

Mafia God 371

Chapter 371: You're A Fucking Maniac

"Fuck — fuck — FUCK—" He caught himself by leaning forward, dropping down over her, his weight pressing her gently further into the mattress — the only available negotiation between staying upright and meeting the floor in an undignified heap. He pressed his face into her back, breathing hard, his whole body shuddering through the aftershocks.

"I love you. I love you so fucking hard."

Val lay beneath him, thoroughly destroyed. Then she laughed. "You're a fucking maniac."

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Marco said, the words coming out between breathless laughter and genuine concern as they both fell back onto the bed and ended up staring at the ceiling. "I didn't mean to..."

Val turned her head toward him, hair spilled across the sheets, cheeks warm. "Oh, you meant to, alright!"

Marco laughed harder at that, one hand dragging over his face. It was a rough, disbelieving laugh. He had finally stopped fighting what he wanted and was now slightly overwhelmed by the fact that it wanted him back. "Too much for you, uhn?" he asked, turning his head just enough to look at her. "I always did think I was going to break you."

Val narrowed her eyes. "Why's that?"

Marco's mouth twitched. "Because I'm much bigger." He shrugged one shoulder against the mattress. "You fit against me like a tiny bear."

Valentina's brow rose immediately. "Tiny, uhn?"

"You are tiny."

She propped herself up slightly on one elbow and gave him a look full of challenge. "You only think that because you're big."

Marco considered that. Then, with the fairness of a man who knew when truth had beaten him cleanly, he nodded once. "That is a bit accurate."

For a few seconds, neither of them said anything. They just lay there in the aftermath of a line crossed and a choice made.

Marco rolled onto his side to face her fully. "Will you marry me?" he asked.

She smiled very, very surely this time, she answered. "Yeah. I will marry you, Marco."

He smiled then and leaned in to kiss her. When he pulled back, his forehead rested briefly against hers. "I'm going to love you," he said. "Going to love this baby with every breath I have left in me."

"I'll always love you, Marco," she said. "Always. And when we get married," she added, smiling with wicked sweetness, "I'll make you watch all my favourite shows with me."

Marco's face changed immediately. The horror was so genuine it nearly ruined the romance. "Can I come home on weekends only?"

Val laughed. "Not on your life."

Marco groaned and fell back onto the mattress. "We should probably discuss the terms of this marriage," he muttered. "Sappy shows? Not my thing."

Valentina turned onto her side, one hand tucked beneath her cheek. "They are not sappy."

Marco gave her a look. "Val, they spend the entire show holding their feelings back."

Val's brow lifted. "And what exactly have you been doing for the past year?"

That shut him up. "Low blow."

"Truth hurts."

He reached out and caught her wrist, tugging her gently closer until she landed half against him again, all softness and warmth and trouble.

Val smiled into his shoulder. Marco's hand drifted to her stomach then, resting there carefully. Val felt him go still.

"What?" she asked softly.

He shook his head once. "Nothing."

"That's a lie."

"I'm just..." He exhaled slowly. "Trying to understand how I got this lucky."

"I'm the lucky one. I got this big scary guy with great fucking skills."

"Yeah, now I feel proud." He smiled.

They settled into a bit of silence before something suddenly occurred to him.

"You said something about Ma earlier. What was it?"

"She gave me this nightdress you ripped," she muttered, feigning anger with only moderate success.

Marco chuckled immediately. If the purpose of the dress had been to drive him completely out of his mind, then yes—Carol had chosen brilliantly. "Yup," he said, shaking his head with helpless amusement. "Sounds like her."

Val tried to hold onto her mock offense for another second, but it dissolved too quickly under the warmth of the moment.

They talked after that. They joked. Teased each other. Picked up old stories. The conversation drifted in and out after a while.

Eventually, Valentina fell asleep still snuggled against him. Marco felt the change in her breathing. He looked down at her, hardly daring to move. One hand stayed lightly against her back while the other adjusted her again—carefully, gently—so she wouldn't put any weight on her belly.

He kissed her hair again and again. He indeed felt proud and lucky. He was going to marry for love.

For actual, soul-deep, ruinous, impossible love.

Something he had never really believed was in the cards for him. Not for a man like him. Not with the life he had, the things he had done, the shape of the world he belonged to.

And yet here she was. Here they were. This, he thought, was his perfect place to be. The only place he wanted to be.

Massimo appeared just outside Carol's room just as she was moving her bag into the hallway.

The corridor was quiet, lit only by the soft gold of wall lamps and the dim gray of approaching dawn creeping in through the distant windows. Carol had dressed for travel already. Her suitcase stood upright beside her, zipped and final.

"You were going to leave without saying goodbye?" he asked.

Carol jumped, her heart thudding painfully against her ribs at the sound of his voice behind her. "What is wrong with you?!" she snapped, pressing a hand briefly to her chest as she turned.

"Answer me."

"Massimo," she said, "you knew I was going to leave. I didn't want to make it difficult."

Massimo nodded once. "Not saying goodbye," he said, "makes it even more difficult, Carol."

Carol looked away. "You can always visit, Massi," she said more softly. "It's not truly goodbye, goodbye this time."

"I cannot leave for a while," he said. "Not until I find someone worthy enough to replace my Capo."