

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 whorin' 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