Mafia Mask 81

Chapter 81 Turning the Tables

Ivy's POV

Sleep had become a luxury I could no longer afford. Every night, the image of Caleb with that scheming Yara Rossi burned behind my eyelids like acid. The way he held her close while simultaneously pleading for my forgiveness haunted every moment of rest. I would weep until exhaustion claimed me, only to wake feeling hollow and drained, barely capable of maintaining my facade during the brutal demands of working for a Mafia Don.

The morning crawled by as I sat behind my desk in the Thorne Group offices, half-listening to Ruby's animated discussion with Jenkins about her brother's underground establishment.

"Boss, your wife is going to absolutely fall in love with my brother's casino. You really need to take her to The Darkstone this weekend," Ruby gushed, her eyes sparkling with genuine enthusiasm despite the dangerous world we all inhabited.

Jenkins, one of Caleb's trusted lieutenants who handled the family's legitimate business fronts, chuckled warmly. "From how you describe that place, I suspect it might become her favorite hunting ground for high-stakes games."

Zoe appeared suddenly, weaving between our workstations with an urgency that immediately commanded attention. Her face was flushed with adrenaline, and she looked like she was barely containing explosive information.

"Jenkins, forgive the interruption, but I need to borrow these two for a private moment," she requested, attempting to keep her voice level despite the obvious tension.

"Of course, Zoe. Go ahead. They're currently trying to convince me that my wife needs to experience the thrill of Ruby's brother's underground empire," Jenkins replied with characteristic good humor, though his eyes remained sharp and calculating as always.

"You should absolutely listen to them. Your wife mentioned she enjoys the rush of high-stakes gambling, correct? The Darkstone is legendary for that kind of action," Zoe added, though I could see her practically vibrating with whatever intelligence she was holding back.

Ruby seized the opening. "Seriously, boss, just say the word and I'll have Parker reserve the perfect private booth for you two. If you want intimacy, there are secluded tables in the VIP section with commanding views of the entire floor. But if you're planning to bring associates, you'll want to be positioned near the main gaming tables where the real power plays happen."

"I'll discuss it with her tonight and let you know our decision, Ruby. I appreciate the recommendation," Jenkins said, walking away while humming one of his usual melodies, a habit that somehow made his lethal reputation even more unsettling.

Zoe watched him disappear around the corner before turning to us with exaggerated disbelief. "Does that man literally sing every single moment of his existence?"

We both erupted into laughter and nodded in confirmation.

"What a genuinely content killer he is," Zoe mused with dark humor. Then her expression shifted to deadly serious. "Listen carefully, ladies. Dominic, Caleb, and Xavier are planning to ambush us during lunch today."

Ruby's eyebrows shot up dangerously. "What exactly do you mean by ambush?"

"That manipulative bastard Dominic is orchestrating the entire operation. I intercepted a phone conversation between him and those two psychopaths earlier. He instructed them to arrive early and position themselves out of sight so I wouldn't detect their presence. Then, when we leave for lunch, they plan to tail us to whatever restaurant we choose and corner us there. They're counting on us not wanting to cause a public disturbance," Zoe explained, her voice growing more lethal with each word. "They intend to play it off as some miraculous coincidence, which means we can't even threaten them with stalking charges."

I felt my already depleted energy drain completely. "I suppose we'll have to order delivery and remain locked in the office today."

"Absolutely not!" Ruby's voice cut through the air like a blade. "If we hide from them now, they'll continue pulling these pathetic manipulative stunts indefinitely. We are not going to cower like frightened civilians."

I could practically see the wheels of vengeance turning in her mind, and apparently Zoe could too.

"You're formulating a battle plan, aren't you?" Zoe asked with growing excitement, and Ruby's predatory grin confirmed it.

Ruby grabbed her encrypted phone and dialed, putting it on speaker so we could all hear.

"My wonderful, amazing, beloved brother who owes me countless favors," she purred in an overly sweet voice.

"Oh hell no, little sister. When you start with that tone, it means you're scheming something dangerous and need me to provide backup," Parker's voice came through the speaker, filled with amused suspicion and underlying menace.

"You understand me so perfectly!"

"Alright, princess, what kind of warfare are you trying to drag me into now?"

"I simply want to enjoy lunch with my favorite brother today!"

"Are you actually missing me, or is this part of whatever vendetta you're planning?"

"I always miss you, brother! But today I really need you to bring some of your most intimidating associates along."

"Now I know you're definitely plotting something lethal, Ruby. What's the target?"

Ruby quickly outlined our situation, explaining that we were dealing with some persistent men who refused to respect boundaries, though she kept the details strategically vague. She simply stated we needed to teach them a brutal lesson about understanding rejection.

"So essentially, you and your associates want to use me and my crew as muscle in whatever revenge operation you've devised?"

"I wouldn't use the word 'use,' brother. I prefer to think of it as mutually beneficial tactical collaboration!"

"You are absolutely ruthless, little sister. But you know what? We'd be delighted to assist you ladies, and we'll get the added benefit of dining with gorgeous women. I'll contact my crew, and we'll meet you at your office at noon to escort you."

"Actually, brother, I think it would be far more effective strategically if we rendezvous at the restaurant. But your team needs to already be established there when we arrive, looking like you've been conducting business for a while."

"Ah, I understand. Very tactical thinking. Understood, princess. This should prove entertaining. See you at lunch."

Ruby ended the call and clapped her hands together with pure malicious delight.

"You are absolutely diabolical!" Zoe declared, her smile stretching across her entire face. "And I'm living for every second of it!"

For the first time in days, I found myself genuinely laughing at their bloodthirsty expressions. We exchanged victorious high-fives in celebration of our upcoming counterattack.

"Now I need to return to my station before that idiot Dominic starts getting suspicious about my extended absence," Zoe said, practically gliding back to her workstation with predatory grace.

When lunch hour finally arrived, we gathered our belongings and exited the building with perfect composure, as if we hadn't a single concern in the world. Zoe had already texted us intelligence from the front desk, confirming that Caleb and Xavier were positioned at the coffee shop directly across the street, probably congratulating themselves on their tactical brilliance.

The anticipation of destroying their ambush sent a thrill through my veins that I hadn't experienced since this nightmare began.