

## Mafia God 259

### Chapter 259: I'm Calling Your Bluff

Veronica's eyes flicked instinctively toward the corners of the room, as if she might find a camera hidden somewhere.

"I'm calling your bluff," she said. "Marco will not let this happen." She needed to believe that.

Needed to believe someone else would step in where Luca refused to. But Luca only shook his head slightly.

"If he wouldn't let it," he said, "then I wouldn't have asked him to be here. His only job here is to make sure you get out once I am dead."

Veronica stared at him, disbelief written all over her face. "No," she said immediately, shaking her head. "I don't believe you."

Believing him meant accepting that this was real. That no one was coming.

"That's up to you," Luca replied simply.

"You know..." she began slowly. "I'll be twenty-six soon." She let out a faint breath, her fingers brushing absently against the edge of the sofa. "Val is nineteen." Her lips curved into the smallest, saddest smile. "We used to think that by now..." she continued, her eyes unfocused now, "I'd be married. I'd have one kid..."

"And Val would be living with me, of course," she added, a faint, almost fond huff escaping her. "She always said she'd just follow me wherever I went."

For a brief second, the tension in her shoulders eased because she had stepped into a memory that felt safe.

"We thought we'd have this perfect little family," she said. "A great husband. A quiet life." Her gaze slowly shifted back to Luca. "Instead..." she whispered, the sadness returning fully now, "I fell in love with a psychopath."

"A hot psychopath, by the way."

The response came after a brief pause, almost like Luca hadn't meant to say it out loud.

The air was changing. Each breath felt thinner, less satisfying, like her lungs were working harder for something they weren't fully getting anymore. A faint sheen of sweat had begun to form along her skin, her body reacting instinctively to the shift.

Across from her, Luca wasn't untouched either. There was tension in his posture now, subtle but there. His shoulders rose slightly with each controlled inhale, his jaw tightening every now and then as he forced himself to stay steady.

"Vee," he said again, more firmly this time. "Pick up the gun." His gaze flicked toward the table briefly, then back to her. "You do not have to die here," he continued. "You can still have your happy ending. Pick up the gun."

Veronica shook her head faintly, her breaths already beginning to shorten, her chest rising and falling unevenly. She leaned forward slightly, her elbows resting on her thighs as she tried to ground herself, to steady the spinning in her head. "No..." she whispered.

"What did you think you would be doing with your life by now?" she asked.

"Uh..." he began. "Well... my goal was to have at least eighty percent control over New York."

A faint, almost distant look crossed his face, like he was remembering a version of himself that had been simpler.

"That used to be just it," he continued. "Business. The famiglia is my life."

Veronica listened, her eyes fixed on him, her breaths shallow now, each one requiring effort.

"And then..." Luca added, his gaze lowering briefly before lifting back to her, "you walked into my life. And everything changed. I wanted you by my side," he said. "I thought I could rule with you, you know."

This was the version of him she knew.

"Luca..." she breathed, her voice breaking into soft gasps now. She struggled to pull in enough air, her body betraying her, forcing urgency into every word. "Think about this..." she managed, her hands gripping her knees tightly as she leaned forward further. "Think about us..."

Her eyes searched his desperately. "Think about what we could have."

Each word came out more strained than the last, her lungs refusing to cooperate, her breaths coming in uneven bursts now.

But she kept going. If there was even the smallest chance— Even the smallest crack in his resolve—

She had to reach it. Before there was no time left to try.

"Vee, please, pick up the goddamned gun! Now!"

Veronica barely seemed to hear him the way he intended. Her world had narrowed down to fragments—his voice, the weight in her chest, the pounding of her heart, the thin, thinning air. "The only way out is death... right?" she struggled, her words breaking between shallow breaths. Her hands trembled as she pushed herself up from the sofa, her legs unsteady beneath her.

Luca's eyes locked onto her instantly.

"Only one of us has to die," she continued. She reached for the gun. Her fingers wrapped around it clumsily at first, her strength faltering, but she held on. She turned it toward herself, the cold metal pressing against her temple, her hand shaking violently.

"Vee!" Luca shouted.

Veronica's eyes found his. And somehow, in that moment—despite the suffocating air, the tears streaking her face, the tremor in her body—she smiled. "I love you," she said. as a truth she wanted him to carry, no matter what happened next.

And then— She pulled the trigger. A sharp click echoed through the bunker. Nothing else followed.

No gunshot. No impact. Just silence. Veronica's eyes widened, confusion crashing through the haze in her mind. Her hand froze where it was, the gun still pressed to her head as her brain struggled to process what had just happened.

The safety. There had to be— Before she could complete the thought— Luca clapped his hands.

A deep rush of air surged back into the bunker, the ventilator reversing again with a powerful whoosh that filled the room. Oxygen flooded back in, almost dizzying in its sudden return.

Veronica gasped instinctively, her body reacting before her mind could. She bent forward slightly, coughing as her lungs greedily pulled in the air they had been starved of.

For a few seconds, all she could do was breathe. Inhale. Exhale. Again. Again.