Mafia Mask 100

Chapter 100 Thorne Surprise

Ivy’s POV

"Ivy, Dominic wants to see you in his office," Zoe announced as I walked into the back room of the Thorne shipping warehouse at closing time.

My stomach clenched. In this world, being summoned by a boss could mean anything from a promotion to a bullet between the eyes. "Did he say what for?"

"No idea. But he looked serious." She stood and headed toward the reinforced door that led to Dominic’s private quarters. "Let me tell him you’re here."

I watched her disappear behind the bulletproof glass, my mind racing through every possible mistake I might have made while managing the high-stakes operations. When she emerged and nodded for me to enter, I took a steadying breath.

"Ivy!" Dominic’s scarred face broke into a genuine smile as I entered his fortress-like office. "First things first - I’m damn glad you and Caleb worked things out."

Relief flooded through me. "Thank you, Dominic. I just hope he doesn’t lose his mind and screw it up again."

"If he does, you know I’ll help you put a few bullets in his ass," Dominic said with mock seriousness, gesturing to the arsenal mounted on his wall.

Zoe snorted from the doorway. "Right, just like you helped by playing informant and feeding him intel about Ivy’s every move."

"Come on, Zo, cut me some slack. The bastard’s been my ally for many years," Dominic protested, looking like a guilty soldier. We all burst out laughing. "But seriously, Ivy, my protection is always yours."

"I know that, Dominic. You've already done so much for me." And he had - giving me work and keeping me safe when I was desperate.

"Which brings me to my second point." Dominic's expression grew more serious, his fingers drumming against the desk where he kept his loaded pistol. "Your work here has been exceptional. You adapted to our world faster than anyone I've brought into the fold, you handle the high-pressure situations like a natural, and my security team can't stop praising your nerve under pressure. Honestly, bringing you into my operation was one of my smartest moves."

I waited for the other shoe to drop. "But?"

"But I'd be lying if I said this position matched what you're capable of. You're overqualified for what I can offer you in my operation." Dominic leaned back in his leather chair. "Caleb wants you back as his right hand. As your friend, I have to tell you - that's a hell of an opportunity. Better protection, better access to power, and it puts you at the heart of the most influential family on the East Coast. Being the Don's personal advisor opens doors most people in our world can only dream of."

My chest tightened. "Dominic, I love working here."

"And we love having you. But I won't hold you back from something bigger." His honesty was almost painful. "I'm giving you complete freedom to choose. If you want to go back to Thorne territory, I'll release you from our arrangement immediately - no blood spilled, no disputes. From a strategic standpoint, it's the smart move."

The weight of the decision settled on my shoulders like a lead blanket. "I wasn't expecting this conversation."

"I want you to know something else," Dominic continued. "If you take the Thorne position and it doesn't work out, you have a place here. My doors are always open for you, Ivy. Always. That's a blood oath."

The generosity of his offer nearly brought tears to my eyes. In this world, such loyalty was rarer than diamonds. "Thank you, Dominic. That means everything to me. Can I have some time to think about it?"

"Take all the time you need. I just wanted you to know where you stand - with both options." He smiled warmly. "Whatever you decide, you have my full backing."

I thanked him again and left his office with Zoe, who had remained silent throughout the entire conversation.

We headed to the employee break room, past the soundproofed operations floors where deals were made and broken nightly, and she finally spoke up with a knowing grin. "Pretty solid boss, right?"

"He really is. What he's offering me is incredible."

"So are you going back to Thorne territory?"

I poured my coffee slowly, buying time while the distant sounds of machinery echoed through the walls. "I honestly don't know. What do you think I should do?"

"I think Dominic's right about the power benefits. But you need to figure out where you'll actually survive, not just where you'll look impressive on paper."

"Any guesses about which that might be?"

Zoe's eyes twinkled with mischief. "Oh, I have thoughts. But I'm staying out of this one, Ivy. This decision could start a war if handled wrong."

We chatted for a few more minutes before I returned to my station, feeling surprisingly lighter. Having Dominic's protection regardless of my choice lifted a huge weight off my shoulders.

As the evening shift began filtering in, I was deep in reviewing the night's priority assignments when excited voices erupted across the operations floor. I looked up to see what the commotion was about.

Standing near the heavily guarded entrance with the biggest smile I'd ever seen was Ruby Thorne.

My heart jumped. What was Caleb's sister doing here? The last time I'd seen her, things between her brother and me had been completely shattered. Now here she was at Dominic's operations center, looking like she was about to burst with joy.

"Ivy!" she called out, practically bouncing on her designer heels as she made her way toward my station, flanked by two of Dominic's security guards.

Everyone in the warehouse was staring now, clearly wondering why Thorne family royalty was making such a scene. I stood up, smoothing my black dress nervously.

"Ruby, what are you doing here?"

"I had to come see you as soon as Caleb told me you two were back together." She pulled me into a tight embrace that caught me completely off guard, her expensive perfume mixing with the scent of cigarette smoke and danger that always clung to our world. "I've been praying for this for months."

The genuine warmth in her voice made my throat tight with emotion. I'd forgotten how much I'd missed having her in my life.

"I wasn't sure you'd want to see me after everything that happened."

"Are you kidding?" Ruby pulled back to look at me, her manicured hands still on my shoulders. "You're the best thing that ever happened to my stubborn brother. I was devastated when you two split."

Around us, I could feel the workers pretending to focus on their tasks while obviously listening to every word. But I didn't care. Having Ruby here, welcoming me back into the family fold, felt like another piece of my life clicking back into place.

"I've missed you," I admitted quietly.

"Good, because I have so much to catch up on with you. And I have a very important question to ask."