

Mafia God 372

Chapter 372: I'll Be Waiting

"Whenever you can..." she said, finally looking back at him. "I'll be waiting."

He moved closer. Instinctively, Carol stepped back. Her spine met the door behind her with a soft thud, and the suitcase beside her tipped slightly before settling again. Massimo stopped only a breath away.

"Massi, no."

His brow furrowed. "Why?"

"Like I said," she murmured, "difficult." Carol could see the question still living in him—why leaving had always been easier for her than staying, why love had never been enough to keep her here, why after all these years he could still make her feel twenty and furious and weak in the same heartbeat.

But the answer had never changed. Staying with him had always meant losing herself. Loving him had never been the problem.

It had always been the life attached to him.

"Don't do this to me now," she whispered.

Massimo's hand lifted as if he meant to touch her, then stopped midway, hovering in the space between them. He stepped back first.

It was a small thing, barely a movement, but Carol understood it for what it was: permission, space, surrender.

"Take care of yourself," he said.

Carol kept one hand on the handle of her suitcase. "You too," she replied. "Try not to die."

"I love you, Carol."

Carol nodded. "I know." She did. She had always known.

That had never been the problem.

Quickly, before the moment could reach in and unmake her—she grabbed the handle of her suitcase and turned away, the wheels rattling softly behind her as she made for the stairs.

This was how it had to happen. She told herself that with every step. Walk. Don't stop.

Don't turn back. Do not be a fool.

Then she reached the edge of the staircase and paused. Her shoulders rose with one deep breath. She let it out slowly.

"God," she muttered to herself, "I'm too old for this." She turned around.

Massimo was still standing exactly where she had left him, watching her. Ready. Always ready for her, in the one way that had remained unchanged despite time, oceans and all the wreckage life had piled between them.

Carol went back to him. Fast enough to make it clear she was not interested in thinking any further.

Massimo met her halfway. The second she reached him, he held her—completely, immediately. Their lips collided in a kiss that was deep and desperate and full of everything neither of them had ever managed to bury for good.

Carol held on to him as tightly as she could. Massimo gave her no space either. It was everything and nothing all at once.

Everything because all the years seemed to collapse between them. Nothing because no kiss, no matter how fierce, could undo the life that had made them impossible.

When they finally pulled apart, Carol couldn't look at him anymore. If she did, she might stay.

That would be the end of every hard decision she had fought to keep. So she turned quickly before she could weaken further. She crossed back to the suitcase, took hold of the handle, and hurried down the stairs.

Massimo stayed where he was smiling. He had lost too much and still somehow found reason to hope. He had given up many things as Don.

Peace. Time. Julian. And Carol, most of all. But somehow, standing there in the aftermath of her leaving him again, he found himself thinking that if he lived long enough—

if his own terrible life did not kill him first— he probably would get her back.

Bianca was packed. Trunks, garment bags, hat boxes, shoes, smaller cases of jewelry and cosmetics— everything she owned as a Genovese bride was now being carried back out. One by one, her things were moved from the mansion into the vehicle her mother had sent.

She was finally done here. Finished. Her short, humiliating, bitter little reign as a Genovese had come to an end.

That did not mean she intended to leave quietly. Oh no. Quiet exits were for women who accepted defeat.

Bianca accepted nothing. As she stood at the top of the stairs, one hand lightly resting on the banister, she let herself look over the grounds one last time. The morning had come soft and bright, mocking her. Sunlight spilled over the inner courtyard, over the clipped hedges, the stone walkways, the fountains,

the manicured perfection of a place that had once been meant to become hers by right. Birds chirped. Staff moved discreetly. The house wore the peaceful face of wealth and order.

Her mouth tightened. No. She would not miss it. Not really. What she would miss—what still burned under her ribs like acid—was what it represented. The title. The future. The place beside Luca she had been raised to believe was inevitable.

Gone now. Burned up by a pizza girl with the power to make men hand over kingdoms.

Fine. If Luca had made one thing clear, it was this: Bianca owed the Genovese nothing anymore. No loyalty. No courtesy.

That made what came next much easier. She would make her revenge as sweet as possible.

She descended the steps and crossed the front of the mansion, spine straight, expression cool, every inch of her body assembled around pride. If she was going to leave in disgrace, she would at least do it beautifully.

On the courtyard terrace, beneath a pale umbrella and beside a delicate breakfast tray, sat the bane of her existence and her mouthy sister.

Veronica and Valentina, giggling over tea. As if life had not ruined enough people to fund their happiness.

Bianca's jaw hardened. Naturally, she should have walked on. Straight to the car. Straight out the gate.

Tail between her legs, if not in truth then at least in appearance.

But then Valentina looked up. And the little cow had the gall to wave. An insulting little wave, bright with satisfaction.

Bianca looked away immediately and continued toward the waiting car, the muscles in her back tightening with every step. She could see the driver already moving to open the door. She could feel the smart, proper choice pressing at her from one side.