Intern 74

Chapter 74

She raised a brow. “Sure, I’ve seen him here and there. Events. Investor meetings. Crisis briefings. But lately? Ever since you showed up?” She pointed at Maya. “I’m seeing him more. A lot more. And the way he looks at you… it’s not corporate. It’s not casual. It’s…” She exhaled. “Different.”

Maya’s voice was small. “You’re reading too much into it.”

Harper arched a brow. “Am I? Because let’s talk about that welfare check.”

Maya froze.

“Oh yeah, I heard about it. Everyone in PR did. The morning you missed work? Bam! James Horton himself-and Monroe, THE head of security-handled it personally. Like, not some junior staffer. Not even HR. Security and the executive secretary. That’s not just a welfare check, Maya. That’s a full-blown code red with a side of ‘Where’s my girl?’ energy.”

She sat back with mock gravity. “Welfare check, my ass. I’ve read the company handbook.

That policy only kicks in if someone’s gone MIA for over twenty-four hours. You were gone

for two. TWO. Hours. I mean, yes, we were worried. I was worried. Because I know you.. You’d probably crawl in with pneumonia just to hand in your reports.”

And let’s not forget – that same head of security? He’s been standing outside your hospital door 24/7. I mean, come on. This isn’t just concern. This is’

presidential-level-protection-for-my-future-wife’ energy.”

“Girl,” Harper deadpanned. “Don’t tell me that was ‘just protocol.”

Maya winced. “That’s not true…”

She smirked. “That man practically flew out of his penthouse like the building was on fire the moment James told him. And I swear, something shifted in the whole company after that. Everyone’s been walking on eggshells-trying to act normal, but the vibe? Totally off.”

Harper leaned in, lowering her voice conspiratorially. “Even Trina’s been different. Like, noticeably. Her phone hasn’t left her hand all day-screen always on, waiting for some urgent call or command from up top.”

Maya groaned and covered her face. “I’m going to die.”

Harper just grinned wider. “Nope. You’re going to Daiya.”

She leaned in, eyes gleaming.

“Oh! And let’s also not forget about your immediate regularization! Yeah, we know! Trina called a mini-meeting this afternoon to say-get this-that effective immediately, you’re a permanent part of the PR team. Permanent, Maya. That means we’ve all been instructed to support you, guide you, assist you-whatever you need.”

She waved her hand dramatically, scoffing. “Of course, there’ll be a few jealous gremlins lurking around, but ignore them. They’re dumb and hollow. Always talking about fashion, contouring, and who they can hook up with next. Their brains are running on mascara fumes. You? You’re smart. Beautiful. Strong. You’re a fighter-and they can’t stand it.”

Then she reached out and gently tapped Maya’s hand, softer now. “But me? I’m genuinely happy for you. You know what this means, right? Stability. Less stress. More sleep. Actual time to breathe. It’s finally time to say goodbye to your three crazy lives-barista, student, intern-and settle into one. Just one full-time job and your studies. Take it. Enjoy it. You deserve this, Maya.”

Maya stared at her, speechless.

The words permanent and deserve echoed in her ears, but they felt distant. Like Harper had just handed her something fragile, beautiful… and far too heavy to hold.

She wasn’t used to things like this-being chosen, protected, kept.

Not when she’d spent years building walls just to survive. Not when she’d learned, painfully, that good things often came with strings… or vanished the moment she let her guard down.

And yet, here it was.

A steady job. Real support. An entire department instructed to look after her. A man-that man-who'd moved heaven, earth, and executive resources just to make sure she was okay.

Her chest tightened.

It should've made her feel safe. Secure. But it only made her feel more exposed.

Because if Damien was behind all this… what did that mean? What was she stepping into?

Maya swallowed hard and forced a small smile, blinking fast.

"Thanks, Harper," she said quietly. "Really. I don't even know what to say."

For a moment, there was only the hum of the hospital lights and the soft rustle of Jamie shifting beside her.

Then, his voice-quiet but clear.

“May…” Jamie looked at her, eyes steady. “If you like him too… don’t hold yourself back.”

Her gaze snapped to him.

He shrugged, small shoulders rising beneath his hoodie. “I told you before-I’ll always be here for you. No matter what.”

That simple truth hit harder than any grand gesture.

Because it wasn’t just about Damien or the job or the luxury that had begun to creep into her

life.

It was about permission.

The kind that mattered.

From the one person whose love had never wavered.

Maya's throat tightened.

She reached for Jamie's hand, squeezing it once.

"Thanks, bub," she whispered.

And this time, she meant it with her whole heart.

Harper, who had uncharacteristically stayed quiet through Jamie's gentle words, sniffled once and dramatically dabbed the corner of her eye.

"Okay-who gave this fifteen-year-old the wisdom of a thousand-year-old monk?" she declared, clutching her chest. "That was so sweet I think I just got a cavity."

Jamie rolled his eyes but smiled.

Harper grinned and leaned forward, eyes twinkling. "Seriously though-can we frame that moment? Stitch it into a pillow? Or better yet, make it the tagline for the Daiya wedding merch."

Maya groaned, burying her face in her hands again. "Harper, I swear-"

“Too late!” Harper sing-songed. “I’ve already designed the logo in my head. Think: intertwined initials, minimalist calligraphy, classy but sexy. I’ll make shirts. Tote bags. Limited edition mugs.”

“You’re insane.”

“I’m supportive,” Harper corrected. “There’s a difference. And anyway, Jamie’s right.” She

winked at him. “This boy gets it.”

Jamie gave a small, bashful shrug. “I just want her to be happy.”

Harper softened again at that. “And she will be. Right, Maya?”

Maya looked between the two of them-their teasing, their belief, their quiet understanding.

She didn’t have all the answers.

The doubt hadn’t disappeared completely.

But something in her chest began to loosen.

Enough to make her wonder…

Maybe she could be.

Maybe she already was.

#

Veintiocho

Maya’s starting to realize she’s not alone anymore – and that attention, in all its messy forms, might just be worth the risk. Harper’s chaos, Jamie’s quiet wisdom… and the shadow of a man waiting on the other end of the message.

Next chapter: she hits send.