Mafia Mask 91

Chapter 91 Port in Hills

Ivy's POV

When we arrived at Xavier's sprawling compound in the hills, the steel gates had already parted for our armored convoy. The other wives were waiting in the marble foyer, their designer heels clicking against the polished floors as they rushed over to take Max from Caleb's protective embrace. My son had been unusually quiet during the drive, his small hands clutching the bulletproof vest that Caleb insisted he wear whenever they left Thorne territory.

"Easy there, ladies! This little prince is precious cargo," Caleb warned, his voice carrying that familiar edge that made even hardened soldiers step back. But his tone softened immediately as Max giggled at the attention from my friends.

"I've been dying to meet the future heir!" Jude declared, approaching with his characteristic warmth that somehow never quite masked the calculating intelligence in his eyes. As one of Caleb's most trusted lieutenants, Jude had witnessed more bloodshed than most, yet he handled Max with surprising gentleness.

My son found himself surrounded by the wives and girlfriends of Thorne's inner circle, their perfectly manicured fingers tickling his belly while expensive jewelry caught the afternoon sunlight. Max's laughter echoed through the compound's courtyard, a sound of pure innocence that seemed almost foreign in this world of concrete barriers and armed guards.

Then Max's bright ice-blue eyes found Caleb across the secured patio.

"Caleb, swim!" he declared with the authority of someone who had never been denied anything by the notorious Don.

"Sunscreen and floaties first, sweetheart," I reminded him, watching as Max already stretched his little arms toward the most feared man in the city.

"I've got our boy covered, Tesoro. Let me handle everything today while you decompress," Caleb said, flashing me that devastating smile that had probably sealed the fate of many rival families. "You've been through enough lately."

The late afternoon sun transformed him into something almost godlike against the backdrop of Xavier's fortress. His dark hair caught the light, designer sunglasses perched perfectly on his nose, the white linen shirt doing nothing to hide the intricate tattoos that marked his rank in our world. Even his casual stance radiated the kind of power that made grown men beg for their lives. He took Max's designer bag from my hands with surprising tenderness, carefully applying military-grade sunscreen to my son's pale skin before inflating the custom floaties that cost more than most people's monthly salary.

With practiced precision, he carried Max into the temperature-controlled pool, and soon they were both splashing around with pure joy, the sound of my son's delighted squeals mixing with Caleb's rare, genuine laughter.

"Max is absolutely beautiful, Ivy!" Jude observed, settling into one of the leather pool chairs that probably cost more than a car.

"It's uncanny how much he resembles Caleb. Even those distinctive eyes!" Dominic added, his puzzlement evident as he studied the two figures in the water.

"I'd say our girl definitely has a type," Xavier grinned at me knowingly, gesturing toward the pool where Caleb was teaching Max to kick.

"Oh honey, like drop-dead gorgeous, dangerous men with enough firepower to level city blocks aren't every woman's weakness," Ruby teased, making the entire group burst into knowing laughter.

The men eventually joined Caleb and Max in the pool, transforming into a group of overgrown children despite the fact that between them, they controlled most of the city's underground operations. The women seized this opportunity to interrogate me about every detail of recent events, their questions sharper and more pointed than any FBI investigation.

"But tell me what happened at poker night after I left. I heard there was quite a scene," I asked, genuinely curious about the aftermath of my dramatic exit.

"My brother disappeared right after you did. I felt terrible for him, but I warned him not to get his hopes up where you're concerned," Ruby explained, her expression sympathetic but realistic.

"Ru, I never wanted to hurt your brother. He's truly a good man, despite what he does for a living," I said sincerely, knowing that in our world, 'good' was a relative term.

"Don't stress about it, Ivy. He understands you're completely devoted to Caleb. Besides, he's survived worse disappointments in this business. But I have to ask you something," Ruby's eyes sparkled with dangerous curiosity.

"Go ahead. I'll give you the truth."

"That move he pulled with the neck kiss was pretty bold. How did it affect you?" Ruby asked the question I'd been dreading since that night.

"Oh, Ru. Your brother is lethal, and he knows exactly how to use it. I won't lie to you - it sent chills through me, heated my blood, and definitely made me nervous. The kiss was incredible, seductive, and dangerously skillful. If circumstances were different, it would have made me want to respond," I admitted honestly, knowing that dishonesty in our circle could be fatal.

"So you did feel something," she stated matter-of-factly, and I nodded. "Next time Caleb screws up, I'm definitely encouraging my brother to make his play." We all dissolved into knowing giggles.

"But what about you ladies?" I was practically vibrating with curiosity.

"Oh girl, things got absolutely wild after you left," Zoe said with a wicked smile. "I won and followed Nora's lead - I kissed both Finn and Brenda simultaneously." I stared at my friend in complete shock. "My man is delicious, but Brenda is pure fire! What a specimen!"

"Zo, was Finn really okay with sharing?" I asked, stunned.

"Finn gets off on watching me explore, honey, you know that. We went home and had the most explosive night!" Zoe spoke like she was reliving every moment. All I could do was laugh.

"And you, Gemma?" I turned to the blonde.

"Dominic nearly had a stroke. Hunter won with high points and kissed my ear. Dominic shot up, grabbed my hand, and practically dragged me home, warning Hunter to keep his distance," Gemma said with a devilish grin.

"And you, Ru?" I asked, my curiosity reaching dangerous levels.

"Won again with the highest score and pulled both Nora and Beckett into a scorching hot kiss! Xavier went absolutely crazy!" Ruby laughed uncontrollably.

"And you're such an amazing kisser, gorgeous," Nora said to Ruby, making us all crack up. "But after that, Jude and Silas dragged me out of there."

"Both of them?" I asked incredulously, and she nodded.

"And this beast kicked Beckett out. Then things got really intense. This man is absolutely incredible!" Ruby said, looking at Xavier with obvious appreciation.

"Oh my God, you girls are complete degenerates!" I concluded, and we all burst into hysterical laughter. Our men glanced over at us curiously but quickly returned to entertaining Max.

"So, girl, did you reconcile with the bastard?" Zoe asked me directly.

"I honestly don't know, Zo. We were in the middle of talking when Xavier called about security concerns. He explained his side, and now I'm completely confused about what to do," I replied honestly.

"The men filled us in on what went down too. Maybe, Ivy, you need some distance to see the situation clearly," Gemma suggested thoughtfully.

"That’s actually not a bad idea. I’ve been wanting to visit my parents - I miss them desperately. Maybe a weekend away from all this could help me gain some perspective," I agreed, already warming to the idea.

"Then it’s decided. Soon, Max, you, and I are heading to Greenleaf," Zoe declared. "But we’re not telling them, not even Finn. They might follow us with a full security detail."

I agreed, thinking it was exactly what I needed.

After lunch, Caleb put Max down for his nap in one of the compound’s secure guest rooms and settled beside me on the reinforced terrace, pulling me into his powerful embrace.

"My angel, being here with you and our boy feels so right! I love that kid more than my own life, Ivy," Caleb said, pressing a tender kiss to my cheek and holding me tightly against his chest.

"The bond between you two still amazes me. My son absolutely worships you! He asks about you constantly," I said, still stunned by how quickly they’d connected.

"Some connections can’t be explained, it’s just natural chemistry, I suppose," Caleb gave me that crooked smile that made my heart skip. "He reminds me of the relationship I had with my father - we were inseparable until the end."

"You miss him terribly, don’t you," I said, thinking about how much I missed my own father, and I could still see him whenever I wanted.

"Every single day," he confirmed quietly. "My angel, now that we’ve cleared the air between us, when are you coming back to the organization? Gemma starts her new position soon."

"Caleb, I listened to what you had to say, but I haven’t decided whether I’m going to forgive you yet," I spoke honestly and heard him let out a frustrated breath. "I despise Rossi, and you were intimate with her in our space," I said, feeling the familiar stab of pain. "I won’t come back to the compound and look at that room imagining you with her."

"I'll burn that damn furniture, Ivy! But please forgive me, I was an idiot, arrogant, and completely blind. I screwed up monumentally, but I love you with everything I have. Come back to me," Caleb pleaded, his voice raw with emotion.

"I need time to think."

"Why is this so complicated? You love me, I know you do. And I love you desperately. Come back to me, Ivy, we can make this work. End this hell of being separated," Caleb's voice was thick with desperation.

"Give me some time to think, just some time. I don't want to come back to you consumed by bitterness and resentment."

"Fine, but I'm not staying away from you, and I'm not giving that persistent bastard Parker any opportunity to get close," he said, tightening his arms around me possessively.

The day was absolutely perfect. Being surrounded by these incredible people I'd found in this dark world was wonderful. Max had the time of his life, and Caleb went above and beyond to shower my son with attention and affection, treating him like the precious heir he might one day become.

When Caleb drove us home in the armored vehicle, Max was already fast asleep in his custom car seat, and Caleb insisted on carrying him upstairs and tucking him into bed. Before leaving, he captured my lips with a kiss that left me breathless, thanking me for the perfect day we'd shared in our dangerous paradise.