

## Mafia God 340

### Chapter 340: It's Kind Of Depressing

"They are all well," Carol said. "They went home to get some much needed rest. You gave them all quite the fright."

"Yeah... that sounds about right."

Time passed—seconds, maybe minutes—before Carol shifted in her seat, crossing her legs as she glanced toward Veronica again.

"I guess I should congratulate you," she said, her tone thoughtful.

Veronica's lips twitched faintly. "That's usually how this works."

"But then," Carol continued, ignoring that, "when I think about the fact that I'm going to be a grandmother..." She paused, "...it's kind of depressing."

"That's not a great start to being a grandmother."

"Yeah, I know," Carol admitted. "It tells me I am growing older. Time is moving," she continued, her gaze drifting slightly, no longer fully in the room. "And yet... I have put half my life on pause. Leaving my family," Carol said quietly. "My sons. Just to get away from all of this..."

Her lips pressed together for a brief moment. "And yet," she finished, her eyes returning to Veronica, "here I am. Right back where it all started."

"You regret leaving."

"Sometimes," Carol admitted after a pause. "Yes. Sometimes I think I should have fought harder... stayed... burned the whole damn thing down if I had to. Like you are doing now."

Veronica let out a small breath. "This mess is my fault."

Carol's eyes sharpened immediately. "And thinking like that," she said firmly, "is not going to help you stay ahead of your enemies. You don't get the luxury of guilt," she continued. "Not in this life...Get some rest," Carol added, standing now. "You'll need it."

Veronica frowned slightly, confusion flickering across her face. "Why?"

Carol turned toward her, already halfway to the door. "I'll call Massimo and tell him you're ready."

"For what?"

Carol paused, glancing back over her shoulder. "You're going to Italy, my dear," she said. "Luca is waiting for you."

Veronica smiled. "Would you not tell anyone about this yet?" she asked, her hand unconsciously drifting toward her stomach again. "I want him to hear it from me."

"Of course."

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Marco rolled his shoulders slightly as he walked through the corridor. The past few days and also making sure Veronica got on that flight safely made him truly weary.

At least she was on her way. At least Luca would see her and know she is okay so he can focus on his recovery.

Marco let out a slow breath as he loosened his collar, already thinking about his bed. Sleep. Actual, uninterrupted sleep. The kind he hadn't had in days.

"Sir?"

Marco barely suppressed a groan as one of the staff approached him. "What is it?" he asked.

"There is someone here to see you."

Marco frowned slightly. "At this hour?"

"Yes, sir."

He sighed. "Who?"

"Miss Scalese."

That woke him up faster than coffee ever could. He adjusted his shirt slightly, running a hand through his hair as he headed back down.

"Val? What—what are you doing here?" Marco's voice came out sharper than he intended as he reached the bottom of the staircase. "It's late. Why would you even be out right now?"

"I'm sorry," she said quickly, stepping forward. "I've been calling you. You weren't picking up, so I panicked. I haven't seen Ricardo. I can't reach him. He isn't at Commissioned either."

"Yeah," he said. "Ben mentioned something. Said Ricardo texted him—needed a few days off. To clear his mind." He scratched lightly at his jaw. "But I can hunt him down if you want."

"He needed a few days off?" she repeated, her voice tightening. "From me?" Her brows pulled together. "I don't understand."

Marco frowned slightly. "I thought he was home with you," he admitted. "I would've checked in if I knew something was off."

Valentina shook her head. "No. He said he was going to work. Said he'd be back, but—" she swallowed, her voice faltering.

"Hey," he said gently. "Just stay calm, alright? I'll look for him in the morning. I'll find out where he is."

Valentina nodded.

"But Val..." Marco added, his tone shifting slightly as he glanced around the empty hallway. "You really shouldn't be here. Both of us alone like this? It's against the rules."

"I'm sorry," she said again. "I just... I have this... nagging feeling."

"Shhh..." he murmured, lowering his voice, he didn't want to startle her further. "Come on."

He reached out and pulled her into a hug. "Ricardo's fine," he added. "Men get cold feet too, you know."

"I'm the one who should be getting cold feet," Valentina muttered into his chest, her voice muffled against the fabric of his shirt.

Marco frowned, pulling back. "Why?" he asked.

Valentina shook her head, her gaze dropping to the floor. "I don't know."

"Did Ricardo do something wrong again?" he pressed. "Aside from disappearing."

"No—no," she said quickly. "It's not... it's not that." She stepped back from him then, like she suddenly needed space to breathe. "Oh God..." she whispered, pressing a hand to her forehead.

Marco's brows knitted together immediately. "Val?" he stepped closer again. "What's wrong? What's going on?"

Her breathing had changed—shorter, uneven. Her chest rising and falling too fast, like her body was trying to outrun whatever was building inside her. "I..." she started, then stopped.

Marco's patience snapped just slightly. "You tell me right now if he did something," he said, his voice dropping, a clear edge of threat threading through it. "Valentina."

"I love Ricardo," she said. "But I think..." she swallowed as she stared up at him. "I think... I think I love you too."

The anger that had been simmering in Marco's chest drained so quickly it almost left him dizzy. He just stood there, staring down at her.

"You don't mean that," he said.

"I should go," she murmured, her voice small in a way he had never heard before. "I'll let you know once I hear from him." She turned and walked away, her steps quick, like she was trying to outrun whatever she had just said.

Marco didn't move. His body locked in place, his mind scrambling to catch up.