

Mafia God 428

Chapter 428: I Cannot Lie To You

"I don't know what to say, Val," he admitted quietly. "I cannot lie to you."

She cried harder at his honesty. Maybe some part of her had wanted a lie. A beautiful one. A soft one. Nothing will happen to me. I will always come home. We will be fine. She wanted him to say it with enough confidence that she could pretend to believe him.

"I would have been dead long before this," he said, "so my life isn't mine. It's owed to another."

Val's fingers tightened in his shirt.

"But you..." He pulled back just enough to look at her face, wiping at her tears with his thumb. "You give me the happiness that had been missing in it."

Her lips trembled.

"And I am sorry," he continued, "that I cannot assure you of a long life. I swore to protect Luca with my life, and I intend to keep that promise until my last breath."

Val slowly lifted her head, eyes wet and wounded. "I don't factor into this?" she asked.

"Of course you do," Marco said quickly. "You do, sweetie... you do." His hands came up to cradle her face, thumbs brushing away tears that kept falling no matter how gently he wiped them. Seeing Val like this made him feel terrible. Valentina was always so strong, so ready to fight the world. She could make him feel ten feet tall with one smile.

"I'd give up my life for you in a heartbeat," he said.

Val shook her head immediately, her face crumpling all over again. "I don't want you to. I don't want you to give up your life!" she cried. "I want you to be here with me and grow old with me and be frustrated with me, and complain about me and... and..." Her sobs swallowed the rest.

Marco pulled her back into his arms, holding her carefully. "Hey... hey..."

She clung to him like she was afraid he might disappear if she loosened her grip. "I don't want heroic," she choked out against his shirt. "I don't want brave dead Marco. I want exasperated living Marco."

Despite the ache in his chest, a rough little laugh escaped him. "Exasperated?"

"Yes," she sobbed.

Marco held her tighter. "How about I make you a promise of your own?"

Val sniffled against him.

"How about I promise to be careful," he said. "To be even more careful?"

She lifted her head slightly. "You mean it?"

"I mean it."

"No unnecessary risks."

"No unnecessary risks." He pressed a kiss to her forehead. "I'll always call. I'll always update you about my whereabouts when I can. I'll come home whenever I can. And when I cannot tell you everything, I'll at least tell you enough so you don't sit here imagining the worst."

Val nodded into his chest.

"We're gonna be okay," he assured her.

She nodded again, though her hands still held his shirt tightly.

"Come get some sleep," Marco whispered, guiding her gently upstairs. "I'm sorry I kept you up."

"I promise not to worry so much," she whispered.

"Thank you," Marco said.

Valentina sniffed, wiping her cheek with the back of her hand as he guided her toward the stairs.

Marco's arm stayed around her waist, his body angled toward hers so she could lean on him as they walked.

"Okay," Val said quickly, as if correcting herself before he became too pleased. "Maybe a little."

Marco glanced down at her. "Thank you?"

"Just be more specific about how late you will be."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And don't say late when you mean almost morning."

"Yes, ma'am."

She narrowed her eyes. "Are you mocking me?"

"Never."

Val tried to glare at him, but she was too tired for it to land properly. Marco tightened his hold, making sure she had most of her weight on him as they climbed.

Halfway up, she asked, "Did you remember to go for your fitting?"

"Yes, yes, I did that. I would never forget that. Suit fitted. Measurements taken. Our wedding is the only day I will be wearing it."

She let out a tired laugh. "I guess I should stop dragging you along to all the appointments."

Marco paused at the top of the stairs and looked at her. "Was that on purpose?"

Val suddenly found the hallway wall very interesting.

"My God, Val."

"You needed to be involved."

"You knew what you were doing."

She sighed. "I wanted to keep you next to me as much as I could."

The frustration left him immediately.

"Every time you were with me, I knew where you were. I knew you were safe. I knew no one was shooting at you."

"Oh, you are a mean, mean woman! All those cake tastings, and colour selections that I can't see the difference?" Marco said, giving her a fake scowl.

Valentina chuckled. "It's so funny seeing you get all swollen up and glaring at the door."

"I was suffering."

"Who suffers while eating cake?"

Marco pointed at her as they reached the bedroom. "You're going to have to carry me to the next appointment because I'm not moving one inch."

"Oh, stop being a big baby," she said, rolling her eyes.

He helped her get into bed with careful hands, adjusting the pillows behind her back, making sure she was settled before pulling the blanket over her legs. Val watched him fuss, her heart softening despite the exhaustion sitting heavy in her bones. Marco could be terrifying to everyone else. A wall. A weapon. A man who stood between Luca and danger without blinking. But with her, he was a giant teddy bear.

Once she was comfortable, he moved away and began undressing. Shirt off. Belt loosened. He stripped down to his shorts pretending to be unaware—of the way Val's eyes followed every movement.

She looked at the strength in his shoulders. The broadness of his chest. The carved lines of his stomach, the power in his body.

Lord, help your girl.

Marco felt her stare. He smiled faintly as he walked back toward the bed. "I haven't changed since the last time you saw me, Val."