

Second chance 43

Chapter 43:

She went downstairs to find Hilliard. He was in the library, standing by the window, watching Elia play with a large globe.

Charla came up behind him and wrapped her arms around him, pressing her cheek against his back.

"Darling, why are we entertaining these grifters?" she cooed.

Hilliard stiffened. He didn't lean into her. "They are guests."

"That child is annoying. You should divorce Cailin and kick them all out," Charla said, running her hands down his chest. "Sign the papers. Let her go."

Most read this week on galnovels.com

"Divorce..." Hilliard murmured, his gaze drifting to Cailin, who sat on the sofa watching Elia like a hawk.

"Yes! Sign the papers!" Charla pressed.

“Not yet,” Hilliard said abruptly.

“Why not? You hate her!” Charla cried, pulling away.

“Because I need to know the truth,” he said. He turned to look at Charla, and for a moment, she saw a stranger in his eyes.

“You still want her,” Charla accused. “After everything she did.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Hilliard snapped. But the denial carried no conviction.

Charla stormed out of the library, her eyes burning. As she crossed the hallway, she passed the coffee table.

Elia’s sippy cup sat on the surface — a bright pink plastic cup with a chewed straw.

An idea took shape. DNA.

If she proved the child wasn’t Hilliard’s, he would lose interest. If she proved it was — well, accidents happened. She swiped the cup and shoved it into her oversized purse.

Across the hall, Cailin caught the movement. She saw the flash of pink disappear into the bag.

Oh no. DNA.

Cailin moved without haste and without sound. She didn't run or call out. She simply materialized in Charla's path as she turned toward the stairs, blocking her way with an unnerving stillness.

"I believe you have something that belongs to my goddaughter," Cailin said, her voice soft but edged with ice. She held out her hand, her gaze unwavering. It was not a request. "I'll take the cup back. We wouldn't want her to get dehydrated."

Charla froze, clutching her purse. To refuse would be an admission of guilt in an open hallway, with servants gliding past. To comply was a surrender. She hesitated a fraction of a second too long.

With a tight, furious smile, she opened her purse and produced the cup. "Of course," she said, her voice a saccharine poison. "Just clearing the clutter. We wouldn't want the little darling to be thirsty."

Cailin took the cup, her fingers brushing Charla's. The contact was like a spark of static electricity.

"Thank you," she said quietly.

Charla's eyes narrowed to slits. "You're hiding something, Cailin. And I will find it."

"Try me," Cailin said, turning her back and walking away, holding the small plastic cup like a retrieved bomb.

Cailin locked the door to the Blue Room. Ashely was pacing the small rug, chewing her fingernail.

"We have to leave. Tonight," Cailin said. "He's going to test her. I saw it in his eyes."

"How? The gates are locked and security is everywhere," Ashely whispered. "And the rain is getting worse."