

## **Mafia God 399**

### Chapter 399: I'll Send Your Sister In

For a moment, he just stood there. Slippers, stretchy pants, T-shirt as if they were checking out of a hotel after bad service.

Luca stared at her, trying to understand the woman in front of him. It seemed like he had brought one woman into this hospital and somewhere between, there had been some kind of character switch. Because this woman wasn't Veronica.

His Veronica was strong, yes. No doubt about it. She had a spine made of steel and a mouth sharp enough to draw blood. But she also carried too much love inside her. Too much emotion. Too much softness beneath all that fire. It was unthinkable that she would feel nothing after losing a child. Their child.

"I'll send your sister in," he said quietly.

"Okay."

Luca held her gaze a moment longer, his jaw tight, then turned and walked out. Vee exhaled.

The sound trembled on its way out. She pressed her lips together, forcing herself to stay still, to keep her hands folded neatly in her lap, to not curl into herself and scream until the walls cracked.

Pretending was harder than she thought. Pretending she hadn't just lost a piece of herself.

A piece of him. A piece of them.

She shut her eyes quickly, breathing through the sharp pain that rose in her chest. No. This was not the time to wallow.

Nonnina was gone. Her body was still in this hospital, waiting to be taken back to Italy. Luca was barely holding himself together.

They had to concentrate on taking care of Nonnina. Arrangements had to be made. Vee refused to become another burden.

She refused to be the fragile thing in the corner while someone dear to all of them had just died.

So she wiped at her cheeks before the tears could fall properly, straightened her shoulders, and looked toward the door.

When Val came in, Vee did her very best to keep everything trapped inside her. She sat upright on the hospital bed, hands folded neatly over the thin blanket.

Her eyes dropped, just for a second, to her sister's protruding belly. The shame hit immediately.

Had she really gotten to the stage where she would be envious of her own sister? Val, who had done nothing wrong. Val, who looked terrified and exhausted, eyes already wet before she crossed the room.

Vee hated herself for the flicker of jealousy. It was not Val's fault that her baby was still there.

It was not Val's fault that Vee's was gone. Still, the sight hurt. God, it hurt.

"Vee..." Val breathed. She hurried forward and reached for her immediately, wrapping both arms around her. "I'm so sorry, sis."

Vee stiffened for half a second before allowing the hug. Then she pulled herself back together and eased away first. "It's alright," she said.

Val stared at her. It was very clearly not alright.

Vee forced a small smile. "I don't really want to talk about it."

"Okay," Val said quickly.

"I'm sorry everything is just a bit too much." Vee looked down at the blanket, smoothing an invisible wrinkle. "You shouldn't be going through this much stress."

Val blinked at her, almost offended. "I should be worried about you, not the other way around."

"That's exactly what I don't want, actually."

Val paused. The chill in her sister's voice made her wary. This controlled, distant version of Vee felt wrong.

"Yeah," Val said carefully. "No problem. Whatever you need."

Vee nodded once, as if that settled the matter. Val sat gently on the edge of the mattress, watching her sister's face, searching for a crack she could reach through. Vee did not give her one.

Instead, she asked, "Are you coming for Nonnina's funeral?"

Val's brows drew together at the sudden shift. "Of course. Sure."

"Luca said the paperwork is being prepared. They're taking her back to Italy."

"I know." Val swallowed. "Marco told me."

Vee nodded again.

"How are you dealing with that now?" Val asked.

"It is what it is," Vee said.

Val nodded slowly, but her eyes stayed on her sister's face. That answer was a wall, not a feeling. "Marco is here too," Val said gently, trying to pull the conversation somewhere safer.

Vee's eyes lifted. "That reminds me. When are y'all getting married?"

Val blinked. "What?"

"When are you and Marco getting married?"

"With all that's going on?" Val asked.

"Val, something will always be going on." Vee looked at her sister's belly again, quickly this time, then back at her face. "Something will always come up," she continued. "With this family? Marco and Luca are the same." Vee reached for her hand. "Seize the happiness whenever and however you can," Vee said softly. "Don't wait for life to become calm first. It won't."

"Tomorrow..." Vee shrugged. "May be too late."

Val's face tightened. "Vee... don't talk like that."

Vee saw the fear in her sister's eyes and immediately hated herself for putting it there. "I'm sorry," she said quickly. "I don't mean to scare you. I'm sorry."

"It's okay... it's alright." Val wrapped her arms around her once more, carefully but firmly stroking her back slowly. "You don't have to be strong with me."

Vee swallowed hard. Yes, she did. "I just want to make sure you are happy, sweetie."

"I am," Val said softly. "I will talk to Marco about it, okay?"

The door opened and Luca came back in with a shopping bag in one hand. He had basically threatened at least one hospital store employee into finding exactly what he wanted.

"I have what you need," he said.

Vee turned to him and gave him a small smile. "Thank you, love." She took the bag and pushed the blanket aside, getting off the bed.

Val straightened immediately. "You're leaving?"

"Yeah." Vee slipped her feet carefully to the floor. "No use staying here."

Val looked at Luca. Luca looked back at her and shrugged faintly. No one had it in them to disagree with her.

"I'll finish the discharge papers," Luca said.