

Mafia God 225

Chapter 225: Marino Was A Good Man

"That's not—" she started, then stopped, exhaling sharply. "You are taking this out of context, for God's sakes!"

"Then explain it to me in plain words," he said. "Because I am clearly missing something."

Vee swallowed, her gaze dropping briefly to the floor before she forced herself to look back at him. "I..." she started, then hesitated. Her throat tightened slightly as she searched for the right words—and failed to find anything that felt strong enough. "I... Marino was a good man," she said finally. "You should at least feel some remorse."

"It is not about whether he was a good man," he said. "It is about what I was asked to do, and what came from it."

Vee shook her head slightly, her eyes glistening now. "That's not—Luca, that's not how people think," she said.

"That is exactly how people like me think," he replied.

Vee looked away for a second, as if she needed distance from him just to breathe properly. "I don't know how to look at you right now," she admitted.

"I didn't know the man," Luca said. "I don't give a fuck who he is or was. You know what..." he muttered. "I'm gonna go. I'm not in the mood for a fight today." He got to his feet in one smooth motion, creating distance before she could respond.

"Luca..." Vee called after him.

He paused just long enough to turn halfway toward her. "We'll talk later," he said. "When you remember exactly who I am once again."

Then he walked out.

As usual, Marco arrived at the Scalese home with groceries in the trunk. It had become routine.

Check on Valentina. Make sure she was okay. Make sure she didn't need anything. He pulled up along the street, the engine humming softly before he turned it off.

For a second, he just sat there, hands resting on the steering wheel. Then he looked up.

And everything stopped. Valentina stood on the porch. Locked in Ricardo's arms. Kissing him.

His chest tightened like something inside him had snapped all at once, the air leaving his lungs in a slow, quiet exhale he didn't even realize he was holding. He didn't move.

Just sat there, watching something he had already feared... become real. She took him back.

Of course she did. He was the father of her child. That mattered. That would always matter.

His grip on the steering wheel tightened slightly before loosening again, like he was reminding himself to breathe. He leaned back into the seat, his head resting against it, eyes closing briefly as if shutting out the image would somehow undo it.

But it didn't. It stayed. Burned into him. He sat there for a while, waiting for the feeling to ease.

Eventually, Ricardo was pulling away, stepping back from her, saying something Marco couldn't hear.

Valentina stayed on the porch, watching him leave. Marco opened his eyes fully now, forcing himself back into motion.

He waited, just long enough for Valentina to shut the door. Marco finally opened the car door and stepped out. He moved around to the trunk. He popped it open and reached inside, grabbing the grocery bags one by one.

Ricardo spotted him almost immediately. "Need a hand with that?" Ricardo asked, gesturing toward the grocery bags in Marco's arms.

Marco didn't look at him. "No."

"Marco, come on," Ricardo said. "Don't you think we should bury the hatchet? For Valentina's sake?"

Marco stopped. He turned then, finally looking at Ricardo—and the look in his eyes made it very clear that this wasn't a conversation he had any interest in having. "No."

Ricardo's jaw tightened, frustration creeping in. "Why?" he pressed. "Marco, tell me why. Why do you hate me so much?"

Marco shifted the grocery bags slightly in his arms. "You will hurt her again," Marco said. "And I want to be mad enough," he continued, his gaze hardening, "to put a bullet through your skull when that happens."

"I'm going to marry her," Ricardo said, as if that alone should change everything.

The groceries in Marco's arms suddenly felt heavier or maybe it was just everything else pressing down on him.

He adjusted his grip slightly, tightening his hold on the bags—not because they were slipping, but because he needed something to hold him.

Something to keep him standing. Because right now— He wasn't entirely sure what would happen if he let go.

Marco had never loved anyone. Not like this. Not in a way that made his chest feel too tight, his thoughts too loud, his control too fragile.

The only love he had ever known had been simple. The kind he had for Luca. For Luca's mother, Carol.

That had been enough. More than enough. And now, an eighteen-year-old pain in the ass had slipped past every carefully maintained distance.

And the worst part? He had to stand there and watch her choose someone else. Again.

All because, somewhere deep down, he had already decided something he would never say out loud—

That he wasn't good enough for her.

"Good for you," Marco said. He started to walk past Ricardo, brushing by him.

"When that happens," Ricardo called after him, "this hovering around her has to stop."

"Whatever you say," Marco replied as he continued walking. He didn't give Ricardo the satisfaction of more than that.

Didn't give him the reaction he probably wanted. Marco climbed the steps to the porch.

He knocked on the door, keeping his expression neutral. Behind him, he could hear Ricardo's car door shut.

Then the engine starting. Seconds later, the door opened.

"Marco!" Valentina's voice burst out. "The way you spoil me," she continued, her eyes lighting up as she glanced down at the bags in his arms. "Did you bring ice cream?!" She was practically bouncing on her feet.

And just like that— Everything inside him twisted again. She looked... happy.

"I wouldn't ever forget," Marco said.

"You're so sweet," Val said, already reaching for one of the bags, her fingers brushing briefly against his as she took it from him.