

Mafia God 241

Chapter 241: You Will Tire Yourself Out

Dropping onto the sofa, he leaned back and stared at the ceiling, his jaw tight, his thoughts racing in circles he couldn't quite break out of.

Maybe he had handled this all wrong. Maybe leaving Veronica to Luca had been a mistake.

A massive one. He leaned forward on the sofa, elbows resting on his knees, his phone dangling loosely in his hand as his thoughts spiraled. His eyes flicked briefly toward the hallway that led to his bedroom—toward her.

"How did you sink this low?" he muttered under his breath, frustration lacing his voice.

Why had she contacted him after all these months? Was she in trouble?

"Shit!" he swore, running a hand through his hair as he grabbed the remote and switched on the TV. He stared at the screen without really seeing it, his mind somewhere else entirely.

It didn't matter that she had broken his heart. Didn't matter how things ended between them.

Didn't matter how long it had been. Some things didn't change. And one of those things was this—

He would always show up for her. No matter what. Cassidy pulled up Renato's capo's number. He sent a short message. He wouldn't be making it tonight. He hit send and dropped the phone onto the table, exhaling slowly as he leaned back again.

Ricardo felt like his head was about to explode. He stood near the edge of the living room, watching Valentina pace back and forth like a storm that refused to settle. Since the engagement, she had been staying with him, and while he loved having her there—loved waking up next to her, loved the way her presence filled his space—

Right now? He had no idea how to calm her.

"Val..." he said carefully, stepping forward slightly as she turned again, her arms wrapped tightly around herself, her movements restless, anxious. "You will tire yourself out."

She didn't stop. Didn't even slow down.

"Think of the baby... okay?" he added. "I am not saying you shouldn't be worried," he continued, raising his hands slightly in a calming gesture. "But you have more than yourself to think of now, okay?" He moved closer, trying to catch her eye as she turned again, his heart tightening at the sight of her.

She looked shaken and scared. "What if something is wrong?" she said suddenly, her eyes finally locking onto his. "What if she's in trouble, Ricardo? Cassidy is a Bastione. An enemy of Luca. I told her not to go. I told her. I don't like it, Ricardo! I don't," Valentina snapped again, her voice cracking slightly at the edges as she stopped pacing for only a second before starting again. Her hands flew up in frustration, then dropped back down as if she didn't know what to do with them.

"She should have gotten back to me by now," she continued, shaking her head. "She said she was going to call as soon as she left there."

"Did she tell you why she was going there?" he asked gently.

"No!" she said immediately, louder than intended. "No. Anything that has to do with Luca and the famiglia... she cannot tell me anything." Her jaw tightened. "I hate this," she snapped, turning away again.

Ricardo exhaled slowly, running a hand through his hair. "Val..."

But she wasn't finished.

"I hate that she has to hide things from me," she continued. "I hate that I'm supposed to just sit here and wait and smile and act like everything is normal when it isn't." Her eyes flicked toward him, glossy

with worry but stubborn all the same. "She doesn't tell me anything important, Ricardo. Not because she doesn't want to—but because she can't. And now she's not answering her phone."

"Try calling Marco," he suggested.

"He hasn't been picking his calls for days now."

Ricardo frowned at that. "Days?" he repeated.

"Yes," she said, rubbing her arms as if suddenly cold. "I thought maybe he was busy, but now... I don't know. Something feels off."

"I'm not sure he is in town," Ricardo said slowly. "I haven't seen him at Commissioned either."

She looked at him sharply. "You haven't?"

"No," he confirmed.

A new kind of worry crept into her expression now. Then, as if another thought suddenly struck him, Ricardo tilted his head slightly. "Did you tell him we got engaged?"

"I... I haven't had the opportunity to," she admitted after a moment.

But Ricardo knew Marco wasn't completely out of reach. He had just gone quiet. There was a difference.

And knowing Luciano—he would have told Marco.

"We can always go check on her in the morning," he suggested carefully, trying to keep his voice steady.

Valentina stopped so abruptly it was like the suggestion physically offended her. "No," she said immediately. "I cannot wait that long."

Ricardo straightened slightly. "Val, it's the middle of the night."

She turned to him sharply, her eyes blazing. "I have to go."

That got his full attention.

"Where?" he asked, already sensing where this was heading. "Val, what are you talking about?"

"I need to tell Luca where she went," she said quickly, like the decision had already been made in her head and nothing could reverse it.

Ricardo blinked. "You want to go to Luca?"

"Yes."

"Right now?"

"Yes."

He stared at her for a second, then stepped closer. "Valentina... are you sure that is a good idea? When it comes to your sister, Luca is volatile."

"Which is exactly why he needs to know where she is," she shot back. "If something has happened to her, he's the only one who can move fast enough to find her. I cannot sit here waiting, hoping she calls me back while something could be happening to her right now?"

Valentina grabbed her bag from the couch, already moving toward the door with restless energy.

"Wait!" Ricardo called immediately, stepping after her. "I'll drive you." He exhaled, already grabbing his keys from the table, slipping into shoes without thinking twice. "Come on," he said, softer now. "And will you please, calm down."

"I'll be calm when I hear from my sister."

Ricardo shook his head as he opened the door, stepping aside so she could pass first. "The legendary Scalese stubbornness," he muttered under his breath.