

Mafia God 421

Chapter 421: I Made Dinner

Vee turned back to him. He kept his eyes on the road.

"I made dinner."

Vee laughed. "You did not make dinner."

"Fine," he said. "I didn't make dinner. But I supervised."

"That doesn't count as making dinner."

Vee shook her head, still smiling as the city lights slid across the windshield. Then Luca's expression shifted.

"I think it's time I learned to eat meals made by the staff."

"Luca, I can cook your food," she said.

He gave a small sigh. "I know you can."

"Then what's the problem?"

"The problem is you are juggling too many things right now. Val's wedding. The pizza parlour. Your training. The famiglia. Me." His mouth curved faintly. "And I am a full-time job."

"It will be too much. Maybe not today. Maybe not tomorrow. But eventually, it will become another thing you think you must carry because Nonnina used to carry it."

"She did it because she loved you," Vee said quietly.

"I know." His voice gentled. "But you do not have to become her to love me."

Vee swallowed around the ache in her throat, then cleared it. "Do you have every staff checked out?"

Luca smiled. "Of course."

"I mean properly checked out."

"Bambola, I know their mothers' dates of birth and favourite colours. I know their weaknesses, sentimental attachments. They are so checked out, it felt like a colonoscopy when they were being employed. And," Luca added calmly, "the little threat that if they betray me, their entire family will be wiped out in one night is a very efficient motivation to behave."

"Good," Vee said, still laughing. "Tony needs to employ a few staff at the pizza parlour. You think you can help me with the colonoscopy thingy you do?"

Luca's face lit up with immediate, disturbing enthusiasm. "I would love to."

"I want normal checks, Luca. Criminal records, references, work history. Oh... oh... oh...I have this hot, dreamy new neighbour. He bought Marino's place."

The car swerved by half an inch.

"Wow, wow, wow." Luca straightened the wheel, eyes narrowing. "Take a chill pill, woman."

Vee turned to him, perfectly innocent. "What?...He is thinking we could partner," she continued sweetly, enjoying the way his jaw tightened. "His customers can order from us, we deliver across the street. Tony thinks it could help."

Luca made a dramatic and deeply Italian sound. "You noticed a guy was hot and dreamy?" he asked.

"I have eyes."

"For me," Luca snapped. "For me only."

Vee smiled wider, delighted by how easy it was to rile him up. "Fine. I very respectfully noticed that the man is attractive."

"Your admiration belongs to me."

"That's just not fair on the rest of the male population, Luca," Vee said, her voice perfectly solemn.

Luca's head turned so sharply she was surprised he didn't hurt his neck. "Are you kidding me right now?"

Vee held the serious expression for exactly three seconds. Then she burst out laughing. "Yes!"

Luca stared ahead again, jaw tight, both hands on the wheel. "Not funny."

"It was hilarious."

"I don't like jokes."

"Yeah, yeah..." She waved him off, still giggling.

He lasted maybe five seconds. Then, like a man willingly walking back into his own suffering, he asked, "He's really hot?"

Vee turned to him slowly. "You just won't let it go, will you?"

Luca gave her a look. "So... he is hot?"

Vee sighed dramatically and leaned back into the seat, smiling at the roof of the car. "He's so... so..."

Luca's eyes narrowed.

She turned her head to him, grinning. "I just said that to tease you."

"I should punish you for even thinking it."

Vee's eyes widened with excitement. She bounced slightly in her seat, clapping her hands once. "Ohhh, yes daddy!"

Luca almost choked. "You're not supposed to get excited." He shook his head, trying not to laugh. "My God, you are a maniac!"

They continued their banter all the way home. Vee laughed a lot, head tilted back against the seat, one hand pressed to her stomach as Luca complained loudly about her disrespect.

By the time they stepped through the threshold, Vee gasped. The foyer and dining area had been transformed.

Rose petals scattered across the floor in a path leading toward the dining table. Candles burned in tall glass holders, their flames flickering gold. Flowers stood in vases all around the room. The table had been set for two with plates, silverware, crystal glasses, wine, and covered dishes waiting beneath silver lids.

Vee turned slowly, taking it all in. "What are we celebrating?" she asked, her voice suddenly smaller. "Did I miss something or forget something? I'm sorry if I forgot."

"You didn't forget anything, Vee."

She looked back at him, uncertain. He stepped closer, hands sliding into his pockets because if he touched her too soon, he might pull her into his arms and ruin the whole dramatic effect.

"I just wanted to do something nice," he said. "I wanted to show you how much you mean to me. That's all."

She looked down at the rose petals, then stepped carefully over them, as if disturbing them too much would be rude. "Oh..." she whispered. She moved deeper into the room, eyes travelling over the candles, the flowers, the dinner table. Her fingers brushed lightly against one of the petals on the edge of the table.

"Oh... you are so sweet." She walked back to him and reached up for a kiss.

Luca met her halfway, one hand settling gently at her waist, the other touching her cheek.

When they parted, Luca glanced toward the table and sighed. "The food will be cold now. I miscalculated your estimated time of arrival."

Vee winced. "I'm so sorry. I should have been here."

"You're here now," Luca said.

"We'll just microwave the food," Vee said, already lifting one of the silver lids. "We can still have a nice evening." Vee picked up one of the dishes and nodded toward the kitchen. "We'll do it together. Come on."

The night had not gone how he planned. He had imagined her coming home early. He had imagined slow conversation, maybe laughter, some sex before midnight arrived.