# My Brother's Best Friend's Secret Baby –

# Chapter 10

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Chapter 10 Rosalie's POV I cleaned seven rooms that afternoon, and I couldn't even begin to tell you what they looked like. My hands did all the work. Stripping beds and remaking them with fresh sheets. Folding the corners the way Mr. Gregor had taught me during training, tight and crisp like an envelope. Wiping down bathroom surfaces. Scrubbing toilets and bathtubs. Polishing mirrors until my own reflection stared back at me, pale and exhausted, dressed in a uniform that wasn't really mine. Vacuuming carpets in straight lines.

Replacing the tiny bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and lotion guests had used once and left half empty. My hands did all the work while my mind was somewhere else. What did he really want? That question followed me everywhere, no matter how hard I tried to focus. He'd said he wanted to know Lucy. He'd said he wasn't trying to take her away from me. But he'd also mentioned consulting a lawyer. That wasn't the behavior of a man looking for a peaceful conversation. That was the behavior of a man preparing for a fight. Did he have the money to fight me? I already knew the answer.

I'd known it the second I saw him in that conference room, wearing that suit and that watch. Aiden King had always possessed a rare kind of determination. The kind born from failure and a refusal to ever experience it again. Seven years in the military, smart investments, and God knew what else had clearly paid off. He had money, while I was an elementary school teacher who cleaned hotel rooms on weekends to make rent. I pictured a judge looking at both of us in a courtroom. I imagined what they'd see. On one side, a decorated Navy SEAL turned successful businessman.

On the other, a woman working two jobs and still receiving eviction notices. Get faster updates on novelceo.com. A man who could offer a child stability, security, and opportunities. A woman who was one missed paycheck away from losing her apartment. I scrubbed the bathtub so hard my shoulder hurt afterward. At 3:15, I clocked out and walked forty minutes to Lucy's school. The afternoon heat was relentless. My feet hurt. And I spent the entire walk thinking about Aiden. By the time I reached the school gates, my jaw was aching from how tightly I'd been clenching it.

Lucy came out with a crowd of other children, her backpack bouncing behind her. Dark curls had escaped the braids I'd carefully done that morning. The moment she spotted me, she took off running. I caught her and hugged her for too long. I knew it was too long

because after about four seconds she started squirming and making the offended little noise she always made when she felt trapped "Mom, you're squishing me." "Sorry, sweetheart." I loosened my grip but didn't let go completely. Instead, pulled back just enough to look at her. I did that sometimes. I tried to be subtle about it.

I'd study her the way people study something they're trying to understand. She had my nose, my hair, and the shape of my mouth when she smiled. But her eyes weren't mine. They never had been. Dark, deep; and direct, the kind of eyes that stare at you and make you feel like you're being examined. I knew exactly who those eyes belonged to. I'd known since the day she was born. The nurse had placed her on my chest, and the moment I looked down at her, my heart had split in two. She had Aiden's eyes. She always had. "Why are you looking at me like that?" Lucy asked.

Find the original chapter at. "I missed you," I said. "But you see me every day." "I know. But I still miss you.' She considered that with the seriousness she reserved for information she wasn't entirely sure she believed. Then she took my hand and started pulling me toward the gate, already moving on to the next subject. "Today we made clay animals," she announced. "I made a horse, but Marcus said it looked like a dog, and I said it didn't, and Mrs. Parrish said they were both very creative interpretations." "That was very diplomatic of Mrs.

Parrish." "What does diplomatic mean?" "It means she was being kind about Marcus being wrong." Lucy nodded, completely satisfied. "That's what I thought."

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