

Mafia God 254

Chapter 254: He Will Be Flogged Brutally

"He will be flogged brutally." Luca answered.

Valentina sucked in a sharp breath, her face draining of colour as her eyes snapped immediately toward Veronica. Veronica was already moving.

She stood up quickly from the sofa and crossed the small distance between them, placing both hands firmly on Valentina's shoulders to steady her. "Hey," she murmured urgently. "Breathe. Stay with me."

The image Luca had just painted refused to leave Val's mind.

"But..." Luca continued. "Marco doesn't want you there. He is accepting his punishment with grace, but I will have to send you away for a couple of days to explain your absence."

Valentina frowned faintly through her shock, struggling to follow. "Send me away?"

"Yes," Luca said simply. "Ricardo, you are free to join her if you want to."

"No," Ricardo said immediately. "I'll stay,"

Valentina glanced at him briefly, but said nothing. The tension between them remained unspoken, but very much present.

Luca nodded once. "Moving forward," he said, "you will not be seeing Marco."

Valentina stiffened.

"He is not allowed to be anywhere around you," Luca continued. "He isn't even allowed to look at you. If this happens again," he said coldly, "his punishment is more final."

Valentina's body trembled as the reality of Luca's words sank in, each sentence hitting harder than the last. "No... no!" she cried, shaking her head violently. "Don't do this. Please—don't do this."

"It's the rules, Val," he said simply. "I'm sorry."

"No! No! No!" she repeated. Her breathing turned uneven, panic rising as she stepped forward a fraction. "You don't understand. I cannot lose him. He is my friend. I cannot—please..."

"Calm yourself, Val!" Vee said firmly. "Take it easy."

But Valentina was beyond calming in that moment. She shook her head again, tears streaming down her face. "You don't understand," she insisted through broken breaths. "Marco risked his life to save me. Me! He didn't have to. He didn't owe me anything. I would have been rotting with Bastardi—or whatever his name is."

Her words tumbled out faster now, desperate to be understood, as if explaining it enough times might undo what was coming. "He protected me." Her chest heaved as she tried to steady herself, but it was useless. The thought of losing Marco entirely—erased from her life by decree—felt unbearable.

"Actually," Luca said dryly, lifting a hand slightly as if correcting a minor detail in a report, "I saved you. But whatever." Luca shrugged slightly. But his eyes shifted subtly—observing, assessing. Not just Valentina, but Veronica too. He saw their loyalty.

"I can't lose him," Val whispered again.

Luca's gaze flicked briefly toward Veronica again, then away, as if he caught himself observing too closely. He adjusted his stance slightly, returning to his usual detached posture.

Valentina's gaze dropped slowly to her hand. The ring caught the light faintly as her fingers trembled around it.

For a long moment, she just stared at it. Her breath was uneven, still shaken from crying, her cheeks wet and her lashes clumped with tears.

With trembling fingers, she slid the ring off. Veronica's breath caught sharply.

"Val..." she began.

Valentina turned. She stopped in front of Ricardo. Her hands shook as she lifted one of his. "I love you, Ric," she said immediately. "I do. I swear to you. You need to believe me." Her grip tightened around his hand. "But I cannot let Marco go," she continued. "I cannot."

Ricardo frowned deeply, his jaw tightening as he tried to understand what she was doing, what she was saying. He felt the cold metal of the ring being pressed into his palm before he even fully registered her movement.

She closed his fingers around it. "I'm sorry," she whispered.

"What are you doing, Val? Can we talk about this?"

Valentina swallowed hard, tears building again.

"You'd choose Marco over me?" Ricardo asked. "Babe, we are expecting a child together."

"He's always protected me," she said softly.

Ricardo's face twisted. "I can protect you," he shot back immediately. "I will protect you!" His hand tightened around the ring involuntarily, knuckles whitening as emotion surged through him. "Everything you're saying right now—it's not you. You're not thinking clearly. This is because of him. He's clouded your brain."

Valentina shook her head faintly. Behind them, Veronica took a small step forward, torn between intervening and letting the moment unfold, her eyes darting between both of them.

Luca remained where he was, silent now, watching with a cold stillness.

"Val," he said again. "Look at me properly. This isn't just about Marco. This is about us. About our child."

Her hands fell slowly to her sides.

"I'm sorry," Valentina said quietly. She wiped at her cheeks with the back of her hand, but the tears kept coming anyway. She turned away from Ricardo and walked toward Veronica. "Can I stay with you today?" Val asked softly once she reached her.

Veronica opened her arms immediately. "Of course," she said, pulling Valentina in.

Valentina collapsed into her sister's hold, gripping her tightly. Veronica's hand moved up and down her back in steady, calming strokes.

"You have to leave today. I'll have someone come over to pick you up," Luca said suddenly from where he stood. "You will be heading to the Hamptons. You cannot be in town."

"They can pick her up at my place."

Luca finally turned his head toward her voice, but only briefly. "Fine," he said simply.

Then, without waiting for further argument or response, he turned and walked out of the house.

Ricardo stepped closer to Valentina again, urgency returning to his face as if Luca's departure had removed the last barrier between him and trying again. "Val," he said quickly. "Please. Just—just talk to me properly. Don't do this like this. Think about what you're doing," he muttered.

"I'll be right back," Vee said. She moved quickly toward the door, pulling it open and stepping out into the crisp air outside.

He was a short distance away now, already halfway to his car, hands tucked into his pockets.