

## Mafia God 231

### Chapter 231: I Merely Feared Your Reaction

"I understand," Marco said carefully, choosing every word. "I merely feared your reaction. Miss Scalese would never hurt you like that," Marco added.

"I know!" Luca exploded, the sudden outburst breaking whatever restraint he had been holding onto. His hand slammed against the desk. "I know!" He turned away again, running both hands through his hair, pacing like a man trying to outrun his own thoughts. "I am not doubting her loyalties," he continued. "What I don't know is why she would go to see him. Why would he be in Italy right at the time she was?" Luca went on. "Is he trying to get back with her? Is he trying to get in her head?"

He let out a harsh breath. "Does he have something on her? What is she hiding from me?" Luca asked. Luca finally stopped pacing. He stood still, his back half-turned, shoulders tense. "I have never been so insecure in my entire life, Marco," he admitted. "And it doesn't help," he added, turning back slowly, "that you are keeping this from me."

"I wasn't keeping it from you to betray you," he said. "I was trying to protect you from acting on incomplete information. But I'm sorry," Marco said. "I will look further into it when I go to Italy to give Don Genovese Bastardi's message."

Luca's gaze snapped back to him immediately, locking onto that detail. "You're leaving soon?" he asked.

Marco nodded once. "Within the next forty-eight hours."

"Do not let Julian know you are leaving," Luca said firmly.

Marco frowned slightly. "You think he'll pull something?"

"I think," Luca replied, straightening slowly, "that Julian is getting more and more desperate." His eyes darkened.

Marco let out a quiet breath, understanding more than he let on. "Alright. Luca...I beg you—while I am gone... please, do not do anything drastic."

"Do you think I should ask her?" Luca said finally.

Marco didn't hesitate. "Yes. I do."

Luca let out a slow breath, his shoulders dropping just slightly. "I'm afraid, Marco," he admitted. He shook his head faintly, almost as if he didn't recognize himself. "I'm... it's killing me. I'm afraid to lose her," Luca continued, his gaze unfocused now, somewhere far beyond the walls of the office. "I'm afraid she cannot see past who I am. Even when she says she does."

His lips pressed together briefly before he added, "I'm afraid she would wake up one day—just like Mum—and decide she's done with it all."

Marco exhaled slowly. "You have never let fear rule you, Luca," he said. "Don't start now. Trust your gut," Marco continued. "You've built everything you have on instinct—on knowing when something doesn't sit right." He paused, letting the words sink in. "And I assure you," he added, "someone wanted you to find those travel documents."

"I looked into Voss," Luca said. "He is spotless."

Marco's brow furrowed as he processed that. "Voss is obsessed with taking you down," he replied. "Who knows how low he is willing to go?"

Luca's gaze drifted briefly. "I am trusting my gut here," he said. "Voss isn't sneaky."

Marco tilted his head slightly. "You're sure about that?"

"Yes. He's aggressive. He wants credit for anything he does. A move like this?" Luca shook his head faintly. "That's not him. Who else was in the store that day?" he asked.

Marco straightened. "While we were there? Just Tony," he said. "But I was told the chef stopped by that morning."

Luca nodded slowly, filing it away. "Who else has access to the shop?"

"Just them," Marco replied. "Tony, the chef... and the Scalese sisters."

"Okay," Luca said after a beat. "Focus on Italy. I'll look into them myself." He paused briefly before adding, almost as an afterthought, "And maybe pay Cassidy a visit."

Marco's posture stiffened instantly. "Boss..."

Luca raised a hand slightly, cutting him off before the argument could fully form. "I'm not doing anything," he said. "I just need to feel the guy out."

"First of all," Marco continued, more insistent, "he is a Bastione now. That alone complicates everything." He held Luca's gaze. "That's disturbing waters we do not want to disturb," Marco pressed on, "especially with the ambush coming up. Timing matters. You making a move now—even a quiet one—could ripple into something bigger than you intend. And second," Marco added, "Voss will be up your ass so fast, you won't even have time to blink."

"Maybe we need a vacation," Luca said suddenly. "Go somewhere... away from all these. From everyone."

"Maybe when I get back from Italy," Marco replied, testing the idea. "Oh—I would like to go to Singapore for a couple of days."

That earned a faint smirk from Luca. "Of course," Luca said dryly. "She always did like you more than me anyway."

Marco chuckled under his breath. "Yes," he said simply, not even bothering to deny it. "She does." He moved to his feet, adjusting his jacket as he prepared to leave. "Would you let me know when Julian finally finds out that I took the message to Italy?" he asked.

Luca's gaze narrowed instantly, picking up on that. "Why?"

Marco paused at the door, one hand resting lightly on the handle. "Just testing something..." he said.

"Alright."

Marco inclined his head once in acknowledgment before stepping out.

\*\*\*\*\*

Warm light spilled across marble floors, reflecting softly off crystal glasses and gold-trimmed tableware. The restaurant buzzed with luxury—low conversations, soft laughter, the clink of cutlery against porcelain. A pianist played somewhere in the background.

At a corner table, Valentina sat across from Ricardo. She looked radiant—her hair falling effortlessly over her shoulders, her dress hugging her figure elegantly.

Ricardo had been unusually attentive all evening—pulling out her chair, ordering for her, watching her.

Valentina had assumed they were celebrating her pregnancy. It made sense. The effort. The setting.

But then—he stood. Her brows furrowed slightly as she followed his movement, confusion flickering across her face.

"Ricardo...?" she started.

And then he dropped to one knee.