

Secret triplets: The billionaire's second chance

Chapter 10:

Hilliard didn't wait for an answer. He grabbed Elia — gently this time, by the shoulder — and steered her toward his backup SUV, not the painted Maybach. He looked at Cali. “You follow in your vehicle. If you try to run, I call the Commissioner personally. You'll be in a cell before you hit the highway.”

He guided Elia into the back seat and closed the door firmly.

“No!” Cali screamed, banging on the window. “You can't take her!”

Hilliard signaled his driver. The locks clicked down. The engine roared.

The SUV pulled away, leaving Cali standing in a cloud of exhaust fumes.

Inside the car, Elia huddled in the corner of the leather seat, trembling.

Hilliard sat opposite her. He felt a pang of guilt seeing her so small and scared, but he shoved it down. He needed answers.

“Buckle up,” he said gruffly.

Your **daily** *dose* of novels on galnovels.com

Elia’s wrist began to buzz.

It was her pink smartwatch — a GPS tracker and phone combined. She reached for it. Hilliard was faster. He snatched the watch from her wrist.

“Give it back!” Elia cried.

Hilliard looked at the screen. The caller ID read: Handler-AI.

He pressed the green button. “Hello?”

Silence.

“Who is this?” he asked.

In her own car, following close behind the SUV, Cali stared at her phone. She couldn’t speak — he knew her real voice too well. She tapped an icon on her screen, activating Kegan’s voice synthesizer.

A flat, robotic voice came through the line. “Return the child immediately.”

Hilliard frowned at the watch. “A voice changer? Really? What are you hiding?” He held it closer. “Meet me at the 12th Precinct. Or I press charges.”

A high-pitched screech erupted from the SUV’s speakers.

Screeeeech.

Hilliard covered his ears. The driver swerved.

Then a deep, distorted voice boomed through the car’s audio system.

“LET. HER. GO. DEADBEAT.”

The dashboard lights flashed red. The engine sputtered and died. The SUV rolled to a stop in the middle of an empty intersection.

Click-clack.

The doors unlocked automatically.

Kegan’s voice came through the smartwatch still in Hilliard’s hand. “Run, Elia!”

Elia didn’t hesitate. She threw the door open and scrambled out onto the pavement.

A black motorcycle screeched to a halt beside her. The rider was dressed in black leather — the silk gown’s hem torn away to free her legs, a rider’s jacket thrown over what remained of the fabric. The rider extended a hand.

Elia grabbed it. Cali pulled her daughter up onto the seat in front of her.

Hilliard sat in the disabled car, stunned. He snatched the smartwatch from the seat just as a small spark emitted from its casing, the screen going permanently black. A self-destruct mechanism. He watched as the motorcycle revved and vanished into the night.

He touched his ear, where the word “Deadbeat” had blasted through the speakers moments before. A low, dangerous chuckle escaped him — one that held no humor, only the thrill of a worthy opponent finally revealed.

“They hacked the car,” he muttered. “They are definitely not normal criminals.”

He gripped the dead watch tight.

“Run all you want,” he whispered. “I have your scent now.”

.

.

.