Mafia Mask 51

Chapter 51 Walls Crumbling Down

Ivy's POV

The strategy room slowly emptied as the capos filed out one by one, leaving behind the lingering scent of expensive cigars and the weight of unspoken threats. Caleb remained seated at the head of the mahogany conference table, his imposing figure motionless as he watched the last of his lieutenants disappear through the reinforced steel doors. The room fell silent except for the distant hum of the building's security systems, and once again we found ourselves alone in this dangerous dance that neither of us seemed capable of escaping.

I moved toward my abandoned seat to collect my ledger and encrypted files, desperate to flee before my carefully constructed walls crumbled completely. But Caleb was faster, his movements carrying the deadly grace of a predator. His strong hands captured my wrist with practiced ease, pulling me down onto his lap with the authority of a man who had never been denied anything he truly wanted. His arms encircled me like steel restraints, trapping me against the solid wall of his chest.

"You have no idea how much I've been losing my mind without you," he breathed against the sensitive shell of my ear, his voice rough with barely contained desperation.

Every instinct screamed at me to run, but my treacherous heart hammered against my ribs at his proximity. The familiar scent of his cologne mixed with something uniquely dangerous threatened to undo months of careful emotional barriers I had built around myself.

"Caleb, please, you can't keep doing this to me," I whispered, my voice breaking despite my efforts to maintain the cold professionalism that had kept me alive in his world.

"Please, Ivy, don't keep tearing us both apart," he countered, his ice-blue eyes burning with an intensity that made my breath catch in my throat.

Before I could form another protest, his mouth claimed mine with a hunger that obliterated every rational thought. His tongue swept past my lips in a devastating exploration that was both achingly slow and desperately urgent. The kiss tasted of expensive whiskey and memories, of passion and heartbreak intertwined in ways that made my chest ache.

For a reckless moment, I forgot everything. The betrayal, the false accusations, the sleepless nights spent crying into my pillow while hiding in safe houses. My body remembered only him, only this fire that no other man had ever ignited within the depths of my soul. I kissed him back with equal fervor, my hands fisting in his expensive silk shirt.

He pressed me closer against his chest, so tight I could feel his heartbeat thundering beneath my palm like war drums. A soft moan escaped my lips as heat pooled low in my belly, my body awakening to his touch like a flower turning toward lethal sunlight. Every rational thought dissolved under the overwhelming assault of sensation.

I shifted unconsciously on his lap and felt the unmistakable evidence of his arousal pressing against me through the fabric of his tailored pants. The intimate contact sent liquid fire racing through my veins, my underwear growing embarrassingly damp as my body betrayed every logical reason to push this dangerous man away from me.

He broke the kiss just long enough to speak against my swollen lips, his breathing ragged and uneven. "Do you feel what you do to me? Do you see how much your body craves mine too? Give me another chance, Ivy. I swear on my family's honor that I'll spend every remaining day of my life proving I deserve your forgiveness."

His voice had dropped to that low, gravelly tone that always made my knees weak with desire. The promises fell from his lips like whispered confessions, each word chipping away at the carefully constructed walls around my heart. We kissed again with the desperation of drowning souls, our mouths moving together in a dance as old and dangerous as the world we inhabited.

The kiss stretched on, hot and wet and full of unspoken needs that neither of us dared voice aloud. It was slow and thorough, Caleb taking his time to savor every response he coaxed from my willing lips. When we finally broke apart, both gasping for air like survivors of some terrible storm, I kept my eyes squeezed shut as I fought to regain some semblance of control over my shattered composure.

My chest rose and fell rapidly as I struggled to slow my racing pulse. When I finally opened my eyes, tears were streaming down my cheeks unbidden, hot and salt-bitter. The weight of our complicated history pressed down on me like a physical force threatening to crush what remained of my resolve.

Caleb's thumbs traced gentle paths across my damp skin, wiping away each tear with infinite tenderness that seemed impossible coming from hands that had spilled so much blood. He pressed soft kisses to my closed eyelids, his touch so loving it made my heart ache with fresh waves of pain.

When I looked at him again, I saw moisture glistening in his own ice-blue eyes. The raw anguish etched across his handsome features was unmistakable and devastating. He was suffering just as much as I was, trapped in this impossible situation of our own making, prisoners of a love that had been forged in violence and betrayal.

My fingertips traced the familiar planes of his face, memorizing every beloved detail that haunted my dreams. His strong jaw, the slight scar above his left eyebrow from some long-ago territorial dispute, the way his dark lashes cast shadows on his sharp cheekbones. Those mesmerizing ice-blue eyes that had captured my heart from the very first moment gazed directly into my soul with an intensity that left me breathless.

God, how I wanted him. The need was a living thing inside me, clawing at my chest with desperate fingers that left me bleeding internally. His arm tightened possessively around my waist while his other hand traced lazy patterns on my thigh, each touch leaving trails of fire that burned through the expensive fabric of my dress.

Unable to resist the pull any longer, I pulled him down for another kiss, pouring every ounce of love and longing into the connection between us. Caleb responded with equal passion, a low groan rumbling in his chest as our tongues tangled together. His kisses were like a drug I couldn't quit, more addictive than any substance known to mankind.

Tears continued to fall as we kissed, and I couldn't distinguish which belonged to him and which were mine. They mingled between us like the salt of our shared sorrow, a physical manifestation of the pain we both carried in the deepest chambers of our hearts.

"Please, my love, forgive me. Come back to me," Caleb pleaded against my forehead, his voice breaking on what sounded suspiciously like a sob. "Without you in my life, I'm nothing but empty space and endless regret."

Seeing him like this, so vulnerable and broken beneath his usual mask of lethal authority, shattered something deep inside my chest. The powerful don who commanded respect through fear and violence was reduced to a man begging for redemption from the woman who held his blackened heart in her trembling hands.

But the wounds he had inflicted still bled freely in the darkness of my soul.

He had destroyed my trust with his brutal accusations. He had chosen to believe the worst possible interpretation when I needed his faith most desperately. How could I possibly open myself up to that kind of devastating betrayal again?

"Caleb," I sobbed, my voice barely audible through the thickness of my tears. "You destroyed me completely. The things you said to me, the way you looked at me like I was nothing more than common trash. I still can’t—"

I couldn’t finish the sentence. The words were too painful to speak aloud, too raw and bleeding to give voice to in this sterile room where so many lives had been decided with casual brutality.

Instead, I scrambled off his lap with clumsy, unsteady movements, my legs threatening to buckle beneath me. Without looking back at the man who still owned every fractured piece of my broken heart, I fled from the room like a woman possessed, leaving behind my belongings and any hope of maintaining my professional composure.

Staying there another moment would have been my complete and utter undoing.