

# *Mafia and Maid*

*By Isa Oliver*

# PROLOGUE

CAMILLO

Arriving at the high society wedding, I take in the display of fragrant pink flowers and floaty pretty fabric draped over every single surface. It's traditional and opulent—and it's like a bridal magazine that's thrown up all over the place.

I follow my brothers up the pristine stone steps into St. Hyacinth's Basilica, tugging once more at the sleeve of my black Brioni suit. The surrounding air is indifferent and undisturbed despite the glances and hushed whispers they don't think we can hear.

Bodies dressed in the best their money can buy blend in with the extravagant decorations that scream wealth and privilege, because Chicago's finest are all gathered here today for an over-the-top display of pomp and circumstance veiled as happy nuptials.

It's tiresome as it's nauseating.

Because I don't belong here.

If the tattoos that crawl up my arms and body don't give me away, the cold set of my face usually does. But here I am, filing in after my older brothers to extend half-hearted pleasantries and niceties to one of Chicago's most powerful financial families. As archaic aristocracy, the Davis family is used to getting its own way. And they've been a sharp thorn in our side for too many months now.

My brothers and I run the Fratellanza mafia, masterminding the shadowy underworld in this city and making our sins pay—and we don't stand for people who won't go along with our proposals. Because although the Davis family sneer down their noses at made men like us, underneath their polish and cut-glass accents, they're just as tainted as we are.

Clocking the exits and entrances as we move further in, I make a note of the sorry excuse for security that wanders through the crowd. It's not much for a wedding of this size and attention. But given the people in attendance, no one here expects a bloodbath—no one except for us. Ruthless, mindless brutes of made men. That's the world I live in. A world where the monsters wear luxurious designer suits and brilliant

smiles to hide their sharp teeth and claws like wolves in sheep's clothing. Where villains and murderers run the city with pretty promises built on shadowy backroom deals.

“Stop fidgeting,” my oldest brother, Marco, grits out. “It’s getting on my fucking nerves.”

My hand drops from my sleeve. I hate weddings, but even more, I hate dressing like some monkey on display, ready to perform while they ogle and judge. My skin crawls at the thought, making the collar of my dress shirt that much tighter.

The smell of old money stinks up the room, and if this wasn’t such a necessary power play, I’d have stayed the fuck at home today. But we need to ensure that Conor Davis, one of the wealthiest businessmen in the city, understands there’s no option to say no to our proposal.

Their ostentatious need to showboat and flaunt their extravagance makes my skin itch. I don't want to be here today, but this is the job. I’m the enforcer for the Fratellanza—this is the role I play.

“We need to say hello to Davis and give him and the lucky groom our congratulations,” Marco says.

I fight an eye roll and nod, making another mental note of two more barely strapped bodyguards who lean much too casually against the wall.

“Let’s get this over with,” I mutter, hating how constricted and suffocated I feel in this suit. It’s expensive and tailored to my body, but the fabric feels taut and unbreathable. The dress shirt beneath it is already plastered to my chest with dew from the humidity. This isn’t how I normally choose to dress, much preferring more relaxed and casual clothing. “For fuck's sake, I feel like a goddamn circus clown.”

I look at my other brother, Alessio, as his lips twitch, but he has enough sense to hold his tongue. If people weren’t watching our every move, I’d have flipped him the bird already. But appearances are everything at an event like this, so I make do with a fierce scowl at him instead.

Marco shakes his head in exasperation at me as he walks on. Dutifully, we follow him to the corner of the church, where the man we’ve come to see stands talking in hushed tones.

He turns to us, his lip pulled up in a sneer before the carefully plastered smile falls into place. He graciously shakes Marco's hand and then Alessio's. I don't bother offering mine; my hands are shoved in my pockets.

"I didn't think you'd make it."

This time, I can't stop the eye roll. There's no chance in hell we'd have missed this. For months, we've been trying to cut a deal with him, to bring him into the fold, but the bastard has been obstinately resistant. Today is to show him that the Fratellanza doesn't take no for an answer.

"We wouldn't have missed it," Marco says in a smooth tone, though I can see the calculating gleam in his eyes.

"Wonderful, wonderful." The tone of his voice says our presence here is anything but. "We were just about to start if you'd like to find a seat."

"We need to talk," Marco drawls, leaving no room for debate.

Conor Davis has enough good sense to look scared for a brief second before his face reddens. "If you insist."

"I do."

"Very well. This way, gentlemen."

"I'm going to find a seat," I say. I'm not needed to sit in on this meeting—that isn't why I've been brought along today. I'm the muscle. The action man who stands between us and problems. Alessio and Marco can handle one sweaty balding man. "Congrats," I add.

From the corner of my eye, I catch the sneers from the crowd as I pass. A mask of cool indifference shutters over my face as I give a tight smile, slipping into the pew strategically chosen on the off-chance things go sideways. Because they often do when my brothers and I are around. One might have a little faith in the house of God, but not me, that's for fucking sure.

These people and I are from different worlds, and the mocking whispers at my back are all the indication I need to know that they realize it too. As I lean back against the polished wood, my gut churns with how badly I want to be far away from here. I tug again on my sleeve, hoping to conceal the edges of black ink that peek out. It's pointless, but I don't feel like giving them any more ammunition.

A body slides in beside me, and my back goes rigid. “Mind if I sit?” a weathered voice croons, and I shake my head. “Isn’t it just lovely?” she carries on.

I turn my focus onto the woman. Older, dressed in her Sunday’s finest, including a stupid hat with lace and mesh. “Yeah,” I growl as politely as possible, once more taking in the ridiculous decorations and fanfare. I wonder if I should tell her that I’ve just been thinking how it looks like a bridal magazine barfed all over the place, but something tells me she wouldn’t quite agree.

“It’s so wonderful to see how traditional everything is. It just warms my heart. Do you know the bride or the groom?”

“Bride’s father.”

“How wonderful.” I listen with half an ear as she continues to blabber on and on about the decorations. “What was it you said you did?” she asks in her singsong voice.

“My brothers and I are in the pharmaceutical trade.”

“Oh, you’re a doctor?” she exclaims, obviously impressed.

“Er, not quite. I’m more on the import-export side.” That’s easier than explaining that we distribute drugs while running clubs and casinos to launder the money through.

I see her gaze catch the tattoos running up the back of my thick neck.

“Oh.”

Her one syllable holds more contempt than a whole sentence could, and the curl of her lip causes my fist to automatically tighten, making the scars more prominent. The judgment pours off her in waves, and it takes every ounce of my strength not to move or say something I’ll come to regret later.

I don’t need to impress these people, not that it’s even possible. Instead of furthering the conversation, I relax into the pew, one arm stretched over the lacquered back.

The woman doesn’t say more, and I send up a silent prayer in fucking thanks. Perhaps miracles do happen just once in a blue moon.

Marco and Alessio slide in beside me, and from their faces, I can tell that their little chat didn’t go well because Marco’s usual expression is darker and harder. I raise a brow to my brothers. But Alessio shakes his head at me as he gets comfortable in the

pew. We'll discuss it at home, it seems. I turn back toward the altar as the music begins, and a hush falls over the crowd while everyone shuffles to find their seat.

The priest stands tall beside a groom who looks disgustingly too old for Davis's daughter. He must be at least twenty years older than her.

The groom straightens his suit and smooths his hair back. Something about him makes him look exactly like the sort of person Conor Davis would put on a pedestal because everything about the groom screams educated, cultured, and refined—thus making him a perfect match for his precious eldest daughter.

We stand as the procession music starts, and sniffs and gasps sound as the happy bride, Rosa Davis, proceeds down the aisle, nodding greetings to her guests.

As she comes closer to me, I can see her features more clearly. And time stops ticking for a few seconds...

Because everything about this woman is absolutely perfect—beautiful. She's like an angel.

Her face is behind a sheer veil, her blond hair in an intricate updo, and her conservative wedding dress trails behind her with a train so long it seems like a fire hazard. But not even the dress can draw my attention away from her stunning looks, my gaze lingering on her body with its curves in all the right places.

And as she passes me, she looks directly at me. And she smiles. It's a smile that's only for me...

But before I can react, she passes, and I'm left watching her back as she walks down the rest of the aisle. She takes her place across from her soon-to-be husband, her father placing her hand in the groom's.

Her wide hips flare beautifully, and I can't stop staring at her gorgeous, full ass... I mentally shake myself. What the hell is wrong with me? She was smiling at everyone, right? Of course that smile wasn't a special one just for me. And she's about to marry another man. Why on earth am I looking at her in this way?

Anyway, who in their right mind would want something like this? Relationships, marriage, love—all that fucking unicorns and rainbows shit isn't for men like me. And shaking my head, I let my mind wander and drift off to think about business matters—about the next person I need to deal with.

At the end of the ceremony, the happy couple walks past, but this time, the bride's face is turned away from me as she looks at the guests in the opposite pew.

All too soon, Alessio nudges me, jerking his chin forward. We're moving to the reception.

I stand, following my brothers out the other end of the pew, dragging my hand down my jaw. I can think of a hundred things I'd rather be doing than making polite conversation in a room full of people who think they're better than me.

We pile into the dark SUV, and I spread out in the back as Alessio drives us down the street toward where the reception is being held at the family's ostentatious residence—because a man like Davis takes every opportunity to flaunt what he has. Thankfully, it isn't too far from where the ceremony took place.

“I assume it went badly?” I comment.

“He's fucking stubborn,” Marco grinds out. “But I'll convince him.”

“And if you can't?”

Marco's head snaps around to glare at me. I casually raise my hands in surrender. He's a scary man, confident in what he does as capo and protective when it comes to our family, but even I know not to push him like this.

“How long exactly do we have to stay?” I sigh.

“As long as it takes for Davis to realize that this is his best opportunity,” Marco says in a terse tone. “We were cut short before the wedding.”

“Just great,” I mutter, earning me another dark look from my brother.

“We're here,” Alessio announces as he parks up

I can do this for another few hours. But even as I tell myself this, my skin prickles, and I itch to feel the wrap along my knuckles. To feel the canvas bend beneath my fists. I can control that, and I need that control right now.

“Just play nice, Millo,” Marco orders.

I growl a response as we step into the greeting line.

The newlyweds stand at the head, shaking hands, talking, and laughing. Or rather, he does. Because with each step forward, I can't help but notice the lack of a female voice. And when it finally hits my ears, it's soft and gentle—almost melodic.

I peer around Marco's broad shoulders, getting my first real glimpse of the bride without her veil. And she's just as stunning as I thought she'd be.

The intricate updo allows for a few of her blond waves to fall around her temples, bringing my focus to her full, apple cheeks and gorgeous eyes which are light brown like milk chocolate. Framed by thick lashes and subtle makeup, her gaze sparkles with life and happiness, as does everything else about her.

Alessio shoves me forward, and I snap back to reality.

We move another few inches closer. Closer still. Finally, we reach their side. "Congrats," I rumble, extending my hand toward the groom first.

His lip curls before he limply shakes my hand, letting go as soon as he can. "Thank you," he responds.

But I ignore his refined voice and turn my attention to the bride, my hand reaching toward her.

Her soft, pink-painted lips part just slightly as her fingers stretch out to me. But then her eyes widen as she sees my bruised and scarred knuckles, and her hand quickly retracts as her gaze darts downward.

I shouldn't be surprised after her husband barely tolerated my handshake. I shove my hand back into my pocket as my tongue runs over my teeth in irritation. "Congrats," I mumble in a flat voice.

Another guest's cut-glass voice sounds behind me, and I look over my shoulder to see her shaking his hand as a soft thank you escapes her lips.

I see red. Why did he get to touch her? And why the fuck was he worthy of a response from her when I wasn't? But I already know the answer...

I push through the crowd of guests, ignoring the protests, toward the outdoor area. The Davis family has spared no expense, and just like the church, the reception is gaudy and an eyesore of too many pink flowers. A string quartet plays some boring melody that is more likely to put me to sleep than make me want to celebrate.



I make a beeline for the bar. My hand curves around the beer bottle that the bartender passes to me, and the scars across my knuckles catch my eye.

Of course, she wouldn't sully herself with someone like me.

I take a swig, watching my brothers corner Conor Davis. It's the reminder I need as I lean against the bar.

This world on display today, the one of love and happily ever after, isn't where I belong—because a monster like me always belongs in the shadows...