

Second chance 77

Chapter 77:

"Tell that to Charla. She's already picking out curtains for this room." Cailin pointed toward the window with her glass.

Hilliard crossed the room and grabbed her arm, his grip tight. "Cancel the lunch."

"Make me," Cailin challenged him. She tilted her head back, exposing the line of her throat.

Hilliard's phone rang. The sharp, insistent tone cut through the tension between them like a blade.

He didn't release her arm. He answered with his free hand.

"Holloway."

"Mr. Holloway, this is the bank," a frantic voice said on the other end. "We have confirmed the loss. Ten million dollars was siphoned to an offshore account before we could freeze the breach."

"Whose account?" Hilliard asked. His eyes stayed locked on Cailin's face.

"It's a private Swiss bank, sir. The funds were moved to an account our internal systems have previously flagged. It's associated with the dark pool broker known only as... 'Cali.'"

Hilliard went still. The heat in his veins turned to ice.

Cali.

The name didn't shock him — he already knew that truth. But the audacity of it, the sheer brazen nerve to use her shadow identity to steal directly from his company, sent a wave of cold fury through him. This wasn't a stranger's attack. This was intimate warfare.

He dropped Cailin's arm.

"You stole from me," he whispered.

"What?" Cailin frowned, genuinely confused.

"Ten million. In your account. You hacked me," Hilliard accused, his voice rising, shaking with betrayal.

"I didn't! I don't need your money!" Cailin stepped back.

“Liar! You came back for revenge!” Hilliard grabbed her again, harder this time. He was no longer looking at his wife. He was looking at an enemy.

He dragged her toward the stairs.

“We are going to find that money. Now.”

Hilliard threw the master bedroom door open and shoved Cailin inside. She stumbled in her heels, catching herself on the edge of the ottoman, but she didn’t fall.

“Transfer it back! Now!” Hilliard pointed to his laptop on the desk.

“I don’t have it! Check the transaction logs — it’s a frame-up!” Cailin shouted back, her chest heaving.
“Why would I steal from you and use my own name? I’m not stupid!”

“You are the only one capable! You and your ‘Blue Bear’ hackers!” Hilliard advanced on her, backing her against the vanity table.

“Is this how you paid for your new life? Stealing from the Holloways?” he sneered. “Did you finance your European vacation with my money?”

"I made my own money! I am Cali!" Cailin shouted, her pride blazing through the fear. "I built an empire without a single cent from you!"

"Cali... the broker. The liar." Hilliard reached out and touched her face, his thumb tracing her jawline with a mixture of tenderness and barely restrained violence. His gaze dropped to the red silk. "You wore this dress for another man."

"I wore it for myself," Cailin spat.

"Everything you are is tied to me!" His control snapped. Logic abandoned him. He wanted only to reclaim what felt like it was being torn away.