Intern 71

Chapter 71

The boardroom was quiet except for the shuffling of paper and the occasional scrape of a

pen.

Damien didn’t hear a single word.

Not the quarterly forecast. Not the supply chain concerns. Not even the new projections James had personally compiled.

He was looking down at his phone again.

Nothing. Still.

The screen was blank. Just the time. 4:26 PM.

He shifted in his chair, jaw tight, one hand clenched around the Montblanc pen similar to the one he’d already snapped in half earlier.

This was ridiculous.

He didn’t wait. They waited for him.

And yet-here he was, checking his phone like a boy after his first confession, pretending to scroll through something important every ten minutes just to disguise the disappointment when the lock screen stayed empty.

No text. No call. No Maya.

By the time the meeting finally adjourned, he was annoyed. Irritated. Restless.

He didn’t excuse himself. Just stood, nodded once, and left the boardroom with James

trailing behind.

His mind flicked through every possible reason she hadn’t used it yet.

Maybe she was resting.

Recovering.

Overthinking.

That thought made something in his chest tighten.

He picked up his phone, checked the screen again.

Nothing.

He set it down.

Too quickly.

“Boss?” James asked carefully.

“I heard you,” Damien replied, voice even. Controlled.

But his gaze had shifted to his phone again. Barely a second had passed.

James noticed, of course.

But he said nothing.

Damien tapped a finger once on the desk. Then again. Stopped.

“She has the number,” he murmured finally. “If she wants to use it… she will.”

A pause.

Still, his thumb hovered over the screen like he could will a message to appear.

One call. One text. From her.

He exhaled through his nose-slow. Quiet.

He wasn’t some boy chasing a girl in the hallway. He wasn’t-

His eyes flicked to the screen again.

Still nothing.

Maybe living without risk isn't really living at all.

He could still hear James' words echoing in his head. Or maybe hers.

A risk.

Wasn't that exactly what she was becoming?

Damien closed his eyes for a breath.

He'd wait. Just a little longer.

Then he opened them again-and checked his phone one more time.

A corner of his mouth twitched-something between frustration and amusement.

Fuck! This is ridiculous!

He was Damien Blackwood. He'd built empires with less patience than he was summoning right now. Men waited on his calls. Banks. Heads of state. International partners with entire portfolios hanging on his decisions.

But here he was… Waiting.

Waiting for a single name to light up his screen.

For a message that wouldn't even say much-just Hi, maybe. Or Thank you.

And that would be enough to undo him all over again.

What the hell are you doing to me, Maya?

He leaned back in his chair, one hand curling under his jaw as he stared at the phone lying face-up on the glass desk.

She was probably sleeping. Or second-guessing. Or still afraid.

It was just before 7:00 PM.

“Car’s waiting,” James murmured. “Dinner meeting at Rivage, private room. Client’s already en route.”

Damien gave a short nod, stepping into the hallway. “Fine. Let’s go.”

They headed toward the elevator, but a discreet sign posted beside the penthouse button caught his attention.

OUT OF ORDER – PRIVATE LIFT UNDERGOING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE.

Damien didn’t say a word.

James pressed the button for the main elevators instead.

The doors slid open. Just him and James. Inside, it was quiet. The hum of corporate lights, the soft ding of descending floors.

Until the elevator stopped again.

PR – 39th Floor

The doors opened with a low chime.

Harper Lin stepped in, head bent over her phone, thumbs flying.

She didn't even look up.

"Ugh, what's your bra size, woman?!" she muttered aloud at her screen, typing furiously as she walked in-straight into Damien Blackwood.

James cleared his throat.

Harper froze.

Her eyes shot up-and widened like she'd just walked into a shark tank.

"Oh!" she squeaked. "Mr. Blackwood! Hey, boss! I didn't see you there-totally didn't realize-!"