Mafia Mask 74

Chapter 74 The Floral Invasion

Caleb's POV

Xavier and I strode through the marble lobby of Thorne Tower, the legitimate front for our money laundering operations. Finn waited by the private elevator that led to the restricted floors where our financial operations ran under the guise of corporate business. The five of us had orchestrated quite the power lunch earlier, joined by Dominic and Jude. Our coordinated flower assault was about to commence, designed to overwhelm the women completely.

Initially, I'd questioned the elaborate scheme, concerned we were venturing into absurd territory for a Don and his lieutenants. But Xavier and Dominic had convinced me with their twisted reasoning: the arrangements would be so outrageously excessive that the women would have no choice but to contact us, furious and demanding explanations. That anger would create the perfect opening for us to arrive as their rescuers, offer protection, and spend quality time smoothing over their rage. Jude and Finn had immediately supported the plan, so we'd committed to this grandiose romantic siege.

The elevator ride to the accounting floor felt interminable. When Xavier and I finally approached the restricted workspace where our money was cleaned through legitimate channels, the sheer scope of our floral invasion struck me like a freight train. The arrangements completely dominated their workstations, forcing both women to construct makeshift barriers just to see around the massive displays at their terminals.

The scene resembled a greenhouse more than a financial operation center. They looked like they were laundering money inside a botanical garden. I caught Xavier's eye, and we both struggled to suppress our amusement at the ridiculous spectacle we'd orchestrated.

"How are the most dangerous women in our entire territory?" Xavier announced with his signature charm, immediately drawing their attention.

Both women exchanged a loaded glance before turning to face us with expressions that could have incinerated steel. Their eyes promised swift and brutal retaliation.

"Do you have any concept of how many individual flowers are crammed into these botanical nightmares? Because we do. Our entire financial unit started a betting pool to count the blooms in our personal disasters. Even our section chief threw money into the pot." Ivy's voice carried barely contained fury.

"Do you realize what our colleagues are calling us now? The flower girls. And that was the most diplomatic nickname we heard today." Ruby matched Ivy's irritation perfectly, her cheeks flushed with embarrassment and anger.

We might have miscalculated slightly, but watching them pace around in indignation was absolutely captivating.

"Ginger, please don't remain angry with me. It was intended as a small romantic gesture. Perhaps we got slightly carried away." Xavier reached for Ruby's hand, bringing it to his lips with practiced smoothness.

"Romantic, Xavier? This wasn't romantic, this was completely insane." Ivy huffed, gesturing wildly at the floral catastrophe surrounding her workspace.

"My queen, please don't be even more furious with me than you already are." I moved closer, sliding my arm around her waist and pulling her against me for a quick kiss.

"What gives you the right to be so familiar, Caleb?" She tried pushing away from my embrace. "I'm not your queen, and I certainly didn't give you permission to kiss me like that."

I silenced her protests with a kiss worthy of classic Hollywood movies, sweeping her backward in my arms like something straight from an old film. The dramatic gesture earned enthusiastic applause and wolf whistles from her fascinated colleagues who understood exactly who held power in this building. When I finally brought her back upright, she was completely breathless.

Glancing sideways, I discovered Xavier had replicated my theatrical move perfectly. Ruby looked just as dazed and oxygen-deprived as Ivy. My consigliere was grinning like he'd just conquered enemy territory.

"Finally got to kiss my gorgeous redhead properly." Xavier's satisfaction was written across his entire face.

"Come on, ladies, let us escort you home and we'll be your devoted servants for the evening." I moved toward Ivy's workstation, hefting the enormous vase that had caused so much chaos. We might have gone overboard, but the results were definitely worth the territorial invasion.

The elevator brought us face-to-face with Zoe and Finn. She mentioned heading to her boyfriend's place since I'd be escorting Ivy home safely. When we reached her building, Mr. Sawyer was stationed at his usual post behind the security desk, greeting us with a knowing smile that suggested he understood exactly what kind of business I conducted.

"I can see you're incredibly persistent, young man." Mr. Sawyer's comment carried genuine amusement.

"I'm confident I'll earn her forgiveness eventually, Mr. Sawyer." My response made him chuckle.

"So you're part of this conspiracy too, Mr. Sawyer?" Ivy planted her hands firmly on her hips, confronting the older gentleman.

"My dear girl, I'm an incurable romantic at heart. Anyone can see this young man is completely devoted to you. You two make an absolutely perfect couple together. Let him grovel appropriately, make him work for your forgiveness, but don't torture him forever, sweetheart. Nothing in this world compares to experiencing true love." Mr. Sawyer proved himself an invaluable ally once again.

"I'll consider your advice, Mr. Sawyer. Good night." Ivy headed toward the elevator bank.

I thanked Mr. Sawyer quickly. He gave me an encouraging thumbs up and waved me after her. I practically sprinted to catch the elevator before the doors closed.

When Ivy unlocked her apartment door, Max came racing over and threw his arms around me in an enthusiastic embrace. She introduced me to the babysitter, who gathered her belongings and prepared to leave. Ivy disappeared into the bathroom for a shower, giving me the perfect opportunity to order dinner from our family's restaurant and plan a surprise with my small accomplice's assistance. I selected the finest cuisine and added chocolate cake for dessert.

After dinner and an extended play session, I tucked Max into bed. The little guy was absolutely precious. We returned to the living room, where I drew Ivy into my arms on the couch.

"My love, we need to have a serious conversation." I whispered the words directly into her ear.

"About what exactly, Caleb?" Her arms encircled me as she spoke, making my heart race with hope. Having her hold me felt incredible.

"About you needing to forgive me."

"I need to forgive you? Why should I forgive someone who treated me terribly and caused me so much pain?"

"Yes, I was terrible, I hurt you badly, but you love me, your son loves me, even your doorman approves of me." I couldn't help smiling at the growing list of allies.

"Don't forget that traitor Finn." She smiled against my neck as she spoke.

"Finn isn't a traitor, he just wants to see you genuinely happy."

"And you think you're my happiness?"

"Absolutely. Because only in my arms do you completely surrender, forget about everything else, and find real peace."

"Is that your only argument?" Her tone carried a challenging edge.

"Of course not. I'm also the only man who drives you completely wild with desire." I slipped my hands under her dress, grasped her thighs firmly, and lifted her so her legs wrapped around my waist.

I carried her to the couch and laid her down gently, positioning myself above her. I pinned her delicious body beneath mine and claimed her mouth with a kiss filled with pure hunger - scorching, desperate, and consuming. She responded with matching passion.

I've been obsessed with this woman forever. I kissed her thoroughly, licking and sucking her sweet lips, tasting every inch of her mouth, savoring her unique flavor. Ivy matched my intensity completely, the same burning desire that coursed through my veins clearly dominating her body too. The same love that made my heart pound was obviously controlling the rhythm of hers as well.

When we were both gasping for air, I reluctantly pulled back from her lips. She smiled up at me, her eyes sparkling with unmistakable desire. I let my lips wander across her face, leaving a trail of kisses until I reached her ear.

"Ivy, you have absolutely no idea how much I love you."

I gently nibbled her earlobe before following with a soft kiss. I trailed my lips down the column of her neck, kissing, licking, and delivering small bites. I moved to her collarbone and continued my assault of kisses across her skin.

I quickly repositioned myself on the couch, pulling her with me so she straddled my lap, her burning center grinding against my hardened length. I moved beneath her while gently biting her nipple through the fabric of her dress. She pressed herself against me as if trying to merge our bodies completely and released a soft moan that nearly drove me over the edge.

I started working her dress zipper down while claiming her mouth again in another searing kiss. My secure phone vibrated insistently in my jacket pocket. Without breaking our kiss, I pulled out the device and tossed it onto the couch cushions beside us.

The phone continued ringing persistently. Ivy burst into laughter, leaving me completely confused. She looked directly into my eyes, framed my face with both hands, and spoke with clear amusement.

"I guarantee that's your cockblocking consigliere calling. Answer it, because he won't give up until you do."

We both started laughing as I reached for the phone. This woman was absolutely incredible. Sure enough, Xavier's name was flashing across the encrypted screen.

"Damn it, Xavier. Did you surgically implant some kind of tracking device that alerts you every single time I get aroused, you cockblocking bastard?" I answered laughing, but my amusement vanished instantly when I heard what my lieutenant had to say. "Alright, we'll meet at the safe house shortly."

I ended the call and sighed heavily. Ivy studied my face seriously, still sitting in my lap. Having her this close and accepting my touch felt absolutely perfect.

"Is everything alright?"

"Scott apparently discovered who Monica has been feeding information to." I looked directly into her eyes, searching for any trace of pain at bringing up this sensitive subject, but found none. "I hope I can finally eliminate her now."

"I'm glad things are progressing in a positive direction."

"I don't know if positive is the right word, but they're definitely moving toward resolution." I kissed the palm of her hand tenderly. "I hope we're also moving toward being okay together." My voice carried all my hope and desperation.

"Caleb, I still don't know." She shifted in my lap and stood up abruptly. I groaned in complete frustration.

"Damn cockblocker." She looked at me and flashed the most beautiful smile when she heard my creative cursing. "My queen, I have to leave, but I absolutely don't want to. Can we continue this later? Pick up exactly where we left off?" I asked with desperate hope.

"Call me. Who knows, I might be feeling generous tonight."

I smiled at her playful tone, gave her lips one final lingering kiss, and reluctantly headed for the door.