

Mafia God 360

Chapter 360: There Will Be Speculation

What did they think she was going to do? Poison the food from up here? Set the courtyard on fire with sheer bitterness?

The insult of it nearly choked her. Her lips curled, and a furious sound escaped her. Of course. Of course this was what she had become to them now. A threat to be contained.

Bianca stepped back. The suite behind her, dim and dead, seemed suddenly preferable to standing there another second under Carol's scrutiny. Her pride gathered around her.

With one last look toward the courtyard below, Bianca turned sharply and headed back inside the suite.

Luca found his father in better shape than he had expected. He had gone up to Massimo's suite that evening before dressing for the party, intending to check on him properly, Luca had seen the state he had been in after Julian. He had seen the way grief had hollowed him out. So yes, he was relieved to find him up, dressed, and moving.

Still, relief did not erase concern.

Massimo stood near the mirror adjusting his tie, the room lit softly now, no trace left of the dark, drunken collapse Carol had apparently found earlier. His hair was in order again, his shirt crisp, his face composed.

"I was coming to see how you were holding up," Luca said. "Looks like Mum's presence here this morning helped..."

Massimo's reflection flicked toward him in the mirror, and the faintest hint of a smile moved at one corner of his mouth. "Your mother," he said, tightening the knot of his tie, "has always had the uncanny ability to soothe me."

Luca made a sound that could have passed for a cough. "Or a good fuck," he muttered under his breath.

Unfortunately for him, Massimo's hearing remained perfectly intact.

"I heard that," Don Genovese said, lifting one stern brow.

Luca straightened slightly. "Heard what?"

Massimo gave him a look in the mirror that said do not test me tonight.

Luca, because he did not wish to prolong this already traumatizing line of thought, lifted both hands in surrender. "I said nothing."

"You thought enough."

Massimo turned then, finally facing him fully, his tie set, his jacket still open. "You ready for tonight?" he asked.

"Always have been."

That earned him a small nod. Massimo seemed to weigh that before speaking again.

"You are announcing her to the world, Luca," he said. "There will be speculation," he continued. "A great deal of it. Especially," Massimo added, "with everyone still under the assumption that you are married to Bianca."

Luca knew what tonight meant. He knew the whispers it would start. The offense it would cause.

The questions it would raise among allies, enemies, extended family, every gossiping bastard with eyes and a surname.

Bianca had been his wife. Veronica would now stand beside him anyway. And once that happened, there would be no hiding from what came next. No easing people into it. No pretending this was anything less than exactly what it was: a choice. A claim. A future publicly named before the old one had fully died on paper.

"Let them speculate," he said. "Everyone will find out soon enough what they need to." His tone made it clear the matter, at least in his mind, was settled. Let them whisper. Let them count dates and scandals and names. Let them choke on speculation if it pleased them. He had spent too much of his life arranging himself around other people's expectations. Tonight was not for them.

"I actually came up here to discuss something else with you."

Massimo, now fastening the cuff of one sleeve looked at him. "I think I have an idea of what it is."

"Then this should be quick." He pushed off the doorway and came a little farther into the suite. "Mum is going to leave," Luca said. "I hope you know that and are prepared for that."

Massimo's hands paused, just briefly.

"Because," Luca continued, folding his arms, "I don't know what you both are doing, and frankly, I am too old and have too many responsibilities right now to give a crap about what you both are doing."

"Duly noted," the Don said at last. Then, more seriously, "Yes. She is quite adamant about leaving. I don't like it," he added, "but I will not stop her."

That, Luca believed. His father had learned that trying to cage Carol only guaranteed losing her faster.

Massimo adjusted the fall of his jacket and went on. "But I hope you know," he said, "that she plans on raising your child in Singapore."

Luca nodded once. "Yes. She discussed it with us."

That genuinely surprised Massimo.

"Oh?" His mouth twitched, and there was the faintest ghost of amusement in his face now. "I thought Regina would have set everywhere on fire already if she ever heard that proposition."

"The nicknames keep piling up."

Massimo ignored him. "And what," he asked, "is your decision?"

"If we are having a boy, she will be raising him away from all of this," Luca said. "It's my child," Luca added. "My decision, Dad."

Massimo let out a slow breath. "Yeah," he said after a moment. "I guess I will not retire for a long time then."

"You want to?"

"I love your mother, Luca," he said. "I have always planned to die in her arms," he continued. "I have always planned to go back to her. I pushed for an heir," Massimo said, his tone flattening with self-awareness, "for absolutely selfish reasons."

Luca's brow furrowed slightly.

"I knew Julian couldn't handle it," Massimo went on. "So I hoped your child would be capable. Just as you are." His mouth tightened. "That was the plan." Massimo exhaled again. "But... if that's what you want," he said, "I will make adjustments to my will at the right time."

"And who," Luca asked quietly, "will you hand over the Italy famiglia to?"

"You hand over New York to Marco," he said, "and take charge here."

New York to Marco.

Italy to him.