

Undressed By The Mafia God #Chapter 131: On Your Knees - Read Undressed By The Mafia God Chapter 131: On Your Knees

Chapter 131: On Your Knees

"Yes ma'am." He watched her turn as she left, and he allowed himself a slow exhale, a rare release. She was acting all tough now—but he knew her, knew her too well. All it would take was five minutes in the right space, and she would be trembling in his arms, surrendering without question.

She had won the battle by shutting him out, controlling the narrative of their fractured connection—but now, the tide was turning. She had given him a flicker of hope, a single thread to follow back into her orbit. And he would not let it go to waste.

He moved through his usual night routine with a little more ease than normal, the ritual of shower, and dinner.

Finally, he made his way to her annex. He pushed the door open. The living room was empty.

He strolled into the bedroom, anticipation tightening every muscle in his body, and there she was. A vision, a dream, every line of her figure accentuated by the stunning lingerie she wore. The way the fabric clung to her, the delicate interplay of shadow and light across her skin, left him momentarily breathless.

In one hand, she held a crop, an extension of the authority she planned to wield.

His lips lifted in a dangerous smile. Well, seems like she wanted to draw blood. Blood it is.

"I was hoping you would be using the pocket knife I got you, Quite sharper than that and could do more damage." He gestured lazily toward the crop in her hand, his eyes dark, calculating, studying her reaction the way he would assess a rival across a negotiation table.

"Stop talking." She commanded.

He saw it then. The way her fingers tightened around the handle of the crop. The deliberate squaring of her shoulders. She was building a fortress around herself tonight, daring him to test its strength. He could also see the flicker underneath.

She knew he wasn't fully taking her seriously. She knew he was indulging her. But indulgence was still participation, and participation meant he was here.

"How are we supposed to resolve our issues if I stop talking?" he arched a brow.

The crop in her hand looked delicate against her wrist, but the intention behind it was not.

"You really have issues taking orders. But this is only going to work out tonight if you do exactly as I say. Now keep your fucking mouth shut and take off your clothes." She affirmed, untangling the crop.

Luca stepped further into the room. He shrugged his robe off without breaking eye contact, the silk sliding down his shoulders before he tossed it carelessly onto the bed. There was something shameless in the way he moved. Just deliberate exposure. Like he was proud of his anatomy.

His fingers hooked into his waistband, tugging his pants down before kicking them aside. Each motion was a challenge. You want control? Take it.

But beneath the arrogance, beneath the smirk that hovered at the edge of his mouth, there was hope. Hope that this was not punishment alone. That this was not the beginning of the end, but a method of repair.

"On your knees." Vee ordered.

His pride flared. He was Luca. Men kneeled to him.

And yet.

He held her gaze. Saw the demand there. The dare. The vulnerability she was disguising as command.

Then, slowly, he lowered himself. One knee first, then the other, until he was before her.

Luca smiled slowly, pride flickering behind his eyes.

His eyes stayed locked on hers, a silent acknowledgment that this was not submission born of weakness. It was chosen. Controlled. Intentional.

"Place your hands behind you."

She walked around him slowly. He felt her move behind him then she crouched near the bag she had brought.

Metal clicked softly as she pulled out the cuffs. He heard the faint jingle before he felt the cold circle wrap around one wrist. Then the other. She snapped them locked with a decisive motion.

"Now, you pick a safe word."

Amusement tugged at him again. He flexed his wrists experimentally. Yes, he could get out of them. Easily. The mechanism functional, but not foolproof. He really would have to teach her proper restraint techniques one day. For her own safety. But tonight was not about correcting her method.

Tonight was about letting her believe she held the reins entirely.

"Veronica."

"Yeah?" she asked from behind him.

"That's my safe word...Veronica."

There was a beat of silence.

"Fine. Now we can have a conversation."

She stepped back in front of him, reclaiming her position. The crop was gone now, discarded somewhere behind her, replaced by a cock ring.

His eyes dropped briefly before lifting again to her face. He masked the flicker of excitement with a lazy remark. "That's quite the shopping you did."

But his pulse had already begun to climb.

She lowered herself to her knees in front of him. The lingerie she wore framed her body like artwork in a private gallery. Every line of her was curated. She reached for his cock with steady fingers.

When she slid the ring down his length while he was still only half-hard, the contact was clinical at first. Her fingers were warm as they adjusted and secured it into place, snapping his balls within the band.

His jaw tightened.

By the time she finished, he was fully hard, blood thick and heavy beneath the confinement. His breathing deepened.

Still, he kept his eyes on her.

"You sure you can go through with this?" he asked.

The cuffs pressed into his wrists when he shifted slightly. The ring tightened as his arousal intensified, trapping the sensation in a maddening loop of pressure and heat. Every nerve ending felt sharpened.

Her fingers brushed over his chest, tracing the warm plane of muscle beneath her palm. The touch was tender. He felt it everywhere. In his throat. In his spine. In the tight, restrained pulse between his legs.

Then she did what she had been holding back since the second she walked into his room earlier.

****okay people, how much do y'all want Luca to suffer. I'll wait for answers before editing the next Chapter.*****

(This is to 100 power stones. On to the next: 200! Lets go yall)

Chapter 132: You Weren't With Me

She kissed him. Her mouth claimed his with authority, controlling the pace, the depth, the angle. She tilted his chin slightly with her fingers, dictating how he received her. She devoured him like she was collecting something owed.

And Luca groaned.

His hands were useless behind him, wrists bound, fingers curling into empty air. Instinct screamed at him to pull her closer, to grip her waist. Instead, he had nothing. Just heat. Just hunger. He had been starving for her.

Three days without her touch had stretched like a desert. And this single spark she struck with her mouth felt like wildfire tearing through dry land. He felt the ring tighten as his body reacted violently to her dominance, pressure building, desire pooling hot and insistent.

When she pulled back, Luca nearly pitched forward.

He chased her instinctively, lips parting, body leaning, as if gravity itself had shifted toward her mouth. Fuck. "Bambola..." he called, pleading, as she rose to her feet and stepped away from him.

The loss of her heat felt like withdrawal. She moved, picking up the crop once more, letting it rest casually in her hand.

"I'm going to be asking you questions, you answer honestly. If I sense a lie, I am going to be pissed."

The authority in her tone had returned. The softness from the kiss was gone.

"More than you already are?" Luca asked.

She ignored him again. She circled behind him slowly.

"How was your trip?" she asked from behind him.

"Terrible."

"Why?"

"You weren't with me." Luca said simply.

Oh boy... when he said things like that, it made everything harder.

Be strong, Vee. Keep going.

Her fingers slid along his shoulders. Beneath her touch, his muscles flexed instinctively, the strength in him impossible to miss. Even restrained, even kneeling, he looked powerful. The line of his back was straight, proud. His breathing steady, though deeper now.

She wondered, fleetingly, if the position was uncomfortable. On his knees. Arms bound behind him. Exposed.

The thought almost softened her.

She replaced the crop with a paddle. Then she picked up the feather tickler and traced it lazily around the perimeter of his shoulders and chest.

His skin reacted instantly. Tiny shivers moved beneath the surface, goosebumps chasing the path of the feather. The cock ring held him rigid, unforgiving. Every light touch magnified, stretched thin by tension.

"Did you touch her?" she asked.

"Vee..."

"Answer the question."

There was no room to maneuver. No room to threaten his way out.

"Yes." He braced for impact. For the sting of the paddle. For the lash of the crop.

But nothing came.

Silence pressed in instead.

"Vee?"

Her foot moved before he could prepare. A sharp, angry shove between his shoulder blades sent him forward. His restrained arms left him defenseless as his forehead met the floor. The position stripped him of dignity in an instant.

"You'll punish me for telling the truth?" Luca asked, pride flashing through the restraint.

"Don't move."

He stayed where he was, breathing against the floor. He heard her moving behind him. The soft shift of objects. The quiet click of something being picked up.

Vee's heart was racing. She reached for the butt plug with hands that were steadier than she felt. She lubricated it carefully and stepped closer.

Then she reached for his ass and pushed the plug in.

Luca grunted sharply, the sensation catching him off guard. The humiliation hit first.

Realizing she was going for that.

"Fucking bitch!" he snapped.

"You have the safe word, use it." she smirked from behind him.

He could hear the smirk in her voice, the confidence. "I'd rather die."

It was pride. It was stubbornness.

Vee shrugged, though he couldn't see it. Her hands slid over his ass, kneading the muscle there.

"I have one question." Luca said. "Who the fuck taught you this? And I fucking hope it wasn't a practical session."

She ignored him again. "Did you fuck her?"

"Yes."

This time the paddle landed.

The impact jolted through him, rippling across already sensitized nerves. The plug shifted inside him as his muscles clenched reflexively, pressing deeper, amplifying everything.

"Fuck!!!" he gasped.

The pleasure was violent. He was stretched tight between humiliation and arousal, pain and gratification, fury and need.

He was totally screwed.

"How many times?" she asked. She hadn't expected the tears. They gathered anyway, stinging as she blinked them back. She refused to let them fall.

Luca sucked in a breath against the floor, forehead still pressed down. "Vee... you don't want to hear this. I said you could do whatever you want to do to get this out of your system but you do not want to hear it." He was protecting her.

The paddle came down hard against his ass once more.

His body jolted forward again, the cuffs biting into his wrists.

"How many times?" she repeated.

"Twice."

The word had barely settled when she cried out, and brought the paddle down twice in quick succession.

"Vee!" The hurt in her voice fractured him. She sounded wounded. "Vee... I swear to you. It wasn't something I could get out of. What was I supposed to say? If it makes you feel better, I had to cum in your underwear." He forced the words out, desperate now, trying to offer her something. Some twisted form of reassurance. "Vee, I'm sorry."

Silence answered him.

She stood behind him, trembling. The paddle hung uselessly at her side now. The dominance she had built so carefully around herself was cracking under the weight of the truth.

"You have me trapped in this arrangement. I can't go forward, I can't go back. But you have all the freedom. It doesn't matter if you came over me instead. It mattered that you could get hard enough, aroused enough to fuck her and I can't even have another man touch me without you taking a knife to their necks."

Luca closed his eyes against the floor. The humiliation of his position no longer registered. The physical intensity dulled beneath shame.

Chapter 133: I Didn't Want Her

Because she was right.

He had bound her with loyalty and jealousy, wrapped her in an arrangement that demanded everything from her and excused everything from him.

Behind him, Vee's breathing grew uneven. The tears she had fought finally slipped free.

"I didn't want her," he said quietly. The arrogance was gone now. "I wanted you."

But she stood there shaking, realizing that the power she held in this moment did not erase the imbalance between them.

"Bambola, do what you have to do." Luca said.

"I want to make you suffer as much as I am suffering, Luca. But this... I'm not cut out for this..."

The paddle slipped from her fingers and hit the floor with a flat, defeated sound.

She was shaking.

"You're weak!" Luca said, pushing himself up from the bowed position back onto his knees.

"Excuse me?"

He lifted his chin, wrists still bound behind him, eyes dark and intense. He wanted her fury back. He needed it. Anger meant engagement. Anger meant she still cared enough to fight. "You heard me. I fucked my wife when I have you, a wife I feel nothing for, a wife I do not love and hey... it was a good fuck. A fuck is a fuck right. But she is my wife and it will happen again and again and again. So if this is how you want to punish me for fucking my wife! Let it out! Use your fucking toys!"

He knew exactly where to press. Exactly which wound to reopen. He was provoking. Throwing gasoline over the embers, hoping the blaze would burn through her pain and leave only clarity behind.

But Vee felt understanding in that moment. He was trying to force her to accept his terms the only way he knew how, through violence, shock, extreme.

He wanted her angry not heartbroken but one didn't come without the other.

Luca was a psychopath, she knew that, she understood that. Pain was his pleasure.

Nothing she had planned would penetrate that armor.

She was in love with a man who did not flinch from suffering. A man who could compartmentalize sex from love. A man who would endure bleeding if it meant keeping her.

Nothing physical would register.

So she dropped the performance entirely.

If she wanted to hurt him, truly hurt him, she would not strike his body.

She would strike his obsession.

And then she went for the jugular.

She moved behind him again, lowering herself to her knees. Her breath brushed against the back of his neck, warm, intimate, intentional. She made sure he felt it.

"You're right! Its only fair. I cannot ask you not to make love to your wife..."

"I didn't say anything about making love..." he argued quickly, jaw tightening.

"But I also have a choice. See, Luca, you do not realise that we can both be mad. I mean, there is no monopoly to madness. So, I am going to leave you here, tied up, on your knees and I am going to dress up... go out there and have a random man fuck me. I don't care if he will be dead by morning. I got fucked anyways."

"Vee!" he shouted in alarm.

She felt it ripple through his body. The subtle tightening of his shoulders. The way his breathing shifted, no longer controlled but jagged at the edges.

"I'm going to suck his fucking cock until he is delirious. I'm going to cum a good number of times, have him take me again and again and again."

Each phrase pressed harder than any paddle strike.

She didn't need to touch him now. None of her earlier torment compared to this.

This was his nightmare.

The idea of her choosing someone else. Of her wanting someone else. Of her enjoying someone else.

"Veronica!" The safe word tore out of him in a growl.

Vee rolled her eyes slowly. The great Luca, the man who claimed he would rather die, had folded the second the blade turned toward him.

He could endure pain. He could endure humiliation. He could endure physical dominance.

But the thought of her with another man?

That broke through every defense.

"I thought you would rather die than use it." she mocked him.

"Get me out of these cuffs!"

"Not until I have been properly fucked." She shoved him forward and rose to her feet in one smooth motion, walking toward the closet. She reached for a coat, fingers steady even if her pulse wasn't. She wasn't actually going to walk into the night and find a stranger. She wasn't reckless.

But he didn't know that.

"Fucking Veronica! Don't you dare walk out that door!" The growl that tore out of him was panic.

The bedroom door shut behind her.

Luca's breathing turned fast. The cuffs bit into his wrists as he twisted, testing the limits. He reached for his thumb and dislocated it.

The sickening pop echoed. A grunt escaped him, teeth clenched against the flash of pain. He had done it before. Countless times. Escaping restraints had once been a necessity. A skill. A survival tactic.

Just never for this reason.

He worked quickly, sliding his hand through the loosened cuff. The metal fell away from one wrist, dangling uselessly.

He was on his feet in seconds.

The ring still constricted him. The plug still seated deep, a humiliating reminder of where he had been moments ago. None of it mattered.

He moved down the hall fast, the faint jingle of metal following him.

He caught her just before she reached the front door.

His hand wrapped around her arm and jerked her back hard enough to spin her toward him.

"What the... how do you keep fucking doing that?" Vee gasped, genuine alarm breaking through her fury.

The cuffs were still swinging from his wrist. He looked almost feral standing there, naked, breathing hard, one hand hanging wrong.

Then, without warning, he reached for his injured thumb again.

Vee watched in horror as he gripped it and wrenched it back into place.

(Brought to you by Jennifer Willard)

The time difference kind of sucks but I will readjust my posting schedule so we get the Chapters while I am awake. And if there is a need for more, it will be gotten immediately instead of waiting until I wake up in the morning. Lol

Chapter 134: You Broke Your Finger

A painful groan tore from him before he swallowed it down.

Her eyes went wide. "You... you broke your finger?!"

When the sharpest edge of pain passed, he lifted his gaze to her.

And that look.

It was dark and violent. Not directed at her, not exactly. His pupils blown wide.

Vee instinctively took two steps back.

He saw the flicker of fear in her expression.

The anger drained from his face almost instantly.

He stilled. His shoulders lowered. "I'm never going to hurt you, Vee," he said. "Don't look at me like that." He looked wounded when he said it.

"But you did hurt me."

"You asked me questions you knew were going to hurt you," he replied.

"I needed to know," she shot back, "Because I guess I hoped that you wouldn't..." Her voice trailed off, the rest of the sentence too naïve to survive being spoken.

That you wouldn't want her.

Tears gathered in her eyes. "You swore you would never hurt me! And yet you did! You did!"

"Vee, I... I..." He started to reach for her, then thought better of it. He bit down hard on whatever instinct he had to dominate. "I'm an idiot," he said finally. "I realised I was an idiot the moment it was done." He looked away briefly, jaw working. "I told myself it wasn't something I could get out of. I told myself it was family expectations." He exhaled sharply. "I told myself that if I didn't do it, people would start looking too closely. Asking questions. And if attention turned to you..." He stopped. "I thought I was protecting you," he finished.

"Why would attention turn to me?" Vee asked, confusion softening the sharp edges of her anger.

"They know about you..." Luca dragged a hand down his face, exhaling slowly. "That's not my point," he said. "My point is... I was a coward. I didn't think," he continued, "that I would be hurting you by fucking her. I didn't. All of my life, a fuck was just that...a fuck. A release. It never meant anything." His eyes lifted to hers. "Until you, Bambola. You changed it," he said. "You made it matter. And I didn't adjust fast enough."

Vee's throat tightened.

"And I hear you," he added. "I hear you. It will not happen again."

"You can't promise me that," she whispered.

"I am giving you my word, Vee," he replied, stepping closer but not touching her yet. "It will not happen again. I will never be the reason you are hurt, ever again."

She looked down at his wrist then, at the dangling cuff, at the faint redness around his skin.

"So you could get out of the cuffs all this time?" she asked, narrowing her eyes.

A ghost of a smirk tugged at his mouth. "Yeah."

"You dramatic asshole."

He huffed a quiet laugh. "I'm standing here, cock running out of blood, my ass plugged, thumb freshly relocated, and the only thing I want to tell you is that I fucking love you."

A small, incredulous chuckle escaped her. "Not obsessed with me anymore?"

"Oh, I'm still obsessed with you," he replied without hesitation. "That part is incurable. Terminal." His eyes softened. "But I also love you. And I will take any kind of humiliation to keep a smile on your face, Bambola," he continued. He glanced pointedly at his jailed member. "Now please, for heaven's sake, get the ring off before my cock loses circulation and dies."

She rolled her eyes, but she moved toward him. "You can get yourself out of cuffs, you can't get out of a cock ring?" she sighed.

"Maybe I just want you to touch it." Luca gave her a smirk that made her laugh. His shoulders eased at the sound.

"Don't do that to me again."

"If it ever happens again, I will give Marco specific instructions. You kill me and Marco will help you get rid of my body."

Veronica shook her head. "The things you say..." She shrugged off her coat, letting it slide down her arms. From the pocket she pulled the small cuff key, stepping closer again.

The final restraint clicked open and dropped to the floor.

She reached for his cock carefully.

He sucked in a sharp breath as his body answered her touch without hesitation. Blood rushed back into him, heat returning, need rising fast and unfiltered.

"On second thought..." His hand closed around her fingers. He trapped her hand there, pressing her palm more firmly against him, claiming the contact. "Leave it." He leaned in and kissed her. "I was going crazy..."

Another kiss. Slightly deeper. His lips lingered longer this time.

"All I needed was you..."

Again. His mouth found hers like it had memorized the path.

"Couldn't get you off my head..."

Again. His breath mixed with hers. His grip on her hand tightened just enough to show he meant every word.

"Couldn't stop thinking about you..."

Again. His thumb brushed along her jaw.

He lifted both hands and cupped her face. "I don't know what you have done to me..."

Again. This kiss slowed, deepened.

"But you should be proud, Bambola."

Again. His forehead brushed hers between breaths.

"You brought the devil to his knees."

And the final time, he deepened the kiss.

Vee met him back with as much vigour. Whatever anger still lived in her dissolved beneath the urgency of her hands. She had missed him. Missed the heat of him. Missed the way his touch felt less like inevitability. When Luca touched her, he claimed her with the same intensity he brought to every other part of his life.

He tore the lingerie from her body in one decisive motion, fabric surrendering without ceremony. In the next breath, he lifted her effortlessly, her thighs instinctively wrapping around his hips.

He didn't carry her far. Just enough to press her back against the nearest wall.

Days of tension, of denial, of punishment had coiled inside him, and now it snapped.

He had been hard for too long. Wanting for too long. Starved for too long.

(Brought to you by Jennifer Willard)

Chapter 135: She Is My Family

When he entered her, it was with the kind of force that stole breath before sound could form. She gasped in recognition. This was what she had craved. This passion that was meant to be reserved for only her.

He filled her completely, the stretch intense, overwhelming. Her fingers dug into his shoulders as he began to move. Each thrust drove her harder against the wall.

For a moment, Luca thought he wouldn't last. The sensation was too sharp, too consuming. Her heat wrapped around him, pulling him deeper into it. He nearly forgot the purpose of the ring constraining him, nearly forgot it was there to prolong this exact torment, to stretch the pleasure until it bordered on unbearable.

The plug inside him wasn't helping either. He was feeling pleasure from both ends as his muscles constricted and loosened.

Vee clung to him, arms locked around his neck, thighs tightening despite the strain. The girth of him forced her open around him, and her muscles trembled from the effort of holding herself up. Still, she refused to loosen her grip.

She wanted all of it.

He adjusted his hold, one hand braced firmly against the wall beside her head, the other gripping her hip to steady the rhythm. His movements remained fast, driving into her with a punishing consistency that made her breath hitch and stutter against his ear.

Every collision felt like release and revenge all at once.

He buried his face against her neck for a second, teeth grazing her skin.

She tightened around him in response, her body answering every thrust, every shift of his hips. Her nails dragged down his back, leaving heat in their wake.

They couldn't make words anymore. Their bodies did the talking, mirroring the very foundation of what they were together. They collided the way storms collide over open water, loud and electric and impossible to ignore.

With one last series of grunts, Luca's muscles tightened, his entire body drawing rigid as he finished inside her at the exact moment she shattered around him.

His forehead rested against her shoulder as their breathing struggled to find rhythm again. The tension that had coiled between them for days, maybe longer, finally released its grip.

"God I missed you!" Luca sighed against her shoulder.

"I missed you too."

A few minutes later, they had both thrown on something loose over their bodies. The edge of urgency had faded into comfort. Luca was finally free of every restraint, the ring discarded somewhere among the mess on the floor. He crouched near the bag she had packed, lifting it and peering inside.

He began pulling things out one by one, examining the various toys she had stuffed into it. Some were familiar. Some clearly experimental. His brow arched higher with each new discovery.

She watched him from the bed, amusement dancing in her eyes.

The laughter came easily. They joked about the things she bought in a moment of vengeful inspiration. She pointed out which ones had been specifically intended for him. He made a dramatic show of reconsidering his life choices.

She teased him about not getting to use most of her carefully curated torture devices. He countered by reminding her how quickly she had abandoned the plan.

For all the volatility between them, the quiet moments never felt strained. They slipped into conversation the way they slipped into each other's space, naturally.

Luca eventually settled on the bedroom floor, his back resting against the side of the bed. Vee shifted until her head found his lap, her hair spilling over his thigh. He absentmindedly ran his fingers through it as they continued talking.

"So, Ricardo has got a thing for Valentina uhn?" Luca asked.

"he's been at the shop everyday since you left. He walks her home. Sometimes they spend the day together. He even helps out around the shop."

Luca let out a low hum, processing that.

"Does she know he isn't staying?" he asked.

"I don't know if they talked about it. But she is quite giddy around him. You should see her. All flirty and glowing. I've never seen her that way before." Vee droned on, a soft smile tugging at her mouth as she pictured it.

"Your sister's happiness makes you happy."

"I guess so... she is my family." Vee shifted slightly, her fingers tracing idle patterns over Luca's forearm. "Speaking of... you said earlier that they know about me. Your family, I mean?"

Luca's hand slowed in her hair before continuing.

"Bianca knows about you. Actually, she has known about you since Julian went to Vienna to yap about how I stabbed him, the cry baby, but I sort of confirmed it at the dinner table. I played it off as something minor and then she found your underwear. Then everything went to shit." Luca explained.

Vee's brows knit together as she absorbed that. "Now, I feel bad," she admitted quietly. "I am breaking up another woman's home."

"You don't have to feel any kind of way about my marriage," Luca replied evenly. "It was always going to be that way even if you hadn't come along. I was always going to keep fucking whoever I liked."

Vee lifted her head slightly to look at him.

"That doesn't make it better," she said.

"My marriage was a merger. It was never built on love, never promised loyalty the way you mean it. You're not stealing anything," he added more quietly. "There was nothing there to begin with."

Vee rested her head back against his lap, staring up at the ceiling again.

"It's not unusual for your family to step out?" she didn't want to use the word cheat because then she herself would feel like the cheater. It would make it real for her in a way she wasn't ready to sit with.

"My mother was my dad's affair outside his marriage."

Vee stayed quiet. She had heard fragments from Nonnina before but she didn't interrupt him. She wanted him to speak it himself. To choose to hand her the pieces.

"My grandfather had so many children from so many women, it's a wonder we haven't fucked our own relatives yet. Hell, I may have, who knows." Luca continued.

Fidelity had never been the pillar in his bloodline. Power had.

"And your mum, how did she feel about it?"

He shifted slightly beneath her, his hand stilling in her hair. "It's complicated."

The answer closed the door as effectively as a lock turning.

Vee felt the withdrawal. She didn't push. Some wounds were still wired too tightly. Forcing them open would only make him retreat further.

"I'm thinking of doing an advertisement promotion for the shop. I just don't have any ideas. The store hasn't recovered since the Inperi incident." Vee said.

The change in topic was intentional. Safer ground.

"Hmmm... that's a good idea. The last time, I had my men spread the word about Scalese pizza parlour around the area."

Vee jerked up, her hand connecting with his arm with a sharp smack. "I knew you had something to do with it!!!" He moved instinctively, wrapping his hands around her waist, pulling her close. "I'd do anything to make you happy...anything," he said, and even without words, the intensity in his eyes made it clear he meant every syllable.

She leaned into him, pressing her lips against his in a hurried, fiery kiss. He responded immediately, his hands firm at her hips, the heat between them igniting faster than either had anticipated. "Why is it I can't get enough of you?" he murmured, almost as if he needed to hear it out loud.

Her own laugh bubbled against his mouth before she remembered something, jerking away just enough to hop off him. "Oh shit! I gotta take my pills." He followed her with his eyes.

"What pills?" he asked, though the answer was obvious.

"I told you," she said, reaching for the bottle on the dresser. "I started contraceptives. I gotta take it daily. Don't want anything accidentally getting stuck in there." She popped one in her mouth, swallowing with a quiet clink of the cap being closed.

Luca's brow lifted, a smirk playing across his lips. "Accidentally? Bambola, everything I do, I do with purpose," he said. She paused, hand resting on the dresser for support, thinking about the deliberate, controlling, consuming nature of him.

"Hmmm..." she murmured softly.

"You should stop taking it," he said quietly but firmly.

"What?" she asked.

"Stop taking the pills," he repeated.

"Are you...are you crazy?" she whispered.

"Is it really that terrible a thought if we have a family?" Luca asked. He got up to his feet slowly. His eyes held hers, unwavering, intense, making it impossible to ignore the depth of the desire and intent behind the words.

Vee's fingers trembled slightly as she set the pill bottle down. Her lips parted, the gravity of what he was suggesting finally sinking in.

"A family?! A...do you hear yourself? Luca?" Her hands flailed slightly, desperate to articulate the impossibility of what he was suggesting. The thought of bringing life into the chaos that surrounded them was almost laughably terrifying.

Chapter 136: Only Way Out Is Death

"Only way out is death, isn't it?" Luca said.

"Well..." she faltered, searching for the words, her mind swirling. The logic of normal life felt alien here. Her pulse thudded in her ears as she tried to articulate the impossible.

"Are you changing your mind?"

"What? No! But...it's a child...a living, breathing being that we will both be responsible for."

"And?" Luca's brow arched, genuine confusion lacing his tone. He didn't understand. How could she hesitate when the idea seemed like the only thing that made sense to him?

"Luca, in the time we have known each other, I have been held at gunpoint three times, twice by you, you have been stabbed, I have been beaten by one of your men, and ninety percent of the time, we are fighting. You want to raise a family?" Her hands dropped to her sides.

"Me holding you at gunpoint doesn't count. You snuck up on me. And everyone who has threatened you and touched you, I have killed or maimed." He leaned closer.

"Exactly my point, Luca!" She almost shouted now, frustration boiling over. Her entire body trembled, from the intensity of the emotions that had been building since the moment they had started this conversation.

"Are you saying I am unfit to be a father?" He was challenging her, demanding that she name him incapable, forcing the truth out of her, no matter how uncomfortable.

"Luca...I am saying what you do makes us unfit to have kids. What kind of life would our kids live?"

The chaos in his life, the danger that defined every choice, seemed distant for just a second as he regarded her, trying to measure her fear, her resolve, and the impossible love they both shared.

"I turned out fine." Luca argued.

"Did you?" Vee raised an eyebrow.

The look alone was enough to stall him.

Luca dragged a hand through his dark hair, the muscles along his arm tightening. His jaw flexed. "You have something to say, Vee. Say it!"

Vee sucked in a breath, steadying herself. The man was standing half naked in the middle of her bedroom, a dangerous creature, and somehow he was talking about raising children. "I don't want a fight, Luca."

"I'm not fighting."

"I cannot have a child with you."

"With me?" Luca repeated slowly, as if he needed to hear the words again to believe them.

"Yes."

"Well, that's good to know. Looks like I am meant for fucking alone."

"That's not what I meant. Besides, that's the only amazing skill you have." Vee said, rolling her eyes.

Luca gawked at her. Then a crooked grin tugged at his mouth. "Only? Sweetie, I will have you know that I can carve a man's heart out of his chest blindfolded with one hand behind my back."

The boast came easily. That was the problem. Violence for him wasn't shocking. It was routine.

"And tell me what kind of skill is that?"

Luca spread his hands slightly. "I have great shooting skills, fighting skills.."

He began counting them off with mild pride. Assassin. Enforcer. Soldier. The Scalese bloodline had never exactly produced accountants or school teachers.

"You are not selling this starting a family thing well, Luca. You are only helping me make my own solid points."

Luca's mouth tightened. "Well, fuck you." He turned away from her before she could see too much of what flickered through his expression. His broad shoulders rolled with restrained irritation as he moved toward the bed.

Vee chuckled and bounced on his back. The sudden weight of her body forced Luca to lean forward slightly, his reflexes kicking in before she could even wobble. His palms slid around to brace her thighs, fingers tightening instinctively to steady her so she would not topple off him.

Even when she caught him off guard, his body always moved first when it came to her. Protect first. Think later. Her laughter warmed the room. It was light, teasing. "How about we pretend to make a family without actually making the family?" she kissed his neck. Her lips brushed the sensitive spot just beneath his ear, and Luca exhaled.

"I'll never say no to that." He moved quickly after that, shifting his weight and catching her by the waist. The mattress dipped as he dropped her onto the bed. Luca wasted no time climbing over her, his hands already busy, his focus narrowing completely onto the woman beneath him.

Ricardo arrived at the Commissioned building that housed Luca's offices just after midmorning. To the outside world it looked like a club. Inside, however, everyone who worked there understood that Luciano Scalese's influence stretched far beyond expensive dancers and alcohol.

Ricardo stepped into the basement with his hands loosely tucked into the pockets of his jacket. He had spent most of the night replaying Luca's message in his head, trying to figure out why he had been summoned here instead of at home, where they both lived.

Luca hated discussing business under his own roof.

That rule had been drilled into everyone around him for years. Home was private territory. Work stayed elsewhere. Which meant the moment Ricardo received instructions to come to Commissioned, one conclusion had settled firmly in his mind.

This was business.

Marco was already waiting.

The large man gave him a brief nod before turning down the hallway without a word, expecting Ricardo to follow. Marco had stood at Luca's side for years. He rarely spoke unless necessary, but nobody in the building questioned him either.

They reached the office door. Marco opened it and stepped aside, allowing Ricardo to walk in first before taking his usual position.

Behind the heavy desk sat Luca.

He leaned back comfortably in his chair, one arm resting along the armrest while the other tapped lightly against the desk surface.

"Luciano..." Ricardo greeted.

"Sit." Luca said.

Ricardo lowered himself into the chair across from the desk. Even though he tried to keep his posture relaxed, there was still a faint tightness in his shoulders. Being called in like this usually meant something had caught Luca's attention.

(This is to 200 power stones. Can we do 400?)

Chapter 137: She Kicked Me Out

"Is everything alright? Did I do something wrong?"

"You tell me. I hear you have been flirting with the younger Scalese."

"Uh...I...should I have not?" Ricardo raised a brow.

Luca's gaze was steady. "What are your intentions?"

Ricardo swallowed.

Intentions.

If only it were that simple.

"Uh...its complicated..."

Complicated didn't even begin to cover it. His mind flickered back to Valentina's face the night before—the flash of hurt in her eyes, the fire in her voice.

He deserved it.

"Does she know you are not staying?" Luca asked.

"Yes, I informed her."

"And?"

Ricardo exhaled slowly. "She kicked me out."

Behind him, Marco snickered.

Luca shot him a withering look before turning back to Ricardo. "According to her sister, you make Valentina happy. So I thought, you could stay on in New York, see where this thing with Valentina goes."

Ricardo hadn't expected that.

In fact, he had come into this office fully prepared to be told to pack his bags and go back to Vienna with maybe an assignment or a message to deliver to Don Genovese. Instead, Luca was calmly suggesting he stay.

"Uh...I'm not so sure she wants to see me again."

"Okay."

Ricardo hesitated for half a second before the panic of losing the opportunity entirely kicked in. "But I would still like to stay on, if it would give me the opportunity to get to know her better." he quickly added.

Because he still wanted to try.

"I have had the management spot of the club open for a while now. The former one got greedy and I haven't had any one to fill the space."

"I'm not working for the familia?" He wasn't sure if that question sounded relieved or confused. Possibly both.

"No...but you will make just as much money. The club thrives with its classy and elite clientele."

Ricardo nodded slowly. Still, he couldn't ignore the quiet sense of relief that crept into his chest. A job meant stability. Stability meant staying in New York. Staying in New York meant—

Valentina.

"I have just one rule, Ricardo."

Ricardo straightened instinctively.

"Do not mistreat the girls who work here. Is that understood?" Luca asked.

Ricardo nodded immediately.

More firmly than necessary, perhaps.

Because despite his many flaws—and there were plenty—he had never been that kind of man.

"Of course, of course. Thank you Luciano." Ricardo said.

A chance.

That was all he had hoped for, and somehow, against all odds, he had gotten one. And it had nothing to do with Bianca Genovese.

Luca gave a small smile. "Now go inform your Zia."

Ricardo nodded quickly, pushing his chair back as he rose to his feet. "Thank you." He said again.

He meant it.

As he moved toward the door, he clapped Marco on the back in passing, the gesture friendly and casual. Marco had always been a difficult man to read. Sometimes he seemed amused by Ricardo, sometimes vaguely annoyed by him, and occasionally he

looked at him the way a guard dog might look at a stranger who had wandered too close to the gate.

Still, Ricardo gave him an easy grin before stepping out into the hallway.

"You have a problem with him being with Valentina?" Luca asked Marco.

Marco leaned back against the wall, arms folding across his chest as he stared at the closed door for a moment longer than necessary. "Not really."

"You have reservations."

The truth was, he had reservations about a lot of things—most of them involving Ricardo. "I don't trust him." Marco said simply.

"Because he is chasing a girl you like."

Marco snorted softly at that. "I don't see Valentina like that, Luca. I just think she can do better than Ricardo."

Valentina deserved someone steady. Someone certain. Someone who didn't look like he might wake up one morning and decide to disappear halfway across the world.

"Well, Veronica says he makes Valentina happy. When Valentina is happy, Veronica is happy. My life is simpler."

Marco hummed in response.

Still, something about Ricardo's sudden determination didn't sit right in Marco's gut.

Maybe it was the timing.

He wanted to believe Ricardo meant well. He just wasn't convinced yet.

"Marco, I am not going to ask you this again. Do you have feelings for Valentina?"

Marco looked up. "No."

Valentina was... Valentina. Strong-willed, sharp-tongued, stubborn in a way usually made him his life choices. He respected her. Liked her, even. But whatever he felt for her had never crossed that particular line.

And he knew himself well enough to recognize when it had.

"then case closed." Luca said.

The matter, at least in Luca's mind, was settled.

Luca's gaze shifted briefly toward the door Ricardo had exited through. "Make preparations for Ricardo to take over upstairs."

Marco pushed himself away from the wall with a quiet sigh.

Whether he trusted Ricardo or not, the decision had been made. And when Luca made a decision, the rest of them adapted.

"Yes boss."

As he turned toward the door, Marco couldn't help thinking that this arrangement might either turn out surprisingly well...

Or become an absolute disaster.

Vee adjusted the straps of her dress one last time, the cool metal of her tracker necklace brushing against the curve of her collarbone. She stood in front of the full-length mirror, taking in her reflection. The jet-black lace wrapped around her in delicate floral patterns that seemed almost alive.

The nude panels created the illusion that the lace was crawling along her body, tracing every curve with meticulous intent. She had always appreciated fashion, but this—this was art. Bold, provocative, and utterly impossible to ignore.

Her fingers brushed along the sheer fabric at her thigh, and a shiver ran down her spine. The dress was short, scandalously so, revealing more than modesty would ever allow, and yet she felt powerful wearing it. She wasn't normally the type to walk into a room and make heads turn, but tonight, she knew she would.

And not just for anyone—this was for Luca.

A week of perfect days and nights flashed through her mind. He had been obsessively attentive. There was a gentleness to his fixation, a tenderness that had her craving more. And she did crave more. Every second away from him felt like a countdown to a delicious inevitability.

Chapter 138: We Should Go

Her gaze lingered on her reflection. The sheer panels left nothing to the imagination, and she wasn't wearing any underwear, just as he had instructed. A hot flush spread across her cheeks as she remembered the smoldering tone in his voice when he told her.

Only Luca could make an instruction like that feel simultaneously like a test, a dare, and an invitation. Only Luca could make her pulse race at the idea of being completely exposed, yet completely safe under his eyes.

Even thinking about him made her stomach flutter. The man was everything sinful, everything intoxicating. When he spoke, even casually, there was an underlying current of danger, a magnetism that made her want to surrender completely. She'd caught herself imagining throwing her panties at him in frustration.

There was no self-control in his presence. She had tried to resist, tried to keep some sense of decorum, but the moment he touched her, whispered her name, or even glanced at her with that consuming hunger, all restraint dissolved.

Her mind flickered to the evening ahead. With Luca, there was always more.

He had a way of taking everything ordinary and making it extraordinary, and she was hopelessly, irrevocably his.

Asides from the fact that he was a mob boss and already married, he would have made an amazing husband. For the first time in her life, she felt safe. Loved, in a way that was suffocatingly intense, unyielding, and possessive. A small, fleeting, entirely forbidden part of her had even considered what their child might look like.

She had let herself imagine it for a second—the impossibly sharp blue eyes of Luca softening as he held a tiny version of himself in his arms, the curve of a child's lips mimicking hers, the chaos of their genetics blending into something so perfect it would make her heart ache.

But that thought was dangerous, intoxicating, and utterly impossible. She knew she couldn't bring a child into this madness that was Veronica Scalese and Luciano Genovese.

The door opened at exactly 8pm, and her stomach did a somersault. She stepped out quickly, and there he was. The man had this infuriating, magnetic ability to make everything else fade. Okay, Luca always looked good, that was a fact. Whatever he wore, however he wore it, casual or formal, it didn't matter.

He could have worn a burlap sack and still looked like he belonged in a magazine cover. But tonight, he looked... different. Like he had made the extra effort to obliterate any rational thought in her head, to strip her of both her mind and her pussy in one calculated swoop.

He stood there, posture straight, chest broad, the hint of a tailored jacket enhancing the lines of his body, his hair perfectly tousled in that "I don't try but I kill trying" way. His piercing blue eyes—eyes that had a history of making her knees go weak—were scanning her, consuming her, and for a terrifying, delicious second, she felt as though

he could see every thought, every desire, every embarrassing, filthy fantasy she wasn't even trying to bury.

And the way he looked at her, darkening eyes, a smoldering intensity that was entirely too much for one human being—made butterflies erupt in her stomach so fiercely she could have cried if she hadn't been determined not to ruin her make-up.

Her mind tumbled over thoughts she didn't want to have in public, dirty, wild thoughts that made her cheeks burn and her thighs ache. She wondered how many of them were written plainly on her face, how many of them he already knew. A tiny, rebellious, hornily panicked part of her wanted to fling herself at him, to let him rip every strip of garment from her body right there.

"I told you to dress up to go out, not dress up to make me want to stay home." Luca walked toward her slowly, and she couldn't help but shiver under the intensity of his gaze.

"Maybe I want to stay home."

"We have to be a normal couple, Vee," he said, stopping in front of her. She could feel the heat radiating from him even before his gaze dropped, and when it did, it lingered on her legs in a way that made her knees weaken. "Even though you are making it incredibly hard right now, literally."

His fingers traced her bare shoulders lightly, before sliding down to entwine with hers, lingering there, then gliding down to her bare thighs.

"No underwear?" he asked.

"You said not to."

The corners of his lips lifted, approving, predatory. "Good girl."

Her stomach fluttered as his fingers traced beneath the hem of her dress, and her breath caught in her throat when they found exactly where he wanted them. His fingers slid through her slit with ease, and the gasp that escaped her was involuntary, wet with anticipation, hot with need.

"God..." he whispered, and the sound was animalistic. "Good God..."

Then, with inhuman restraint, he pulled his fingers back, clutching them briefly. She could feel the tension coiling in him, and a small, wicked thrill ran through her that she was the cause of it. Her own desire had always been like that around him—fiery, desperate, uncontainable—and seeing him struggle to maintain even a shred of composure made her feel both powerful and giddy.

"We should go..." His voice rasped, rough, a faint tremor betraying the hold he had on himself.

"Yeah." Her smile was mischievous, and a little victorious. She picked up her coat, sliding into it as the fabric brushed her skin, soft but insufficient to hide her body, and held on to his arm.

They moved outside to the courtyard. Marco was already waiting in the vehicle.

And as she slid into the back seat, she felt a flutter of anticipation for what was to come.

Luca was quiet as Marco drove them out of the estate, the vehicle gliding smoothly over the private road. His fingers flexed lightly on his thighs, subtle movements that betrayed the barely restrained tension coiled within him. Vee's eyes followed the motion, a teasing smile tugging at her lips.

Chapter 139: I'm Helplessly Crazy

She leaned slightly toward him. "Are you nervous about going out to dinner? I remember you said you hadn't been on a date since high school."

He blinked at her, then shook his head. "No...no...it's not that. I want to at least pretend tonight. Be a normal, respectful man. Someone who deserves you. It's just... I'm mad, Vee. I'm helplessly crazy. Because the only thing I am currently thinking of doing to you right now is fucking you. That's it."

Vee let out a soft chuckle. The honesty in his admission was intoxicating. "Would it help if I said I was thinking that too?" she asked.

His head snapped toward her slightly, eyes blazing with frustration. "Well, fuck no! It's not helping. I..." He let out a sharp sigh, as if he was struggling to rein in the storm inside him. "Fuck! I love fucking you, don't get me wrong. It's the best part of my life, but...I want to be more. I want...I want to love you."

Her pulse quickened. His vulnerability, usually hidden behind the layers of authority, obsession, and danger, made her heart tighten. She glanced at Marco first, who was expertly focused on driving, hands steady on the wheel, eyes forward.

Without a second thought, she slid across, moving into Luca's lap, her body pressing flush against his, the hardness of his cock immediately searing through her dress and into her skin. The contact was electric. His hands went immediately to her waist, gripping just enough to hold her steady, yet leaving room for the fire they both knew was inevitable.

Her chest pressed against his. She could feel the rapid thump of his pulse through the hard line of his body, and a thrill ran through her that made her teeth ache with suppressed desire.

"I'm trying," he murmured. His fingers slid lightly along her back, tracing the lace of her dress, teasing, holding, restraining. "I'm trying to be normal, Vee. I want to earn...everything with you. I want to be the man you deserve."

"Shhhh..." Vee shut him up with a finger pressed softly against his lips. The gesture was gentle, but the look in her eyes was anything but. There was heat there—dangerous, reckless heat that Luca knew very well. "There is nothing normal about us, Luca," she murmured. "Maybe don't try too hard and just feel... let yourself feel, my love." She leaned forward and kissed him.

Slow.

Soft.

Not the desperate kind of kiss they often fell into when things spiraled out of control between them.

He held her close, one hand sliding to the back of her neck. "You want me to fuck you?" he asked bluntly. Luca had never been a man for poetic language. Subtlety had never really been his strength.

Vee simply nodded.

"Your words..." he groaned, rubbing a hand down his face in exaggerated frustration. "Bambola!"

"Yes," she said again.

"Here?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Now?" he confirmed, searching her face.

"Yes, Luca."

The certainty in her voice snapped the last thread of restraint he had been clinging to.

He pulled her firmly against him.

"Marco?" Luca called without looking away from her.

"Understood, boss," Marco replied.

There was a faint sound of the car slowing as Marco guided the vehicle toward the curb. The man had the remarkable ability to sound both completely professional and deeply unimpressed at the same time.

Luca kissed her again—this time harder, the restraint gone from it.

Marco finally parked and stepped out of the car without another word, closing the door with the discretion of a man who had clearly done this before, a lot of times. He leaned casually against the hood, arms crossed, scanning the street.

Vee's fingers moved quickly to Luca's belt, working it open with a kind of impatient confidence that made him laugh under his breath.

"You're trouble," he muttered.

"I know."

The moment his cock was free, she adjusted herself, letting her body sink down against him.

A soft cry slipped from her lips.

Filled with pure, unfiltered pleasure.

Luca's hands gripped her hips automatically, his head falling back against the seat for a second as a low breath escaped him.

"Madonna..." he muttered. Luca kept his eyes on her, studying every shift in her expression. The beauty in her face, the pleasure trembling in her voice, the restless writhing of her body against his—it was all intoxicating.

His hands rested firmly on her hips, guiding her rhythm, helping her move against him in the cramped space of the backseat.

"God, I love this!" she moaned.

A proud smirk tugged at Luca's mouth.

Of course she did.

His sweet Vee—his sharp-tongued, impossible Veronica—was a wild one. He had known it from the moment he met her. She carried fire in her bones and temptation in every glance.

And he knew exactly how she liked to be touched.

How she liked to be pushed.

Hard.

Fast.

Rough.

The problem was the car. The confined space made it nearly impossible to give her everything she wanted.

"Bambola..." he muttered under his breath.

Vee only moved faster.

The small backseat had become a battlefield of tangled limbs, and reckless desire. Her dress had ridden up around her thighs, and Luca's hand slid upward before he tugged the bodice of the dress forward.

The fabric stretched.

Then slipped.

Revealing her breasts.

He reached forward and pinched her nipples between his fingers.

"Yes! Yes! Fuck!" she gasped, bouncing on top of him faster.

Luca's smirk widened.

That was the sound he had been waiting for.

He pinched harder, giving her the pain she needed for her pleasure to build. His eyes began to cloud as his own control started to slip.

God help him, this woman was going to be the end of him.

"Bambola, you're killing me," he grunted.

With Vee, everything turned reckless.

He liked it, loved it, adored it, savoured it, worshipped it.

Vee arched her back suddenly, her head falling against the driver's seat as her body rolled against his. She ground against him, while her fingers reached down to touch her clit.

Luca's eyes darkened as he snatched her hands away. "When you need more," he growled, spanking her ass hard as a warning, "you tell me."

He couldn't deny her anything, he didn't even bother to try anymore.

Luca yanked her close and turned her to kneel on the seat, her back arching slightly against him. She shivered instinctively, anticipation coiling in her gut.

He knelt behind her, letting his hands rest on her hips before pushing into her again. The impact sent sharp, undeniable shocks through her body, a deep, instinctual moan escaping her lips. She braced herself against the window with one palm.

"Luca!" she cried.

Every movement, every reaction she gave, made his heart pound and his pulse spike. He watched the subtle shifts in her back, the tightening of her muscles, heard the small whimpers and gasps that spilled from her mouth. The car rocked slightly under their combined weight and motion, adding a surreal rhythm to the chaos.

Her fingers dug into his thigh as he drove harder.

His own hand wrapped around her throat pushing her down hard to meet his thrusts making her moans sound like choking.

He groaned low in response. He felt her tightening around him, felt the heat spike, knew instinctively when she was about to reach her apex.

And then she did with a scream. The friction, the sensation, the extra lubrication, it all hit him hard. Every muscle tensed, every breath caught in his chest, and he moved through his release with a grunting, primal intensity.

When it was over, they both sagged together, hearts hammering in sync. Luca pressed a kiss to the nape of her neck.

He rested his forehead against her shoulder, and she leaned back into him, their bodies still entwined.

Luca slowly withdrew his cock from her wetness. He fished a handkerchief out of his pocket, his fingers brushing against her skin as he pulled her legs onto his thighs. The gesture was intimate as he wiped her clean. "When we get back home," he murmured, "I'm going to eat your pussy so hard, you won't be walking for days."

Vee chuckled. "Oh Lord..." she whispered. There was nothing normal about them. Nothing quiet. Nothing restrained. They couldn't get enough of each other.

When they had regained a semblance of decency, straightened clothes, and a more presentable posture, Luca tapped on the window. Marco, who had been leaning casually against the car, returned without a word, slipping into the driver's seat and starting the engine.

Vee giggled softly, pressing herself against Luca's chest. "Do you think he's offended?" she whispered into his ear.

"You started it," Luca said, smirking. "You ask him."

"God, no," she laughed.

Luca let out a low chuckle, shaking his head. "It's fine," he said, running a hand down her arm as she leaned into him. "I'm sure he'll be visiting Dante himself later tonight."

Vee's eyes sparkled with mischief. "Dante must be feeling the effect of your loss in his business," she teased, smirking.

Chapter 140: Its Just Me With You

"That's his problem," Luca replied smoothly, his gaze flicking to the windshield as the car rolled onto the quiet street. "He has a lot of clients anyway."

"Its different in a way. I mean with Dante, he provides you various women. Its just me with you." Vee said.

"And you are more than enough. Infact, you are a full time job." He pulled her ear lobe between his teeth.

A sharp shiver ran down her spine.

"Are you saying I am too much for you to handle?"

"You know what? I swallow my pride and I admit defeat. Yes!"

The dramatic seriousness in his tone made her eyes widen first before laughter burst out of her.

"Oh my God! I bested a mafia God." Vee laughed.

"You should have that on a plaque. Fucked the devil into admitting defeat."

Veronica laughed until her cheeks ached. Her eyes watered from the force of it, her shoulders shaking while she tried—and failed—to compose herself.

And Luca... Luca could only look at her.

He had seen beautiful women all his life. Women sculpted to perfection, women who had built entire identities around being desired, hell his own wife was one,.

But Veronica... she was terrifyingly beautiful.

It was the life in her.

The way she laughed without restraint. The way she teased him without fear. The way she could turn his world upside down and look delighted about it.

She wasn't trying to impress him.

And somehow that made him want her even more.

His thumb brushed lightly against her lower lip as she slowly calmed down, still smiling, still glowing with that infectious energy that made him feel like he was both winning and losing every time he was near her.

"We're here." Marco announced.

The car slowed to a smooth stop outside the restaurant, the soft rumble of the engine fading as Marco expertly parked.

Vee shifted slightly, as she pulled her coat properly around her shoulders.

Luca stepped out first, his tall frame unfolding from the car with effortless grace before he turned to offer her his hand.

The moment she stepped onto the pavement, he placed his hand on the small of her back.

As they stepped inside, Vee's eyes moved around the space slowly.

The restaurant was beautiful.

But there was one small detail that immediately caught her attention.

It was empty.

Just silence.

Well... not entirely silence.

His men were there.

She spotted them once she looked closer—stationed casually but strategically around the room. One near the bar. Another by the hallway leading to the kitchen. One by the entrance they had just walked through.

Making it very clear that this place, tonight, belonged to Luca.

Vee slowly turned her head toward him, her brows lifting slightly in amused disbelief.

"Did you buy the place?"

"No...just borrowed it for the evening." Luca answered.

Vee blinked slowly, looking around the empty dining room again.

"Why?"

"So we could have privacy." Luca answered.

She looked back at him, lips twitching with amusement. "I thought you said you wanted to be a normal couple."

"baby steps, Bambola. Baby steps."

His hand brushed the small of her back as he guided her toward their table. He pulled out her chair for her.

Vee settled into the seat, smoothing her dress slightly as the attendants appeared almost instantly with menus.

The menus were placed before them, and soon enough they placed their orders. The waiter moved away quietly, leaving them once again in their oddly private world.

The evening went... surprisingly well.

Better than she expected.

They ate slowly, savoring the food that was clearly prepared by chefs who knew their craft. Luca even attempted what could almost be described as polite conversation—though it still carried that sharp edge of dangerous charm that made him unmistakably Luca.

They drank wine.

They talked.

They laughed.

At one point Vee laughed so hard she nearly choked on her drink, and Luca had watched her with that same quiet, intense gaze that always made her feel like she was being studied and adored at the same time.

It almost felt normal.

Until Marco walked in.

"Marco?" Luca said, placing his glass gently on the table.

"Your brother is here."

"and how in the fucking hell does he know where I am?"

Marco shrugged in response.

"Send him in." Then he turned toward Veronica. "I apologise for this."

She lifted an eyebrow, amusement dancing in her expression. "Just promise you will not try to stab your brother again."

Luca gave her a look that could only be described as deeply unrepentant. "No promises."

Julian strolled in. His coat was draped casually over his shoulders. "Brother!" Julian said.

"How did you find me?" Luca asked without mincing words.

Julian's grin widened, the picture of smug satisfaction. "If I told you that, then I won't be able to find you next time now, will I?"

Across the table, Vee slowly lifted her glass of wine.

Something told her this "normal dinner date" had officially ended.

"What do you want that couldn't wait?" Luca asked.

Julian dragged a chair across the floor with a soft scrape, and settled himself comfortably at their table. "Nothing much, Luca. Just came to see the face of the woman who will help me take you down."

Luca's jaw immediately went rigid.

The shift in him was instant and unmistakable. The relaxed man who had been laughing over wine minutes ago vanished. His shoulders squared slightly, the muscles in his neck tightening as he stared at his brother with a look that had probably preceded several unfortunate "accidents" in the past.

"You know, I can still make you disappear Julian. No one will find your dead body, ever."

Julian leaned back lazily in his chair, looking entirely unimpressed. If anything, he seemed entertained by the tension simmering in his brother. "You can always try." His gaze landed on Veronica. "Nice to meet you formally Miss Scalese. It is Scalese isn't it?"

Vee held his gaze calmly. "Yes." she answered. She felt Luca beside her—felt the barely contained fury radiating from him. The tablecloth brushed against her fingers as she rested her hand casually in her lap.