



Mafia Maiden

Author: *Nicole Grey*

Category: Romance, Adult, Crime And Mafia

Description: I was raised to believe monsters lived far from mansions and marble.

Turns out, they wear suits and offer diamond rings.

Luca Bellandi is a name whispered with fear—a ruthless Italian don known for bloodshed, not mercy. So when I'm told I'm to marry him to end a decades-old feud, I expect cold indifference or violence.

Not obsession.

He says I'll be safe. Untouched by his world. Shielded from the sins he's committed. But the moment I become his wife, I learn the truth.

Luca doesn't want a wife.

He wants a possession.

And I've just become the most protected treasure in his empire.

He doesn't let me into his world of guns and secrets. But someone's already watching me from the shadows... and if they reach me, I won't survive.

He promised I'd never see blood.

But someone's about to make him bleed for me.

Total Pages (Source): 16

1

EMILIA

I know something's wrong the moment the car turns down the gravel path instead of heading for the main driveway.

It's a subtle shift—an old service road shadowed by cypress trees—but I grew up in this house. I know which doors are meant for guests and which ones are reserved for secrets. This entrance has always been the latter.

The driver doesn't even glance up at me in the mirror, he is avoiding me.

That's the first sign that all is not right.

The second is the deathly silence when I step out of the car. No housekeeper to greet me and hold open the door. No staff arranging florals on the steps. Just my uncle, standing alone on the terrace in a charcoal suit that doesn't match the summer heat. His hands are clasped behind his back. His face is hardened, like he's trying very hard not to have any expression at all.

I haven't seen that look since the day he told me my father was dead. Who died now?

He doesn't smile. Doesn't open his arms. Just says, "Come inside."

My stomach knots. I listen—because good girls in this family always do what they are told without asking why. That's how we're raised. Polite. Pretty. Obedient.

The villa smells like wood polish and rosewater. Everything is spotless. Still. Wrong.

I follow him to his study.

It's a room I was never allowed in growing up. I used to imagine it full of whispered threats and men with guns. Instead, it's bare. Two chairs. A glass of untouched whiskey. And a silence that doesn't belong in a house like this.

"Sit," he says.

I do, perching at the edge of the chair, like a perfect lady.

He doesn't sit. He stands at the window, staring out at the olive groves whatever he is going to say, he is afraid to say it to my face. Men like him are never afraid.

"There's been some unrest," he begins. "The Romano alliance is dissolving. There's unnecessary bloodshed. Land disputes. Families are choosing sides." These are not topics I'm usually privy to. Business is business and women have no place in this family's business.

I blink. "What does that have to do with me?"

His mouth thins. "Everything."

I am confused. I am not exactly going to solve land disputes or murders.

"We need stability. Protection. The Bellandi family has agreed to accept our offer."

"Offer?" I stutter.

He turns. Meets my gaze. "You."

For a second, I don't understand. Then I do.

It sounds archaic. Like something out of an old history textbook. I wait for the part where he tells me I misheard him.

“You're going to marry Luca Bellandi.”

It is like a slap I didn't see coming.

I shoot to my feet. “Absolutely not.”

“I was not asking you, I was telling you, as a courtesy.”

“You don't get to decide that. I'm not a toy. I'm not something you trade to?—”

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:23 am

“He’s already on his way. I wanted to give you a chance to process, before he arrives.”

That silences me.

My ears ring.

The Bellandi name is a legend. Whispers in marble halls. Ghost stories dressed in silk and smoke. And Luca—he’s the worst of them. The one they call the wolf. A man who took over his family at thirty and left nothing but silence in his wake.

And now I’m supposed to marry him. He’s an enigma, I have often wondered if he even exists.

My voice breaks. “You can’t be serious.”

“You’ll be safe,” my uncle insists. “That was my only condition. He gets your hand—not your loyalty. Not your obedience. He wants a wife in name only.”

As if that makes it better. So now I am a pretty ornament.

I open my mouth to argue, but footsteps echo down the hall—slow, sure, final.

Then the door opens.

And Luca Bellandi walks in. He is real. He exists.

The room seems to shrink around him. He's taller than I expected, broad-shouldered in a tailored black suit, shirt unbuttoned at the collar like power is something casual. His hair is dark, swept back. A scar cuts clean across his jaw. And his eyes—Christ. They're cold. Green. Unblinking. Like a forest after a storm.

He doesn't smile.

Doesn't speak.

Just looks at me like he already owns me.

And somehow, he does.

He takes the seat opposite mine. Our knees brush.

"You're Emilia," he says.

Not a question. A fact.

I nod, but my voice is gone, and I can't make myself speak.

He looks at me like I'm something valuable he intends to keep. Something he's already decided belongs on his shelf.

"I'll keep you safe," he says, voice low and rough. "You won't be touched. You won't be involved. I will keep my word to your father. But once you wear my ring, you're mine."

"I didn't agree to any of this."

"You didn't need to."

I look at my uncle, but he's already stepped away, leaving the door ajar like the deal is sealed in blood and silence. Run off like a coward leaving me literally to the wolves.

"What happens if I refuse?" I whisper.

Luca stands up.

He crosses to me like a predator staring at its prey. When he stops in front of me, he lifts my hand. Gently. Like I'm delicate.

He bends, presses his lips to my knuckles.

A kiss that doesn't ask permission.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:23 am

It is a claim.

“Then I’ll wait,” he murmurs. “But make no mistake, cara mia... I’ll still have you.”

2

LUCA

She doesn’t speak to me during the drive.

She sits beside me, spine straight, shoulders stiff beneath the ivory lace of her wedding gown. Her hands stay folded neatly in her lap, fingers clasped so tightly the tips have gone white. She doesn’t look at me, not once—not even when I glance over and my eyes linger.

I don’t blame her.

She’s just been handed off to a man she has never met before. With a name she was raised to fear. A future she never chose for herself.

But she came with me. No fight, or fuss—no trying to run away.

She stood beside me and said the words ‘I do’. She let me slide my ring onto her finger. She kissed me in front of a hundred witnesses and didn't flinch when I pressed my hand low against her back to lead her away. She came willingly into my fold, into my family, and into my life.

That's enough—for now.

Still, I can feel her silence like a scream.

When we pull through the iron gates of the villa, dusk has softened the lake to glass. Lights burn low in the windows. The staff have gone—sent home hours ago at my instruction. No witnesses. No interruptions.

No one sees her but me.

I step out first, adjusting the cuffs of my shirt as I round the car. She hesitates for just a moment before placing her hand in mine. Cold fingers. Shaky grip. But she doesn't pull away.

I guide her up the stone steps, through the heavy front doors, and into the hush of the foyer. The chandelier overhead glows, casting golden light across the polished marble floors. The air smells like rose petals and firewood. Like something sacred waiting to be ruined.

"Where is everyone?" she asks, looking around.

"Gone."

She swallows. "You cleared the house."

"Yes."

"To make sure I couldn't make a scene or run?"

"No," I say, and pause. "To make sure no one else could look at you tonight."

Her breath catches, but she doesn't say anything. She just follows me up the staircase, the hem of her gown brushing against the carpet runner like a whisper. I take us to the farthest room—the quietest one. The bedroom I had prepared hours ago, before the ceremony, before the toast, before the ink of our names dried on the marriage register.

When I open the door, the scent of beeswax and roses wafts out.

Candles burn low in wrought-iron sconces. The fire crackles in the hearth. A trail of white petals lines the floor, spilling across the velvet runner at the end of the bed. The mattress is turned down. Champagne chills in a silver bucket by the window.

She freezes in the doorway, not crossing the threshold into the room.

Her eyes scan the room like she's looking for a trap.

“This was never your choice,” I say, stepping behind her, my voice low. “But it's still your night.”

She turns to face me, the light catching her eyes. “You promised I'd be safe.”

“You are.”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:23 am

“Then why did you lock the door behind us?”

I meet her stare, unflinching. “Because I don’t trust myself not to walk away if you ask me to.”

The air thickens between us.

She blinks, and I can see the war playing out behind her eyes. Fear. Defiance. Curiosity.

I step closer. Slowly. Deliberately. Like I’m approaching a wild and untamed animal that is cornered. I stop just in front of her, close enough to feel the heat coming off her skin.

“If you want me to sleep somewhere else, say so,” I offer.

She doesn’t speak. But she doesn’t move away either.

Her throat bobs as she swallows. Her lashes flutter once. And then—quietly—she says, “What if I don’t?”

My breaths are heavy.

“Then I’ll show you exactly what it means to belong to me.”

I lift a hand and brush a strand of hair behind her ear. She trembles beneath my touch, but she doesn’t flinch. Her eyes stay locked on mine.

“Take off the dress,” I say softly.

She stiffens.

I let the silence stretch, then lean in to whisper against the bare skin of her neck.

“Let me.”

I move behind her slowly. My fingers find the zipper hidden at the base of her spine, and I lower it one inch at a time, exposing pale skin that glows like silk in the candlelight. She stands dead still, her breaths shallow, her body taut with a tension that isn't quite fear.

The gown slides down, pooling around her feet with a soft rustle.

She stands in lace and satin. Stockings. No bra. A garter that makes my cock twitch.

I circle to face her again.

And stop.

She's exquisite.

Hair tousled. Nipples peaked. Hips curving beneath the delicate band of silk.

My voice drops to a rasp. “Have you ever let a man see you like this?”

She shakes her head, barely a whisper of movement.

“Good.”

I trail a finger down the center of her chest, past the valley between her breasts, down over her ribs, her stomach, until I reach her hip. She gasps when I make contact. Not from pain—just surprise.

“You’re mine now,” I say quietly. “No one else gets this. No one else gets you like this. Understand?”

She nods, slow and silent.

I lean in and kiss her.

Her lips are soft and hesitant. She tastes like champagne and fear. Her hands hover awkwardly at her sides until, finally, they lift and rest against my chest.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:23 am

That first touch. It wrecks me.

I scoop her into my arms and carry her to the bed. She clutches my shoulders as I lay her down between the petals and silk and shadows.

“You don’t have to do anything,” I murmur, settling beside her. “You just have to let me.”

Her reply is a whisper. “Okay.”

I undress slowly. I lock eyes with her as she watches me. Her gaze tracing every inch of bare skin, wide with apprehension.

When I join her, I press soft kisses along her throat, over her collarbone, down her chest.

Her body moves—an arch, a breath, a tremble.

She’s aching for something she’s never had. Something only I can give her.

I drag my fingers down her belly, between her thighs.

She moans.

“Soaked already,” I murmur, my voice thick. “You’re made for this. For me.”

I taste her first. Long, slow strokes of my tongue. She gasps, fists the sheets, writhes

beneath my mouth. Her eyes squeezed closed as I hold her hips and whisper praise between every pass of my tongue.

“That’s it. Let go. Let me feel you come on my tongue.”

She shudders. Breaks. Cries out, her chest heaves with each breath she takes.

But I’m not done.

When I finally slide inside my aching cock her, it’s slow. Deliberate. She holds her breath, but she doesn’t tell me to stop. She clutches my arms, her eyes wide, body so fucking tight around me.

“You’re so damn perfect,” I whisper into her mouth. “I’ve got you.”

I move slowly, worshipping her with inch I add inside her. Stretching her open to take me, the wetness and heat of her pussy only making my cock hungry for more.

She moans. Whimpers. Reaches for me like I’m the only thing that can save her and wreck her at the same time.

And I am.

I whisper filth against her ear—promises, praises, possession.

Her body tightens around my cock, she shudders beneath me with a muffled cry. She comes with a broken moan, and I can’t even try hold back, I’m spilling inside her with a low groan even though I wanted this to last.

I don’t move.

I just hold her. Let the fire crackle and the silence consume us. Let myself believe—for this one moment—that having her doesn't mean I've already killed her.

Because she doesn't know what kind of man I am.

Tonight, she let me pretend I'm something softer. It's a lie—this is not me.

3

EMILIA

The villa is too quiet.

It's the kind of quiet that feels staged. Like someone scrubbed the world clean and hit pause to stop anyone from seeing what's really there. Every corner is picture-perfect—gold light flowing through arched windows, white petals scattered across the terrace like confetti from a ghost wedding. Even the water in the distance seems hushed, the waves softer somehow. Polite.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:23 am

But I don't feel polite. I feel like I'm unraveling, and that at any moment the thread I am hanging on by is going to snap.

It's been three days since my wedding.

Three days since he touched me—tasted me—claimed me.

Three days since I stopped pretending I didn't want him to do it again.

I should be ashamed of that. Maybe I am. Or maybe I'm just too spun out to know what's shame and what's survival anymore.

The silk slip I wear clings to my skin like liquid. It's pale rose, almost see-through in the fading light, the hem brushing just under my ass, exposing me with every step I take. I told myself I put it on for comfort. But comfort doesn't usually come with lace trim or matching panties I never used to own.

The garden terrace is still warm from the boiling hot day. The stone beneath my bare feet feels sun-kissed and smooth.

I walk further away, closer to the danger I crave more than I should.

I trail my fingertips along the balustrade, passing rose bushes in bloom, their petals bruised from the heat. The air is heavy with the scent of jasmine and citrus. Cicadas hum in the olive trees. The whole scene could be something from a dream—too perfect, too beautiful.

Too still.

I feel it. That subtle shift in the air. That electric tension that zaps up my spine like someone just breathed my name without saying it out loud.

I don't have to turn around. I already know. He's behind me.

Luca.

I feel his presence like gravity. Like heat. Like the inevitable pull of something I've been pretending I could resist.

"You're barefoot again," he says softly.

His voice is like smoke. Smooth. Dangerous. Seductive.

"I didn't hear you come out," I say, not turning around.

"I didn't announce myself."

I swallow hard. My skin prickles beneath the silk. The air between us thickens, heady and heavy. It is not the humidity, it's him.

"You didn't come to breakfast," he adds, stepping closer. "I thought maybe you were avoiding me."

"I needed some air."

"You could've asked me to walk with you."

I finally turn, and instantly regret it.

He's dressed in black again. No tie. Shirt sleeves rolled to the elbows, exposing forearms that look carved from stone. His hair is mussed like he's been dragging his hands through it. And his eyes—those cold, calculating green eyes—are locked on me like I'm his next confession or his next sin.

"I didn't think you were the type for strolls in the garden," I murmur.

"I'm not," he says, his mouth tilting in the barest hint of a smile. "But for you?—"

He steps closer. Close enough that I feel the heat of his body. Close enough that my breath catches and my nipples pebble beneath the thin silk of my slip.

"I can't breathe when you look at me like that," I whisper.

"Then stop looking like a fucking fantasy and I won't."

He reaches out slowly, brushing his fingers along my arm. A featherlight touch that sets fire to my skin. He trails upward, over my shoulder, then runs his thumb over my bottom lip.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

“You always smell like flowers,” he murmurs. “Do you do that on purpose?”

“No.”

“You should,” he says. “Because it drives me out of my mind.”

His hand slides down again—over my hip, along the curve of my thigh. He stops just beneath the hem of my slip. My breath hitches, but I don’t pull away.

“Why haven’t you touched me since our wedding night? Don’t you want me?” I ask, my voice quieter than I mean for it to be.

His jaw tightens. “Because I told myself I would let you come to me. That I’d be the patient man who waits.”

“And now?”

His eyes darken. “Now I’m not sure I can wait another fucking second.”

He pins me to the stone wall with his body, not roughly—but completely. One hand braces beside my head, the other cups my jaw, tilting my face toward his. His lips are so close I can feel the heat of them brush my own.

“I’ve been good,” he whispers. “I haven’t touched you I wasn’t going to unless you begged. Haven’t kissed you and wouldn’t unless you opened for me. I haven’t taken what I want.”

His voice drops lower.

“You think I want to beg? You think I want to wonder why my husband doesn’t want me?”

His hand slides higher beneath the slip. His fingers find the damp heat between my thighs, and I gasp.

“You came out here like this,” he growls, “wearing this—barefoot and needy—on purpose, hoping I’d find you.”

“Yes,” I breathe.

That single word shatters whatever self-control he had left. His mouth crashes down on mine.

It’s not gentle. It’s fire and force and hunger.

I open for him, kissing him back with everything I’ve been bottling up for days. My hands tangle in his shirt, fingers clawing at the fabric, pulling him closer.

He lifts me like I weigh nothing, pinning me to the wall. My legs wrap around his waist instinctively. He grinds against me, hard and thick through his pants, and I moan into his mouth.

“You want me to stop?” he asks, voice rough, raw, torn.

“No,” I gasp. “Don’t stop.”

He lowers me just enough to rip the slip over my head and toss it to the stone bench behind us. My panties are gone a second later—torn away with a sharp tug that makes

my skin shiver.

He doesn't hesitate.

He drops to his knees in front of me and drags his tongue over my pussy like he's starving for it. I cry out, my hips jerking against his mouth, my hands fisting in his hair.

He moans low against me, the sound vibrating straight through my core.

“You taste like heaven,” he mutters. “Sweet. Soaked. Mine.”

He laps at me with slow, devastating licks—one hand spreading me wider, the other gripping my thigh. He doesn't let up until I'm shaking, legs trembling, back arching against the wall as I come on his face.

He still doesn't stop.

He devours. He worships.

When I come again, it's with a helpless cry, my fingers digging into his shoulders, my whole body unraveling for him.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

He stands slowly, his lips wet with my arousal, his eyes blazing with possession.

“Look at you,” he rasps. “Shaking. Wrecked. So fucking beautiful like this.”

He kisses me again, slower now, but no less desperate. And when he lifts me again and carries me to the bench, I don’t ask questions. I just let him lay me back, spread me open, and slide his cock inside me with a low groan that sounds like relief. It hurts less this time, but it still stretches me so wide I feel I’m being torn in two.

“Luca...” I whisper, gripping his arms.

He cups my jaw, kissing me hard. “You’re mine now. You understand me?”

I nod. “Yes.”

“Say it.”

“I’m yours.”

He thrusts deeper. “Again.”

“I’m yours, Luca.”

He fucks me like he’s reclaiming something he lost—deep, slow strokes that drive me wild, fingers gripping my hips like they were made for his hands. I never quite imagined what sex would be like, I was raised to be afraid of it, I never expected to enjoy the ‘chore’ my mother had resented so much.

I come again before he does, clenching so tight around his cock I can feel it throb.

And when he finally lets go, groaning my name as he spills inside me, I don't feel shame.

I feel power. I feel wanted. I feel whole.

And maybe that should scare me. Because somewhere in all that heat and hunger, I realize the truth.

I don't want to escape him. I want to be his. I like being his wife, his toy, his possession.

4

LUCA

The house is quiet when I return.

Not peaceful. Not warm. Just... empty.

The kind of quiet that seeps into your bones. That clings to the walls like blood under your fingernails. I close the front door and lock it—not because I expect trouble, but because that's what I do. I secure things. I deal with threats. I keep what's mine safe.

Even if I have to be a monster to do it.

I stripped off my bloodied jacket hours ago. Washed my hands at the last safehouse before getting back in the car. Scrubbed until my skin burned. But I can still feel it—the weight of it. The rage. The guilt.

The silence.

Because no matter how many times I tell myself I did the right thing—no matter how many bodies I bury for her—it never feels clean.

I climb the stairs, ignoring the whisper of memories in every shadow.

I didn't mean to fall in love with her.

I meant to claim her. Protect her. Use the marriage to solidify a truce, and keep her far from the blood that built my empire.

But the moment I saw her walk barefoot through the garden with moonlight in her eyes, I knew?—

I wouldn't survive this woman.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

When I get to the bedroom, I stop dead in the doorway.

She's sprawled sideways across the bed, curled in on herself, one leg bent, her nightgown hiked halfway up her thigh. The firelight catches the pale silk of her skin and the soft curve of her waist, and for a second, I can't breathe.

She looks fragile, and breakable.

And I am anything but gentle.

I should leave her alone. Sleep on the couch. Pretend I'm still the man who knows how to wait. How to protect her without tasting her again. But I can't—not after tonight. Not after wrapping my hands around the throat of the man who gave her away like a lamb to slaughter.

Her uncle begged. I didn't listen.

Because the second he said her name—said it like it was just another move on the board—I saw red.

And now?

Now I need her like penance.

I step inside and sit on the edge of the bed. The mattress dips under my weight, and she stirs.

Her lashes flutter, and she blinks up at me, sleep-hazed and soft. “Luca?”

“Go back to sleep.”

She shifts onto her back, the neckline of her nightgown slipping off one shoulder. Her skin glows in the firelight, and I hate myself for the way my cock stirs at the sight.

“Is something wrong?” she asks, voice laced with sleep and worry.

Everything’s wrong.

And she doesn’t know the half of it.

“No.”

I lie. Because if I tell her the truth, she’ll look at me like I’m a monster in the dark.

Maybe I am.

She reaches for me, her hand ghosting over my thigh. I catch her wrist—not rough, but firm—and press it back to the bed.

“Don’t,” I rasp.

“Why?”

“Because I can’t take you gently tonight.”

Her breath hitches.

She stares up at me, eyes wide, pupils dilating.

“Then don’t,” she whispers.

Two words.

That’s all it takes.

I snap.

I’m on her in an instant, my mouth crushing hers, my body pressing her down into the mattress. She gasps into the kiss but doesn’t resist. Her arms wrap around my neck, her fingers tangling in my hair as she arches against me like she’s been starving too.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

I kiss her like she's air and I'm suffocating.

She tastes like heat and honey and something I can't name.

My hands drag down her body, gripping her thighs and yanking them apart. I grind against her, letting her feel the length of me, thick and hard through my slacks.

"You don't know what I've done for you," I growl against her throat. "What I've ruined. What I've become."

"I don't care."

"You fucking should."

She lifts her hips, rubbing against me like she's trying to drive me mad. It's working.

"I just want you."

Her voice is breathless, unsteady, but sure.

And I'm gone.

I tear the nightgown straight down the center, exposing her completely. Her breath catches, but her eyes stay locked on mine.

"God, look at you," I rasp. "Soft. Bare. Fucking mine."

I lower my mouth to her chest, sucking her nipple between my lips, biting just hard enough to make her gasp. She moans and grabs at my shoulders, nails dragging down my back like she wants to mark me too.

I kiss lower, down her stomach, to her hips. Then farther.

When I reach her center, I don't tease.

I spread her open with my hands and bury my face between her thighs.

She cries out, head falling back, hips bucking up into my mouth.

"You taste like a fucking dream," I groan. "Sweet and wet and made for me."

I eat her like it's my only job—tongue deep, rough, relentless. Her thighs shake. Her fists clench the sheets. And when she shatters around my mouth, she screams my name like it's the only word she remembers.

But I'm not done.

I never am.

I crawl back up, kissing her neck, her collarbone, the soft skin beneath her ear.

I unbuckle my belt and shove my slacks down, my cock springing free—hard, heavy, aching for her.

When I line up at her entrance, I pause.

"You want me to stop?" I ask, even though I know the answer.

“No,” she whispers, wrecked. “Please. I need you.”

I push inside her with one deep, devastating stroke.

She gasps, her eyes rolling back, her body arching off the bed.

“Fuck,” I grit. “You feel like heaven. Like home. Like everything I never deserved.”

I thrust again. And again.

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

Slow at first. Deep. Purposeful.

Each movement driving us both higher.

I grip her hips, hold her steady, fuck her like I'm trying to rewrite every bad thing I've ever done.

"Say it," I pant. "Tell me who you belong to."

"You," she moans.

"Louder."

"Only you, Luca."

I growl, thrusting harder. "That's fucking right. No one else gets you. No one else hears those sounds. No one else sees you like this."

My hand slides to her throat—not to choke, just to feel the flutter of her pulse as I bury myself inside her again and again.

"You're mine," I snarl. "Every inch. Every breath. Every fucking heartbeat."

She moans, her voice ragged, her body tightening around me like she's about to fall apart.

"Come for me," I command. "Let me feel it. Let go for me, baby."

She obeys.

Her orgasm hits her like a wave—loud, messy, unrestrained.

I follow a heartbeat later, spilling inside her with a hoarse cry, grinding into her so deep I swear I feel her soul shudder against mine.

We collapse together in a tangle of limbs and heat and sweat.

Breathless. Shaking.

Ruined.

She runs her fingers through my hair, soft and slow. I press my forehead to her chest and breathe her in like she's the only clean thing left in my world.

I want to tell her everything.

About the blood on my hands. The way her uncle begged. The sound his bones made when they snapped.

But I don't.

Because if I tell her now—she won't look at me the same way in the morning.

And I'm not ready to lose her.

5

EMILIA

The storm is gone by morning.

But it's left its mark—on the world, on the house, on me.

Tree limbs are scattered across the courtyard like bones. Puddles shimmer across the marble floors where the rain snuck in through the old windows. The whole villa feels quiet, but not in a peaceful way. In a waiting way. Like something is about to begin, or end, or both.

I wake up alone.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

The bed is ice cold beside me, sheets tangled from what we did last night. From the way we tried to erase everything ugly between us with our bodies, and heat, and whispered lies.

But some truths don't burn away so easily.

My thighs still ache.

My mouth is sore from kissing him so hard.

And I can still feel the phantom imprint of his voice on my skin—low, rough, filthy.

I sit up slowly, scanning the room.

The letter's gone.

So is Luca.

There's no note. No trace. Just silence.

I find my robe and slip it on, knotting the belt tight. I pad barefoot through the halls, past dust-moted sunlight and empty rooms, not sure if I'm looking for him or for the version of myself I lost somewhere between his mouth and the feel of him thrusting deep inside me.

Eventually, I find him.

Not in the study. Not in the garden. Not in the bedroom where I left him gasping my name into my throat.

He's in the chapel.

Tucked in the farthest part of the house, behind a heavy wooden door I've passed a dozen times without looking twice. I push it open gently and step inside.

The air is thick with incense and memory.

Dust clings to the pews. The altar is bare, the stained-glass windows faded by time. But he's there.

Luca.

Seated near the front, elbows on his knees, head bowed like a man not sure whether he's praying or bracing for damnation.

He doesn't move when I enter. Doesn't look at me. But I feel him register me all the same. His shoulders stiffen. His breath pauses. His whole body shifts just enough for me to know I still affect him—even now. Even after everything.

"I thought you'd be gone by now," he says without lifting his head.

"I thought about it."

He lets out a short exhale. A nod.

I walk down the aisle slowly, letting my fingers trail across the edge of a dusty pew, then slide in beside him. The wood creaks beneath me.

“You took the letter,” I say softly.

He nods again. “I didn’t want you to burn it.”

“I wouldn’t have.”

“I would have.”

We sit in silence.

I glance sideways at him.

He looks wrecked. Haunted. Like sleep didn’t touch him. Like the ghost of what he’s done is heavier than any priest could absolve.

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

“I didn’t come here to forgive you,” I say.

“I didn’t expect you to.”

“I’m still angry.”

“You should be.”

“But I’m also tired of pretending I don’t know what this is.”

He finally looks at me. His eyes—those brutal, possessive, beautiful eyes—are filled with something I can’t name.

“You don’t owe me anything, Emilia.”

“I know,” I whisper. “And that’s the only reason I’m choosing to stay.”

His jaw clenches. His breath catches like I’ve punched him in the chest.

“I could have walked out that door this morning and never looked back. But I didn’t.”

“Why?” His voice is hoarse. Raw. “Why the hell would you stay after everything I’ve?—”

“Because I love you.”

The silence swells around us.

I say it again, softer this time. “I love you. The monster. The man. The parts you try to hide and the parts you throw in everyone’s face. I don’t want safety if it means silence. I don’t want peace if it means pretending I don’t crave the way you ruin me.”

His eyes flash. He grabs my wrist. Not roughly—but firmly. Anchoring himself.

“I don’t know how to be good,” he says. “I don’t know how to unlearn the violence or tame the possessiveness. I don’t know how to touch you without wanting to claim you.”

“Then don’t.”

His breath shakes.

I rise from the pew, step between his legs, and straddle him.

He goes still.

His hands fall to my hips, gripping tight through the silk of the robe. His gaze drags over me—hair tousled, mouth bare, thighs parted just for him.

“You’re playing with fire,” he murmurs.

“I’ve already burned.”

I untie the robe slowly, letting it fall open.

His eyes darken.

No bra. No panties. Just skin and want and the kind of heat that lives in the marrow of my bones now.

“Jesus Christ,” he growls. “You’re killing me.”

“Then die with me.”

He grabs me—mouth crushing mine, hands sliding up my thighs, my ass, my back. The robe falls away completely, and I gasp into the kiss as he lifts me in one fluid motion and carries me out of the chapel.

We don’t make it back to the bedroom.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

We don't need to.

He slams me against the nearest wall, the stone cool against my spine. His mouth is everywhere—neck, collarbone, chest—biting, sucking, devouring.

“You're so fucking perfect,” he pants. “Every inch of you. Mine.”

His hand slides between my legs, fingers slipping inside like they were made for me.

“You're dripping,” he groans. “Soaked. I haven't even fucked you yet and you're already begging for it.”

“I need you,” I gasp, rocking against him. “I need all of you.”

“Sweetheart,” he growls, “you're about to get it.”

He lowers me to the floor just long enough to shed his clothes—shirt gone, belt undone, slacks pushed down. His cock springs free, thick and hard, already leaking.

I lick my lips.

“You want it?” he asks, stroking himself slowly.

“Yes.”

“Then turn around.”

I do.

He presses my chest to the cold stone, hikes my leg up onto the narrow windowsill, and pushes inside me from behind with one deep, brutal thrust.

We both groan.

“Fuck, yes,” he snarls. “So tight. So fucking wet. You were made for this cock.”

He starts to move—long, hard strokes that hit deep and sure.

I moan, fingers bracing against the wall, body arching into every thrust.

“You like this?” he grits. “You like me owning you like this? Fucking you where anyone could walk in and see who you belong to?”

“Yes,” I cry. “I’m yours. Always.”

He fucks me harder, faster, the sound of skin on skin echoing through the stone hall like a prayer.

“You’re going to come for me,” he says. “Right here. Against this wall. With my name in your mouth and my cock buried so deep you’ll feel me for days.”

I fall apart for him.

With a cry that’s equal parts surrender and triumph, I come hard, pulsing around him, shaking with the force of it.

He follows with a low, vicious growl, thrusting once, twice more before spilling inside me with a curse and a promise.

“I’m never letting you go,” he breathes against my neck. “Never.”

We stay like that—panting, clinging, wrecked—for what feels like forever.

When he finally pulls back, he lifts me again, cradles me in his arms like I’m breakable, and carries me the rest of the way to the bedroom.

We don’t sleep.

We make love again—slower this time. On clean sheets. With soft kisses and rough hands and the kind of worship that makes the air feel holy.

Page 15

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

When we collapse at last in the early afternoon, our limbs tangled and sweat cooling between us, I look at him and know.

I was never meant to be protected from this man.

I was meant to survive him.

And now?

I belong to him.

Completely.

Not because he took me.

Because I gave myself willingly.

And in the quiet that follows, with his hand resting over my heart and his voice rough in my ear, I whisper the only truth that matters:

“You’re not the life I dreamed of, Luca Bellandi. But you’re the one I choose.”

6

LUCA

Seven years earlier.

She doesn't belong here.

Not among men who speak in contracts and kill in promises. Not under chandeliers paid for in silence or beside women who wear diamonds like armor and smile like threats. She moves through this place like it hasn't touched her, like the dirt of our world hasn't even grazed the hem of her sundress.

And God help me, I don't want it to.

I first see her just past the rose hedge, laughing at something a little girl says. Not a practiced, empty laugh—the kind women here perfect by seventeen—but real, unfiltered amusement. It spills from her lips like she hasn't learned yet to be careful with her joy. She kneels to adjust the girl's sandal, her head bowed, a loose braid slipping down her back, and in that moment, I stop pretending I'm only here for the politics.

She stands again and spins beneath the olive trees, arms wide like she's trying to hold the sky. The hem of her yellow dress flutters around her knees, bare feet brushing over the stone path as if nothing in this place could ever hurt her. She's radiant in a way this world doesn't know what to do with.

I light a cigarette and stay hidden beneath the arbor's shade, watching her move through dusk like a dream no one has earned.

She's young. Maybe seventeen. Maybe barely eighteen. But she doesn't carry herself like a girl. She isn't performing. She isn't calculating who's watching. She's just present—completely, startlingly alive in a place designed to kill that kind of thing young.

And I know, with a certainty that slides cold and final through my spine, that I've seen her before I was supposed to. Before I could have her. Before I even knew I'd

want to.

I shouldn't be looking at her. I know that. But I can't look away.

Later, I ask. Quietly. Discreetly. One name at a time.

Emilia Renzi.

Niece to a minor associate. Raised far from the city. Kept away from the business. Sheltered by a mother who knew too well what this world can take from a woman. She's soft. Good. Unclaimed. A reminder of what life looks like untouched by blood and power.

She's not mine.

But I want her like she already is.

I want to know what her voice sounds like when she isn't laughing for a child but whispering something just for me. I want to know if her breath hitches when I touch her. If she trembles when I say her name.

But I don't speak to her. I don't make a move. I don't even let her see me watching.

Because this isn't the moment.

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 8, 2025, 4:24 am

Not yet.

She's still innocent. Still wrapped in a version of herself that I refuse to stain.

I turn to leave, and for a second, I hate the part of me that hesitates. The part that looks back one last time and memorizes the way she lifts her face to the stars like they've never betrayed her.

But I do look back.

And I think—no, I know—that one day, she'll belong to me.

Not because I'll take her.

Because I'll wait.

Because I'll make sure the world doesn't touch her until I can.

Because when the time comes, and she walks into a room with fire in her voice and silk on her skin, and she meets my gaze like she's never once been afraid of the dark—I'll be ready.

She'll think it's fate.

She won't know it's obsession.

I flick the cigarette into the gravel and disappear into the villa, her laughter still

echoing behind me. But I carry a vow with me, silent and absolute:

One day, Emilia Renzi will wear my ring.

She just doesn't know it yet.

And when she finds out what I've done to make sure she ends up mine... she'll either hate me forever—or fall even harder.