Mafia Mask 62

Chapter 62 First Sight Obsession

Dominic's POV

Walking into that exclusive boutique in Little Italy to catch up with Zoe and Ivy, I never expected to encounter perfection wrapped in danger. She moved like liquid silk through the designer gowns, every gesture calculated yet graceful. This wasn't mere attraction - this was complete captivation by a living work of art who clearly understood the deadly world we all inhabited.

Gemma was breathtaking. Her body curved in all the right places beneath that fitted black dress, rich caramel skin practically glowing under the boutique's crystal chandeliers. Those dark curls cascaded down her shoulders like expensive silk I desperately wanted to run my fingers through. Every professional smile she offered made my pulse race with thoughts of claiming those full lips as mine.

I lingered with the girls, manufacturing excuses to stay near this enchanting woman who clearly catered to families like ours. The boutique itself reeked of old money and older secrets - exactly the kind of establishment that dressed the wives and daughters of made men. But Gemma treated me like background noise, polite yet distant, untouchable. When I suggested she model one of those curve-hugging evening gowns Zoe and Ivy were considering for family functions, she shut me down with the efficiency of a closed steel vault.

So I purchased the golden dress anyway, along with matching heels that would make her legs look endless. If she wouldn't try it on for me, I'd find another way to see her wearing it at the next family gathering.

When I asked for her personal contact information, she handed me the store's business card with the same detached professionalism she'd show any customer. Not even a flicker of recognition for my position in the organization. Challenge accepted, sweetheart.

The next day brought me back like a man possessed, trying every approach to crack her professional armor. Nothing worked. Then Zoe and Ivy arrived, catching me mid-desperation at the counter, practically begging Gemma for any acknowledgment. They found my suffering absolutely hilarious.

Gemma scribbled her number on cards for both girls, then dismissed me with a pointed warning about management not appreciating customers who made their employees uncomfortable. The rejection stung, but her fire only intensified my obsession.

Monday morning, Zoe delivered the shopping bags to my office along with a stern lecture about boundaries.

"Dominic, don't mess with Gemma. She's genuinely good people trying to make an honest living."

"Trust me, Zoe, she's absolutely perfect." I couldn't suppress my grin.

"Don't be disgusting, Dominic!" She scolded me like a disapproving older sister.

I spent the entire day staring at those bags, plotting my strategy. This woman had completely scrambled my normally calculating mind without offering even an ounce of encouragement. By evening, I was practically climbing the walls with frustration.

I headed straight to Little Italy, positioning myself across from her boutique like some lovesick soldier. She was inside helping customers, looking absolutely radiant under those lights. Eventually she'd have to leave for the day, and I'd be waiting.

I ducked into the cosmetics store opposite hers, attempting casualness. A petite girl with silver braces immediately approached with knowing eyes.

"Looking for something special for someone special?"

I glanced around, realizing how obvious my surveillance must appear. We stood before an elaborate display of luxury cosmetics, and I scrambled for plausible cover.

"Shopping for my sister. She's obsessed with this stuff, but I'm completely out of my depth." I flashed my most disarming smile.

Her metallic grin told me she saw straight through my act.

"You're not shopping for cosmetics. You're stalking that girl across the street." Caught red-handed. "But I could help you... or I could alert security about the creep watching my friend work."

This kid was sharp as a blade and twice as dangerous.

"Look, I just want to ask her for coffee. Let me use this as cover, and I'll make it worth your time."

"How worth my time?" Her eyes gleamed with entrepreneurial opportunity.

"Pick whatever you want. I'll cover it."

"What's your spending limit for this 'sister's gift'?" She was already calculating angles.

"I honestly have no clue what any of this costs."

"Depends which girl you're planning to pursue." This teenager was a natural negotiator.

"What difference does that make to the price?"

"Well, depending on your target, your 'sister's gift' gets significantly more expensive."

Christ. This little shark was about to fleece me completely.

"Fine. It's Gemma."

"Ooooh! That's going to cost you serious money." Her grin widened dangerously. "You've got it bad for Gemma. If you're serious about impressing her, I'll share everything I know."

Now she had my complete attention.

"What's this going to cost me, little entrepreneur?" Straight to business.

I surveyed the boutique products surrounding us. How expensive could cosmetics possibly be? If this kid possessed insider information about Gemma, the investment would pay dividends.

"Are you buying the entire inventory?" She shook her head knowingly. "Then start talking while you shop."

"Deal." We shook hands like seasoned business partners. "You've got until her break."

Later, I knew Gemma had recently ended a relationship after discovering her boyfriend's infidelity with a coworker. What a complete fool.

"Time to settle accounts."

"It's Dominic, Lila," I corrected, handing over my platinum card to this miniature extortionist.

"I'm still calling you Dominic." She processed the payment with satisfied efficiency. "Thanks for exceeding my monthly quota."

She'd assembled an elegant case filled with premium cosmetics. Seemed reasonable enough. My phone buzzed with a bank notification, and I glanced at the total casually.

"Lila, I think there's been some mistake with this amount."

"Let me double-check." She compared receipts with angelic innocence. "Nope, Dominic. Exactly correct."

Nearly thirty thousand dollars. For makeup.

"Jesus Christ! This stuff actually costs that much?"

"Language, Dominic." She tsked mockingly. "Life lesson - quality women require quality investments. Premium cosmetics demand premium prices. I curated this collection specifically for Gemma's complexion and style. She'll love it. But don't present it on your first date - she'll refuse out of principle. Wait until you've established trust, then find the perfect moment."

This young girl had just schooled me in both business strategy and romance psychology. I couldn't decide whether to be impressed or terrified.

"She's grabbing her purse. Give me your card - I'll have this delivered to your office so she won't see you carrying it." Even her logistics were flawless.

"Lila, call me tomorrow. I want to discuss a position with our organization." I handed her my business card and left.

I timed my exit perfectly, pretending to check messages while walking directly into Gemma's path.

"Sorry! Wasn't watching where I was going." My most disarming expression.

"No problem. Here visiting Little Italy again?"

"Picking up something for family business."

"Ah, the devoted family man." Her smile was radiant.

"Something like that. Coffee break?"

"Just a quick one."

"Mind if I join you?" She hesitated briefly.

"Alright, but only for a short while."

I maximized that time, but she still wouldn't offer her personal number. I spent the rest of the week haunting Little Italy like Gemma's devoted shadow.

Thursday finally brought breakthrough. I leveraged Zoe's plan for Xavier to reconcile with Ivy, agreeing to facilitate only if Gemma joined our group dinner. Afterward, she finally surrendered her contact information.

Friday, I insisted on driving her home from the boutique. She accepted my offer. Before she could escape my car, I caught her hand gently.

"So Gemma, about tomorrow night..."

"I only agreed because the girls invited me. We're developing a friendship." Her tone remained firm.

"Aren't we becoming friends too?" I asked with calculated innocence.

"Yes, we are." Her smile softened everything.

"Then as your friend, I want to give you something." I retrieved the shopping bags from my backseat, placing them carefully in her lap.

Her expression shifted to pure fury.

"I'm not accepting this, Dominic. I know exactly what game you're playing."

"Gemma, it’s just a gift. Like what I bought Zoe and Ivy for family events. You’ll look incredible in this dress, and you deserve beautiful things. I won’t lie - I selected it specifically for you because it’s perfect."

"Dominic, I can’t."

"Why not?" I didn’t allow her to answer. "Accept it, Gemma. Wear it tomorrow night. Please. You three will look absolutely stunning together." I deployed my most persuasive expression.

"You’re absolutely relentless." I shook my head definitively. She sighed, rolled her eyes, but smiled. "Fine, I’ll accept a gift from a friend." She emphasized ’friend’ pointedly. "But you’re not getting this dress off me tomorrow night."

Maybe not tomorrow, but eventually that golden dress would hit my bedroom floor, I thought, widening my smile. She thanked me, kissed my cheek goodbye, and as she closed the car door, I called out through the window:

"Picking you up tomorrow evening." I drove away before she could protest, catching her amused headshake in my rearview mirror.