

Exposed to the CEO Behind the Mafia Mask

Chapter 10: Chapter 10 A Dangerous Attraction

Caleb's POV

The moment she turned around, the world tilted on its axis.

Those emerald eyes. Bright and lethal like perfectly cut gems that could slice a man's soul in half. Her full lips, the elegant curve of her neck, and that slender figure wrapped in a dress that should be classified as a weapon—every curve designed to bring men to their knees.

"Well, well," Xavier's voice cut through my trance like a blade.

My jaw clenched with murderous intent. The sight of my consigliere openly appreciating my new assistant sent a surge of possessive rage through my veins that caught me completely off guard.

"You must be the new blood who went to war with the boss," he continued with that lethal charm that had women confessing their deepest secrets.

I watched her cheeks flush the most enticing shade of pink as she stumbled over her words, and something primal in me wanted to eliminate every man who had ever seen that blush.

"I'm Xavier Black, consigliere and best friend to the beast beside me," he introduced himself, extending his hand toward her with predatory grace. "And you're the legendary Ivy Brooks."

My eyes narrowed to deadly slits as their hands touched. What the fuck was wrong with me? I'd never felt this territorial over anyone before, especially not an employee I'd just encountered.

"Xavier, please," he insisted, flashing that dangerous smile before gesturing toward me. "And this terrifying specimen is Caleb Thorne, your new Don."

Her gaze shifted to meet mine, and something earth-shattering happened. A bolt of recognition so powerful it nearly brought me to my knees. Those striking green eyes widened with what looked like shocked realization, her perfect lips parting as if she'd seen a ghost.

"Miss Brooks," I managed, my voice coming out rougher and more threatening than intended.

"Mr. Thorne, it's... a pleasure to finally meet you," she replied, extending her trembling hand.

The moment our skin connected, lightning struck. Her hand was soft and warm, fitting perfectly in mine like she'd been crafted specifically for my touch. I couldn't remember ever reacting this violently to simple contact. The scent of her perfume—something intoxicating and dangerously familiar—drifted toward me, stirring memories I couldn't quite capture.

I realized I'd been holding her hand far longer than appropriate, my thumb unconsciously stroking across her knuckles in a gesture that was unmistakably possessive.

"We'll be in my office," I said abruptly, needing to escape her presence before I did something that would compromise us both. "Bring the chamomile tea in fifteen minutes."

I strode past her, carefully avoiding any contact that might shatter what remained of my control. Once inside my sanctuary, I took a steadying breath, trying to regain the composure that had never failed me before.

Xavier followed, closing the door with deliberate precision. The moment it shut, a knowing smirk spread across his face like a predator scenting blood.

"Don't," I warned, my voice carrying lethal promise.

"I didn't say a word," he replied, raising his hands in mock surrender as he settled into one of the chairs across from my desk with casual elegance.

"You didn't need to. Your face says everything." I loosened my tie, suddenly feeling like I was being strangled by silk.

"Admit it, Thorne. She's absolutely devastating."

I shot him a glare that had made grown men weep. "She's an employee."

"An employee who has you acting like a possessive animal marking territory." Xavier chuckled darkly, leaning back with predatory satisfaction. "I've known you since we were running numbers in college, and I've never seen you claim ownership over a woman before. The look you gave me when I introduced myself—if looks could kill, my body would already be feeding the fish."

"You're imagining things," I muttered, opening my laptop to avoid his too-perceptive scrutiny.

"Am I?" He raised an eyebrow with dangerous amusement. "What happened to 'no complications with staff,' Don? That rule suddenly feeling restrictive?"

I looked up from my screen, irritation and something darker flashing across my face. "Nothing's changed. Miss Brooks is my executive assistant, nothing more."

"If you say so." Xavier's smile turned predatory. "Though I wouldn't blame you for making an exception just this once. She's stunning, intelligent enough to impress Heidi, and fearless enough to challenge you. That's a combination rarer than diamonds in this business."

Before I could respond with violence, a commotion outside our fortress caught our attention. A woman's voice, shrill and entitled, echoed through the reinforced walls.

"I don't care if he's conducting business! Move aside this instant!"

Yara. Fucking hell.

"Miss, please—you need clearance—" Ivy's calm, professional voice was a stark contrast to Yara's screeching.

"Do you know who I am? I'm Yara Rossi! My father is the financial director of this company!"

I was on my feet and moving toward the door before conscious thought kicked in. Yara Rossi had been a persistent threat since her father joined our family. She seemed to believe that Roman's position entitled her to special privileges—and to me.

"You're just hired help. Cross me, and you'll regret it for what little time you have left," Yara threatened, her voice dripping with venom and implied violence.

Something murderous erupted inside me. No one threatened my people, especially not some spoiled princess who'd never earned anything through blood and sacrifice.

I yanked open the door, ready to remind Yara exactly who ruled this empire. In my haste, I collided with Ivy, who had apparently been about to knock with a tea service. She stumbled backward from the impact, and predatory instinct took over as I reached out, catching her by the waist.

Time stopped as I pulled her against me to steady her. Her body pressed flush against mine, soft curves molding perfectly against my harder frame like she'd been designed to fit against me. Her scent enveloped me—vanilla, jasmine, and something uniquely intoxicating—filling my senses and obliterating rational thought.

Her hands came to rest on my chest, and I could feel the heat of her palms burning through expensive fabric straight to my skin. Those emerald eyes looked up at me, wide with shock and something that looked like recognition, her lips parted in a way that made me want to claim them.

The position was dangerously intimate, completely inappropriate for a professional setting, but I couldn't bring myself to release her. Something primal had awakened, a need so intense it bordered on violence.

My body responded immediately, hardening against her in a way that left no doubt about my intentions. Her eyes widened further, and a subtle gasp escaped her lips as she undoubtedly felt exactly how much I wanted her. The delicate blush that spread across her cheeks made her even more irresistible.

"Mr. Thorne," she whispered, her voice barely audible but somehow echoing through my bones.

Yara's outraged gasp finally penetrated the haze of lust. Still holding Ivy possessively against me, I turned my head to find Yara glaring at us, her perfectly crafted facade twisted with jealous fury.

"Caleb, I need to speak with you immediately," Yara demanded, her eyes promising retribution at the sight of my hands claiming Ivy's waist.

I was trapped between a furious Yara, my calculating consigliere watching from the doorway with dangerous amusement, and the woman in my arms who had somehow managed to shatter every defense I'd built in a matter of minutes.

And worst of all, I was still rock-hard against her, with no way to hide my desire if I let her go.

Which meant I had no intention of releasing her anytime soon.

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