

Every Mafia's Favorite Girl – The Soul Known 2

“Would A Cupcake Box Be Inappropriate?”

The journey from the master suite to the driveway was an event in itself.

There was simply so much to observe. In her old life, Aren had never seen this many extravagant things in a single location.

The organization she had served was based in a desert country. Their headquarters, while filled with camaraderie and warmth, had been merely adequate – functional and gray.

This place, however, seemed constructed for the sole purpose of excess.

Marble stretched beneath her bare feet in gleaming expanses.

Gold trim curled across ceilings high enough to echo her footsteps.

Crystal chandeliers scattered warm light like fractured stars overhead.

Aren absorbed it all with naked fascination. As a result, she completely failed to notice the reactions she inspired in everyone around her.

Servants stood frozen along corridors as she passed. They watched as the “Lombardi Mess” walked with a quiet grace they had never witnessed before, sporting a hairstyle they could hardly recognize.

Wearing a man’s bathrobe, no less.

Most of them arrived at the same conclusion within seconds:

‘She’s still high.’

‘High enough to cut her own hair.’

They quickly looked away. No one wanted to be noticed by Ariana Lombardi in such an unstable state.

Outside, a black sedan waited at the bottom of a sweeping marble staircase. The driver opened the door without a word, his face a mask of cold indifference.

Aren slid into the leather interior, offering him a small nod. She didn’t know where she was going, but in a world of unknowns, she chose to trust the momentum of Ariana’s life.

As the car moved, the streets of Borgata kept her eyes wide.

There were no ruins, no military checkpoints, no signs of war. Everything was cleaner, larger, and far more luxurious than any territory she had ever visited in her past life.

When the car finally slowed, it stopped in front of a building that seemed to be made entirely of light.

Glass stretched upward in a glittering facade, reflecting the city itself.

The Lombardi Hotel.

Before the car had fully settled, doormen were already in motion.

Doors opened.

Steps aligned.

As Aren stepped out, they bowed.

One of the doormen held the door open for her. Aren paused just long enough to incline her head politely.

"Thank you for your hard work," she said.

The doorman immediately stumbled.

His polished boot caught the edge of the carpet, and his eyes widened as he stared at her.

Ariana Lombardi did not thank people. She barely acknowledged they were sentient beings.

Aren, however, noticed none of his shock.

In her previous life, politeness wasn't optional. A team that respected each other functioned efficiently under pressure. A team that didn't... didn't last.

When she finally reached the reception desk, the staff didn't even wait for her to speak. A gold key card was already being presented to her with both hands, the receptionist's head deeply bowed.

"Lady Ariana," she greeted smoothly, "welcome home."

The words were warm.

The tone was not.

There was tension there — fear, carefully hidden.

Aren, once again, noticed none of that. She accepted the card with a grateful nod.

"Thank you. Which floor am I assigned to?"

The receptionist looked up immediately.

Her face drained of color.

"Your... your suite is on floor twenty, my lady."

"And the room number?"

"Room... Room thirteen."

"I see. Thank you."

Aren inclined her head again.

Behind the desk, the receptionist's knees nearly gave out.

She had spent the entire morning bracing herself for shouting, for insults, for impossible demands that inevitably ended in tears.

Instead, she had received two calm questions, two polite thank-yous, and a bow.

'Has the world gone mad?' she wondered faintly.

Aren, meanwhile, had already turned toward the elevators.

The ride upward was smooth and silent. When the elevator doors opened onto the twentieth floor, the suite was easy to find.

Inside, the space was... expansive.

Velvet curtains framed towering windows overlooking the city below, while gold-leaf furniture decorated every corner of the room. Every object appeared meticulously positioned, as though untouched by ordinary life.

Aren's gaze moved slowly across the room.

'Must feel lonely, living here alone.'

The thought lingered as the door closed behind her.

She spent the next hour doing what any sane person who woke up in the wrong body would do: *gather intelligence*.

She started with the phone. The passcode was correct on the first attempt — Ariana's own birthday.

Inside, information poured toward her in overwhelming waves: messages, financial statements, emails, photos, contacts, schedules.

The more Aren read, the more she confirmed this world was not her world.

The names of the cities and countries meant nothing to her. This city was called Borgata, and it seemed governed less by laws and more by a balance of power, money, leverage, and violence polished into something socially acceptable.

Piece by piece, the full image of the original Ariana Lombardi emerged.

Twenty-four years old.

Sole heiress of House Lombardi, one of the ten mafia empires of Borgata's underworld.

House Lombardi itself specialized in luxury hospitality — hotels, resorts, elite nightlife, high-end "pleasure" districts catering to the obscenely wealthy.

On the surface, everything looked glamorous.

The details told a different story:

- 1. Ariana had \$3.2 million in personal debt.*
- 2. There were 47 unanswered messages from her father. Ariana lived in the family hotel to avoid him.*
- 3. There were 25 folders of photos from parties that made Aren feel secondhand exhaustion just looking at them.*
- 4. Most confusing of all were 11 male contacts, saved only as first names followed by various heart emojis.*

Aren stared at these names for nearly five minutes.

'...Context unclear.'

She placed the phone face-down on the table.

'Will revisit later.'

The silence of the suite was eventually shattered by the vibration of the phone.

Isabella, Ariana's assistant, had sent fourteen messages in five minutes.

Isabella: *My lady, are you awake?*

Isabella: *The car is being prepped.*

Isabella: *Please tell me you aren't at the Sartori estate still.*

Isabella: *Your father is asking for you. Please answer me.*

Aren read every one of them. She appreciated every new data point.

She considered for a moment, then typed a reply.

Ariana: *Understood. Thank you, Isabella.*

She sent it.

She waited.

No response.

Somewhere, several floors below, Isabella was leaning against a wall. She stared at her phone, wondering if her mistress had suffered a stroke or a sudden religious conversion.

Aren, unaware of the crisis she had just caused, turned her attention to the closet.

And immediately regretted doing it at all.

It was a nightmare of sheer silks, aggressive furs, and leather that left nothing to the imagination. Several garments appeared to contain less actual material than a standard hand towel.

She pushed past the racks until her hand brushed against something different.

Tucked into the very back, still encased in a protective garment bag, was a high-necked floral sundress and a matching cream cardigan. They looked modest, simple, and entirely out of place.

A small gift tag hung from the hanger:

"To Ariana, with love. — Aunt Silvie."

Aren traced the elegant handwriting silently. She didn't know an "Aunt Silvie," and clearly, the original Ariana hadn't cared to.

But the word "love"—

That, she understood.

Carefully, she removed the tag and placed it into a velvet jewelry box, then pulled on the dress.

The fit was perfect.

A few minutes later, the suite door burst open with enough force to rattle the walls.

Isabella entered like a woman charging onto a battlefield.

Garment bag over one arm. Venti espresso in the other. Her expression set in grim

determination — the look of someone fully prepared to drag a hungover disaster out of bed by force if necessary.

She took one step inside.

She stopped dead.

Completely.

Silence stretched between them.

Five seconds.

Ten.

Isabella's eyes moved slowly, taking everything in.

The hair.

The floral sundress.

And finally, the mistress herself—

Sitting calmly where chaos was supposed to be.

Aren immediately rose to her feet upon seeing Isabella, her head bent in a formal bow.

"Isabella," she said. "Is it customary to bring something to a meeting?"

She paused briefly, searching for the correct phrasing.

"In my — um, previous experience, meetings tended to proceed more smoothly when there was something sweet available for everyone."

Isabella stared at Aren as though witnessing paranormal activity.

Her mouth opened.

Then closed.

Opened again.

No sound came out.

"My lady," Isabella finally managed, her voice unsteady. "This is the Summit of the Ten Houses."

She swallowed hard.

"The Dons of the nine Houses other than yours are meeting to... well..."

She hesitated, then forced the words out.

"To potentially dismantle your entire life."

Aren listened. Considered it.

"I see."

Then, with complete sincerity—

"In that case... would bringing a box of cupcakes be inappropriate?"