Intern 81

Chapter 81

Damien stood in the center of his darkened penthouse, phone still pressed to his ear long after the call ended.

Her voice lingered.

Not just in his ears-but in his blood, his breath, his bones.

He stared out the floor-to-ceiling windows, the city lights glittering below like a thousand

quiet temptations, and for the first time in years, he felt… still.

Not calculating.

Not on guard.

Just still.

She had said his name like it meant something.

Soft. Trusting. Real.

And it had unraveled him.

He didn’t move for a long time. He couldn’t.

Because something was shifting in him-slow, seismic. Dangerous.

Maya wasn’t a passing distraction anymore.

She never had been.

And now… she was in his system.

Embedded.

He clenched his jaw, running a hand through his hair.

He couldn’t afford this.

Not her. Not this feeling. Not now.

But God-he wanted her.

Not just her body. Not even just her mind.

He wanted all of her.

The parts that laughed shyly, that stood up for her brother, that texted him with trembling fingers and still found the courage to hit send.

He wanted her in the morning light and the midnight quiet.

In his bed. In his world. At his side.

And that terrified him.

Because the last time he let someone in that deep… he’d buried her in the cold.

And he’d sworn-sworn-he’d never feel that kind of loss again.

But Maya wasn’t giving him a choice.

And maybe… maybe he didn’t want one.

Still, he knew happiness came at a cost.

And somewhere in the shadows of his past, someone was still counting.

Before he could fall any deeper, before he could let himself believe in something like happiness- He had to make sure everything was taken care of.

The loose ends. The secrets.

The past that could still ruin everything.

He opened the drawer.

A single photograph. Faded, creased at the corners.

Her face stared back at him-smiling, trusting.

The woman he couldn't save.

The daughter of the man who would never forgive him.

He took his phone and dialed Ashcroft.

As the line rang, Damien closed his eyes, tasting the bitter weight of all he'd lost-and the even heavier cost if he failed to act.

When the call connected, he spoke with cold finality-

"It's time to handle unfinished business."

The next morning, a quiet knock at the door was followed by the soft shuffle of shoes on tile. An elderly man stepped in, his white coat neatly pressed, his expression calm and kind.

"Good morning," he said gently. "I'm Dr. Anderson."

There was no arrogance in his voice, no trace of condescension. Just quiet confidence and a kind of grounded steadiness that made Maya want to exhale.

An expert in cardiology with over twenty years of experience, he was one of the senior surgeons exclusive to Ashcroft Medical Pavilion-highly skilled, highly respected, and undoubtedly well-compensated. But he didn't carry himself like someone who needed to remind anyone of that. He listened more than he spoke, and when he did speak, it was with the deliberate clarity of someone who understood just how much words could weigh.

He reviewed Jamie's medical history thoroughly, asking thoughtful questions and occasionally glancing at Maya to check if she understood. He confirmed a few things, then carefully laid out the next steps.

Jamie would be placed on a tailored diet plan, designed by a specialized nutritionist. A new set of prescriptions would help stabilize his heart in preparation for surgery. And-if everything went well-they could be looking at a surgical window as soon as next month. Or the one after.

But what left Maya speechless wasn't just the plan.

It was the cost. Or rather… the complete absence of one.

Every single upgrade-his private room, the new medications, the specialist consultations, the scheduled surgery-had all been covered. No bills. No red tape. No hesitation.

Mr. Blackwood had taken care of everything.

Dr. Anderson had mentioned it so casually, like it happened every day. But Maya knew better. She'd spent most of her adult life fighting for scraps, choosing between groceries and rent. Nothing came free. Especially not this.