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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 83

Monday Night – Mario's House – 24 February 2003

Apollonia called her sister from the car. She instructed her to be at Mario's place when she arrived. She did not elaborate on why. Raffaella noticed the time and immediately knew that something was amiss. She told Viviano she had to meet her sister at their father's house. His look of concern spoke volumes to Raffaella, but she made it a non-issue when she told him she believed it had something to do with Moretti business and not Mario. Both of them knew Apollonia was only waiting for the opportune moment to murder Mario.

Raffaella found her father sitting alone in his bedroom reading while the stereo played some old scratchy vinyl recording of an unknown Italian opera singer. She approached him and placed a kiss on each cheek. He responded by doing the same to her. They clasped hands and just looked into each other's eyes.

"Are you ok, daddy?" asked Raffaella.

"As well as I can be Raffy. It isn't easy seeing the love of your life..."

Raffaella removed her right hand from her father's and placed it on his cheek. She felt him lean into her hand. "I know daddy. I cried when I was alone in my room. I miss her too, daddy.

"It is late, Raffy," said Mario. "Why are you here?"

She wanted to lie to her father, but she knew he'd catch her in it, so, "It's not that late, daddy. Apollonia called me from the city. Told me to meet her here. She said I had to be here before she arrived. Just as well, as I wanted to make sure you were ok."

Mario took his hand from hers and rested them on the arms of the chair Lucia loved to sit in. He waited a moment before he asked, "Where in the city, Raffy?"

He watched his oldest daughter frown and question in her mind his question of where Apollonia was in the city. She responded, "I think she was in a limousine coming home from East 84th Street, daddy."

"Are you sure?" asked Mario. "East 84th Street?"

"Yes. East 84th Street," said Raffaella.

Mario Moretti became agitated when he heard his oldest confirm that Apollonia was returning from East 84th Street. Raffaella witnessed a change in her father she had never witnessed before. He lost the color in his face and his hands began to slide over the tops of the arms of the chair in anticipation of something not to his liking. Raffaella Moretti felt her own fear begin to rise because she inferred from her father's change in demeanor that something bad existed or occurred on East 84th Street and Apollonia was coming to the house to confront him about it.

"Fuck," she whispered to herself. "Daddy, tell me before she arrives. Tell me or I may not be able to help you. Please, daddy, I don't want to lose you too."

Mario Moretti smiled. He looked around the room and then up to his oldest daughter's face. "Doesn't much matter anymore Raffaella. Doesn't much matter. If Apollonia discovered what I think she discovered, the only thing I can and will do is offer myself up to her." Mario Moretti closed his eyes, "It is the only right thing to do."

"Daddy, what are you saying to..." was all Raffaella got out of her mouth.

From the kitchen came the scream, 'RAFFAELLA??? RAFFY, WHERE ARE YOU???'

Raffaella turned from her father, exited the room, and onto the balcony. She called to her sister, "Apollonia, I'm on the balcony."

"GET YOUR ASS DOWN TO THE KITCHEN, NOW!!!" screamed Apollonia. Her anger patently obvious to her sister.

Raffaella did not have a chance to say anything to Mario before she made haste down the steps and into the kitchen. She saw Apollonia standing in front of the door that lead into the basement still dressed in the black Moretti dress she wore to Lucia's funeral. Raffaella strode over to her sister and before she could kneel to do her due diligence Apollonia stopped her. Surprised, Raffaella stood wide eyed waiting for the next shoe to drop.

"Where is Mario?" asked Apollonia.

Fearfully waiting for something horrible to happen to her, Raffy answered, "In his room, reading and listening to an old recording of an Italian opera."

"You told him I was on my way here?"

Raffaella closed her eyes expecting her sister's violent reaction to take place when she replied, "Yes, I did."

"FUCK," cried Apollonia. "FUCK, FUCK, FUCK!!!"

Raffaella sighed when her sister did not react violently when she heard that Mario knew she was on the way and from where. Relieved, she asked, "Something I need to know, Appy?"

Apollonia took her right hand and moved it to Raffaella's face. She saw her sister flinch and knew she was stressed out just from hearing her yell and scream at her. Her hand made contact with her sister's face and she gently pressed it against the soft skin of her cheek. Apollonia took her left hand and put it on Raffaella's right hip.

"We need to talk sis," said Apollonia just before she moved her hand to the back of Raffaella's head and pulled it in for a kiss. "I need some coffee. Please make a pot. As it brews, we're going downstairs into the wine cellar to find another safe that should be hidden under the floor. Everything will come into perspective when I retrieve the contents of the safe."

"Ok," said Raffaella. She made her way into the kitchen where she found the coffee and filters. She filled the coffeemaker and turned it on. "Appy, when I told daddy you were coming here from the city he asked me from where and when I told him East 84th Street he became very agitated."

Apollonia did not react to her sister's statement about Mario's reaction. She simply said, "Follow me."

Raffaella followed her sister down the stairs into the basement. The wine cellar was a custom built room that was built to hold 10,000 bottles of wine at the perfect temperature for storage. The floor was raised which allowed for air to circulate underneath in concert with the air ducts to keep the room at a perfect fifty-five degrees. The doors to the room were kept closed and locked. The keys were hung on the wall heading down the steps into the basement. No one ever worried about someone coming into the house to steal bottles of wine some of which were very expensive. Apollonia never understood why the doors were kept locked, but she now had total understanding of why based upon what she believe was stored in the safe after seeing the basement of the townhouse on 84th Street.

Apollonia unlocked one of the doors, entered followed by her sister, and said, "Check the floor. There has to be some sort of trap door that allows access to the safe. Start in that corner."

The sisters separated and began a board by board inspection of the floor. Twenty minutes later they were standing in the middle of the huge wine cellar frustrated. Neither of them found the trap door. They were about to start again when Mario made his presence known.

"Looking for something, Apollonia?" he chided.

Raffaella again waited for the explosion but was amazed that her sister kept her cool. Apollonia her hands opening and closing into fists stood legs slightly apart staring that the man she no longer acknowledged as her father.

"That I am sissy boi. That I am," replied Apollonia. She stepped towards Mario, put her nose about a millimeter from his, and cooed, "East 84th Street, bitch boi. Do I need to extrapolate?"

"No, Apollonia, you don't," answered Mario. "But, you're never going to find what you're looking for."

"If I have to dismantle this room Mario, I will find what I'm looking for, you can bet on it," said Apollonia after she stepped back from being nose-to-nose with Mario.

Both women heard him chuckle before he spoke, "Good luck, because I'll go to my grave before I tell you anything, cunt. No amount of torture or pain will force me to give you what you seek. I'll let you torture me to death before I reveal if and where a safe may be hidden in this room."

Again Raffaella waited for the inevitable explosion, but instead she heard Apollonia continue her calm conversation with Mario.

Apollonia stepped back further from the man she won't ever again acknowledge as her father. "Why don't you return to your bedroom, bitch boi. Your stupidity just gave me the location of the safe."

Mario Moretti's face changed from self-serving confidence to abject fear. He ran though his mind what he said and could not put together the key to his telling his violent psychotic daughter the location of the safe. She knew it was in the wine cellar, but she didn't know its exact location. For a split second, he had moved his eyes to the center of the rear wall of the room and to the floor. It did it unconsciously and had no idea that she had set him up.

"Raffy, in the middle under the shelving," cried Apollonia. "We're going to have to remove the bottles from the three bottom shelves and then the shelves themselves. Fuckin' stupid asshole didn't think I would find the safe, but all I had to do was tell him he had already given it to me and the dumb son-of-a-bitch stares right at it."

The sound that came out of Mario Moretti's mouth was sickening. He could not keep himself upright as he stumbled out of the wine cellar and began to make his way up the cellar steps. Raffaella watched and became

frightened for her father. She looked at her sister and used her face to beseech her to let her go to him. Apollonia nodded her approval although inside she wanted him to have an accident that would put her out of her misery when it came to thinking about him. She also knew Mario Moretti would never commit suicide.

Forty-five minutes later Apollonia Moretti uncovered a large double door safe that was not designed to be installed on its back in the floor. She pondered for a minute as to how the doors could be opened when she noticed two u-clamps welded onto each door at what would be the top and the bottom. She looked up and laughed. Built into the ceiling and cleverly hidden were two winches. Apollonia surveyed the wine cellar one more time and found the switches that would lower and raise the cables that would hold the doors of the safe open. The combination was no secret because Lucia kept it on a laminated piece of paper inside the stainless steel tube she kept inserted in her lower bowel.

Raffaella answered her sister's summons and was taken aback when she saw the size of the safe that was embedded into the floor of the wine cellar. Apollonia spun the combination lock and spun the six handled wheel to release the locking mechanism. Together they hooked the cables into the u-clamps and raised the doors. Both women stood open mouthed when they saw the contents. One side of the safe and half of the other contained bars of gold bullion and velvet bags that they knew could only be filled with perfect diamonds. The remainder of the safe held Lucia's journals and envelopes of various sizes. Apollonia stepped down onto the edge of the safe and handed the journals and envelopes to her sister which she placed into twelve large empty wine boxes. They closed and relocked the safe, but did not take the time to replace the shelving and bottles. Save that for tomorrow. Six trips for Apollonia and six for Raffaella and the boxes were seated on the floor next to the breakfast table.

After sorting the journals into ascending date order, Apollonia Moretti began to read while drinking her first mug of hot black coffee since she arrived. The only thing she savored was the coffee as she began to get nauseous from her mother's writings. Raffaella Moretti sat quietly waiting for her sister to tell her to go home or help with what had to be an enormous and unsatisfying task. With each page read, Apollonia Moretti gained an insider's view of her mother's deviance, but what made her even more irate was her father's growing acceptance and eventual participation.

"We have a problem, Raffy," said Apollonia after she closed the journal she was reading and placed back in the proper date sequence. "Do me a favor, go upstairs and bring Mario to me."

"Must I?" Raffaella replied afraid of what her sister would do to him. "First, I need to know what is in those journals and the envelopes. I'm not going upstairs until I know, Apollonia."

Apollonia picked up the mug of coffee, stared hard into her sister's eyes, and feigned that she was going to bean her sister with it. Instead, she placed the mug to her lips and drained its contents in a couple of big gulps. The mug broke into pieces when she slammed onto the oak table top. Raffaella jumped her fear borne from the possibility her sister was going to cut her with the handle of the mug. Apollonia stood up, grabbed her sister by the arm, and dragged her to Mario's room.

The door was closed and Apollonia barged in to find Mario sitting on Lucia's favorite chair reading and listening to Italian opera. He did not react adversely to her barging into his room without knocking. "So, Apollonia, should I assume you found and opened the safe?"

"Yes, Mario," replied Apollonia. "I found the safe. Opened it, because your dumb cunt of a dead wife left the combination in the tube she kept shoved up her ass. Bet you didn't know that one. Also found the winches in the ceiling. Nice trick, Mario."

Mario shifted in the seat trying to get comfortable as the stress of not knowing what Apollonia was going to do to him coursed throughout his body. "I guess you're going to come behind me and snap my neck like you did your mother's. If that is what you want, then get it over with Apollonia. Don't fuckin' play with me you psychotic bitch."

Raffaella gasped when she heard her father invite Apollonia to take his life. She stepped next to her sister and whispered, "Appy, please don't..."

"Shush, Raffy," said Apollonia, "I'm not going to do anything to him, right now that is. Mario Moretti is an enigma Raffaella. He's a two faced cocksucker..."

"FUCK YOU," screamed Mario, "YOU DON'T KNOW SQUAT YOU FUCKIN' SPLIT TAIL BITCH. ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR IS BEIN' USED BY A MAN LIKE ME TO JERK OFF INTO!!! YOU AREN'T EVEN WORTH FUCKIN'!!! LOOK AT THE USELESS SISSY BITCH YOU MARRIED, CUNT."

"Feel better Mario? Your words are just that bitch boi – words. What I have now is total control over you, the Moretti family worldwide, and a whole bunch of people who are going to pay dearly for their stupidity. How many of them know Lucia kept journals and took clandestine pictures and videos of their depravity?"

Stunned, Mario inquired, "Pictures? I knew about the journals, but pictures and videos?"

Apollonia laughed so hard she began to cry. "Yes, Mario, pictures and videos. I haven't opened or viewed any of them yet, but your depraved wife cross-referenced her journal entries with the photos and videos. Your proverbial goose is cooked, Mario, unless you have something you want to say to me."

"I've already told you what you can do. I'm not proud of what I did, but I did it and I will pay the consequences," said Mario as he sat up in the Ethan Allen chair so his head and neck were above the back. "All you have to do is come behind me Apollonia and do to me what you did to your mother. I'd rather suffer at your hands than spend the rest of my life in prison."

Raffaella screamed, "NOOOOO!!! APOLLONIA, HE'S EGGIN' YOU ON!!! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT???"

Apollonia pulled her sister to her side and held her there. She glanced up at her, smiled, turned back to Mario and said, "I'm not going to murder you Mario. I'm not going to turn you into a full-fledged sissy bitch either. Both of those resolutions are too good for you, Mario. What I'm going to do to you is make you suffer for the rest of your natural life and I speculate that should be another thirty or so years."

"And, how are you going to do that?" asked Mario with a bit of a sarcastic snide attitude to his question.

"The basement at 84th Street, Mario. I know John and Mary Gleason are really Giuseppe and Sienna Moretti. They are now beholden to me Mario. They will do anything I ask without question," replied Apollonia relishing the look on Mario's face when she said it.

"I don't understand," said Raffaella.

"Later, Raffy," said Apollonia. "Look around you Mario. Relish what you have for the moment. What I'm going to do to you will pale in comparison to what you and Lucia did to those children. The beauty of it all – I'm not going to tell you when. Like I just said, Mario, look around you and relish what you have because I will take it all from you."

"You uncovered the truth about Giuseppe and Sienna? You're not serious about the basement, Apollonia?" The fear in Mario's eyes and voice was evident to both women.

"I can hear and see the fear, Mario," replied Apollonia. "The answer to both your questions is yes. You have until we get back from Dallas to prove to me in words and deeds that I should not take you and permanently house you in the basement."

Apollonia turned to her sister, kissed her passionately, and cooed, "Come Raffy. We're going to my old room and I'm going to feel your mouth on my cunt for the rest of the night. I really don't want to go home to put up with the two assholes who are recovering from black-and-blue gonads."

Raffaella knew better than to complain. Viviano knew she was at her father's house at the behest of her younger sister. She knew he would put two-and-two together when he woke up in the morning and found he didn't have an outlet for his morning wood.