Intern 99

Chapter 99

They had changed into something more suited for the tropical sail, and the effect was… immediate.

James now wore a plain white t-shirt, paired with light gray chinos-clean, composed, and subtly refined.

Ashcroft, of course, looked like summer mischief incarnate-shedding his earlier jeans and white polo for something brighter: a cheerful sky-blue linen shirt with sleeves pushed to the elbows, paired with tailored beige shorts and boat shoes. He looked every bit the carefree billionaire on vacation-easygoing, effortless, and unmistakably rich.

But it was Damien who made Maya forget to breathe.

He had arrived in dark jeans and a plain black tee, but now wore a sleek, open-collared white dress shirt-crisp and rolled at the sleeves-tucked into fitted navy shorts. The look was casual, yet on him, it became something else entirely.

Powerful. Magnetic. Intentional.

Too intentional.

Because the soft white of his shirt and the deep navy of his shorts didn't just look good-they matched her. Deliberately. His outfit mirrored her pale yellow sundress with such balance, such contrast, that it felt like a visual echo.

He'd seen what she was wearing.

And chosen this.

To balance her softness with his edge.

To make them look like a pair.

Like they belonged here-on this yacht, on this trip… together.

And his eyes? They were locked on her.

Her breath hitched.

There was no smile. No wink. Just an unreadable expression-still and searing, like he could see right through her.

Her skin prickled. Not from the breeze. From him.

She looked away quickly, heart thudding.

“Harper,” she murmured, “please stop talking about the hug.”

“Fine,” Harper sighed, flopping back dramatically. “But for the record, if he hugs me like that, I will pass out.”

Maya laughed-but the sound came too soft, too distracted. Her instinct made her glance back-just once.

Her eyes found Damien.

He and Ashcroft stood near the sleek marble bar, each holding a glass of amber liquid that caught the light-a subtle hint of aged whiskey.

They spoke in low tones, their conversation punctuated with rare smiles and knowing glances.

The wind tugged gently at the open collar of his white shirt, the sunlight catching the edge of his jaw where dark stubble shadowed skin that hadn’t seen a razor in days. He looked more relaxed, but not softer.

No-never that.

He looked like danger dressed in summer.

Their eyes met across the deck.

And for one suspended second, the noise, the sea, the laughter-everything faded.

There was no smile. No nod. No words.

Just… awareness.

Something deep and charged passed between them, like a wire stretched too tight.

Her breath caught.

He took a slow sip of his drink, but his gaze never left hers.

Then, just as silently as he appeared, Damien disappeared, leaving Ashcroft to linger by the bar, swirling his drink thoughtfully.

But Maya’s heart was already thudding.

Like it knew something was coming.

Something inevitable.