Mafia Mask 23

Chapter 23 Chocolate Cake and Dangerous Confess

ions

Ivy’s POV

I settled back at my desk as the workday wound down. The afternoon tasks kept my hands busy while my mind processed everything that had happened earlier—Roman’s attack, Caleb’s protective fury, and the dangerous electricity that seemed to crackle between us whenever we were in the same room. Jude’s cheerful voice drifted through the office as he belted out "Oh! Pretty Woman" with surprising vocal talent.

"Jude, you should audition for one of those singing competitions," I called out with genuine admiration.

"Maybe someday, but honestly, I love the adrenaline here too much to leave." His expression shifted to concern as he approached my desk. "Monica filled me in on the drama while I was upstairs handling classified files. You holding up alright?"

"I’m fine, really. Thanks for asking."

"Good to hear. Well, I’m heading out early tonight. My wife got home and texted that she has something special planned. Her surprises are always incredible, so I’m practically racing home."

"Look at you, the devoted husband. Enjoy your evening."

"I will definitely share the details tomorrow over lunch. Hey, we should do something this weekend. I mentioned you to my wife and she’s dying to meet you."

"That sounds wonderful. Would it be okay if I brought someone?"

"Absolutely. See you tomorrow, pretty woman."

His playful nickname made me smile, but before I could respond, a familiar voice spoke directly behind me, so close I could feel his breath against my ear like a dangerous caress.

"Well, Miss Brooks, you're becoming quite the problem for me. My lieutenant whistles like a lovesick teenager whenever you walk by, my consigliere has nicknamed you pretty woman, I can barely concentrate on business, and now I have an unhealthy obsession with chocolate desserts. Where exactly is this all leading?"

Caleb's voice carried that dangerously smooth quality that reminded me of warm honey laced with poison.

"Mr. Thorne, you might want to be more careful about developing addictions," I replied, keeping my tone light while refusing to turn around and face those lethal ice-blue eyes.

"Come on, pretty woman, let's take that beauty of yours somewhere it can be properly appreciated. Dinner sounds perfect after the violence we dealt with today. But don't think I'm dropping our earlier conversation just because we're being social." He flashed that knowing wink before heading toward the door where Xavier and Heidi were already waiting by the elevator.

Dinner exceeded my expectations in every dangerous way. The restaurant buzzed with sophisticated conversation and undoubtedly served as a front for high-level criminal meetings. The food was exceptional, and the company kept me laughing throughout the meal despite the undercurrent of lethal tension. When dessert arrived, my boss ordered his now-signature chocolate cake and leaned in close enough that his words tickled my ear.

"Want to help me with this?"

I nodded without hesitation. Resisting him felt impossible when he radiated this combination of charm, confidence, and raw dangerous magnetism. Xavier seized the moment to tease his brother.

"Heidi, you should see how obsessed Caleb's become with chocolate cake. I keep warning him he's going to need new suits if he keeps this up."

"That’s exactly why I’m sharing with my very capable assistant."

"Ivy, you need to establish some ground rules with these three and Jude. Remember what I taught you about maintaining control in dangerous situations," Heidi interjected with mock seriousness.

"Too late for that advice, Heidi. Our new queen has already got me completely under her spell," Caleb replied, causing heat to rush to my cheeks.

When we prepared to leave, Heidi offered to drive me home, but my boss immediately intervened, insisting he would handle it so she wouldn’t have to navigate unfamiliar territory. Outside my apartment building, he turned off the engine and faced me directly with predatory focus.

"Today was pretty intense."

"Caleb, I owe you an apology. My behavior today was completely unprofessional. I let someone provoke me and crossed lines I shouldn’t have crossed. If you want to reconsider my position, I completely understand. I actually had my resignation ready to submit at the end of the day, but then everything exploded with that whole situation. I can turn it in tomorrow morning. This isn’t who I am normally. I don’t act inappropriately or lose control like that, but something about you triggers reactions I can’t explain, and when you push my buttons, I just lose it completely."

When I finally looked at him, he was smiling with obvious dangerous amusement.

"Ivy, that’s the first time you’ve used my name without the formal title. I like it. Can we keep it that way?" I nodded, confused by his reaction, and he continued. "Listen, Ivy, I know this isn’t your normal behavior. Before I left Fresh Ramsey, I had Heidi send me your complete file, and I personally called your previous supervisor. I know exactly who you are professionally. And anyone with blood in their veins would react to the way I was deliberately provoking you today. I’ll admit I enjoyed myself immensely, but during that video conference, I wanted to bend you over my desk and fuck you senseless because I couldn’t focus on a single word being said, and I’m normally laser-focused during business operations."

He ran both hands through his hair in that gesture I was beginning to find irresistibly endearing.

"Do you have any idea how frustrated you left me, watching you pleasure yourself when I couldn't participate?"

"I'm sorry about that, but I was furious with you after what happened during lunch."

"Don't you dare apologize for that. Just remember next time that I want to join in too," he said with a wickedly seductive smile that promised retribution. "I'm not firing you. You're incredibly valuable, and whatever develops between us personally, I know it won't interfere with our professional relationship. Right? So can we just see where this dangerous game goes naturally? And maybe avoid leaving me speechless during important client meetings?"

I nodded, secretly thrilled to know I had rattled this powerful, controlled man so completely.

"Now go get some rest. You must be exhausted. We'll have a proper conversation tomorrow about where this leads."

He lifted my hand to his lips and pressed a gentle kiss to my knuckles that sent electricity shooting up my arm. As I stepped out of the car and headed toward my building entrance, he called out with laughter in his voice.

"Ivy, I'm definitely going to keep provoking you."

The promise in his words made my blood sing with dangerous anticipation. This game between us was far from over.