Mafia Mask 39

Chapter 39 False Betrayal

Ivy's POV

Shortly after Caleb stormed out of Thorne Group headquarters, he returned looking like he had just executed someone with his bare hands. Blood still stained his knuckles as he swept through the office corridors, his presence making even the most hardened enforcers step aside.

"My office. Now. Ivy."

The ice in his voice cut through me like a switchblade. Xavier and Heidi hurried behind him, their voices urgent as they tried to reason with their Don. But Caleb brushed them off like gnats. My hands trembled as I stood from my desk, confusion clouding my thoughts about what could have triggered such murderous rage.

I entered his private office where he conducted the family's darkest business. Xavier and Heidi followed before securing the door behind us. The metallic click echoed like a gunshot.

Caleb's ice-blue eyes burned with a fury I had never witnessed, not even during the bloodiest territory wars. When he spoke, each word felt like a physical blow.

"How could you betray the family like this, Ivy? You came here playing the innocent little bookkeeper, but you're nothing but a snake in our ranks. You destroyed everything I thought I knew about loyalty. After everything we shared, every secret I trusted you with." His voice cracked with something deeper than anger. "You're the biggest mistake I've ever made in my life."

Those words shattered something inside my chest. "Caleb, what are you talking about? I don't understand what's happening."

"Don't you dare stand there and lie to your Don!" He paced like a caged predator, his tattooed hands raking through his dark hair. "You know exactly what treachery you've committed. I want you gone from my organization and out of my territory. The only reason you're not being dragged out in chains by my soldiers is because I have mercy for your boy."

Chains? The room started spinning around me. My legs felt like they might collapse. "I don't know what you're accusing me of."

"Get out! Now!" His fist crashed against the mahogany desk with such force that I flinched backward. "You'll never work in this city again except maybe scrubbing floors in the docks, where rats like you belong. I curse the day I let you into my family's inner circle!"

Strong hands pulled me from the office before I could crumble completely. My vision blurred with tears, my chest burning with pain I couldn't comprehend.

Heidi gathered my personal belongings while Xavier guided me to his adjacent office. They seated me carefully, like I was made of glass ready to shatter at any moment.

"Ivy, remember when I contacted Caleb about the suspected security breach?" Xavier's voice carried the weight of someone delivering a death sentence.

I nodded weakly, wiping my eyes. "You said you'd investigate the money laundering discrepancies. Did you find the leak? But what does any of this have to do with me?"

"Our cyber specialist discovered two encrypted messages sent from your terminal," Heidi explained with careful precision. "They were deleted immediately, but we recovered them from our secured servers."

"What messages? I never sent any communications to anyone outside the family's network."

Xavier slid two printed documents across his desk. The first one made my stomach plummet into an abyss.

From: Ivy Brooks

To: encrypted.contact@darkweb.syndicate

Subject: Security Alert

Boss,

The inner circle suspects infiltration. They're conducting internal investigations. Exercise extreme caution with next shipment.

H. Brooks

Financial Operations

Thorne Syndicate

The second message was even more devastating.

From: Ivy Brooks

To: encrypted.contact@darkweb.syndicate

Subject: Operation Status

Boss,

My infiltration proceeds flawlessly. The Don trusts me completely. He's revealed family banking routes and territory maps.

H. Brooks

Financial Operations

I stared at the documents, my hands shaking uncontrollably. "I never wrote these. I swear on Max's life, I never sent these messages to anyone. Someone else orchestrated this frame job."

Heidi's weathered hand found my shoulder. "I believe you, child. When I vetted you for this position, the Morgan family vouched for your character completely. Dr. Rivera spoke of your integrity. There's no universe where you'd commit treason against us."

"Heidi, I want to believe that," Xavier said slowly, his military background evident in his measured tone. "But Ivy is our only new recruit. Everyone else has served the family for decades. The security breaches started shortly after her arrival."

"So you're condemning me because I'm the outsider?" The hurt in my voice was raw and bleeding.

"Caleb is devastated beyond reason, Ivy. He's not thinking like a strategist right now. You must understand, the timing appears catastrophically suspicious."

My tears dried up, replaced by cold fury that would have made any street enforcer proud. I stood up slowly, removing my security badge and encrypted phone from my jacket. "Of course. It's simpler to sacrifice the newcomer than admit one of your trusted soldiers has been playing you for fools."

I grabbed my purse and locked eyes with Xavier. "Fine. I'll disappear from your territory. But I pray when you realize how catastrophically wrong you are, the real traitor hasn't already destroyed everything you've built with blood."

I moved toward the door, then turned back. "Should I submit to a strip search, Consigliere? Ensure I'm not stealing family secrets on my way out?"

Xavier shifted uncomfortably in his leather chair. "Ivy, please don't make this harder than necessary. No, you can leave freely. We'll transfer your final payment and documentation later."

"Keep your blood money. Just clear my employment record so I can find honest work. Even if it’s in the sewers, as your Don so eloquently suggested."

As I exited Xavier’s office, Monica materialized like a vulture sensing fresh carnage. "Ivy, what happened? You look devastated."

I looked at her with pure disgust and pressed the elevator button. When the doors opened, she tried to follow me inside.

"Stay back," I said, holding up my hand like I was stopping traffic.

The doors closed on her shocked expression. The security team allowed me through the lobby without question when I explained about surrendering my credentials. Outside in the cold city air, I flagged down the first taxi I could find.

Only when I reached my small apartment did I allow myself to completely break down, sobbing until nothing remained inside me but emptiness.