one worth taking. If you walk away broken, you’ll heal. But if you never try, you’ll never know what you’re capable of.”

He gave her a knowing look-gentle but unshakable.

“You’ve got more fight in you than you realize. Just don’t forget that.”

Maya’s breath caught, a flicker of something real hitting her-hope, maybe. Or fear dressed as hope.

She nodded slowly, biting her lip as a quiet thought settled in her mind: Maybe living without

risk isn't really living at all. Maybe it's time to allow something for herself, even if there's no certainty about what lies ahead.

Maybe it's worth taking the risk, even if just temporarily. Maybe… letting Damien Blackwood in her life isn't so bad after all.

Her fingers fidgeted with the edge of her sleeve, hesitation heavy in the air.

Then, in a small voice, she asked, "Mr. Horton… could I… umm.. could I have Mr. Blackwood's number? He called earlier, but it showed up as a private number, so no number was registered."

James glanced at her briefly, a hint of surprise in his eyes.

"Sure. I'll get it for you."

He tapped on his tablet, the soft clicks filling the quiet room as Maya fought to steady her racing heart.

After a moment, James looked up with a subtle smile.

"I've forwarded Mr. Blackwood's private line to your phone. Only his family and closest friends have this number."

Her fingers trembled slightly as she glanced down at her screen.

One number. One choice.