

Second chance 42

Chapter 42:

Hilliard watched the exchange in silence, thinking of the ruler Amerigo had cracked across his five-year-old knuckles for using the wrong fork.

“Do you like horses?” Amerigo asked Elia.

“Yes! But Mommy says they are too big,” Elia chattered happily, her mouth full of bread roll.

Cailin delivered a sharp kick to Ashely’s shin under the table. Ashely flinched, nearly biting her tongue.

“I mean... Auntie Cailin says,” Elia corrected herself quickly, her eyes darting to Cailin for approval.

Hilliard caught the slip. His gaze locked onto Cailin across the table — cold and calculating. I heard that.

After lunch, Amerigo beckoned Elia over and produced his antique gold pocket watch.

“Can you open it?” he challenged.

Elia took the watch. She didn't fumble. She found the hidden catch instantly and popped it open.

"It has gears like a robot!" she exclaimed, tracing the mechanism. Then, catching Cailin's tense look, she quickly added, "My toy robot has gears too. But they're plastic."

Quality translations on galnovels.com

"She's sharp," Amerigo remarked to Hilliard. "Mechanical aptitude."

"Too sharp," Hilliard murmured.

Cailin rose from her chair. "The rain has stopped. We should go."

"Nonsense. The roads are still slippery," Amerigo said, waving a dismissive hand. "Stay for dinner. I insist."

"We really can't—" Cailin began.

"You will," Amerigo said.

Cailin pulled Hilliard aside into the hallway as the others drifted toward the living room.

"Let us go, Hilliard. This is torture," she whispered, gripping his lapel.

"Why? Are you afraid the truth will come out?" he asked, leaning down.

"There is no truth other than what I told you," she said.

"Then prove it," Hilliard replied, his voice dropping to a quiet, dangerous murmur. "A simple test could clear all of this up. A single strand of hair from that pretty little head of hers. If she's not mine, you have nothing to worry about." He didn't ask. He stated it as fact, watching her reaction with the predatory stillness of a wolf.

The blood drained from Cailin's face so quickly she felt dizzy. "You want to violate a guest's child on a whim? You're insane." She knew he wouldn't ask again. He would simply take what he needed.

"I'm thorough," Hilliard said.

"If you lay a hand on her," Cailin said, her voice shaking, "I will sue you for harassment, for unlawful detainment, for everything."

Hilliard's smile was slow and utterly without warmth.

“That sounds like a mother’s threat, Cailin. Not a godmother’s.”

Charla paced the length of her guest room — the one she had been relegated to while the “renovations” were supposedly underway. She was furious.

“The old man loves that brat,” she hissed, kicking a priceless ottoman.

She pulled out her phone and dialed a number she knew by heart.

“It’s me. I want everything on Ashely Trevino. And the child, Elia,” she ordered her private investigator.
“Find out who the father is. If there isn’t one listed on the birth certificate, I want to know.”

She hung up and checked her makeup in the mirror. Perfect victim.