

Mafia God 425

Chapter 425: The Genovese Famiglia

She could feel every eye on her. Eyes that belonged to men who had killed, protected and bled for the name she was being brought into. Her palms were damp, but she kept her hands still.

Marco stepped toward her. He looked different tonight. Tonight, he was the voice of the famiglia. Serious. Formal. Almost priest-like. "Who do you belong to?" he asked.

Vee's eyes flicked to Luca. He remained seated, calm and silent, watching her with a gaze that steadied and unsettled her at the same time. "Luciano Genovese," she answered.

"What stands above your own life?"

"The Genovese famiglia."

"What becomes of traitors?" Marco asked.

"Death."

"Will you protect this family even against the blood of your blood?"

Vee stilled. The question hit wrong. No, not wrong. Too deep. For the first time since she stepped onto the crest, her composure cracked. Her eyes reached for Luca, mind scrambling.

Blood of her blood. That meant family. That meant the person she had protected before she knew how to protect herself. The girl she had raised. The sister who had been her first home.

Valentina. Vee's throat tightened. She couldn't swear against her. She couldn't even imagine it. She couldn't...no...

But then she saw the small tilt of Luca's head. It was barely anything. But it steadied her. Vee drew in a deep breath.

Her heart was still hammering, her thoughts still tangled around Valentina but she understood now. The question was not asking whether she would abandon the people she loved. It was asking whether she understood what betrayal meant in this world. "I will," she answered strongly enough to carry.

Marco stepped backward, satisfied with her answers. He moved to a decorated table beside the crest. On it sat a black velvet cloth, a slim gold tray, a long silver pin, and Luca's ring. The ring looked heavy even from where Vee stood—dark metal with the Genovese crest worked into it.

Marco picked up the pin and the ring before returning to her. "Hold out your palm," he instructed.

Vee obeyed. Marco took her thumb gently.

"This binds your name to his," he said quietly.

Before she could fully prepare herself, he pricked her thumb with the pin. She felt a tiny sting. Vee inhaled sharply but did not move.

A bead of blood rose. Marco pressed her thumb against the ring, staining the metal with her blood.

Then Marco handed the ring to Luca. He took the ring from Marco, his gaze never leaving Vee's as he slid it onto his finger. Her blood marked him now, just as his name was about to mark her.

Luca brought the ring to his lips and kissed it. Vee's throat tightened.

Marco picked up a scroll from the table and handed it to her. "Read this and mean it."

Vee accepted it and opened it. She lifted her chin and began. "From this night onward, my loyalty belongs to the famiglia. Its enemies are my enemies. I take the oath of the omertà; secrets die with me. I renounce fear, betrayal and weakness. If I break this oath, may my name and blood be erased."

Luca finally got to his feet with that familiar swagger that made Vee want to roll her eyes even while her heart tripped over itself. He came to her and took her hand, fingers covering hers. His thumb brushing over the tiny prick on her thumb. His eyes searching her face through the black veil.

He lifted her hand and kissed her fingers. Luca turned her gently to face the famiglia. His voice carried over them, smooth and proud. "I present to you, Donna Veronica Genovese."

The name struck her chest. Veronica Genovese. It wasn't legal yet. But here, in this room, under his name and before his people, it had already happened.

Marco stepped forward first. His face held a promise that she was not walking into this alone. He took her hand, bowed his head, and kissed her knuckles. "Donna," he said.

One by one, the men followed. Each stepped forward, took her hand, kissed it, and gave her the respect the ceremony demanded. Some murmured "Donna." Some only bowed their heads.

As they paid their respects, they began to leave. Soon, it was just her and Luca. Vee stood in the centre of the Genovese crest, still wearing the veil, her heart still racing beneath the beautiful black dress.

Luca stepped closer and lifted the veil over her head. His smile was waiting beneath it. "You did good," he said.

Vee let out the breath she had been holding for what felt like an entire lifetime. "I was nervous as hell."

"Wasn't obvious."

"Really?" She raised a brow.

"Really." His hand brushed along her cheek, his smile turning wicked at the edges. "I was the distracted one."

"Why?" Vee asked.

Luca's smile turned slow and wicked. "Because I kept thinking about my cum dripping down your leg."

"Oh God." She pressed a hand to her forehead.

He stepped closer, his hands settling at her waist. "I am only a man, Bambola. A weak, devoted, deeply corrupted man."

Vee's cheeks warmed. "Besides, I have underwear on, there's no dripping down."

His face fell with theatrical disappointment. "Crap. I should have told you not to wear one."

"You would have if you had told me what was going to happen," Veronica accused him, pointing a finger at his chest.

He caught her hand and kissed the tip of that accusing finger. "It was supposed to be a secret."

"You could have said, 'Wear something better, Vee.' Or 'fix your hair, Vee.' Or 'try not to smell like sex, Vee.'"

"You smell perfect."

She tried to glare at him, but the veil now pushed back over her hair and the blush on her face made the effect much less threatening than she intended.

He tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "All members of the famiglia in one place is always a secret," he explained. "Unless it's a public event where non-members are also present. We do not announce gatherings like this. Not even to the person being initiated."