

Second chance 89

Chapter 89:

The glass exploded against the pavers inches from Cailin's feet, sending shards scattering in every direction.

"You planned this! You bitch!"

Charla charged. Her face was twisted, ugly with hate. She raised her hand, palm open, aiming for Cailin's face.

Cailin braced herself — but the blow never landed.

Hilliard caught Charla's wrist in mid-air. He didn't simply stop her; he twisted her arm back, forcing her to stumble.

"Enough," Hilliard growled. It was a low, terrifying sound — not the voice of a fiancé, but of a stranger capable of far worse.

"She humiliated me! On my birthday!" Charla sobbed, struggling against his grip. "Look at the sky! Look at them laughing!"

“You humiliated yourself,” Cailin said calmly, stepping back from the broken glass. “You assumed the world revolves around you. It doesn’t.”

Cameras flashed blindingly all around them. The press was devouring every second — the almost-slap, the ex-wife standing untouched and composed.

Hilliard recognized the scene spiraling beyond control.

He released Charla with a firm shove. She stumbled back into her mother’s arms, wailing.

“Get the car,” Hilliard barked at Gavin.

He seized Cailin’s hand. “You are coming with me.”

“I have my own ride,” Cailin protested, digging her heels in.

“Not anymore. I need answers.” He didn’t ask. He pulled her toward the VIP elevator.

The crowd parted like the Red Sea. No one dared obstruct Hilliard Holloway when he looked ready to burn the building down.

Charla screamed after them. “If you leave with her, we are done! Do you hear me, Hilliard? Done!”

Hilliard didn’t pause. He didn’t look back.

The elevator doors slid shut, cutting off the noise of the party.

Silence descended — heavy and suffocating.

Hilliard pressed the button for the Penthouse Lounge, a private floor accessible only by his keycard. The moment the doors closed, he turned on her. He backed her against the mirrored wall, his body blocking every exit.

“Who is he?” he demanded. “The man who lit up the sky for you?”

Cailin pressed her back against the cold glass. “Why do you care? You have a fiancée. Go comfort her.”

“I don’t care about Charla! I care that another man is claiming you!” Hilliard slammed his palm against the wall beside her head. The metal rattled. “Is it the Italian? The one who bought you this dress?”

“I am not yours to claim, Hilliard,” Cailin said softly, her chin trembling.

"You are," Hilliard said, leaning in until his eyes were level with hers, dark and dilated. "You always have been."

The elevator dinged. The doors opened.

He pulled her out into the unlit lounge, crossed to the heavy oak door, and turned the lock.

Click.

"No one leaves until I get a name," he said.

Cailin looked at the locked door. Then at him. She was trapped in a cage with a jealous beast.

The room was dimly lit by the city lights filtering through floor-to-ceiling windows. It smelled of leather and aged scotch.

Hilliard paced the length of the Persian rug. "Is it your benefactor? The client you mentioned?"