Mafia Mask 54

Chapter 54 Devils Dance

Caleb's POV

I wandered through the crowded ballroom of the Thorne family estate, searching desperately for Xavier among the sea of made men and their wives. The crystal chandeliers cast dancing shadows across my vision, already blurred from too much whiskey. Where the hell was my consigliere when I needed him most? Jude had vanished into thin air as well, probably handling some territory dispute downtown.

My legs felt unsteady beneath me, and the ornate ballroom tilted dangerously. The quarterly family gathering was always a test of endurance, but tonight I had to escape before I made a complete fool of myself in front of every capo and underboss in the northeast. My private office on the second floor of the estate seemed like the only sanctuary where I could clear my head and wait for this political nightmare to end.

I began weaving through the crowd of expensive suits and designer gowns, managing weak nods at familiar faces who paid their respects. Soldiers stepped aside with lowered eyes, while their wives curtsied slightly. The effort of maintaining the Don's authority was exhausting when every step felt like walking through quicksand.

Then I felt it - slender arms snaking around my waist like a serpent closing its trap. That cloying, overpowering perfume hit me like a physical blow, the same scent that had haunted the family compound for weeks. Before I could react, Yara Rossi appeared beside me, her red lips stretched in a predatory smile that made my blood run cold.

"There you are, Don Thorne," she purred, her grip tightening possessively around my arm like she had some claim to the head of the Thorne syndicate.

She began dragging me through the ballroom like a trophy she'd captured, stopping to exchange pleasantries with various family members while I struggled to maintain my balance. The alcohol had robbed me of my strength, and her surprisingly firm grip kept me anchored to her side despite my attempts to break free.

"Yara, let go," I mumbled, but my words came out slurred and weak.

She either didn’t hear me or chose to ignore my protests, continuing her performance as the devoted companion to every underboss’s wife who watched us with calculating eyes. Every smile she flashed at the other families made my stomach turn. This woman was absolutely relentless in her pursuit, and tonight she’d found me at my most vulnerable moment.

Finally, she steered me away from the crowd and toward the marble staircase leading to the family’s private quarters. Before I could process what was happening, her lips crashed against mine with desperate hunger. I tried to push her away, but my coordination was shot, and she clung to me like a leech sensing weakness.

"Yara, stop," I managed between her aggressive kisses, but she pressed closer, her manicured hands roaming where they had no business being.

She practically carried me to the private elevator that led to the upper floors of the estate, her arm supporting most of my weight while she jabbed the button repeatedly. The small space felt like a cage once the doors closed, trapping me with her suffocating presence.

"Poor Caleb, you’re completely wasted," she cooed, her voice taking on a false sweetness that made my skin crawl. "Let’s get you to your office so you can rest and sober up. Then we can return to discuss our families’ alliance when you’re thinking clearly."

"I need to find Xavier," I slurred, my head lolling against the elevator wall.

"How about this - you go rest in your office, and I’ll find your consigliere for you. I’ll tell him exactly where you are," she said with that syrupy tone that should have been my first warning.

Through my alcohol-fogged brain, that seemed reasonable enough. I nodded weakly, not realizing until the elevator reached the executive floor that she hadn’t left to search for Xavier at all. She was still right there beside me, her fingers digging into my arm as she guided me down the hallway past portraits of deceased Thorne patriarchs.

The next few hours dissolved into a black void of unconsciousness.

I woke up to afternoon sunlight streaming through the bulletproof windows of my private office and a splitting headache that felt like someone was driving nails into my skull. My mouth was dry as cotton, and every muscle in my body ached. But the worst part was the weight pressed against my chest and the unmistakable feeling of bare skin against mine.

My eyes snapped open, and the horror of my situation hit me like a freight train. Yara was sprawled across my chest on the leather sofa, wearing nothing but a lacy black bra and matching underwear. Her auburn hair was tangled and wild, and she was sleeping with the satisfied smile of a cat who'd cornered a canary.

What the hell had happened here?

Panic surged through me as I realized I was shirtless, my clothes scattered across the office floor like evidence of a crime I couldn't remember committing. The implications crashed down on me with sickening clarity. In the syndicate world, this kind of compromise could mean a forced alliance with the Rossi family.

In my desperation to escape this nightmare, I shoved Yara off me with more force than necessary. She tumbled to the floor in a heap, her limbs tangled awkwardly against the Persian rug.

"Owww!" she shrieked, her voice piercing through my skull like a rusty knife. "Caleb, what the hell? What's wrong with you?"

"I should be asking you that question," I snapped, scrambling to my feet and grabbing my shirt from the floor. "What happened here, you psychotic woman?"

Yara stretched languidly, making no effort to cover herself as she smiled up at me with predatory satisfaction. "Oh baby, don't tell me you don't remember our incredible night together. You were absolutely insatiable, telling me how gorgeous I was, how perfect we'd be as allied families..."

She rose from the floor like a serpent, moving toward me with her arms outstretched as if she expected me to welcome her embrace.

"Stay away from me, you lunatic!" I dodged her reaching arms and backed toward the reinforced door. "I would never willingly touch you, Yara Rossi. You're the most repulsive creature in all the five families, you and that scheming father of yours."

Her expression shifted from seductive to wounded in an instant, crocodile tears beginning to well up in her eyes. Then came the ear-piercing wail that made my hangover ten times worse.

"You can't treat me like this, Caleb!" she screamed, her voice climbing to frequencies that could shatter the bulletproof glass. "You used me and now you want to throw me away like garbage? Well, you can't! Daddy will make sure our families honor this union, you'll see."

"You've completely lost your mind," I said, running both hands through my disheveled hair. "Get dressed, Yara. Please, for the love of God, put your clothes on and then we'll discuss this like civilized syndicate members."

She dressed with deliberate slowness, making sure I saw every movement as she slipped back into her evening gown. The moment she finished zipping up the back, I grabbed her arm and marched her to the elevator.

I spun her around to face me, my voice deadly serious. "If anything happened between us last night, it was because you orchestrated it while I was too drunk to consent. This isn't the old country where your father can force a marriage to protect family honor. Besides, we both know you lost your virtue to that Silva underboss years ago, and half the syndicate found out about it. Tell your father to negotiate with them instead."

"Caleb, please," she whined, trying to cling to my arm as I pushed her into the elevator. "You don't mean this."

I jabbed the lobby button and stepped back as the doors began to close. "Stay away from me, Yara. Pretend you don't know me, pretend our families have never met. If I see you on Thorne territory again, I'm calling my soldiers."

The moment she was gone, I slumped against the wall, my head pounding with equal parts hangover and horror. I immediately contacted the estate's security to confirm she'd left the grounds, then called my tech specialist to change all my access codes.

With shaking hands, I dialed Xavier’s encrypted number.

"Don, you disappeared last night without a word to your protection detail," Xavier’s voice came through clear and concerned. "What happened to you?"

"I danced with the devil herself and lived to regret it," I said, my voice hoarse with exhaustion and disgust. "Call Dominic and meet me at the penthouse soon. I need to tell you both what happened before the Rossi family tries to use this against us."

"Of course, Caleb. We’ll be right there," Xavier assured me before hanging up.

I fled my office like it was contaminated and headed to my downtown penthouse to confess my sins to the only people I trusted completely in this treacherous syndicate world.