Intern 91

Chapter 91

But she never did.

Because she couldn’t.

So she wrote instead.

Page after page. Fearless, angry, tender, tired.

And every evening on her way home from the café, she passed a boutique window downtown -glass polished, displays pristine. And in the center: this very pen. The same one now in her hands. She’d stopped to admire it more times than she could count. Dreamed of saving enough to buy it one day as a gift to herself. A reward, maybe, for surviving.

But groceries came first.

Jamie’s meds came first.

Life always came first.

She never did.

Until now.

Tears blurred her vision as she looked down at the gift. The pen. The journal. Her name engraved like a quiet declaration.

It wasn't just the gift-it was the intention. The knowing. The quiet care behind it. Damien's way of speaking without speaking. Of giving her something no one else ever had: space. Space to breathe. To remember who she was beyond survival. A future written in ink. A voice no one could silence.

He saw her in ways no one else did-not loud, not invasive, but intimately. Silently.

Like he understood what she wouldn't say aloud.

Like he cared enough to remind her… she mattered too.

"This… is beautiful," she whispered.

Silence settled-gentle, reverent. As if the room itself understood what this gift truly meant.

Her eyes misted over. “Writing was how I stayed sane,” she added quietly. “When everything felt like too much, I’d scribble my feelings out just to breathe. My words were all I had that belonged to me.”

Ms. Janice stepped closer, placing a comforting hand on her shoulder. “You have a good heart, Maya. A simple one. Grateful. Not many like that anymore.”

James nodded from where he stood.

A quiet beat passed-until Jaime, sensing the heavy emotions building, broke in with a smirk and a shake of his head.

“Oh, man… just the other night I promised I was gonna buy you that pen someday,” he said dramatically. “Had this whole plan, too. Save up. Surprise you.”

He narrowed his eyes and gave a faux-accusing glance at the room. “But then bam! Mr. Blackwood beats me to it. Hmm… I smell a leak in the system.”

He side-eyed Monroe and Lee with exaggerated suspicion. “You two wouldn’t happen to know anything about that, would you?”

Monroe scratched the back of his neck with a guilty chuckle. “What? Me? I don’t even like pens.”

That earned a burst of soft laughter around the room-light, warm, and exactly what Maya didn’t know she needed.

Even James allowed himself a quiet smile, and Lee gave Monroe a teasing nudge with his

elbow.

Maya didn't trust her voice enough to reply. Her throat tightened as warmth swelled in her thest. She only nodded, blinking hard.

Ms. Janice leaned in, her tone gentle and maternal. "Come on now, sweetheart… let's eat before it gets cold."

Lunch had been arranged by James-straight from a five-star hotel kitchen. The dishes were refined but comforting, with options catered perfectly to her recovery needs and Jamie's dietary restrictions.

Maya tried to eat, and for the most part, she managed. But her mind kept drifting-to the pen. To the man who sent it. To the feeling of being seen, cared for, protected.

Someone had noticed.

And it wasn't just someone. It was him.

Later, once the apartment quieted and the men had gone, Maya found herself seated on the edge of her bed. She'd tried to help clean, but Jamie and Ms. Janice had waved her off with matching looks of protest.

"Sit, rest, you just got out of the hospital," Ms. Janice had said firmly.

Now, with the sun casting soft gold across her bedroom and shadows curling near the curtains, Maya sat with the gift box on her lap. She opened it again, her heart catching in her throat.

She traced the initials with her fingertip, breathing in the journal's rich leather scent.

Her name. Her tool. Her story.

Almost without thinking, she reached for her phone. The words that formed weren't rehearsed, but they were honest-simple and steady, like the man who haunted her thoughts.

She typed: "Thank you for the gift. And for everything you don't say."

She hesitated for a beat before hitting send.

Unseen by her, shadows lingered beyond the windows. Silent eyes watched, ever vigilant.

Her safety wasn’t a chance.

It was a promise.

One that came at a price.