**Intern 83**

Chapter 83

The rest of the day passed quickly.

Just before six in the evening, Dr. Levin, Maya's attending physician, stopped by for another

routine check.

His calm eyes met hers as he spoke, "All the toxins and medications have cleared your system completely. No side effects. Your head is clear-MRI showed no long-term damage. The external wounds are healing well. You're clear for discharge tomorrow."

Relief bloomed in Maya's chest. Finally-she'd be going home.

"Thank you, Doctor," she said softly, gratitude washing over her like a wave she'd been holding

back.

Later, Ms. Janice returned with dinner. It was Maya's last night in the hospital, and she wanted to make it count.

“Why don’t we invite Monroe and Lee to join us?” Maya suggested.

Ms. Janice smiled. “Good idea. It’ll be nice to have company.”

Monroe arrived promptly, steady and attentive, accompanied by Lee-a security guard Maya had only just learned the name of the day before.

Together, they all shared dinner in the quiet hospital room, laughter filling the air as Jamie’s jokes bounced back and forth.

She didn’t know when Monroe had gone from a quiet shadow to someone she actually trusted. But tonight, it felt… easy. Familiar.

For a moment, it felt like a family-a rare, imperfect harmony in the midst of chaos.

After the meal, Monroe and Lee quietly cleaned up, then slipped back out to their posts, leaving Maya and Jamie with Ms. Janice.

Ms. Janice gathered the remaining belongings, helping Jamie pack what they could bring home to lighten the load for the next day.

Once the room was still again, Maya sat alone with a book in her hands, but her mind was elsewhere.

She thought about the days ahead-the new life unfolding before her.

No more long shifts at the coffee shop. No more juggling work, school and internship.

Stable employment awaited her at Blackwood Enterprises, the kind of opportunity she'd only dared to dream of.

But alongside the promise came uncertainty.

How would things change between her and Damien?

At work… and beyond?

Would the dangerous pull she felt toward him grow stronger-or pull her under?

She let the book rest on her lap, her eyes drifting toward the window where the city lights twinkled-distant, yet full of possibility.

Change was coming. And she had no choice but to step into it.

Across the city, in a very different kind of quiet

The city below pulsed with light, but Damien's office-sealed behind biometric locks and bulletproof glass-felt like a world apart. A safe world. Or at least, as safe as it could be when ghosts of the past stirred.

Ashcroft stood near the liquor cart, swirling a glass of whiskey like he had all the time in the world. James stood a few steps behind the chair opposite Damien's desk-calm as ever, posture straight, eyes sharp, always watching.

Ashcroft had come in person-because when Damien called last night and said, "It's time to handle unfinished business," there were only two places worth talking about that. One was six feet underground.

The other… was here.

"So." Ashcroft finally broke the silence, voice casual, but his eyes razor-sharp. "What's the play? I assume this isn't about the stocks."

Damien didn't respond right away. He was leaning back in his chair, one hand resting against his chin, the other drumming lightly against the armrest.

Before he could answer, James's phone buzzed on the table. He checked the screen, then gave Damien a short nod. "It's Monroe. I told him to call with the evening update."

Damien gestured. “Put him on speaker.”

James tapped the screen, then spoke clearly. “You’re on speaker, Monroe. Go ahead.”

Monroe’s voice came through, steady and composed. “Good evening, James. Mr. Blackwood, sir.”

Ashcroft grinned. “Well, if it isn’t our ever-loyal shadow-in-chief.”

Monroe didn’t miss a beat. “And a very good evening to you as well, Mr. Ashcroft, sir.”

Ashcroft smirked. Damien said nothing, but his eyes flicked toward the phone with full

attention.