

Mafia God 404

Chapter 404: You Must Be Exhausted

At first glance, that was all. But Luca did not deal in first glances. He watched again, eyes narrowing. This time, he ignored Ricardo. Ignored Cassidy. Ignored the obvious.

At the edge of the frame. A car parked. There was nothing dramatic enough for an ordinary eye to catch.

But Luca saw it. When Cassidy pulled out, the car moved ahead. Then Ricardo followed Cassidy. Perfectly spaced.

Whoever was in that car was good. Very good. He knew that tactic. Actually, he had honed it to perfection himself.

Follow by being followed. Interesting. And definitely not something he intended to hand over freely to Detective Voss.

Luca replayed the clip once more, keeping his face blank.

Voss watched him watching it. "Well?"

Luca handed the phone back. "Nothing."

Voss looked at him suspiciously once more, phone still in hand. "Right. I will get out of your hair then."

"How merciful."

"Say hi to Miss Scalese."

"I will."

Voss turned and began heading toward the entrance hall.

"Detective," Luca called.

Voss stopped near the doorway and turned, raising a brow. "Yes?"

Luca paused. He did not know what he wanted to say. Perhaps, the strange acknowledgement that, for once, they were both working together from opposite sides of the law.

"Never mind," he said. "Good luck with the search."

Voss gave a small nod and headed out.

Luca and the rest of his family landed in Italy a few days later on a rented private jet transporting Nonnina's body.

The flight had been quiet. Luca sat near the window for most of the flight, staring out at clouds he did not seem to see. Veronica sat beside him, her hand resting in his, their fingers locked together so tightly that neither of them seemed willing to be the first to loosen.

Marco and Valentina sat across from them. Val slept for some of the flight with her head on Marco's shoulder, one hand over her belly.

By the time they landed, everyone looked like they had been travelling for years instead of hours.

They were all beginning to feel like ping pong balls bouncing between Italy and New York. Back and forth.

Celebration, danger, grief. Wedding talks, death arrangements, missing men. At this point, Veronica thought she could probably navigate both airports blindfolded.

Nonnina's body was transported separately to the funeral home that would handle the arrangements. Luca watched the vehicle leave with a stillness that made Veronica's chest ache. His face gave nothing away, but his hand tightened around hers.

They all headed to the Genovese estate. Luca intended to make the ceremony grand. Nonnina had dedicated over thirty years of her life to him. She had raised him, scolded him, fed him, protected him, loved him. He intended to honour her in a way no one would forget.

Everything. For her.

Don Genovese was waiting in the living room when they arrived. A few days ago, Vee had been celebrated as the regina of the new generation.

Now she was back with no baby. That should have made her nervous. It might have made her shrink, wonder who was whispering, who was judging, who was counting her losses.

But now? She couldn't give a damn what anyone thought. And she sure as hell didn't need anyone's pity.

Veronica had already braced herself for it before stepping fully into the living room. The soft eyes. The careful voices. The awkward touches on her arm. The thought alone made her angry.

She did not want pity. But when Massimo saw her, he did not give her that wounded look people offered when they had already reduced a person to their loss. He did not search her face for evidence of collapse.

He simply stepped forward, took her hand, and lifted her fingers to his lips with a genuine smile. "Regina," Massimo said warmly. "Welcome back."

She smiled. "Thank you."

"You must be exhausted. This back and forth trip must be quite tiring."

"It's always nice to visit Italy," she answered, smoothing her free hand over the front of her dress. "So I don't mind."

Massimo hummed, clearly not fooled. He turned toward the room, clapping his hands once. "Alright, everyone. Get some rest. Big day tomorrow."

"What's happening tomorrow? Nonnina's funeral is in three days."

"I booked you girls a spot at the relaxation centre," Massimo said. "No arguments," he said, raising a finger before she could begin. "All you have to do is relax and let the colour come back to your cheeks."

Valentina squealed happily. It was so sudden, so bright, and so wildly inappropriate that everyone turned to look at her. "A relaxation centre? With warm pools, massages, facials, herbal treatments and food?"

Vee looked uncertain. "Shouldn't we be planning the funeral?"

Nonnina's funeral was in three days. Her body had only just been taken to the funeral home. It felt wrong to go anywhere soft and peaceful while Nonnina lay waiting to be honoured.

"I have that handled," Luca chipped in.

Vee turned to him. He stood beside her, one hand in his pocket, face tired but firm.

"It's fine," he said gently. "You can go."

"Are you sure?"

"I know how to plan a funeral."

Valentina looped her arm through Vee's before she could change her mind. "Alrighty then. Relaxation, here I come."

Massimo laughed and turned them toward the staircase. "Go. Rest. Sleep."

Vee allowed herself to be guided away, she looked back once at Luca. He gave her a small nod, his eyes softening for her alone.

Once the women had gone upstairs, the warmth Massimo had worn for them faded gradually. He turned to Luca and Marco.

"So," Massimo said, "I hear you boys have a problem."

Luca shot Marco a look immediately. Marco raised both hands. Luca was not amused. The last thing he needed was his father getting involved in New York activities. New York was his territory, his mess, his enemies. If Massimo stepped in, things would not stay contained.

"We have it handled," Luca said.

"I'm not mad or anything," Massimo said at last.