

Shattered Loyalty, A New Beginning Blooms

Shattered Loyalty, A New Beginning Blooms Chapter 1

I was three days from marrying Dante Fazio, the Fazio Underboss, when I found his burner phone. A text from 'Little Trouble' read: 'I miss your hands on me. She is just a statue, Dante.' My heart didn't break; it simply stopped.

For eight years, I'd played the perfect Mafia Princess, convinced I loved him and believed he was my hero. But seeing his mistress in our sheets, I saw his true face: a movie star jawline with the soul of a coward.

Tears were for women with options, and I had none in this world. But I wasn't crying; I was cold, fueled by a silent rage, trapped but refusing to be a victim.

Slipping out of bed, I dialed a number I'd memorized a decade ago but never dared to call. When Lorenzo Moretti, the rival Don, answered, I whispered,

"The wedding is off. I want an alliance with you. I am ready."

Chapter 1

I was three days away from marrying the Underboss of the Fazio crime family when I unlocked his burner phone and read the message that shattered eight years of loyalty.

The screen glowed toxic bright in the darkness of our shared penthouse bedroom.

Dante was asleep beside me. His chest rose and fell in a rhythm that used to comfort me. Now, it just looked like the breathing of a liar.

I looked down at the device in my hand.

The contact was saved as 'Little Trouble.'

The latest message read: I miss your hands on me. She is just a statue, Dante. You said it yourself. Come back to bed.

Attached was a photo.

It was a selfie of a woman lying in sheets I recognized. They were the Egyptian cotton sheets from Dante's private office suite downtown. She was wearing his shirt.

My heart did not break. It simply stopped.

For eight years, I had played the part of the perfect Mafia Princess. I was Elena Vitiello. I was raised to be seen and not heard, to be the glue in a political alliance that would keep the peace in New York.

I had convinced myself I loved Dante Fazio. I thought he was the hero who pulled me from the burning rubble of the Opera House when I was fourteen.

I looked at his sleeping face. He was handsome in a way that made women stupid. He had the jawline of a movie star and the soul of a coward.

I slid out of bed. The silk of my nightgown felt like ice against my skin.

I walked into the bathroom and locked the door. I did not cry. Tears were for women who had options. I? I had a strategy.

I sat on the edge of the marble tub and pulled my own encrypted phone from a hidden pocket in my robe.

My hands shook, but not from fear. They shook from the adrenaline of lighting a match in a room full of gasoline.

I dialed a number I had memorized a decade ago but never dared to call.

It rang once.

"Speak."

The sound of his voice was like gravel grinding against bone. It was deep, dark, and terrifying.

Lorenzo Moretti. Enzo. The Capo dei Capi of the rival family. The man my father called the Devil.

"The wedding is off," I whispered.

There was a pause on the other end. I could hear the faint sound of a lighter flicking open, then the sharp inhale of smoke.

"Elena," he said. My name sounded like a prayer and a curse coming from his mouth. "Are you sure?"

"Dante broke the code," I said. My voice was steady now. "He has a comare. He has been disrespectful."

In our world, infidelity was common. But disrespect was a death sentence. Dante hadn't just cheated. He had mocked me to a mistress. He had exposed our future marriage to the ridicule of a stripper.

"I want out," I said. "I want an alliance with you."

Enzo laughed. It was a low, dark sound that vibrated through the phone line. "You know the price, Elena. If you come to me, there is no going back. I will burn the Fazio family to the ground for you. But once you step through my gates, you belong to me."

I looked at my reflection in the mirror. I looked pale. Fragile. But my eyes were hard.

"I know," I said. "I am ready."

"Good," Enzo said. "I am in Italy. I will be in New York in three days. Do not let him touch you."

"He won't," I promised.

"Elena?"

"Yes?"

"If he touches you, I will cut off his hands."

The line went dead.

I stared at the phone. For the first time in eight years, I didn't feel like a statue. I felt like the match.

I walked back into the bedroom. Dante shifted in his sleep, murmuring something incoherent.

I placed his burner phone back on the nightstand, exactly where I found it.

I lay down beside him. I stared at the ceiling.

Tomorrow, we were supposed to go pick up the custom engagement ring. It was supposed to be a symbol of our power.

Now, I knew it was just a piece of glass on a sinking ship.