

Mafia God 287

Chapter 287: You Can Handle That

"He's distracted," she said.

A pause.

"By a mistress."

"You can handle that," David said simply. The way he said most things — stripped of everything except the essential content. He always believed problems had straightforward solutions and the primary question was simply which one to apply.

"I cannot. He claimed her as famiglia."

To claim someone as famiglia was to place them under a particular kind of protection, any physical harm taken against that person was treason.

"Makes no difference to me," David said. "You want her gone, she is gone."

And the thing was — she believed him. Completely and without reservation. David had always existed in the rare category of people whose words and capacity existed in perfect alignment. He said what he could do and he could do what he said and there was no gap between those two things.

Which was precisely why she couldn't use him that way.

"I fear if anything happens to her, I will be blamed immediately." "Luca is already suspicious of me. He's been watching, I can feel it." She paused. "The most dangerous version of him is when he's quiet. I have tried everything. I tried to sow discord between them. I moved pieces that should have landed." She shook her head once. "It hasn't worked. None of it has worked."

She looked at her hands briefly. "It's like the girl has bewitched him." She said.

"What do you need?" David asked.

"I have a plan," Bianca said.

David tilted his head. "Plans," he said.

"Fratello. I need to do this carefully. My marriage is at stake. My husband doesn't call me. He doesn't want to see me. He has touched me once since we got married. Once. In over a year. What I want— What I want is my husband back." She met David's eyes. "Him. I want him back."

"But I don't want him annoyed at me. I don't want him suspicious, I don't want him looking in my direction with hatred. I cannot be the visible hand in any of this. Not even slightly. If anything traces back to me — anything — it's over. He will end it and I will have nothing."

She held David's gaze. "So I need to be precise."

"How do you plan on getting this done?" David asked.

"I'll be leaving for New York in a few hours," she said.

"New York. I cannot be anywhere near airports, Bianca. I'm a wanted man."

"Fratello. You have your ways. Whatever finance you need," she added, "I will provide."

"Still haven't heard the plan," he pointed out.

The ghost of a smile moved briefly at the corner of her mouth. She leaned forward, dropped her voice and proceeded to explain.

The blood left Ricardo's face so completely and so quickly that it was almost interesting to observe.

One moment he was standing in his office across from Veronica, the next, he had become a man who appeared to be drafting his will in his head.

"He's going to kill me," he whispered.

"He will not." Vee kept her voice even.

"Vee." His voice was careful. "You do not know him if you really think he is going to let this go."

"I pleaded on your behalf."

"You—" He stopped. "Vee, that's—"

"Listen to me." She stepped toward him. "I know what you did. I know why you did it, I know what she held over you and I know you were caught between something impossible." She held his gaze. "I'm not here to relitigate that."

Ricardo was quiet.

"But in the light of everything that has been happening—" She paused, measuring the next words. "This isn't about just me anymore. It isn't about you. There are things in motion that are bigger than both of us, and Luca needed the complete picture to navigate them." She let that sit. "I had to tell him. Not to punish you. Because the alternative was leaving him blind to something that could get people hurt."

Ricardo sat down. He put his head in his hands briefly. Then he looked up.

"He's going to kill me," he said again. "I have to tell Valentina before Marco tells her,"

"Ricardo, don't make rash decisions."

"I'm not being rash— You don't understand. If she hears it from Marco—"

"She won't," Vee said. "Keep Val out of this. Please. She's in a sensitive state. Have you forgotten she is carrying your child?"

Of course he hadn't forgotten. How the hell could he?

"Don't stress her," Vee continued. "Not over something that hasn't even exploded yet. Marco will not say anything to her."

Ricardo let out a slow, frustrated breath. "Vee..."

"Please. Look, I am tired of begging every Italian man that comes my way. It's becoming a full-time job." She arched a brow. "Keep Val out of this. End of story. Also, you need to prepare yourself."

He stiffened immediately. "For what?"

"Bianca is on her way to New York."

"Great." Ricardo dragged both hands down his face. "Just fucking great." He let out a hollow laugh. "She is going to cause trouble. She is—my God."

"I assure you, Ricardo," Vee said. "If for no other reason to believe me, believe that I will protect my sister."

Ricardo gave a slow nod.

"Good," Vee said, straightening slightly. "Now, to your engagement. We have everything planned," she continued smoothly. "Venue, guest list. We just need you both to pick a day. Nonnina has been working tirelessly. I don't know where the woman gets her strength from."

Ricardo managed a small chuckle. His throat hadn't quite agreed with the idea of humor. "I will discuss with Valentina," he said. "But we should be able to do this week." He paused, then added, "Any estimate on when the wedding is holding?"

"We should have you guys fired up by next month," she replied. A faint smile tugged at her lips. "You've got awesome wedding planners."

Ricardo huffed out a breath, a real one this time, and nodded. "Thank you."