

Second chance 19

Chapter 19:

On the other end, Davy — the genius, the hacker — realized the mistake instantly. He went silent. Hilliard could hear the heavy, panicked breathing of a child.

“Answer me!” Hilliard shouted.

“Don’t scare him!” Cailin screamed. “Hang up!”

Click.

Davy hung up.

Hilliard threw the phone onto the leather seat between them and turned to Cailin. “Explain. Now.”

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Cailin’s mind raced. She couldn’t admit to triplets. If he knew there were three — if he knew about the boys — he would take them. He would win.

“He’s my godson,” Cailin lied. She held eye contact even as her voice trembled. “Ashley’s other kid.”

“Ashley has two kids? And they both call you Mommy?” Hilliard stared at her, incredulous. “Do you think I’m an idiot?”

“It’s a nickname. A term of affection,” she pressed, desperation bleeding into her voice. “She’s a single mother, Hilliard. I help her raise them. To them, I’m ‘Mommy Cailin.’ A second mom.”

Hilliard laughed — a harsh, barking sound. “First Elia, now Davy. Are there any more?”

“No,” Cailin said too quickly.

Hilliard grabbed her chin, forcing her to look at him. His fingers were warm and possessive. “If that child is mine, Cailin — if you hid my son from me—”

“He’s not yours!” Cailin pulled away from his touch. “I terminated the pregnancy! Remember? You saw the file!”

The reminder silenced him.

Pain flashed across his face. The anger drained away, replaced by that hollow grief she had glimpsed earlier. He let her go and leaned back against the seat, pressing a hand over his eyes.

"We'll see," he said quietly. The words carried more menace than a shout.

He picked up her phone again. "Unlock it."

Cailin crossed her arms. "It's private."

"Unlock it, or I break it and have my IT department extract the data," he said. "I will find every photo, every message."

She knew he wasn't bluffing. And she knew she couldn't win a tech war without her boys.

Reluctantly, she leaned forward. Face ID unlocked the device.

Hilliard took it back and scrolled through the call log. Ashley. Kegan. Baby Davy.

He hit dial on Ashley's number. "Put it on speaker. Tell her to bring the boy."

Cailin began to sweat. She needed to signal Ashley. She needed a miracle.

Ashley answered on the first ring. "Cailin? Are you okay?"

"Ash," Cailin said, her voice shaking with deliberate emphasis. "Hilliard wants to meet Davy."

Ashley paused on the line. The silence stretched a second too long. Cailin prayed Ashley had caught the code — the tone, the sheer panic beneath her words.

"Davy? Why does he want to meet my son?" Ashley asked, her voice filled with convincing confusion.

Cailin exhaled. Thank you, Ash.

"Because he called Cailin 'Mommy,'" Hilliard interjected, leaning toward the phone.

Ashley laughed loudly. "Oh God. Did he? That kid. It's a game we play — a 'safe person' code. He calls his guardians 'Mommy': me, his nanny, Cailin. He knows she'll always protect him. No father figure, remember? I told you this."

"Bring him to the hotel," Hilliard said. "I want to see him."