

## Vita Mia – Lucciola

Giovanni took his seat at the head of the table. Though the wine was poured no one had taken a sip. He picked up his glass and the others did as well. “I am happy to announce the newest member of the family. Last night Catalina, my *piccoletta*, gave birth to a baby boy. Armando Mancini Battaglia. *Cin, cin.*”

“*Cin, cin,*” everyone said.

Giovanni sipped and glanced to his wife. She gave him a reassuring nod of approval. He sat and the servers began to bring in the silver trays of food. It was then he took notice of his gathering. Carlo wasn’t among his men and his absence was a disappointment. Everyone else had made an appearance.

“We have good news, family news tonight,” Giovanni began. A few of the wives ate or fed their children from their laps, but his men were all riveted when he spoke. He had little appetite himself, but he broke bread and shared in the meal to encourage everyone else to do so.

“*Bella*, I think this news should be given by you.”

Mirabella nodded. “Giovanni and I have decided to take the business in a different direction. My fashion business, that is.” Mirabella smiled at Kyra. Jamie was not present but she’d invited a few other people from her Rome office to join the celebration. “Thank you ladies for carrying the torch for the last year. It has been difficult, I know. The good news is that your hard work is why we will go so much further. The next press release will share the new vision. We are no longer Mirabella’s or House of Mirabella’s. We are now *La Battaglia*. And the first launch of our line will be menswear. Totally inspired by my husband,” Mirabella smiled.

The family clapped.

When the applause subsided, she continued. “We will continue our shoe and lingerie lines because they are very commercial and profitable. We will extend that into luggage and purses. And Giovanni and I have both decided to venture into jewelry. We now have new investments in South and East Africa along with Russia for gold and diamonds. The collection will have everything from the highest quality jewelry to watches and accessories. The future is bigger than clothing and it’s brighter. We start again together, as Battaglia. As *la famiglia*.”

The applause rose and several stood and saluted her and her husband with their glasses. It was because of Mirabella and her credibility that Giovanni could see creating a legacy for his children that would push them out of the Mafia. A future that guaranteed prosperity instead of death and despair. It would be the legacy they deserved, the one he promised his wife when she ran from him in fear years ago and agreed to return into this life.

*“Grazie, Bella,”* Giovanni said. Everyone sat and silence fell across the table. “To get to the that future my Bella promises you, we all must deal with the past and the present. The past, as you know, was based on a lie, and my cousin Lorenzo was the king of lies. For eight month’s we have been fighting a losing battle and it has cost us personally and financially. But the battle is over. Lorenzo is dead.”

No one celebrated. Out of respect.

He continued.

“That is the past. The present is you, everyone at this table will come with us. Some of you are asking yourselves where do you fit in the family? We all know we have new enemies and untrustworthy friends. We have to finish the work we’ve started in the Campania so that our father’s mistakes don’t repeat. With that being said, Renaldo is now my new underboss here in Italy.”

Kyra gasped, not in celebration but abject horror. Giovanni caught her reaction and so did the top enforcers at the table. She looked over to her husband with disbelief in her eyes then got up from the table and left the dinner. Her reaction was understandable. Standing next to Giovanni would put a permanent target on Renaldo’s back, with the law and with the Camorra clans. What wife would celebrate such a promotion for their husband? A few congratulated Renaldo. He gave a smile and excused himself to go after his wife. Giovanni went on. “Dominic is underboss and no longer consigliere for the family. He will now run Palermo, Bagheria, Mondello. He will work to ensure that our interests are protected with the Sicilians. Because is a Sicilian. It’s in his blood.”

Everyone nodded that the decision was wise.

“Nico is now the eyes and ears of the family and most trusted,” he said. “See him, before you see me.”

Nico nodded to everyone at the table. A few congratulated him. “However, that role is shared.” Giovanni interrupted. He glanced to his wife who looked at him curiously. “When I was at my lowest, when this family was at our lowest, you made us

strong, *Bella*. The women in this family are not bystanders, they are the heart and soul. And my Donna, is the strongest ally I've ever had. You are a part of me. The better part of me, Donna Mirabella Ellison Mancini Battaglia. You are my soul. And I do need you to be at my side until the very end."

Mirabella leaned in and kissed him. Everyone clapped.

"I love you," she said. "Nothing will ever change that. Nothing and no one to the very end."

He chuckled.

She hugged his neck and refused to let go. In order to conclude the meeting, he had to pull her down to his lap. He then raised his glass. "*Un brindisi, alla famiglia, vicina e lontana!*" He made a toast to the success of the family near and far.

"*Cin, cin!*"

Everyone stood and toasted the Don and his Donna. There was plenty of celebration. But the one that mattered, was the loving way his wife held on to him. Giovanni knew he'd made mistakes with her in the past. But she never gave up on him. And after losing Lorenzo and his faith and belief in his mother and father, having her close to his heart gave him hope. Whatever price he had to pay to make sure she and the kids had a future that wasn't washed in blood by his sins, he'd pay it. He hugged Mirabella and pressed the side of his face to her breast. She stroked his head.

"We're going to be just fine," she said. "A family. Have faith Gio."

"I do," he said.

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Giovanni's dark hair was askew, and his expression was raw, thanks to the time he spent between her thighs loving her most intimately with his tongue. Down he went on her again and the brink of climax made her chew into her bottom lip to keep from screaming out. Again he stopped. Damn him. She kicked at his chest and he chuckled. He eased up on her with devilment in his eyes.

"You think it's funny?"

He bit her chin. Mirabella forced him to his back. It was her turn to take charge. She was now the one on top. She eased down on his erection and arched her pelvis

during the receiving. Giovanni's hand slid a line up her belly and chest, until his palm gently cupped her breasts. She rode his dick nice and steady with a bump and grind, clench and twist, up and down motion that was all control by her inner thigh muscles, her tight pussy walls, and jiggling buttocks. Tonight, was the first night since the birth of their daughter she could have sex with him. A reunion that was good for their soul.

The roots of her hair were damp with sweat. The temperature in the room felt hotter than hades. It must have been him. It must have been this love of theirs that survived mafia wars, the birth of children, destruction of friends and families. This love that continued to grow in spite of it all. He felt so good to her she gave into every carnal lustful surge from her powerful man. His dick thrust into her from his bottom maneuvers and she felt him reach the limits. She smiled.

And then she smelled something. Smoke.

Mirabella stopped moving. Giovanni grabbed her hips trying to force the sexual rhythm to continue.

“Gio? Wait.”

“Don't, Bella, keep going,” he groaned. He grabbed the back of her neck and forced her down to lick her mouth as he turned her over to her back. He kept with his rapid dick thrusts and she lost her train of thought. What women could continue to think with a Titan between her thighs. She grabbed his arms and rolled her hips so his crushing passion could be met with the sweet softness of her vaginal walls in the way he loved her most.

It was undeniable. She smelled smoke.

Giovanni kept thrusting and panting. He dropped on her. Mirabella looked up at the ceiling. Was she going crazy?

Smoke? Smoke? She smelled smoke.

And then a loud crash was met with the scream of a woman and they both froze.