

Mafia God 246

Chapter 246: He Is His Father's Son

Carol laughed softly. "He is his father's son," she said. "But he is also mine. And that means... when it truly matters—he will choose correctly."

"For his sake," he said quietly, "I hope you're right."

Carol reached out, squeezing his arm gently. "What you just told me explains why you are worried," Carol said slowly. "But not why you are sad."

"What?"

"You are both worried and sad," she repeated gently. "Why are you sad?"

Marco frowned faintly, instinctively retreating behind the walls he knew so well. "I just told you," he replied, a bit too quickly.

Carol shook her head almost immediately. "Nonsense," she said. "That's not it. Look at me," she murmured.

Marco did.

"I see it clear as day, Marco," Carol said quietly, her eyes searching his. "It's like a light is dim in your eyes."

"I can't tell you, Ma," he said. "I'm sorry."

"Marco Costa Montgomery."

"Ma!" Marco reacted immediately, straightening, almost like muscle memory had kicked in.

"Start talking," Carol ordered.

Marco shook his head. "I... I cannot," he said. "I want to tell you... it just hurts too much."

Carol didn't push harder. Instead, she smiled. "When Luciano came to me to talk about a girl," she began, "it didn't surprise me. Not really. He has always been intense. Passionate. But you..." she added, a quiet chuckle slipping through. "You were always different."

Marco looked away, but she gently reached out, guiding his face back toward her.

"You have always been so guarded," she continued. "So locked up. You keep your emotions tightly sealed away, like if you let them out, everything will fall apart. And yet... your affection speaks volumes. Your little acts of love. The way you show up. The way you protect. The way you stay."

Marco swallowed hard.

"I always thought," Carol went on, a faint teasing warmth in her voice, "you would be the one to break many hearts. Because you were so emotionally stunted. But this..." she said softly. "This is different." Her gaze softened, searching his. "Someone broke your heart, didn't they... my beautiful boy?"

Marco blinked rapidly, his vision blurring as embarrassing tears threatened to spill over. He shook his head, stubborn even now. "No... no, she didn't."

"Oh, baby," she murmured. "Come here."

Marco moved forward, and the moment she wrapped her arms around him, something inside him finally gave way.

He let go. His shoulders tensed, his breath hitching as he buried his face against her, holding on tighter than he had intended to.

Carol held him just as tightly, one hand cradling the back of his head, the other rubbing slow, soothing circles against his back. "It's alright," she whispered softly. "You don't have to say it."

But the thoughts came anyway. Marco's chest tightened painfully as her name echoed in his mind.

The love he never really had. The love he wasn't allowed to have. The love he buried so deep he almost convinced himself it didn't exist.

He had stood by her. Protected her. Laughed with her. And he had locked himself into a role he could never escape.

A Friend. A Protector. Family. Anything but the man who loved her. He had put her in a place where his feelings could never touch her.

Where they could never ruin her. Even now, in Carol's arms, he couldn't bring himself to say her name.

Because saying it would make it real. It would make it final. And he wasn't ready for that.

He wasn't ready to admit that it was over. That it had never even begun. His grip on her tightened.

His Valentina was getting married. And there was nothing he could do about it. Nothing he should do about it.

So he just sat there, in the arms of the only person he could allow himself to fall apart in front of, grieving a love that had never been his to begin with.

Luciano arrived back home at about five in the morning, the sky just beginning to lighten with that dull grey that came before sunrise. The estate was quiet.

He preferred it that way. As he stepped out of the car, his shoulders stiff, his entire body carrying a tension that hadn't eased since he left Cassidy's house.

Luciano walked straight into the house. His mind was still stuck in that room. He already knew he wouldn't be going into work early. There was no point. He wasn't in the headspace for it, and forcing it would only make things worse.

As he crossed the courtyard earlier, he had noticed Ricardo's car still parked there. That meant Nonnina had already taken charge of the situation—settled Valentina in, probably calmed her down.

At least someone was handling something properly. Luciano pushed open the door to his room and stepped inside, closing it behind him.

He shrugged off his jacket, tossing it carelessly onto a chair, then moved toward the dresser. One by one, he removed his weapons—placing one gun back in the safe and the other under his pillow.

Then he began to undress. His shirt came off. Then his belt. His jeans. Each action felt automatic, his body moving while his mind remained trapped somewhere else entirely.

The image wouldn't leave him. He should have shot him. He should have pulled the trigger the second he saw him standing there.

Luciano's hands curled into fists at his sides. He should have killed him. She said she could explain...

Explain what? What was there to explain? She clearly was considering taking him back. If his own mother could walk away from him—

If she could leave him behind like he was nothing, then what was stopping Veronica from doing the same?

What made him think that he was worth staying for? Luciano stepped closer to the dresser, placing both hands against it, gripping the edge tightly as he stared at his reflection in the mirror.

And what he saw, he didn't like. A man with anger sitting too close to the surface. A man who loved too hard.