Mafia Mask 42

Chapter 42 Web of Deception

Roman's POV

I settled back against the headboard and struck a match, watching the flame dance before lighting my cigarette. The smoke curled upward as I turned to study the woman sprawled naked beside me on the silk sheets.

"Outstanding performance today, sweetheart. Truly exceptional work." I reached for my phone to arrange the usual payment. "I'll have the funds transferred within the hour. Treat yourself to something sparkly." A low chuckle escaped my lips as I considered her unsuspecting husband. "Does that naive fool of yours ever wonder how you afford such expensive tastes on his pathetic earnings from the docks?"

My mistress stretched languidly, her body catching the afternoon light filtering through the penthouse windows. We had been conducting this arrangement for years now, and she had proven invaluable in ways her husband could never imagine. She possessed a talent for deception that I found both useful and arousing, perfect for infiltrating the Thorne Syndicate's inner circle.

She laughed, a throaty sound that filled the room, and plucked the cigarette from between my fingers. After taking a long drag, she exhaled slowly.

"My darling husband is completely oblivious. He actually believes everything I wear is costume jewelry and designer knockoffs." Her eyes gleamed with malicious amusement. "He's every bit as clueless as that Don Thorne, completely blind to what's happening in his own organization. Though I must admit, I'm baffled how such an imbecile built an empire like the Thorne Syndicate. His father was equally gullible, trusting everyone who crossed his path." She paused, considering her words carefully. "Of course, he nearly exposed your money laundering operations before the car bomb incident."

"Yes, the old Don's little accident was remarkably well-timed, wasn't it?" I couldn't suppress my satisfaction. "Though that brat Caleb surviving threw a wrench in my plans. He was supposed to be in that car with his father. But even with him breathing, I had everything mapped out to seize control of the family's territory. My dear daughter would have that simpleton wrapped around her finger within months, finally getting her coveted position as the Don's wife. Then that insufferable Xavier had to start poisoning Caleb's mind against me." My jaw tightened with frustration. "The fool actually promoted that snake to consigliere."

"The delay was unfortunate, but the outcome remains the same." She traced patterns on my chest with her fingertip. "How exactly does your daughter plan to win him over? He can barely tolerate being in the same room with her."

"Friday night, at Heidi's farewell gathering. You'll ensure Xavier is otherwise occupied while my daughter handles the rest." My tone left no room for negotiation. The old widow's departure from the Thorne compound would provide the perfect opportunity for Yara to make her move.

"Consider it done. I should leave before my devoted husband starts wondering where I've been." She rose gracefully, already reaching for her clothes. "Just remember, they cannot suspect my involvement in any of this."

"Trust me, darling. You'll appear completely innocent when this syndicate falls."

After she dressed and departed, I remained in bed, savoring my whiskey and cigarette. She was manipulative and mercenary, but those qualities made her perfect for my purposes. When I first seduced her into this arrangement, I recognized her potential immediately. Despite her grating personality and obvious gold-digging tendencies, she delivered intelligence that made tolerating her worth the effort. Unlike my insufferable wife, whom I maintained purely for appearances within our own crime family.

This penthouse had served as our private sanctuary for years, carefully chosen for its discretion and distance from Thorne Syndicate headquarters. During our regular encounters, she had provided intelligence that proved invaluable to my plans. A few thousand dollars transferred to her account, and she would reveal every detail about the syndicate's operations I needed to know.

Just recently, she informed me about Caleb's closed-door meeting with his capos. I had anticipated swift retaliation from him, but so far, he had only implemented security measures on family communications. I immediately instructed her to plant that incriminating evidence on Ivy's laptop. The little mouse had been interfering with my daughter's romantic pursuits, and I needed her eliminated from the equation. Anyone could see Caleb's growing interest in that insignificant woman.

Watching him banish Ivy in a rage, convinced she had betrayed the family, provided tremendous entertainment. Earlier today, when word spread through the compound about Caleb and his assistant's

public display of affection, I recognized the perfect opportunity for a finishing blow. My mistress's call confirming their intimate moment allowed me to execute the next phase flawlessly.

That emotional fool had exiled his secretary like a common traitor and vanished from the compound, leaving his loyal inner circle in complete disarray. Their panic had been so pronounced that they inadvertently revealed crucial information I could exploit about the family's weapon shipments and territory boundaries.

I had already set everything in motion. My accountant had skillfully forged replacement ledgers and financial records, substituting them for the originals in Caleb's private vault. When they eventually retrieved them, they would find nothing suspicious. The genuine documents remained safely hidden in my own territory where no one would think to look.

My strategy was proceeding flawlessly, thanks largely to the steady stream of intelligence my mistress provided. The Thorne Syndicate would soon belong to me entirely. I would systematically destroy Caleb's confidence and force him to surrender his territory for a fraction of its value. The irony was delicious - I would purchase his empire using funds I had been systematically skimming from joint operations for years.

My daughter would secure her marriage to him and maintain control over his actions. Even as my subordinate, the Thorne name would continue opening doors that benefited my interests. Keeping him on a short leash would be essential for maintaining order in the new regime.

I stubbed out my cigarette and poured another measure of whiskey, relishing the burn as it slid down my throat. Soon I would have to return to my own compound and endure another evening of my wife's tedious company, pretending to be the devoted family patriarch everyone believed me to be while I orchestrated the downfall of the most powerful crime family on the East Coast.