Intern 84

Chapter 84

Monroe continued, “Dr. Anderson stopped by this morning. Reviewed Jamie’s full chart. He’s optimistic. Set up a tailored diet, new prescriptions to stabilize the condition. If things progress as expected, surgery might happen as early as next month.”

“Dr. Levin also stopped by to checked on Ms. Thompson, she’s cleared for discharge tomorrow. No lingering effects from the sedatives or restraints. MRI’s clean, vitals are strong, wounds are healing.”

Damien exhaled through his nose, but it wasn’t relief. Not entirely. It was control. Control slipping back into place.

But then-

“One more thing,” Monroe said. “She also asked about Mr. Ashcroft.”

That got Damien’s attention fast. His hand stilled.

“Dr. Anderson mentioned in passing that Mr. Ashcroft personally called in to prioritize the surgery. Ms. Thompson didn’t recall meeting him, so when she asked, I provided the basics- that he’s your closest friend, that the pavilion is owned by his family, and that he’s a very private individual. I also explained the prioritization was granted as a personal favor you requested.”

There was a pause.

Then Ashcroft clutched his chest in mock delight.

“Oh hell yeah. Maya’s asking about me?” he beamed, then grinned at Damien. “See? She wants to meet me. That’s a sign. That’s fate. I better start picking out a tux-your girl wants a proper introduction.”

James chuckled under his breath. “Here we go…”

Ashcroft didn’t miss a beat. “Let’s see… I need to look my best, obviously. I mean, she’s basically my future sister-in-law, right? Wait-technically we already met, but she was unconscious. And, well… kinda half-naked. So, didn’t really get the chance to look closely, you know? There was a possessive man hovering nearby… huh. Yeah, that probably doesn’t count.

Damien rolled his jaw, glaring.

Ashcroft pressed on with gleeful malice. “What should I bring as a gift? Something personal. Thoughtful. Hmm… How about a little box of Beckett’s body parts? I’ve kept a few things in

cold storage.”

James choked on his water.

Ashcroft winked. “Too gruesome? Alright, alright. What does Maya like? Coffee? Cats? Damien’s black soul in a bottle?”

Damien’s hand shot up. “Enough.”

There was steel in his voice.

Ashcroft just leaned back, grinning. “Ah. There it is. That look. The one where your jaw tightens and your eyes go all-what’s the word? Oh, right. Possessive.”

Damien didn’t flinch. But the tension in his shoulders said plenty.

Ashcroft’s smile widened. “You’re jealous already, and I haven’t even shown her my good side.”

James cleared his throat, diplomatic as ever. “Shall I note down a more appropriate gift suggestion, Mr. Ashcroft?”

Ashcroft barked a laugh.

Damien gave James a sharp glance, but he didn’t object. Because James hadn’t crossed a line. He never did.

James continued, voice even. “She asked about Mr. Ashcroft, sir. Which means she’ll likely ask again. Might be best if we’re prepared-logistically.”

There. Professional. Tactful. But still hitting the nerve.

Damien’s fingers stilled. The idea of her saying his name-asking about him-left a taste in his mouth he couldn’t name. Unease? Possessiveness? Or something darker?

“She doesn’t need to meet him,” Damien said flatly.

“Oh, come on,” Ashcroft said, amused now. “She asked about me. You can’t hide your best friend forever.”

“I’m not hiding you,” Damien snapped. Then, lower, more guarded: “I just don’t want her pulled into anything more than she already is.”

Ashcroft tilted his head. “You really think you can keep her in a box, D? Like she isn’t already neck-deep in your world?”

Ashcroft’s voice softened-not teasing this time, just steady. “She already is, Damien.

Silence stretched between them.

Damien looked away, eyes fixed on the skyline-on the lights he couldn't ever quite reach.

James didn't speak this time. He simply looked at Damien-and waited.

Ashcroft finally sighed, clapped his hands together. "Alright. Fine. No grand introductions. No body parts. For now. But I definitely need to meet her…"