

The Mafia Don's Hidden Heiress

Chapter 2 — Don't Be Seen

Something feels off before I even touch the door. I can't explain it yet, but I feel it immediately. It's slightly open, not wide enough to look alarming, just enough to catch my attention. anyone else might walk in without thinking twice. I don't.

My father doesn't leave doors open, not carelessly, not here.

I stand there for a second longer than I should, adjusting the pastry box in my hand. It was warm when I got it, but I barely notice it now. I almost convince myself I'm overthinking it. Almost. "Dad?" I push the door open and step inside.

Nothing answers me. No movement, no voice, not even the usual delayed response when he's distracted. The silence settles too quickly, too heavily, and something in my chest tightens in a way I don't like. I take a few steps in, slower now, my eyes moving across the room. Everything looks exactly the same. The glass on the table, his jacket over the chair, not thrown but placed like he always does, like even the smallest things have intention. The faint scent of his cologne lingers in the air. Nothing is out of place, and somehow that makes it worse.

"Dad?" I call again, a little louder this time, but the silence doesn't change. It just stays there, thick and unhelpful. I turn slightly, looking more carefully now, not just seeing but trying to understand. That's when I notice the curtains. they're fully open. Not the way he leaves them, not measured or controlled, just open, letting the outside in without restraint. I frown. That's not right. He doesn't do that here.

I take another step, then another, and that's when I see it. At first it doesn't register properly. It's just something on the floor, a shape that doesn't immediately make sense. My brain tries to turn it into something else, something normal, something that fits into the room I walked into a moment ago, but it doesn't work. "Dad?" My voice sounds different now. I move closer, slower at first, then faster when the shape refuses to become anything else.

And then I see him.

For a second, I just stand there because it doesn't make sense. He's on the floor, on his side, not in a way that looks like he fell, not messy or chaotic, just there. Too still. "Dad?" I'm already moving, the pastry box slipping from my hand and hitting the floor behind me. I don't look back. I drop beside him.

Up close, it's worse. There's nothing in him. No tension, no reaction, nothing that suggests he's about to move or speak. My hand pauses for a second before I touch him, like some part of me already knows what I'm going to feel. I press my fingers against his arm. Cold. Not cool, not recent. Cold.

"No." The word comes out before I can stop it. I shake him once, then harder. "Dad, wake up." Nothing happens. No breath, no movement, no response.

I stop because something in me has already caught up. This isn't something I can fix.

I sit back slightly, still staring at him, trying to find something that explains this. There's no mess, no broken glass, no sign that anything happened here. And somehow, that's worse. Because it means he didn't fight. My chest tightens at the thought. He would have fought. He doesn't just-, I cut the thought off before it finishes.

My phone is in my hand before I even realize I picked it up. I call Gabriel. It rings once, then twice. "Elena." His voice is steady, too steady. "He's not—" I swallow. "He's not waking up. I don't know what's wrong."

There's a pause. Not confusion, not shock. Something else. "Are you alone?" The question throws me off. "Yes." Another pause. When he speaks again, his tone has shifted. Still calm, but different. "Stay where you are. Do not touch anything else."

Too late. My hand is still on him. "Gabriel..." "I'm coming." A second passes, then, "And Elena..." Something about the way he says my name makes my chest tighten. "Do not let anyone see you." The line goes dead.

The silence returns, heavier now. I don't move. I don't even know what I'm supposed to do. I just sit there, my hand still resting against him like it might make a difference if I leave it there long enough. It won't.

My eyes move again, slowly taking everything in one more time. The room. The windowss. The curtains. The door. Still open.

He didn't leave it like that.

Something shifts in me, not grief, not yet. Something colder. Clearer.

He let someone in.