

Zillionaire 1341

Chapter 1341:

One of the men—tall, with hawk-like eyes—spotted her instantly. “Ms. Brooks, is that you?”

“It’s not me!” she blurted, her voice high with panic. Her legs kicked into motion like a sprinter’s, pounding against the sand as she tore toward the shoreline. “It’s her!” the man confirmed, already signaling the others. “Ms. Brooks is over there—stop her!”

The rest surged after her in a wave of black suits.

But Linsey had little strength left. After everything—after what she had just endured—her legs were shaky, her breaths shallow.

She barely made it a hundred yards before her lungs burned and she fell short of pace.

The men closed in, surrounding her in a wall of solid muscle.

Her eyes darted for an opening—none. Heart hammering, she bent, snatched a fistful of coarse sand, and clenched it tight. “I’m warning you—come closer and you’ll regret it!”

The man who had first called out held up both hands, looking oddly earnest. “Ms. Brooks, please, you’ve got it wrong. We’re not here to hurt you. We’re just following orders—”

“Drop the act,” she cut in sharply, her voice trembling with anger. “If it weren’t for you people, I wouldn’t have been humiliated like this!”

The bodyguards exchanged baffled glances—humiliated?

What were they being blamed for? They had only been ordered to find her, nothing more. But Linsey didn’t believe a word.

The moment she saw their guard slip, she hurled the sand straight into their faces. They staggered, blinking through the grit.

She spun to flee—and crashed headlong into a solid chest.

The impact knocked the breath from her lungs—and from the man's. He grunted softly, stumbling slightly, but his arms instinctively caught her.

And when he saw who it was, the pain didn't matter.

"Linsey..." Gorman murmured, his voice low and breathless with relief as he held her close.

Startled, she looked up at him, eyes wide. "Gorman? You?"

A gentle smile softened his eyes. "You disappeared without a word. I was worried, so I sent them to find you."

Her gaze flicked over her shoulder to the black-suited men, still brushing sand from their faces.

"You mean... they're yours?" she asked, pointing awkwardly.

"Yes," Gorman admitted without hesitation. "My most trusted men."

Heat crept up her neck. Realization sank in, leaving her suddenly awkward and still processing.

"Oh my God..." she muttered, turning back to the bodyguards with a sheepish bow of her head. "I'm so sorry. I thought you were the enemy."

Luckily, none of them seemed offended. If anything, they looked amused.

One stepped forward, addressing Gorman with formality. "Mr. Green, now that Ms. Brooks is found, should we take our leave?"

Chapter 1342:

Gorman gave a nod, and in moments the suits melted away into the distance, leaving only the whisper of the waves around them.

Now that they were alone, he studied her with quiet concern. "Linsey... what happened?"

A tightness formed in Linsey's throat as she tried to speak. Whatever explanation she meant to give dissolved before it could escape.

Watching her hesitate only deepened Gorman's concern. "Linsey, you don't have to be scared. If something's wrong, just tell me. I'll stand by you, no matter what."

What difference could his help make now? She had already lost her virginity, and bitterness welled up inside her.

Thinking carefully about the complexity of that man's background, she decided Gorman was better off kept away from all this chaos. After wrestling with her thoughts, she finally managed a half-truth. "I stopped by the pharmacy for some medicine, and things got mixed up. They mistook me for a doctor and whisked me off to help someone. After that..." Her words trailed off, leaving the rest hanging in the air.

Gorman pressed for more, his voice soft but insistent. "What happened after that?" he asked, watching her closely.

With her gaze fixed on the ground, Linsey forced a small lie. "They realized their mistake and sent me home. That's all."

"Why didn't you answer my calls?" he asked.

She pulled her phone from her pocket and tapped the dark screen. "It ran out of power," she replied. Charging her phone had slipped her mind before her errand, so it had died unexpectedly.

Not a single detail in her story was questioned by Gorman. A relieved smile crossed his face as he said, "The important thing is that you're safe."

Earlier that day, his most loyal employee had told him Collin was in town on business, so he had been worried Linsey might cross paths with him. It seemed his fears had been unnecessary.

He couldn't shake the feeling that fate had brought him and Linsey together for a reason, and that Collin was simply passing through her life.

That realization made him wonder if it was time to become more than friends with her.

While Gorman drifted into his own thoughts, the seriousness in his eyes was unmistakable.

Feeling the weight of the day catch up with her, Linsey murmured, "I just want to get back and have a shower."

Before long, both of them were headed back to the inn.

The innkeeper and the little boy wore worry on their faces as they watched over Linsey. Their relief was obvious once they realized she was safe and sound.

After a brief exchange, Linsey excused herself and slipped into her room for a shower.

Once she emerged from the bathroom, she caught sight of Gorman. He stood with his back to her, framed by the tall window, speaking quietly on his phone. Something must have tipped him off to her arrival because he ended his call and turned to greet her, his expression warm.

She returned his smile, drawing closer before saying, "I have to apologize. I completely forgot to pick up the ointment you needed for your injuries."

Chapter 1343:

"Don't trouble yourself about it," Gorman responded, his tone light. "I asked someone else to get it, and I've already taken care of it."

His voice softened as he continued, "Linsey, there's something on my mind that I want to talk about."

"Go ahead," Linsey answered without hesitation, her expression gentle.

A tension worked its way through Gorman's jaw as his fingers curled tightly at his sides. He managed to ask, his voice tinged with nerves, "Would you consider being my girlfriend?"

"Did I hear you right?" Linsey was taken aback, thinking she must have misheard.

Once the meaning sank in, Linsey's eyebrows shot up. "Are you being serious?" Considering how little time had passed since they met, it all felt too sudden for her.

She kept her doubts unspoken, but Gorman seemed to read them just the same. To him, none of this felt rushed.

If it were up to him, he would have asked for her hand in marriage right then and there.

Despite the urge, Gorman held his tongue and searched for another way to explain himself.

Gorman kept his eyes down, a hint of sadness coloring his voice. "I know this might come out of nowhere, but my family has been pushing me, and I honestly don't know what else to do..."

He paused to meet her eyes. "There's someone I can't get out of my mind. I have no interest in the blind dates my family keeps setting up. So, would you mind pretending to be my girlfriend for a little while?" This was the best reason he could think of to offer her.

Gorman believed that confessing his feelings directly would not only catch Linsey off guard but might also make him seem insincere.

One thing he trusted was her gentle, understanding heart, and he hoped this explanation would move her.

Being seen together as a couple would keep other guys at bay, and calling himself her boyfriend would give him the chance to grow closer to her. He was sure that if they spent time together like this, she would eventually start to care for him too, and their act would become the real thing.

Everything played out exactly as Gorman hoped.

Linsey gave him a nod. "Alright."

The answer filled Gorman with happiness, which he tried to hide, so he responded softly, "Thank you, Linsey. You're truly kind."

Linsey brushed it off with a smile. "It's not a big deal, Gorman. You don't need to be so serious."

His chance came right away. "Would you let me take you out for dinner and a movie tomorrow?" he asked, inviting her on their first date.

A moment of hesitation flickered across Linsey's face.

Predicting her uncertainty, Gorman spoke up quickly. "Since we're playing the part of a couple, it would help if we got used to being close. That way, we won't slip up around others. Doesn't that make sense?"

Suddenly remembering something, he hurried to reassure her. "And please don't worry. I respect boundaries. I would never cross the line or do anything you're uncomfortable with."

Chapter 1344:

Those words made Linsey think unexpectedly of the masked man she had crossed paths with the day before.

Gorman noticed her distraction and waved a hand in front of her. "Linsey?"

A slight start, and Linsey returned to the present.

Misreading her silence, Gorman put on an apologetic look and said, "I hope I didn't make you uncomfortable. If you'd rather not, I absolutely won't push."

Linsey quickly reassured him, "You're overthinking things. My mind just wandered for a second. That's all."

A spark of hope returned to Gorman's face. "So that means you're saying yes? I'll have to make sure our date is perfect."

She nodded with a gentle smile, but inside, she couldn't help but compare him to that mysterious masked man from yesterday. How was it that Gorman felt so completely different?

That thought warmed her to Gorman a little more.

Their date came the next day. After the movie, they planned to head out for dinner, but dark clouds rolled in, and a heavy rain began to pour.

Driving his own car that day, Gorman hadn't thought to bring an umbrella.

Concern for his recovery made Linsey hesitate to let him get soaked. She kindly suggested, "Why don't you stay in the car where it's dry? I'll run to the restaurant and borrow an umbrella for us."

She slipped off her seatbelt, pulled on her hat and mask, and stepped outside. There wasn't a second for Gorman to object; all he could do was wait in the parking lot until she got back.

The restaurant wasn't far away. Linsey dashed through the rain as quickly as she could. Still, she couldn't keep from getting drenched.

As she finally made it up the restaurant steps, she spotted a man in a wheelchair nearby and called out in a bright, hopeful voice, "Excuse me, sir!"

Collin paused, his hands still on the wheels. Something about her voice tugged at his memory—it was strikingly familiar. He started to turn around, but Linsey rushed toward him before he could.

Their eyes met, and the happy light in her expression faded instantly.

Linsey couldn't shake the feeling that this man looked oddly familiar.

Something about him brought to mind the man she had spent the night with. Her eyes drifted down to his legs, but she quickly brushed aside the thought as ridiculous.

After all, the man from last night had been strong and sure-footed, while the man before her was confined to a wheelchair. The difference was impossible to ignore.

A cold glare from Collin cut through her thoughts. "Enjoying the view?" he snapped. "Stare any longer, and I might just take your eyes."

His mood had been foul, especially after failing to track down the woman he had been with. Now, being stopped and inspected by a stranger only added to his irritation.

Linsey jerked out of her daze, cheeks warming beneath her mask. "Sorry, I didn't mean anything by it." She knew exactly why he bristled. Anyone living with a disability would be protective of their pride, and she had just been caught openly staring at his legs.

Chapter 1345:

Her mistake became clear, and she quickly offered another apology.

Collin paid no attention to her words and moved toward the restaurant. Just as he was about to roll away, Linsey reached out, stopping him again.

“Excuse me, could I borrow your umbrella?” she asked politely.

That question made Collin give her a long, searching look. Rainwater dripped from her clothes, her thin shirt sticking to her and revealing every curve.

Feeling the weight of his gaze, Linsey gasped and immediately wrapped her arms around herself, her face burning red. She nearly snapped at him for staring, but he turned away, showing no real interest.

A mocking grin flickered across his lips. “And why would I hand you my umbrella?”

The question caught Linsey off guard, but she answered after a beat. “It’s pouring outside, and my boyfriend’s waiting in the car. That’s why I wanted to borrow it...”

A sharp interruption came from Collin. “That’s not my problem.”

Linsey’s patience frayed. “If you don’t want to lend it, just say so. There’s no need to be rude about it. I don’t owe you anything!”

She had thought the man from last night was frustrating, but this one managed to be even more insufferable. At least her previous encounter had been marked by a gentle tone. This time, every word out of this man’s mouth felt like a threat ready to burst.

With every passing second, Linsey felt her irritation bubbling higher, though Collin clearly had no interest in arguing with her any further. He shot a cold glance at his bodyguard, who stood off to the side, and barked, “Are you even my bodyguard? Can’t you see I’m being harassed? Handle this!”

“Yes, sir.” The bodyguard snapped out of his daze and quickly moved to guide Linsey away. He happened to be among the rare few who had seen Linsey’s face before. Even though her outfit now concealed her features, the sound of her voice was distinct enough to catch his attention and distract him from his job for a moment.

The bodyguard did as he was told, but Collin's irritation only grew stronger. Already, disappointment simmered in him over his team's failure to locate the woman from last night. Now, they couldn't even keep away a minor nuisance.

He made up his mind to fire every single one of them later. Without glancing back, Collin pushed forward, his face clouded with a grim and heavy look.

Out of nowhere, Linsey's sneeze echoed behind him, sharp and sudden. His body froze before his thoughts could catch up, and the wheelchair jerked to an immediate stop.

Linsey, unaware that his eyes were now fixed on her, stepped toward the restaurant's front desk, ready to ask for an umbrella.

"Hey," Collin called out to her from behind.

She halted at once, turning her head slightly, her voice still edged with frustration as she asked, "What is it?"

Collin drew a sleek black pistol from his coat pocket.

Linsey froze—her breath hitched, her limbs stiffening before panic took over. Her eyes widened in alarm as she stumbled several steps back, heart thundering in her chest. Was he going to shoot her?

Chapter 1346:

A jolt of raw terror surged through her. Her blood turned to ice. Without thinking, she turned on her heel to run.

But before she could take a full step, something heavy dropped from above—startling and sudden—draping over her head like a trap.

“Ah!” she shrieked, dropping to the floor in fright, clawing at the dark fabric tangled around her.

When she finally wriggled free, gasping and breathless, she stared down in confusion at the offending object: a black suit jacket.

Then came a voice—low, lazy, and dipped in sarcasm. “Scared of a jacket? What a coward.”

The tone alone was enough to slice through her confusion. Even Linsey, mild-mannered by nature, felt her temper stir.

She sprang to her feet, frowning as she flung the jacket back toward him with a snap. “Didn’t anyone teach you not to litter?”

Collin caught the jacket mid-air, a flicker of disbelief flashing across his face. “What did you just say?”

Was she seriously calling that jacket—his custom-tailored piece worth over a hundred grand—trash? He stared at her like she had lost her mind.

Linsey, on the verge of breaking down, blinked rapidly to keep the tears from spilling. She refused to cry—not here, not in front of him. All she had wanted was to borrow an umbrella. A simple request.

But he had denied her that. He even refused to let her leave. And now he was tossing expensive clothing at her as if she were some stray dog in the rain? Every action felt deliberate, calculated to humiliate her.

The two locked eyes in tense silence. Nearby, the bodyguard shifted uncomfortably, his gaze flicking between them.

He knew he was supposed to send Linsey away—but Collin was the one who had stopped her this time.

Best to stand down and keep his mouth shut. The last thing he wanted was to overstep and provoke his boss.

Collin noticed the shimmer of tears in Linsey's eyes.

For some reason, it irritated him.

He tugged at his collar with a sharp click of his tongue and muttered, "Your clothes are soaked. I gave you the jacket so you'd cover up."

Only then did Linsey glance down—and realize her blouse clung to her skin, transparent and revealing far too much.

Before she could respond, the jacket landed on her shoulders again—this time with a purposeful toss that left no room for argument.

She didn't toss it away. Instead, she sniffled softly, clutching the lapels. "Then... what was with the gun earlier?"

Collin gave a short, mocking laugh. "I lend you a jacket and now you want everything in my pockets too? Aren't you a greedy one?"

"N-no, I..." Linsey stammered, cheeks burning with embarrassment as realization dawned. She had completely misunderstood him.

Chapter 1347:

In the end, all she could manage was a soft, "Thank you... for the jacket. I'll wash it and return it."

"No need," Collin said flatly, shaking his head. "I don't wear anything someone else has touched."

Her brows lifted in surprise. "Then... this jacket?"

“Do whatever you want with it,” he said with a shrug, as if it were an afterthought. Linsey stared at him, momentarily speechless. Then she gave a faint nod. “Thank you...”

Collin, clearly uncomfortable with any notion of sentiment, shifted his stance.

“Don’t overthink it. I did it merely out of courtesy.” He turned to the bodyguard. “Get her an umbrella.”

“Yes, sir,” the man replied instantly.

After everything—after the tension, the confusion, the storm of emotions—Linsey was finally handed an umbrella. She let out a quiet breath of relief. “Sir, thank—”

But Collin was already wheeling himself away, his back turned.

Left standing there, she turned to the bodyguard instead, giving him a soft word of thanks before stepping back out into the downpour. Gorman, who had been waiting in the distance, brightened the moment he saw her. “Linsey, you—” he began, but the words trailed off.

His eyes landed on the men’s jacket resting on her shoulders before he frowned slightly, puzzled. “Where did you get the jacket?”

Linsey struggled to find the right words to explain what had just transpired. After several moments of thoughtful silence, she offered a brief account. “I bumped into this kind stranger while looking for an umbrella to borrow. He was incredibly generous, and when he saw how soaked I was, he graciously offered me his suit jacket.”

Gorman listened in complete silence, his brows knitting together as his lips pressed into a tight line, making his thoughts impossible to read.

“What’s wrong?” Linsey asked gently, sensing the shift in his mood and unable to hide her growing concern.

Gorman reached out to touch the wide lapels of the suit jacket, murmuring under his breath, "It's nothing. Just that this jacket looks strangely familiar." This particular brand wasn't something just anyone could purchase. The company maintained extremely strict requirements for its clientele.

Typically, only wealthy tycoons, worth over ten million dollars, could even qualify to buy from them.

Gorman distinctly remembered that his arch-rival, Collin, had always been particularly fond of this exact brand.

Could it possibly be that this kind stranger was actually him?

The moment this thought crossed his mind, Gorman immediately pushed it aside. He felt absolutely certain that Collin and Linsey had never met, making such a coincidental encounter virtually impossible.

Beyond that, based on everything he knew about Collin's character, there was simply no way the man could be so gentlemanly and genuinely kind-hearted. After reassuring himself with this logic, Gorman maintained his composed, gentlemanly facade without missing a beat.

"Linsey, there are plenty of bad people in this world, so it's better not to trust strangers too easily," he advised carefully.

Chapter 1348:

Linsey nodded obediently. "I understand completely."

Her sincere assurance allowed Gorman to finally relax somewhat.

He spoke in gentle tones. "Then wear mine instead. You really don't need that jacket anymore."

Whether it was Collin or some other man, Gorman absolutely wouldn't allow anyone to get too close to Linsey. She belonged to him and him alone.

Gorman's possessiveness surged dangerously, but given his carefully maintained gentlemanly image, he couldn't afford to act too forcefully. Instead, he smoothly removed his own jacket and remarked casually, "Who knows if that stranger has any contagious diseases? Wearing mine would be much safer."

"I doubt it..." Linsey found herself recalling the mysterious man's appearance. Apart from his physical disability, he hadn't seemed unhealthy in the slightest. Furthermore, he had clearly been quite wealthy, and wealthy people typically took excellent care of their health.

Gorman continued his gentle persuasion, "Apart from me, you shouldn't trust other men so readily. These days, you simply can't be too careful around strangers."

Under his persistent coaxing, Linsey finally slipped on Gorman's jacket. "What should I do with this one?" Linsey asked, gesturing to the borrowed jacket.

Gorman countered with his own question, "Did he ask you to return it?"

Linsey shook her head slowly. "He mentioned he doesn't wear clothes that others have worn."

This was exactly what Gorman had hoped to hear. "Then just toss it away. It's completely useless now anyway."

With those words, he stepped out of the car with the umbrella and deliberately dropped the jacket into a nearby trash bin. Grabbing a sturdy stick from the ground, he forcefully shoved the jacket deeper into the garbage, his expression remaining coldly indifferent.

Only after the jacket had completely disappeared beneath layers of other trash did Gorman finally discard the stick and turn back around, instantly resuming his gentle, caring demeanor.

Inside the restaurant, Linsey and Gorman found a comfortable table and settled in. Despite Gorman's jacket draped over her shoulders, Linsey still shivered from the cold dampness of her wet clothes clinging uncomfortably to her skin.

Remembering that the restroom probably had a hand dryer, she pushed back her chair and announced, "I'm going to the restroom to try drying my clothes. Go ahead and order for us."

"Alright," Gorman replied smoothly, flashing his most charming smile. Neither of them noticed the man who had been discreetly observing Linsey from across the room.

The moment she stood and walked away, he slipped quietly from his seat and followed her.

Linsey had no idea someone had been trailing her steps all along. Inside the women's room, she wasted no time stripping off the suit jacket Gorman had loaned her, hoping to pat her damp clothes dry.

A loud crash shattered the quiet, the door slamming open without warning. Her nerves on edge, Linsey lifted her gaze to the mirror, searching for the person barging in.

Chapter 1349:

Standing in the doorway was a much older man. Sparse wisps of hair clung to his scalp, a boxy face riddled with pockmarks, and a pair of thick glasses resting on his nose. His lips were so swollen, they looked like sausages pasted above his chin.

What drew her attention most was his bloated stomach, stretching his shirt in an unflattering bulge.

Nothing could have prepared Linsey for a man showing up in the women's room. Instinct kicked in, and she grabbed the jacket, hugging it against her chest.

She tried to keep her voice even, but there was a cold edge as she told him, "You must be lost. This is the women's room. The men's is just across the hall."

Instead of backing off, he let out a noisy burp, the stench of old food filling the air.

He let out a low laugh. "No mistake. I came here on purpose."

There wasn't much space separating them, maybe a few short steps. With nowhere for the smell to escape, Linsey felt her stomach twist as the odor hit her. Unable to fight the nausea, she slapped a hand over her mouth and gagged, dropping the jacket. Her figure was exposed for a split second.

Greed flickered in the man's eyes as he stared, Adam's apple moving with a swallow, his breath reeking of booze and fried food.

"You look so alluring..." he blurted, staring openly.

Every muscle in Linsey's back went rigid. Goosebumps prickled her skin.

She backed up, heart pounding, and scooped the jacket off the floor, clutching it to her chest. "I don't care how drunk you are. If you don't leave right now, I'm calling the police!"

A sly smirk curled on the man's lips as he wet them. "You've got it all twisted, gorgeous. I only stopped by for a bite, just like you. Saw a pretty face and figured..."

"Maybe we could chat, see if we click, maybe even be friends." Digging into his pocket, he started searching for something.

No part of Linsey wanted anything to do with him. She seized the moment, edging toward the exit while his attention was elsewhere.

Even with booze clouding his senses, he reacted with surprising speed. "Where are you rushing off to? I'm not finished." He latched onto Linsey's wrist and flashed a business card at her.

"Let me go!" Linsey yelled, her voice cracking with frustration.

He acted as if her outburst was nothing but background noise, muttering, "Name's Edmond Griffin. I run things over at Griffin Group, a top player in real estate."

To make sure she got the message, he continued, “Ever heard of the Fortune Global 500? We landed 501st this year. Next time, we’ll break right into the big leagues.”

“You’re out of your mind!” Linsey kept pulling away. “Let me go. Do you understand?”

The sight of Linsey’s panicked eyes only made Edmond’s interest more obvious. His grip only tightened instead of letting up.

“You’re my type,” he said in a voice thick with want, sliding his card down the front of her shirt. “So, tell me, what’s your price? How much to spend the night with me?”

Chapter 1350:

Linsey clenched her jaw and forced out, “Three grand. Does that sound fair?”

Delight flickered across Edmond’s face. His thumb caressed the back of her hand, and he added, “Absolutely! You’re adorable, and I bet you’d be even more charming in private. I’ll throw in another two grand.”

“That’s very generous of you, sir. Please let go now,” Linsey responded, masking her disgust.

Trusting her response, Edmond immediately let her go.

Without missing a moment, Linsey’s hand shot up, delivering a hard slap right across his cheek.

The slap rang out like a gunshot, echoing through the corridor as Linsey’s hand met Edmond’s cheek with brutal force, sending his glasses flying from his face. “You disgusting pervert!” she spat, her voice trembling with rage as her whole body quivered.

Edmond stood there, stunned and disoriented, eyes bulging in disbelief. For a moment, he looked less like a man and more like a grotesque statue, frozen in place.

“You bitch! How dare you hit me?!” he finally roared, snapping out of his stupor. He raised his hand, rage twisting his features. But before he could retaliate, he realized—she was gone.

Edmond was enraged, his chest heaving violently, his round belly jiggling with every breath as if it might detach and roll away. Never in his life had he been humiliated like this—and he refused to let it go. Without hesitation, he took off after her.

Panicked, Linsey darted through the unfamiliar corridor, her sense of direction scattered by fear.

But she wasn’t fast enough. In mere moments, Edmond, fueled by fury and moving with unexpected agility, closed the distance between them. Spotting her up ahead, he wheezed between curses, “Keep running. Let’s see how far you get, you ungrateful little bitch! You’ll regret this!”

Linsey’s breath hitched. Her legs burned, but she couldn’t stop—not now. She backed away, eyes wide with terror. “Don’t come any closer! I’ll scream—I’ll call for help!”

“Go ahead and scream,” he sneered, his drunken grin stretching wider. “Call the police if you want. No one’s gonna save you.”

If only she could call the police. But her phone was back at the dinner table. She had only stepped away to use the restroom—how could she have known she would be followed?

Now, she was overwhelmed by regret and fear.

Desperation surged. She clenched her fists and screamed, “Help! Please! Someone help me!”

The corridor swallowed her cries like a void.

Edmond inched closer, drunk with power and adrenaline. “Go on, scream all you want. No one’s coming for you.”

Linsey's eyes darted around. No weapon. No phone. Nothing. Except—Gorman's suit jacket.