

Mafia God 349

Chapter 349: Give Him Your Card

The jeweler made the professional choice not to react.

She gestured toward the salesman. "Give him your card."

Massimo looked at her, then at the ring, then back at her. "Why am I the one paying?" he asked. "I'm quite certain Luca gave you his card."

Carol stared at him in theatrical disbelief. "You would have your son—who is currently fighting for his life—pay for this?"

Massimo opened his mouth.

"What kind of father are you?"

The guilt landed exactly where she meant it to. Massimo closed his eyes briefly, calling on reserves of endurance.

"Fine. Fine," he muttered, pulling the card from his wallet and handing it over. "Take it."

The jeweler accepted it with both hands. Carol looked deeply satisfied. Massimo, meanwhile, leaned slightly closer to her once the man stepped away to process the payment.

"You know," he said, "you do not have to act repulsed by me all the time. You try too hard," he added. "And we both know that is not exactly how you feel." Massimo looked pleased with himself.

Carol wasn't listening anymore. Not really. Massimo's last smug little remark faded into the hush of Salvadori Venezia as her attention drifted back to the display case. Beneath the glass, diamonds lay arranged—princess cuts, emerald cuts, pear shapes, marquises—each one flashing under the warm showroom lights.

Behind the counter, the jeweler was wrapping the selected ring. For a moment, all she could see were the ghosts.

A younger version of herself. A younger Massimo. A life that might have been softer if she had loved a different man—some ordinary man, boring perhaps, kind perhaps, a man whose name did not come with blood debts and armed convoys and enemies.

But she had fallen in love with Massimo Genovese. And loving him had been like stepping into a beautiful house already on fire.

Now she was older, and the years had not passed so much as hardened around her. She had sons she loved more than her own pride, a grandchild on the way, and an ache inside her for the life she never got to keep.

Old and alone. Her eyes lifted slowly to Massimo.

"You cannot turn this child into you," she said. "At least let one generation find peace, Massimo," she said. "Let this bloodshed skip a generation."

"It is who we are, Carol," he said. "After all this time, you should have accepted that the famiglia doesn't bend. The moment we begin to, everything crumbles."

"Massimo, please. I've never asked you for anything. Please," she said again, quieter this time. "Just please."

Massimo schooled his expression back into stone and turned his gaze ahead just as the jeweler returned, the small engagement box resting in both hands.

"Signora," the man said.

Carol turned to take the package. Her eyes stung suddenly with tears. He wasn't going to listen.

Maybe she was talking to the wrong Genovese.

Luca did his absolute best to look like a man who wasn't one bad cough away from collapsing.

It was not entirely convincing. He felt horrible. His lung still protested, his side still burned, and his body had very strong opinions about him being out of bed at all.

Too bad. He was determined to do this. Enough delay. Enough cowardice. It was high time for the first step in reclaiming the future they both deserved.

He dressed simply: a light shirt, loose pants. He stepped out into the courtyard. Carol had arranged tea beneath a shaded awning near the fountain. There was a small table set.

Veronica was there with Carol. She had come in to check on him a couple of times already, but always with his mother beside her. Veronica was still angry with him. Rightfully so. He had earned every inch of it.

And yet— She had still come. Still checked on him. Still looked at him with worry even while clearly wanting to throttle him.

Carol noticed him first. Veronica turned a beat later, following her gaze. The moment she saw him, shock flashed across her face.

"What are you doing out of bed?"

"I'm fine," he said, which was a lie. He forced a slow breath and added, "The room was beginning to suffocate me."

Carol was already moving, quickly pulling out a chair for him before he fell over. Luca crossed the last few steps carefully, pride doing most of the heavy lifting.

Veronica was beside him. Her hand came to his arm first, then to his back as he lowered himself down, helping him sit. Her brows were drawn tight, worry etched openly across her face. "Should he be doing this?" Veronica aimed the question squarely at Carol.

Carol, naturally, shrugged. After he had properly settled into the chair, Carol leaned down and pressed a small kiss to his temple.

"Try not to be stupid," she murmured then she walked away, giving them privacy.

Luca took a moment to catch his breath. Veronica was sitting across from him, close enough to reach, and he still could not quite believe she had come all this way only for him to almost ruin everything in under five minutes. "I was an idiot."

"We don't have to talk about that, Luca," she said after a second. "I get it. You were in a pretty bad place," she said gently. "I should be apologising, actually, but I guess I covered my fear up with anger. Plus this child is doing things to my emotions that I do not understand."

Luca smiled. "Kinda like me already."

She reached for his hand and threaded her fingers through his. Luca looked down at their joined hands, at how naturally hers fit with his.

"I don't care about anything, Luca," Veronica said. "I really don't," she continued. "We both made a promise. The only way out is death. I want to be by your side," she said, giving his fingers a small squeeze, "whatever it takes."

"You just made this next part easier," he said with a smile.

"What part?" Vee asked.