Mafia Mask 97

Chapter 97 Defending His Family

Ivy's POV

I slipped into the armored SUV before Caleb could assist me, my nerves still rattled from the confrontation at the house.

"Something troubling you, tesoro?" Caleb's voice carried that dangerous edge he reserved for threats against our family as Finn pulled away from the estate grounds.

"My aunt decided to make a power play. I'll explain everything later. Right now I just want to put it behind us. Good morning, you two." I forced what I hoped resembled a genuine smile.

Max chattered endlessly during the drive, even bragging about how he stuck his tongue out at the "scary woman," which had us all laughing despite the tension still coursing through my veins.

The Miller family compound welcomed us with the kind of warmth only old allies could provide. Zoe's parents showered Max with attention while dropping not-so-subtle hints about expanding the next generation, making Zoe roll her eyes and redirect the conversation toward safer topics.

After lunch, Mr. Miller whisked Caleb and Finn away to his private study for what I knew would be territory negotiations and arms deal discussions. Meanwhile, Zoe and I found ourselves doing exactly what we'd done at my family's safe house, updating her mother on every detail of our Port Serenity operations.

When departure time arrived, Zoe had her tactical gear packed since we were taking the family jet for an evening departure. Our agenda included treating Max to gelato at his favorite establishment, collecting my belongings from the penthouse, a brief stop at Finn's weapons cache, then heading directly to the private airstrip.

"Godmommy, ice cream?" Max announced, pointing toward the upscale parlor as we emerged from the bulletproof vehicle.

"Absolutely, sweetheart. Gelato time it is." Zoe responded, and he erupted in delighted clapping.

Finn positioned his arm protectively around Zoe's shoulders while she carried my son, and Caleb's fingers interlaced with mine in that possessive way that marked me as his territory. We secured a table on the outdoor terrace, and the moment we settled in, Tiffany's shrill voice sliced through the afternoon air behind me.

"Look what we have here. The little whore who spread her legs and can't even name the sperm donor. And there's her bastard spawn too."

"Don't you ever speak about my woman or my son that way again." Caleb rose to his feet with the lethal grace of a predator, every muscle in his powerful frame radiating barely controlled violence.

Spinning around, I found my cousin Tiffany standing there with her mouth agape and eyes bulging, flanked by two women I recognized as her usual entourage of wannabe mob wives.

"You're actually involved with this slut? Well, you should know she's still throwing herself at my husband. Just yesterday she was practically begging him to take her back, said she'd even settle for being his side piece."

"Obviously you have no clue what kind of trash Ivy really is, handsome, but I can give you all the sordid details." One of Tiffany's companions slithered up to Caleb, placing her manicured hand on his arm with a predatory smile.

"Remove your hand from me immediately." Caleb's voice dropped to that deadly whisper that preceded bloodshed. His gaze shifted to my cousin, and he unleashed the full force of his reputation. "I'm assuming you're the backstabbing cousin who betrayed Ivy in her own bed. Sounds like you're the actual whore in this situation. And clearly these pathetic hangers-on are cut from the same diseased cloth. But here's what really happened - your husband cornered my woman at the market yesterday. Don't believe me? Go ask the shopkeeper who called my security detail."

"Who the hell do you think you are, talking to my wife like that?" As if this nightmare couldn't deteriorate further, Brodie materialized looking for a fight and reeking of cheap whiskey.

Caleb’s laugh contained nothing but contempt and the promise of retribution.

"You two are absolutely perfect for each other." Caleb’s eyes swept over them with the dismissive arrogance of a don addressing street trash. "But since you asked, I’m Ivy’s man and her future husband. Now I suggest you disappear before you make this significantly more unpleasant."

"Wait, so he’s the bastard’s real father." Brodie’s voice grew more aggressive as the pieces clicked into place. "You claimed you had no idea who knocked you up, Ivy. Now you show up with this pretty boy who’s practically the kid’s twin."

"Stop calling my son a bastard." Caleb’s voice turned deadly quiet, which somehow made it infinitely more terrifying. "Don’t you dare address my family again. Don’t even look in Ivy’s or my son’s direction ever again."

"So you really are his father?" Tiffany’s voice cracked with disbelief and something that sounded dangerously close to hysteria.

"Obviously he is. Just look at them, the kid’s his carbon copy." Brodie stated with drunken certainty.

Words completely abandoned me as this situation spiraled into absolute chaos. Zoe’s face radiated pure murderous intent. Finn had wisely escorted Max inside the establishment to shield him from this mess. My chest constricted as panic set in, while Caleb looked ready to paint the sidewalk with blood.

"Maybe focus on salvaging your own disaster of an existence instead of obsessing over mine, Tiffany." I finally managed to speak, scraping together what little composure remained.

"How is any of this fair? You got knocked up, claimed you didn’t know who the father was, and instead of casting you out, my aunt and uncle protected you. That rich girl over there makes sure your brat has everything he needs and keeps covering for you. Then you somehow manage to get through college and land your dream position. You come back home with this gorgeous man who’s obviously loaded, and surprise, he’s your kid’s father all along. How does everything always work out for you? Meanwhile, I’m stuck with a drunk husband who cheats constantly, a kid I never wanted, and I’m trapped in this godforsaken place." Tiffany’s voice turned venomous with resentment.

"You reap exactly what you sow, Tiffany." I replied steadily.

"Tiffany, honey, this gold digger baby-trapped him, and this poor fool fell for it completely." One of her companions spat the words like poison.

"Don’t even start with that garbage, you pathetic wannabe." Caleb cut her off instantly. "Ivy doesn’t need to trap anyone with a pregnancy. She’s the most genuine woman alive, and you’re just a collection of jealous, miserable failures. Do everyone a favor and vanish."

Caleb squeezed my hand, pressed a gentle kiss to my temple, and called out to Zoe.

"Come on, ladies. Let’s go inside. I want to enjoy gelato with my son."

We turned our backs on them, but Zoe couldn’t resist delivering the final blow. She looked directly at the unpleasant group and declared:

"Choke on your jealousy. Kiss my ass, bitches." She flipped her hair dramatically, blew a mocking kiss over her shoulder, and strutted after us into the parlor.

Once we were seated and Caleb handed me a glass of sparkling water, I took several deep breaths to steady myself. I looked at Caleb curiously.

"How did you know about my encounter with Brodie at the market yesterday?"

"That’s small territory living for you, tesoro. Everyone knows everyone else’s business. Mr. Felix turned out to be quite the informant. After we arrived, we stopped at the bakery before heading to your safe house. Finn mentioned your mother’s weakness for dulce de leche pastries, and I wanted to make a good impression on my future mother-in-law. We ran into Mr. Felix there, and when Finn introduced me, he immediately said it was good that people around here knew you had someone watching your back. You know how these conversations develop, tesoro. One thing led to another, and Mr. Felix told me everything. I seriously want to eliminate that piece of garbage ex-boyfriend of yours. I cannot comprehend how you ever associated with that lowlife." Caleb stared at me in complete bewilderment.

"If I had found the perfect protector like Finn back then, you wouldn't have gotten the chance to show off by announcing you're my future husband." I said with a grin, watching his smile spread across that devastatingly handsome face.

"I guess I owe that scumbag a thank you note." He laughed and gave me a quick kiss. "Now let's get that gelato."

After leaving the parlor, we headed to my family's compound. The other visitors had already departed, giving us more quality time with them before our flight. Zoe made sure to tell my parents about the confrontation and how Caleb defended us, which only made them adore him more.

From the estate, we stopped at Finn's weapons depot where his mother had prepared travel provisions for us. We visited briefly before calling our private transport to the airstrip.

By the time we arrived at the penthouse, my son had been sleeping for hours, and Caleb once again insisted on tucking Max into bed. He seemed to genuinely cherish this ritual. When we emerged from the bedroom, I seized the moment to make my move.

"Stay here tonight." Caleb's smile grew slowly across his face.

"Are you serious, tesoro?"

"Completely serious. Stay. We had such an incredible weekend, I want to extend it longer." I said as his arms encircled me.

"Won't Max think it's strange seeing me here in the morning?" His concern for my son's feelings was absolutely endearing.

"He'll probably be thrilled to see you first thing."

"Can I take him to the safe house tomorrow?" Caleb asked like it was the greatest privilege imaginable.

"Hey, you'll have to fight me for that honor, buddy." Finn announced, clapping Caleb on the shoulder. "I'm the godfather, and I'm staying here tonight too."

"Tomorrow Max's escort duty is mine, Finn. You get way more opportunities for this than I do." Caleb argued back.

"You boys can sort that out in the morning. Right now I need sleep because I'm completely exhausted." Zoe ended their debate and started dragging Finn toward her room.