

Second chance 97

Chapter 97:

"I don't have a child," Cailin said. Her voice trembled, betraying her.

"Then why are you sweating?" Hilliard lifted her hand, turning her damp palm toward her.

"Because you kidnapped me," Cailin snapped, trying to yank free. "This is insane, Hilliard."

"I expedited the lab work," Hilliard said, ignoring her. "It's the best facility in the country. The samples are being processed. We will know within the hour."

Cailin felt sick. The room tilted slightly. She closed her eyes. Elia. If the test came back positive, he would take Elia. He would take the boys. He would lock her in that estate and never let her go.

She thought of Kegan. In the car she had typed a frantic text blindly in her pocket — SOS. DNA. Clinic. Had he received it? Could he do anything? An hour was an eternity and nowhere near enough time.

The door to the inner office opened.

A doctor in a grey suit stepped out, holding a tablet and looking distinctly uncomfortable. No one enjoyed delivering news to Hilliard Holloway.

“Mr. Holloway,” the doctor said, clearing his throat. “The results are ready.”

Hilliard rose abruptly, pulling Cailin up with him. The air seemed to leave the room.

“Show me,” Hilliard said.

Cailin’s legs felt like water. She braced herself for the end of her life as she knew it.

Hilliard took the tablet. His fingers moved across the screen, fast and aggressive. He stared at the data.

Silence stretched. Ten seconds. Twenty.

His brow furrowed. A deep crease formed between his eyes. He swiped the screen, refreshed the page, and read it again.

He looked at Cailin. His expression was unreadable — not anger, not triumph. Confusion. Absolute, baffling confusion.

“Well?” Cailin challenged, her heart lodged in her throat. She had to play the part until the very last second. “Does this imaginary child have your eyes?”

Hilliard turned the tablet around.

The screen displayed a single large graphic in red.

PATERNITY PROBABILITY: 0%

“No relation,” Hilliard said. His voice was hollow — the voice of a man watching a ghost dissolve into nothing.

Cailin stared at the screen. She blinked. Zero percent.

The relief hit her so hard her vision swam. The floor seemed to rush upward, but she locked her knees and held herself upright.

Then the anger came. It was performance — a shield she needed to wield immediately and without hesitation.

She wrenched her hand free. She shot to her feet, knocking her chair over with a loud clatter.

“You dragged me here... for this?” Her voice rang off the sterile walls. “You accused me — you humiliated me—”

“The test must be wrong,” Hilliard muttered, tapping the screen again as though he could change the result through sheer force of will. “I know what I saw. I know what I felt.”

“It’s your clinic! Your doctors!” Cailin grabbed her purse. “You are obsessed, Hilliard. You need help.”

She backed toward the exit.