MANHATTAN MADAM

by

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INT. ELEGANT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A roaring fire and the hurried tapping of a keys. MADAM MAGDALENE (mid/late 20's), on a large couch, stares focused on her laptop as she types. Her cell rings. She pins the receiver against her shoulder and continues to work.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Mariya...

She listens. Her fingers canter to a halt. Her face turns serious. She hangs up and sits in shock for a few moments before crossing to a drinks cabinet and pouring a whiskey.

But before she can take a sip, she has to remove her glasses and take a moment of somber reflection. RUPERT (early 20's), 200lbs of bespectacled man-candy in an overly tight shirt, enters the room looking alarmed.

RUPERT
Did the driver call you? There's been a serious incident.

She puts her glasses back on, her hand quivering, and nods.

RUPERT
May I suggest we send flowers to the hospital?

MADAM MAGDALENE
Tulips, I remember she said she likes tulips.

She reigns in a little vulnerability.

MADAM MAGDALENE
And get me The Syndicate.

RUPERT
We can't afford to take a hit.

She nods, moves to the window, and stares out.

MADAM MAGDALENE
When I landed on these shores, I believed you could cut the world in two, good trading with good on one side and bad trading with bad on the other. Sometimes I wonder if I was just naive, or-

A phone rings from another room. Rupert leaves to answer it. She turns solemn and leans against the wall, lost in thought as she stares into nowhere. Rupert re-enters.
RUPERT
It's Mr Thorello, he's here.

MADAM MAGDALENE
So it's serious.

RUPERT
The driver may be overreacting.

She thinks long and hard.

MADAM MAGDALENE
We lie.

RUPERT
That the girl was from our agency?

MADAM MAGDALENE
No, that would be like walking right into our own trap.

Rupert looks crestfallen. She moves in affectionately, clearly attracted to him and not afraid to show it.

MADAM MAGDALENE
There is no shame in lacking the skills for lying. It's what makes you so innocent. A good lie must go like a magic trick. You must give people what it is they want see. Or, if you are good enough, what you have led them to want believe.

She lets her hand fall open and snatches it shut.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Then you seize what you are owed.

RUPERT
I'll send him in.

Rupert hurries to the study entrance and opens the door.

In swaggers MR THORELLO (50's), a burly mass of East coast mafioso attitude. She moves to him with a balletic poise.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Mr Thorello

MR THORELLO
Mariya, I'd like to say it's a pleasure, but, well, you know?..

They sit on the couch as Rupert stands diligently.
MADAM MAGDALENE
We need to make sure this cannot happen again. Drink?

MR THORELLO
Nah, let's make this quick. Long story short, it's a member issue.

MADAM MAGDALENE
A Syndicate member?

MR THORELLO
No, a member's-member issue. Your girl, she tried to bite our guy's dick off.

MADAM MAGDALENE
(long beat)
Oh... Why?

MR THORELLO
Why? Who gives a fuck why? For what it's worth, I understand he was, erm, skull fuckin' her at the time.

She chews her lip disgusted.

MR THORELLO
Either way, the girl acted outta order. Bottom line is, I need to know where she is, I gotta take care of her.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Take care of her?...

Thorello shrugs nonchalantly. She thinks long and hard.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Rupert, slam the door, please.

BANG! Rupert obliges, causing Thorello to jolt.

MADAM MAGDALENE
How can I not alarm my girls with a disappearance like this?

MR THORELLO
I dunno, guess that's why I ain't in the whorein' business, and find myself in the killin' people who don't fulfil orders business. So what's a little churn on your part? Business is good, right?
She is not convinced.

MR THORELLO
Listen, you know why we use this house? Quality, Mari, quality. You think we wanna do business with these fuckin' chicken shacks, with their crystal heeled pole skanks?

She struggles to hide the fact she's weakening.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Do not call me Mari! You know I hate that.

MR THORELLO
So you're still grindin' that axe?

MADAM MAGDALENE
Let's not make this about the past.

Thorello sighs and sits back fed up.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Rupert, could you give us a moment?

Thorello and Madam Magdalene lock eyes and remain pokerfaced while Rupert leaves and clicks the doors shut

MR THORELLO
I hit you once, just once, and you agreed it taught you a lesson.

He binds his fists fuming. The words hit her hard. She averts her eyes and dwells. She looks hurt and vulnerable but deep down she's facing her demons and rebuilding.

He teases a check out his inside pocket and hands it over.

MR THORELLO
I know this game. I think that more than covers your costs, don't you?

She stares at the check stunned and looks back at him. He smiles like an angel. She crosses back to the window and thinks, then daintily tears the check up into pieces.

MADAM MAGDALENE
My duty is to my girls, not my bottom line. So listen to me when I say this, fuck you and fuck your dirty scumbag money.
MR THORELLO
Hah! Good luck findin' a john in this city who ain't a sex offender. You're over. You're done.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Rupert!
Rupert quickly enters to see Thorello motioning to leave.

MADAM MAGDALENE
Get me Cooch.

RUPERT
Cooch?

She nods firmly. Thorello can't believe it and neither can Rupert who's now frantically jabbing at his cell.

MR THORELLO
Oh I get it, my enemy's enemy and all that. Well, you're diggin' your own grave. You do this and-

RUPERT
-Ma'am.

Rupert offers his cell. She takes it and stares defiantly.

MR THORELLO
You can tell your new customer-

MADAM MAGDALENE
-Why not tell him yourself?

She holds out the cell like a gun. Thorello jolts to his feet scared and bumbles to the door.

MR THORELLO
Wait! Wait! Easy now! Let me talk to my people, see what I can do-

Thorello exits. The door slams. A long silence, and then--

TEENAGE VOICE
(through phone)
--Erm... Joe's Pizza... can I take your order please?

Madam Magdalene slumps onto the couch and sighs relieved.

THE END