

Mafia God 266

Chapter 266: I'm Not So Sure

Vee's smile faded just slightly as she looked down at the table, her fingers tracing the edge of her glass. "I am proud of my sister," she said quietly.

And she meant it. Valentina, despite everything, had followed her heart—even if it was messy, even if it was complicated.

"Of myself?" she added. "I'm not so sure." Her gaze drifted toward the dining room entrance without her meaning to, expecting him to walk in at any moment.

Part of her was already bracing for it. No matter how much she told herself she needed space—

Her awareness of Luca hadn't gone anywhere. It lingered. It hovered. It was constant. Nonnina followed her gaze for a brief second before looking back at her, a knowing look settling into her expression.

"Famiglia men do stupid things sometimes," she said gently. "But it's a tough world they live in," she continued. "It's even tougher to put yourself in their shoes because you will not understand it. They are difficult," she added with a faint, fond smile.

A small pause. Then— "Mad even."

"That's an understatement," Veronica said.

'Mad' didn't even begin to cover it. Before Nonnina could respond, her expression suddenly shifted—her eyes lighting up.

Vee didn't have to look. She felt him. Luca had showered and changed. When Vee finally glanced up, it was against her better judgment—and immediately, she wished she hadn't.

He stood there in loose pajama pants, his hair still slightly damp, falling carelessly over his forehead. Drops of water clung faintly to his skin, tracing down his neck, disappearing along the lines of his bare chest.

Nonnina's expression soured instantly. "What's this?" she demanded, her brows knitting together as she pointed at him.

Luca looked down at himself, feigning confusion. "What, Nonni?"

"This!" she gestured again, more emphatically this time, clearly scandalized by his lack of a shirt.

Vee quickly dropped her gaze back to the tablecloth, her jaw tightening slightly as she forced herself to focus on literally anything else.

"You find it sexy too, uhn?" Luca continued, completely unfazed. "Good to know older women got a thing for me too." He winked.

Nonnina burst into a flurry of Italian curses, half of them sounding like threats, the other half like prayers for divine patience. She waved her hands in the air dramatically as she turned and stormed into the kitchen, muttering under her breath the entire way.

Luca chuckled, clearly satisfied with himself. But the reaction he had been waiting for? The only one that actually mattered?

He didn't get it. Vee sat there, her posture stiff, her gaze fixed intently on the tablecloth. Her fingers traced an invisible pattern along the fabric.

She was trying not to react at all. That bothered him more than if she had yelled at him.

Instead of moving to his usual seat at the head of the table, he walked around until he reached the chair beside her and sat down.

"What are you doing?" Vee asked, her voice sharper than she intended as she quickly averted her eyes from his chest.

Looking at him was dangerous territory she had no intention of stepping into again.

"Sitting down for dinner?" Luca replied casually, as though there was absolutely nothing unusual about his choice.

Vee pointed firmly toward the head of the table without looking at him. "You sit over there."

That was his seat. The position that created distance—space—something she desperately needed right now.

"I like to be unpredictable sometimes," he said, completely at ease.

Vee let out a small, frustrated breath. "Fine."

If he wasn't going to move— She would. She pushed her chair back and got to her feet, ready to put as much space between them as possible. But before she could take a full step away, Luca's hand wrapped around her arm, stopping her mid-motion.

"Hey—" she started, but he gently pulled her back down into the chair.

"Let's not waste both of our time, Bambola," he said. "I'll just move wherever you move to. So, sit and enjoy your dinner."

Vee stilled. Her jaw tightened as she stared straight ahead, refusing—absolutely refusing—to turn her head even slightly in his direction. She knew if she did— Her eyes would betray her.

They would linger. She would remember. And she didn't want that.

"You always have to have your way, don't you?" she murmured under her breath.

"With you?" Luca replied smoothly. "Always."

Nonnina returned, carrying another dish, her earlier irritation seemingly forgotten as quickly as it had come.

Luca straightened slightly. "It all smells delicious, Nonni," he said, his voice laced with charm.

"Awww... thank you, Diavolino," Nonnina beamed, clearly pleased, setting the dish down carefully. "Are you being this sweet because Zuccherino is here?" she asked.

"I'm sweet to you all the time," Luca argued, leaning back slightly in his chair like he was genuinely offended by the accusation.

"Not this sweet," Nonnina clipped without missing a beat. She scooped food onto their plates, poured their drinks, and set everything in place.

Then, as if she could feel the tension crackling between them, she paused briefly beside Vee and put a soft reassuring pat on her shoulder.

And then she left the room. Vee didn't waste a second. She picked up her fork and started eating, faster than usual. It wasn't hunger driving her—it was urgency.

She needed to get through this quickly and leave.

"How are the renovations at the shop going?" he asked casually.

"I'd like to eat quietly, please," she said.

"Okay then," he said. "You can just listen."

Vee paused mid-bite. Slowly, she lowered her fork. "What if I don't feel like listening?" she shot back.

"You cannot stop me from talking."

"I can always leave."

"And leave Nonnina's meal? Oh, the disrespect," Luca said, his tone dipped in mock offense, like that was the real crime happening here.

"Just eat quietly, Luca!" she snapped finally, her patience cracking just enough for the frustration to spill through.

"I miss you."

Vee's hand tightened slightly around her fork.