

Mafia God 285

Chapter 285: Its Never Enough With You

Vee stared at him. Her lips parted. The response she had prepared — whatever it would have been — did not arrive, because her brain had encountered the sentence and was currently conducting a full audit of it to determine whether she had heard it correctly.

"I don't—" She stopped. Started again. "What?"

"You're going to learn to be a Donna," he said. "Even if it kills every value you have."

"What does that mean?" She searched his face. "This Donna you keep saying." It was the second time the word had appeared in their conversation that night. "What does that actually mean, Luca? For me, specifically, what does that mean?"

"You'll see," he said. He turned and threw his shirt back over the chair.

Then he crossed to the bed and dropped onto it. He settled against the headboard. Looked at her.

"Why do you always have to keep things from me?"

"Because," she said, moving back toward the bed, "your main switch is set to kill." She reached the bed and sat on the edge of it, turning to look at him. "If you had any other settings," she continued, "I might consider being more open with you."

"You always have the same excuse." Luca said. He had heard that particular argument enough times to have developed a specific impatience with it. "I leave people alive for more stable reasons than emotional attachments, Vee."

"You have to stop letting your rage control you," Vee said.

Luca inhaled. A long, slow breath in. He held it for a moment. Then let it out, equally slow.

She had to learn. She really, genuinely had to learn. Not to submit — he had never wanted that from her, wouldn't have known what to do with it if she'd offered it — but to understand the world she was standing in.

"In my world," he said, and his voice had lost its snap, "rage and paranoia are all you have to keep you alive."

It was a fact. She could find it inconvenient. But it was what it was.

"You always have the same excuse," she said.

He opened his mouth. Closed it. Looked at her. The satisfaction on her face was dramatic that she just used his own words to construct a cage around his argument.

"Now can we please get some sleep," she said. The conversation was over.

"I was planning on doing something else again," he said. "But you ruined it." He said it like he was mourning a genuine loss — a regrettable outcome.

"Are you ever satisfied?"

"It's never enough with you," he said. He reached for her. His arms came around her, knowing where she belonged and returning her there — scooping her in against him, arranging her against his chest, his arms closing around her in an embrace.

Marco was not in order. He stood in the middle of the office wanting significantly more space than the room could provide — weight forward slightly, jaw set, a stillness that was not calm but the opposite of calm, the stillness of a pressure vessel doing active work.

When Luca had finished relaying the relevant information, Marco had said nothing for a moment.

"I'm such an idiot." He wasn't looking for disagreement. "I'm so stupid." He had reviewed available evidence and arrived at a verdict about himself that he found both accurate and deeply offensive.

Luca regarded him from behind the desk calmly but that was because he had the slight advantage of twelve hours over Marco. "Good that you recognise it," he said. "But please — tell me how you arrived at that conclusion."

Marco's jaw tightened. "I knew it." He said bitterly. "I knew there was a reason Ricardo was sent to New York. I felt it. Something was off about the whole arrangement and I filed it away and now—" He stopped.

"We both understand your stupidity for different reasons," Luca said.

"I can't let her do this."

"Marco. It's too late for you to interfere."

"Luca—"

"You had two chances." He held up two fingers, the point needed to stand on its own and be looked at. "Two separate moments where the path was available to you and you didn't take it. You can't go back and reconstruct the road now just because you've decided you want the destination."

Marco turned away briefly. Then he turned back. "She's not safe with him." The conviction in it was absolute. "You remember what you said?"

Luca waited.

"Someone stabs you once—" Marco's eyes met his directly. "Odds are they will do it again."

"I know," Luca said. He had arrived at the same destination Marco was currently standing in and made his peace with the route chosen regardless. "Veronica wants us to give him a chance." That simply meant, it wasn't up for debate. It was the established setting in which they would now have to operate. Veronica wanted it, she would get it. He may argue with her, fight with her on it but she would still always get whatever she wanted. Plus, he had given her his word.

"Fuck chance. I want to kill him myself."

"Enough." Luca said flatly.

Marco went still.

"I gave my word." Luca's voice had dropped back to its regular register. "You will do nothing." He let that land. "You will say nothing. But. While Bianca is in New York, I want her watched. Constantly." He said. "She may not come for Vee directly because she is famiglia now. But she is pulling strings. There is something in motion — some arrangement she and Julian have constructed that we haven't fully mapped yet — and I want to know what it is before it presents itself." "I hate not knowing."

"I want something. Anything. Whatever she has been doing, whatever arrangements exist, whatever money has moved or conversations have happened or agreements have been made — I want material. Something concrete." A pause. "Something I can use to leverage a divorce that doesn't end with bodies and a war with her family."

He held Marco's gaze.