

Mafia God 240

Chapter 240: You Should Rest

Carol straightened slightly, clapping her hands together in a small, decisive motion as she shifted gears. "You should rest, Marco," she said. "Come on, I'll get everything done. You go rest."

Marco shook his head lightly, already reaching for another bag. "I couldn't possibly—"

"Marco!"

He stopped and slowly turned to face her.

"That's an order," she said, pointing toward the hallway like she was addressing a stubborn child instead of a man who could break bones without effort. "Get some rest. I'll make you something to eat."

"Yes, Ma," he said. He dipped his head slightly before stepping away from the kitchen.

A smile spread across her face as she leaned lightly against the counter. Who would have thought?

All those years ago...that that boy, small, thin, standing at the roadside like he didn't belong anywhere was finally this man.

Look at him. He had grown into something formidable. But to her? He was still that boy.

Her boy. Carol wiped her hands on a cloth and turned back to the groceries. Leaving both her boys in the hands of Don Genovese had been the hardest thing Carol had ever done.

Harder than walking away from the man she once loved, still loved. Harder than starting over in a foreign place with nothing but pain to keep her moving.

That day still lived in her bones—the weight of it, the finality of it. Luciano had begged for her life, ten years old, young but old enough to understand what had to be done when you walk away from the famiglia. Marco had looked like his whole world was falling apart.

He had watched quietly, standing too still, same age as Luciano. He could have gone with her. She had every right to take him. But she hadn't.

She had made him stay and made him promise to look after Luciano. To protect him. To stand beside him no matter what.

And Marco... had agreed. Twenty years later, he was still keeping that promise. Still standing in the shadows, still carrying burdens that were never truly his to begin with.

Carol swallowed softly as she turned back to the present, blinking away the familiar sting in her eyes. She moved toward the counter, pulling open cabinets and drawers, gathering ingredients one by one.

He was still a good boy, Marco. The way he spoke, the way he moved, the way he still bowed his head slightly when she gave him an order like he was still that boy she found on the roadside.

He had come a long way.

Cassidy paced his living room, his phone pressed to his ear as it rang for what felt like the hundredth time.

There was no answer, again. He pulled the phone away, staring at the screen as if willing it to change.

"Come on, Vee..." he muttered under his breath, frustration creeping into his voice. He tried again. It had been an hour. An hour since she was supposed to arrive. Time wasn't on his side. He had somewhere to be. Renato Bastione was not a man you kept waiting. After another thirty minutes—and several more unanswered calls—Cassidy finally gave up.

He grabbed his jacket from the back of the chair, slipping it on quickly before picking up his keys from the table. He headed for the door, pulling it open.

Veronica's body dropped forward. Right at his feet. She was limp and unconscious.

"Vee?!"

He dropped his keys instantly, crouching down beside her as panic surged through him. He reached for her, turning her slightly, his hand moving to her face, then her neck, checking for her pulse.

"Hey—hey, hey—" he said quickly, tapping her cheek lightly. "Vee, wake up. Come on." His eyes darted around the area, scanning the street. "Vee? Vee, can you hear me?"

Leaning closer, he brushed a strand of hair away from her face—and that's when he caught the smell of alcohol.

Cassidy frowned, his brows pulling together as confusion replaced panic. He leaned in again, just to be sure.

Yeah. No mistaking it.

"Were you drinking?" he murmured, disbelief creeping into his tone.

It didn't make sense. Veronica barely drank. Still, he didn't waste time standing there trying to figure it out. Carefully, he slid one arm beneath her knees and the other around her back, lifting her into his arms.

She felt lighter than he remembered. Or maybe he was just stronger now. Either way, the familiarity of holding her like this hit him harder than he expected.

He pushed the thought aside and carried her inside, kicking the door shut behind him as he moved quickly through the house.

He didn't stop until he reached his bedroom. Gently, he laid her down on the bed, adjusting her so she was comfortable before pulling the covers over her. For a moment, he just stood there, watching her chest rise and fall, steady and calm.

But his mind was spinning. When did Vee start drinking? He dragged a hand down his face, exhaling slowly.

No. It didn't fit. Veronica had always hated alcohol. Hated what it did to people. Hated what it had done to her father.

He remembered the way she used to talk about it. She would never let herself become that.

Would she? Cassidy's jaw tightened. Unless... Had Luca finally pushed her that far? He knew what Luca was capable of.

He knew the kind of life Veronica had been pulled into—whether she chose it or not. He looked back at her again.

Even like this... unconscious, still—She was the same. Beautiful. There was a stubbornness in her face, even in sleep. It made him smile.

Just slightly.

"Still you," he murmured.

Then he stepped back. Reality crept in again. He had somewhere to be. A meeting he couldn't miss.

Renato Bastione. Cassidy let out a heavy sigh, running both hands through his hair as he turned away from the bed.

He couldn't leave her here alone. He walked back into the living room.