

Undressed By The Mafia God #Chapter 181: I Can't See You Anymore - Read Undressed By The Mafia God Chapter 181: I Can't See You Anymore

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Ricardo hesitated, and in that hesitation, she already knew. "Val... I can't see you anymore."

Stunned didn't even begin to cover it.

They had been good. No—perfect. They had built a small, quiet bubble together. In that bubble, he had been hers.

"Are you seeing someone else?" she asked.

Ricardo's head snapped up. "No. I swear, Val, no. It's not that."

"Then what is it?" she demanded. "You're ending what we have... for work?"

He stepped closer, his expression pained. "I can't put you through that. I can barely make time to see you as it is. It's not fair to you."

She admired the excuse. It sounded noble, considerate even selfless.

And yet, it was also complete bullshit.

"Oh my God..." she whispered, shaking her head slowly. "This is not happening."

But it was.

"I'm truly sorry, Val," Ricardo said. "I am. I am. I... I will always love you."

"You may go," she said simply.

Ricardo blinked, thrown off by the sudden shift. "Val, let me at least drop you off at home."

"I can handle myself just fine without you, Ricardo," she replied. "You may go."

Ricardo ran a hand through his hair the moment he stepped out of the parlour. He wasn't lying. He would always love her. But love was useless when you were owned. And he was owned by Bianca.

Every time he thought he had found a way out, she pulled him back in harder.

Ricardo clenched his jaw, his hand falling uselessly to his side.

.Behind him, inside the parlour, Valentina turned her back the moment the door closed. Her vision blurred, tears stinging.

She swallowed hard.

This shouldn't hurt.

It shouldn't.

They hadn't known each other long enough for this to matter. And yet...

It did.

God, it did.

She wiped at her cheeks quickly. "Get a grip," she muttered under her breath.

Valentina straightened, lifting her chin slightly, forcing her breathing to even out. She refused—refused—to let this be the thing that broke her.

Nonnina moved through the new space—directing, arranging, adjusting.

Everything had to be perfect for her. For the girl who had already suffered too much.

Veronica's jaw dropped slightly as her gaze swept across the room.

"What the hell...?" she breathed.

Luca smirked faintly, watching her reaction with satisfaction.

"Luca..." she started, pushing herself up slowly with the walking stick. "Am I supposed to live here by myself?"

"I will be here most times," he said. Then, after a beat, he added, "If you want me to. It's time," Luca continued, softer now, "I gave you back your freedom... your choices."

"Oh, thank you. This is lovely!" she said. She moved toward Nonnina, and wrapped her arms around the older woman in a warm embrace. "Everything is perfect, Nonni."

Nonnina melted instantly, her hands coming up to cradle Veronica's face. "Of course it is," she murmured

Veronica pulled back, a playful glint returning to her eyes as she turned toward Luca. "Do I get Nonni too?" she asked, smirking.

"What? No!" Luca shot back immediately, his brows lifting in mock offense. "Absolutely not. She's mine."

Veronica raised a brow. "Selfish."

Luca scoffed, crossing his arms loosely. "We can share her," he amended.

"Everyone wants me..." Nonnina chimed in. "Zuccherino, come on. Lunch is here. I know you are tired of the hospital meals."

Veronica groaned dramatically, leaning slightly on her walking stick. "Ugh... you have no idea. It tastes like sawdust."

Nonnina laughed, guiding her gently toward the dining area, fussing over her.

Luca hung back. He stood in the doorway, arms loose at his sides, observing them. There was something unsettling about how easily Veronica slipped into spaces—how naturally she drew people in, how effortlessly she softened edges that had long since hardened.

For a fleeting second, he imagined Veronica with his mother.

"Luca?"

He blinked, refocusing as Veronica turned toward him.

"Have you heard from Valentina yet?" she asked.

"Yeah. Marco says she's down with the flu."

"Poor baby," she murmured. "I'll have to stop by and see her later."

"What? You cannot go anywhere until you can at least move without the stick—or until your physical therapist clears you."

She frowned, clearly unimpressed. "I'll be fine. It's just a short visit."

"No," he said, firmer this time. "It's not happening."

Veronica stilled, her eyes narrowing slightly. "You just told me I had choices."

"You do," he replied. "Just not stupid ones."

"Ugh... you fuss too much," Veronica said, waving a hand dismissively. "Come on, come eat something."

He took his seat beside her, leaning back slightly, his fingers tapping once against the table before stilling. "Listen, Bambola..."

"Oh, oh..." Veronica groaned immediately, rolling her eyes as she reached for her glass. "That tone? That exact tone? I don't like it already."

Luca raised a brow, faint amusement flickering across his face. "What?"

"When you say 'listen, Bambola...' it means you're about to say something I will absolutely hate," she replied, narrowing her eyes at him.

He smirked faintly. "Sort of true."

"What is it?" She was bracing already.

"I have to go to Vienna."

"Okay..." she said cautiously. "Why?"

"It's...My wedding anniversary with Bianca. They're throwing a huge event. I have to be there."

"I understand."

It was too quick.

Luca's eyes sharpened slightly. "What?"

Veronica shrugged lightly, reaching for her fork. "Yeah," she said. "I understand. I trust you. But you know," she added, a smirk tugging at her lips, "just in case... we will have to empty your balls before you go."

Luca barked a short laugh, shaking his head. "I would never say no to that."

"Nobody is talking about such nonsense at my table!" Nonnina snapped.

Both of them froze.

"Yes, ma'am," Veronica said.

Luca chuckled under his breath, shaking his head as he leaned forward, unable to resist.

To annoy Nonnina further—because he was, at his core, still her Diavolino—he reached across and caught Veronica’s chin gently, pulling her into a brief kiss.

Nonnina gasped in outrage and smacked the back of Luca’s head with her napkin.

"Luciano!" she snapped.

"Worth it," he said simply.

Veronica shook her head, a quiet laugh escaping her.

Marco lay sprawled across the three-seater. One arm rested behind his head, the other loosely draped over Valentina, who was stretched out on top of him like she had nowhere else to fall apart.

Her face was buried in his chest, her fingers clutching his shirt. At this point, he had become less of a person and more of a resource—a human tissue.

He didn’t mind.

"What do you want me to do?" Marco asked. "Do you want me to punch him in the face? I’ll do it." A pause. Then, more casually, "I’ll even shoot him for you."

She huffed, before dropping her head back onto him. "I didn’t think it was going to hurt, you know."

Marco’s gaze shifted to the ceiling, his fingers absentmindedly tracing slow, grounding circles against her arm. "Depends. On how much you cared? So tell me... how did you feel about him?"

Valentina hesitated, her lips pressing together before she exhaled softly. "I liked him," she admitted. Then quieter, more honest, "A lot."

Marco nodded once. "Then it’s going to hurt," he said. "And you have to let it."

She frowned faintly. "Let it?"

"Yeah. Don’t rush to fix it. Don’t pretend it didn’t matter. If you bury it, it festers. And then one day, it comes back uglier."

"Do you have a girlfriend, Marco?"

"No."

"Why not?" she pressed, shifting slightly so she could see his face better.

Marco sighed, his gaze drifting back to the ceiling. "Have you heard of my job?" he asked dryly. "I'm the lieutenant to the most dangerous man in the city." A faint smirk tugged at his lips. "I'm basically a walking corpse."

"That's sad."

"Really, it's not," Marco replied. He shifted slightly beneath her, his arm tightening just a fraction. "Protecting Luca has always been my destiny," he continued. "Him and his mother... they took me in when I was five. Gave me a home when I had nothing." His jaw tightened subtly. "So yeah... I don't do girlfriends. I don't do attachments. Not when everything I am belongs to someone else."

"That sounds lonely," she said quietly.

Marco shrugged. "You get used to it."

Valentina lifted her head suddenly, blinking at Marco. "Oh my God! This is the first time you will talk about yourself!" she exclaimed.

"Anything to make you smile," he added.

"Thank you for being here, Marco," she said softly.

He nodded once.

"Oh—and," she added suddenly, the mischief snapping back into place, "you can punch Ricardo in the face for me."

Marco's lips curved slowly. "Yes, ma'am. Your wish is my command." He tilted his head slightly. "So... I'm guessing no training today?"

Valentina narrowed her eyes at him. "Do you want me to shoot you?"

Marco raised both hands immediately. "No! God, no!" he laughed. "We shall reschedule then. I value my life, thank you very much."

She snorted softly, shaking her head as she settled back down against him, the earlier ache still there—but dulled now, softened by his presence.

For now... that was enough.

(Getting the flu sucks. Who invented it? Where did it begin? Ughhh...I hate my life right now!)

