Intern 68

Chapter 68

Monroe returned with Jamie just as the afternoon sun cast long, warm shadows across the hospital room. Jamie had a paper bag in one hand and a chocolate smear on his cheek-the kind of boyish mess Maya hadn't seen in years.

James gave them both a final nod, murmured something about pending meetings, and left with the same quiet efficiency he always carried. The room felt noticeably still without him.

Maya sat on the edge of the hospital bed, her fingers clenched around her phone. Damien's private number glowed on the screen-just a series of digits, but it felt like a loaded weapon.

Should she call?

Just a quick thank you. For Jamie. For everything.

But her thumb hovered and didn't move. She couldn't find the courage. Not yet.

"You okay?" Jamie's voice broke the silence. He was still standing near the door, head tilted, watching her too closely.

"Yeah," she replied quickly, slipping the phone into her lap. "Just tired."

He didn’t look convinced. “May?” he asked, stepping closer. “Why is Mr. Blackwood helping us? Is he… your boyfriend?”

Maya’s breath caught.

“What? No!” She sat up straighter, too fast. Her face burned. “No, Jamie. He’s not-he’s not anything like that.”

Jamie blinked at her, then slowly grinned. “Wow. You’re blushing.”

“I am not!”

“You are,” he said smugly. “I didn’t even say anything serious yet and you’re already freaking

out.”

Maya groaned, covering her face with both hands. “You are way too observant for your own good.”

Jamie just shrugged. “I like him for you.”

Maya peeked at him through her fingers, baffled. “You what?”

“I do,” Jamie said simply. “He’s strong. Powerful. But not arrogant. He doesn’t act like those

other rich guys with empty hot air. He’s calm. Confident. He listens. And he’s smart. And he’s not bad-looking either.”

“Jamie-”

“He’s thirty-five, right? I googled.” Jamie continued, unbothered. “You’re twenty-five. Ten years apart. Not a big deal. He doesn’t even look thirty-five. He looks like he actually works out.”

Maya gaped at him. “Oh my God.”

“So I’m just saying,” Jamie added innocently, “I’m sure my future nieces and nephews will be adorable.”

“Jamie!” she gasped. “You’re-this is-stop talking!”

He shrugged, utterly unrepentant. “Am I wrong?”

She opened her mouth, then closed it again. She had no idea how to respond to any of that.

Jamie approached her slowly, more serious now. His paper bag crinkled as he set it down on the bedside table.

“But seriously, May…” he said quietly, wrapping his arms around her. “Don’t hold yourself back.

”

She stiffened slightly in his embrace, then softened into it.

“You’ve been responsible for me since you were eighteen. You’ve always put me first. And I’m grateful- I’ll always be grateful. But you deserve to live too. Not just survive.”

Her throat ached. She didn’t speak.

“Pain’s part of life,” Jamie went on. “It teaches us things. It makes us stronger. When Mom and Dad died… it hurt. But that pain gave you a reason to fight harder. You didn’t let it break

you.”

Maya closed her eyes, swallowing the lump in her throat.

“I have my own pain-physically, emotionally. I know you do too. Probably even more. But… let yourself be human. Just guard your heart. And if one day it breaks…” Jamie leaned back, meeting her eyes. “Then I’ll still be right here.”

Fifteen years old. But he carried more wisdom than most grown men.

Because they had no one else.

Because life had never given them the luxury of being young.

Maya didn’t know what to say. Her chest was full and fragile all at once.

She just pulled him into a tighter hug.

Less than half an hour away, in a towering glass building that scraped the clouds and ruled the skyline, Damien Blackwood sat in his office like a king at the edge of a cliff-still, sharp, and far too aware of the silence around him.