

Mafia God 226

Chapter 226: She Loves Luca

She turned and walked into the house, heading straight toward the kitchen. Marco followed her inside.

He set the remaining bags down on the counter, watching her as she immediately began unpacking, her energy light.

It didn't match the storm still settling inside him.

"How is my sister?" Valentina asked casually, glancing over her shoulder at him as she pulled items out one by one.

"Yeah... I need to talk to you about that." Marco said.

The lightness in her movements slowed as she turned to face him fully, one hand still resting on the counter, the other loosely holding a carton she had just taken out of the bag.

"What's wrong?" she asked, her brows knitting together. "Is everything okay?"

Marco exhaled quietly, shaking his head once. "She is fine," he said. "I promise." The reassurance came quickly, like he needed to remove that fear from her mind before anything else. "I just..." he started, then stopped. His jaw tightened slightly as he searched for the right words. "I just need you to assure me of something."

Valentina straightened a little, setting the carton down on the counter completely now, her full attention on him. "Yeah... yeah... anything," she said quickly. She held his gaze.

Marco couldn't hold it. So he stepped back enough to breathe. His eyes drifted away from hers, landing somewhere over her shoulder, on nothing in particular.

Anywhere but her.

"Is Veronica still seeing Cassidy?" he asked.

"What?" she said softly, confusion immediately replacing concern.

"No... no... why?" she continued, shaking her head. "She loves Luca. I don't understand it, but she does. She truly does."

Marco nodded slowly. "I know," he said. "I know." But he didn't sound convinced. "I just need to be sure, okay?" he added, finally glancing back at her. "You won't lie to me, will you?"

"Never have," Valentina said. "Never will." She took a small step closer to him, trying to close the space he had created, trying to read him better. "Is she in trouble?" she asked.

Marco shook his head immediately. "No. I hope not."

"You won't lie to me, will you?" Val said.

Marco looked at the way her eyes searched his face, the way she stood just a little too still. "Never have," he said. "Never will."

Val's eyes shimmered almost instantly, moisture gathering faster than she could hide it. It caught him off guard, with how quickly it surfaced. Was it a pregnancy thing?

Before he could react, before he could think it through, she stepped forward and wrapped her arms around him.

Okay... there goes control. His arms came around her automatically. They felt too big around her.

She looked incredibly small against him. Fragile. And it hit him again— That quiet, painful reminder.

He wasn't what she needed. He never had been. His hands rested carefully on her back, like he was afraid of holding her too tightly. He let himself feel the warmth of her body against his, the softness of her breathing. He could tell her.

Right now. Just a whisper. Just a small, I love you. Just enough for it to exist between them.

Maybe she wouldn't even hear it. Maybe she would. Maybe everything would change.

But he didn't. He couldn't. Because if she pulled away— If she rejected it— He didn't know if he could stand there and take it.

So he stayed silent. Like he always did.

"I made you dinner," Val said against his chest.

Marco exhaled slowly, grateful for the change. "That's good," he said quietly. "So you have patched things up with Ricardo?" he asked.

"Uh... yeah," she said.

Marco nodded once. "And are you keeping the baby?" he asked.

"Yes. Yes. I just have to tell my sister first," Val said.

"That's good," he said, nodding once. "I'm sure your sister will be glad."

Veronica would be happy. Relieved, even. Family mattered to her in a way that shaped her decisions. It was why he didn't believe any of these nonsense cooking. He just had to find the right words to tell Luca.

Val paused then, the serving spoon hovering just above the pot as she turned slightly to look at him. "Are you?" she asked.

"Am I what?" he replied.

"Are you glad?" she clarified, as she scooped some spaghetti onto a plate.

"I am." He was glad she was keeping the child. Because it was hers. Because it would be a part of her.

But the rest of it—The father—That was where everything twisted. Because Ricardo didn't deserve that.

He didn't deserve her. He didn't deserve the kind of love she gave so freely. Ricardo was going to hurt her again.

Marco could feel it. But he said nothing. Because it wasn't his place.

Luca had been in a sour mood for the past three days. The situation with Cassidy had been gnawing at him relentlessly.

It didn't sit right. No matter how many angles he examined it from. According to Marco, the papers had most likely been planted on Veronica's desk.

Cassidy's trip, it seemed, had nothing to do with Vee after all. The man could have been on an assignment for the Bastiones.

But something still felt off. Luca leaned back in his chair, his fingers tapping lightly against the armrest as he stared ahead.

He didn't want to ask Veronica any questions. Asking meant doubt. He had no reason to doubt her. He had been with her most of the time while she was in Italy.

Every moment that mattered, he had been there. The only times he hadn't were when obligation dragged him elsewhere—appearances with Bianca, dinners that required a united front, meetings his father insisted he attend.

Responsibilities he couldn't ignore. Responsibilities that came with the life he lived. But outside of that—

He had been there with her. So no—There was no reason to question anything. Besides...

She loved him. Didn't she? If he was being honest—Truly honest— There were moments when he wasn't entirely sure.

Like the way she had looked at him when he told her about Marino.