

Mafia God 303

Chapter 303: I Don't Do Pretense

"Excuse me?!" Bianca snapped.

"I don't do pretense, Bianca," Valentina continued. "And I have never been one to hold my tongue. You have something to say, say it! Your fake smiles ain't fake enough, sugar."

Luca remained still, fully aware that the fragile civility of the evening had finally shattered but impressed at the fire in Valentina.

"Valentina, I am just trying to make conversation." Bianca said, looking seriously offended.

"Mio figlio..." Nonnina reached across the table and clasped Valentina's hand. The older woman's eyes pleaded for peace.

Valentina turned to her, the fire in her gaze still burning, her lips poised to deliver another cutting remark. She wasn't quite finished with Bianca yet; the words sat on her tongue. But the earnest expression on Nonnina's face gave her pause. The room seemed to hold its breath as Valentina exhaled slowly, allowing the anger to ebb—if only slightly.

"I apologise," she said, her tone softening as she offered a polite, if not entirely sincere, smile. "Pregnancy hormones and what not."

Ricardo released a quiet breath of relief, grateful for the temporary de-escalation. Then, as if summoned, the doors to the dining area swung open with sudden urgency.

Marco burst into the room. The abrupt entrance drew everyone's attention. Marco stood at the threshold, slightly breathless. His eyes immediately sought out Luca.

"Luciano!" Marco called, his voice edged with urgency.

Luca's expression hardened instantly. He rose from his seat. The alarm in Marco's eyes signaled that something was terribly wrong.

He glanced at Ricardo. No words were exchanged, yet the message was clear: Keep Valentina safe. Ricardo gave a subtle nod.

Valentina watched the exchange with growing unease. Marco's presence was unexpected, and the tension radiating from him sent a chill down her spine. Bianca, too, observed the scene with keen interest, her curiosity piqued by the sudden disruption.

Luca moved swiftly toward Marco, he placed a firm hand on his shoulder and guided him away from the dining area into the adjoining living room, ensuring their conversation remained private.

"Speak," Luca commanded once they were out of immediate earshot.

"The mission failed," he said. "I just got word."

The blood drained from Luca's face as Marco's words settled between them. "Don?" he asked.

"They cannot locate him."

Luca's breath caught in his throat. That could only mean capture, or death. "His ring?" Luca demanded urgently. "Track his ring."

Marco shook his head. "He took it off. They found it on Bastione ground."

"Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" Luca exploded, pacing the length of the living room.. "Book me the next flight. I'm leaving immediately."

Marco stepped forward, his expression resolute. "It's better I go, Luca."

Luca stopped abruptly, turning to face him with blazing eyes. "The hell you will! I need to find my father!" he snapped.

"I understand," Marco replied calmly, refusing to be intimidated. "But please, you may be needed here. Renato might retaliate. We need you on the ground."

Luca's chest rose and fell with controlled breaths as he struggled to rein in his emotions. Marco's reasoning was sound, but logic did little to soothe the turmoil raging inside him. The thought of his father—alone, possibly injured or captured—gnawed at him relentlessly.

"What's the status right now?" Luca asked, forcing himself to focus. "Where is Julian?"

"One of his men contacted me," Marco explained. "Julian is fine, but most of our men—and those of the Vitales—are gone. They walked right into a trap."

The magnitude of the loss was staggering.

Luca's mind raced, piecing together the implications. "How did they know? How?"

"I want every contact, every informant, every ally questioned. No one is above suspicion."

"Consider it done," Marco replied.

He knew Marco was right—leaving now could destabilize everything and invite further attacks. Yet the urge to search for his father himself remained almost unbearable.

"Julian has to step in for Father," Luca said. The initial shock had begun to harden into cold determination, the instincts of a leader taking over where the panic of a son had briefly surfaced.

"Maybe that was the plan all along," he replied.

"Find my father, Marco," he instructed, his tone leaving no room for argument.

"I'll do my best, Luca, but you know he may not be alive."

"If he is dead, I want to see his body," Luca said. His gaze locked onto Marco's, unwavering. "Go, now!"

Marco gave a curt nod, understanding the urgency and the weight of the responsibility placed upon him. Without another word, he turned and left.

Luca remained still for a moment, drawing in a slow breath as he attempted to compose himself. The enormity of the situation pressed down on him, but there was no time to grieve—not yet. He had a family to protect and, more importantly, a traitor to uncover.

With renewed purpose, he walked back toward the dining room. As he entered, his eyes immediately found Bianca.

"Is everything alright, Luca?" she asked.

Luca did not respond. Instead, he strode toward her with intensity. He reached for her arm and yanked her off the chair.

"Luca!" Bianca gasped, startled by the sudden aggression. "Luca! You are hurting me!" she yelled, struggling to keep her balance as he pulled her away from the table.

Ricardo half-rose from his seat, confusion etched across his face, while Valentina watched with wide, anxious eyes.

Luca said nothing as he dragged Bianca out of the dining room and into a quiet corner of the living room. He finally released her arm, though the fury radiating from him remained palpable.

Bianca steadied herself, rubbing the spot where his grip had tightened. "What on earth has gotten into you?" she demanded.

Luca stepped closer, his towering presence casting a shadow over her. His eyes blazing with restrained rage. "The raid failed," Luca told her.

Bianca's hand flew to her mouth, her eyes widening in what appeared to be genuine shock. "Oh my God!" she gasped, her breath hitching as she searched his face for more information. "Is Don...?"

Luca didn't answer her unspoken question. "I know you have been giving Julian information," he said. "I want to know what you have been telling him."