

## **Mafia God 326**

### Chapter 326: You Look Exhausted

"I missed you too," Val replied, offering a faint but genuine smile. "Get some sleep, okay? You look exhausted."

"I feel like I've aged ten years in the last two days," he admitted. He settled more comfortably into the bed.

After a brief silence, he spoke again. "How is Veronica holding up?"

"She's fine," she reassured him. "For some reason, she is always crying but Nonnina and Marco are there with her, keeping her company. Her place is secure."

Ricardo reached for her hand, intertwining their fingers as he allowed himself, for the first time in days, to relax.

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"Are you going to tell me how you almost died?" Carol asked as she continued slicing carrots on the counter of her kitchen.

Massimo Genovese stood a few feet away, flexing his shoulder cautiously. The wound was still tender, a dull reminder of how close he had come to death. He rolled his arm slowly, testing its mobility, wincing slightly as pain flared. Despite the injury, his presence remained imposing—an aging lion, wounded but far from defeated.

"One of my sons betrayed me," Massimo said simply.

Carol's knife froze mid-slice. When she finally resumed cutting, her movements were slower. "If you have something to say, Massimo, say it," she replied.

"If it's our son," he said carefully, "you know what will be done, right?"

The knife stopped again. This time, Carol turned to face him, her eyes blazing with fury. "So, I saved your life only for you to resurrect and threaten to kill my son?" she demanded.

"It's the rules," Massimo said, his expression unyielding. To him, the code of the famiglia was sacred—an unbreakable law that had governed his entire existence. Betrayal, especially from within the bloodline, could not be tolerated.

Carol let out a bitter laugh, setting the knife down with a sharp clatter. "Rules?" she echoed incredulously. "Have you stopped to think that not everyone in the famiglia follows those rules anymore?" She wiped her hands on a kitchen towel and stepped closer, her gaze never leaving his. "Everyone else plays dirty, Massimo. They manipulate, they scheme, they stab each other in the back long before anyone has the chance to defend themselves. And God help those who aren't smart enough or brutal enough to survive it."

"You still believe in honor," Carol continued. "But honor doesn't protect you anymore. It makes you vulnerable. If one of your sons truly betrayed you, then you need to understand why before you start talking about punishment."

"Motives do not excuse betrayal," he replied.

"Before you start talking about killing our son," she said firmly, "you'd better be absolutely certain of the truth."

"Luca is smart, he is brutal. He absolutely could have done this," Massimo said.

Carol stared at him in disbelief. "You have two sons," she said slowly. "Have you thought of shining this generous suspicious light on the other one?"

"He is not smart enough."

"Oh my goodness... You... you are a piece of work," she muttered, shaking her head.

"You think Luca is capable of betraying me, don't you? I don't see you jumping to his defence." he asked.

She exhaled slowly before turning to face him. "He is what you raised him to be, Massimo," she replied. "I wasn't there. How did you raise our boy, hmm? Did you even care for him at all? Did you protect him? Or did you just leave him to Vittoria and hope for the best?"

The accusation struck its mark. Massimo's jaw tightened, and a flicker of guilt passed through his eyes before it was quickly replaced by anger. "I did the best I could," he snapped. "You weren't there! You left at the first sign of trouble! And what did you think would happen by leaving?" he demanded.

"At the first sign of trouble?! At the first?!!" Carol's voice rose, years of buried resentment erupting to the surface. "Under what rock were you living, Massimo? Your entire family treated me like the outsider. I was insulted, I was abused, I was accused of so many things it became hard to keep count of them. And that is exactly what you are doing to our son. He is so like you—he followed exactly in your footsteps."

Before he could respond, a subtle sound caught his attention—a faint creak enough to set every instinct he possessed on edge.

"Sssshhh..." he whispered urgently, raising a finger to his lips as his head snapped toward the source of the noise.

Carol, still fueled by anger, scoffed. "Don't shush me! You do not have the right!" she shouted.

"For God's sakes, just shush for a second!" Massimo hissed, the intensity in his tone finally cutting through her fury.

Carol's retort died on her lips as she noticed the sudden tension in his body. His posture had shifted from defensive to predatory.

Massimo rose swiftly from his chair and moved toward the living room window, his steps silent despite his size. He parted the curtain just enough to peer outside, scanning the quiet street with narrowed eyes.

Carol didn't waste another moment. Instinct took over, honed by years of surviving in a world she had desperately tried to escape. She turned toward a seemingly ordinary cabinet along the wall. She pressed a hidden latch, and a section of the panel slid open, revealing a concealed compartment.

Inside lay a carefully maintained collection of firearms. She reached in and pulled out two revolvers. Alongside with those, she pulled out speedloaders.

"Massimo! Catch!" Carol called then tossed one of the revolvers across the room.

Massimo caught it effortlessly. A grin spread across his face despite the imminent danger. "God, I love you!" he said, the words laced with admiration and a hint of nostalgia as he crouched beside the window, positioning himself for the inevitable confrontation.

Carol rolled her eyes but couldn't suppress the faintest smirk. She armed herself with the second revolver, slipping a speedloader into the pocket of her jeans before moving into position behind a wall that offered a clear line of sight to the front door. Her breathing slowed, every sense heightened.