

## **Zillionaire 281**

### Chapter 281 Why Cling To

Collin

Linsey hastily waved her hands and stepped back. "Mr. Green, please don't do this. I'm already married."

Gorman scoffed, his tone icy. "I know. But that cripple, Collin, could never make you happy."

After confirming that Linsey was indeed his lifesaver, Gorman had initiated a thorough investigation into her background. He uncovered that she had been betrayed by her former boyfriend not long before marrying Collin.

To Gorman, Collin was merely a disabled outcast within the Riley family, hardly a threat. He felt certain he could win Linsey over.

Initially, Linsey was relieved to learn Gorman was alive, but his disparaging remarks about Collin took her by surprise. Her face clouded with displeasure. "I'd appreciate it if you would speak of my husband with respect."

Gorman's feelings of jealousy intensified when he saw her defend Collin so vigorously.

Gritting his teeth, he proposed, "Linsey, I can offer you everything-money, power, anything your heart desires. Marry me, and it's all yours. Why cling to Collin?"

Linsey looked at him, shocked by his persistence.

Their prior interactions had been minimal, and his desires were irrelevant to her. With this realization, she decided further discussion was pointless.

Taking a deep breath, she replied calmly, "Mr. Green, I'm here tonight to discuss business. If you're not interested in a serious collaboration, then let's end this conversation here."

With that, Linsey attempted to walk past Gorman, but he blocked her path, his expression intense.  
"What if I'm not ready

to let you go?"

Her heart raced.

The man she had rescued years ago was now threatening her.

Her instinct was to confront him directly, yet she recalled the guards stationed outside.

Outnumbered, she knew starting a conflict here would be unwise.

Thus, Linsey shifted her strategy and maintained her composure. "I won't stop you from trying to repay me."

A glint of excitement appeared in Gorman's eyes, reminiscent of a child with a new toy.

Linsey continued, her voice firm, "However, if you genuinely wish to repay me, shouldn't it be on my terms? If you coerce

me into something I resist, wouldn't that transform gratitude into bitterness?"

Gorman's brow furrowed. "I'm not trying to do that, Linsey. I genuinely want to treat you well."

"Then let me leave. All I want right now is to get out of here safely."

Gorman remained quiet.

Linsey maintained a composed exterior, yet inside, tension brewed. She discreetly

slid her hand into her bag, her fingers clasping the self-defense spray.

Seconds ticked by until Gorman finally yielded. "Alright, you're free to go."

Linsey let out a sigh of relief and began to move toward the exit when his voice halted her progress.

With her back to him, she heard him pose a haunting question. "Linsey, will you truly never consider divorcing Collin?"

Her response was resolute. "My husband and I share a deep love. I will never turn my back on him, no matter the

circumstances."

A tense silence followed. Suddenly, Gorman erupted in laughter.

Confused, Linsey turned around to face him once more, her eyebrows knitted in perplexity as she tried to decipher his

reaction.

Chapter 282 You Haven't Changed

Gorman regarded Linsey with a measured gaze and remarked, "Not bad. You've managed to pass my test after all."

"Huh?" Linsey was utterly perplexed. She looked at Gorman as though he were detached from reality.

Gorman lifted an eyebrow, his demeanor relaxed. "Had you agreed to marry me, neglecting your husband, I would have lost respect for you. But it seems you are the same person who saved me once. You haven't changed."

Then, he allowed a slow smile to spread across his face. "You might not want to marry me now, and that's fine. Eventually,

you'll fall for me; it'll be inevitable."

Linsey found herself speechless. She laughed incredulously and gave Gorman a look of sheer contempt. "You're out of your

mind."

She didn't plan to stay any longer. She quickly opened the door and left.

Outside the room, Danny was taken aback before quickly entering. "Boss, did Ms. Brooks just leave like that? Shouldn't you

follow her? She seemed upset."

Gorman gave a lazy smirk as his eyes wandered to a painting on the wall. "She can't escape me."

Danny fell silent, then ventured, "Tonight was a prime opportunity. You should have spent more time with her. After all

these years of searching..."

Calmly, Gorman responded, "I had no intention of letting her go, but she clearly didn't want to stay. I noticed she was

prepared to defend herself."

This left Danny at a loss for words.

Why was Linsey suddenly so cautious around his boss?

If he had known what Gorman had just done, he might have been bold enough to confront him, perhaps even shake some

sense into him.

No one in their right mind would leap to a proposal the moment they reunited with the woman they barely knew?

Unfortunately, Danny was oblivious.

Gorman's words came out measured and deliberate. "She has a strong personality. Trying to force her to stay would be

catastrophic."

Danny paused, then slowly nodded. "You're right."

"I'm in no rush. In time, Linsey will come around," Gorman said, his chuckle deep and knowing.

A frown briefly marred Danny's face.

Come around?

Hadn't he just described Linsey as strong-willed?

This doubt flickered through his mind as he observed Gorman's assured smile. Opting for discretion, he remained silent.

It seemed his boss had gotten on his feet and was now taking a more considered approach with Linsey.

As his assistant, it was perhaps best to leave it at that and not overthink the complexities of his boss's strategies.

After arriving home safely, Linsey still felt uneasy.

Under normal circumstances, seeing someone she had once saved flourishing

should have been a positive experience.

Yet, she hadn't anticipated such a strange twist in events.

What could Gorman possibly do next?

At dinner, Collin observed Linsey drifting off occasionally and felt compelled to

ask, "Linsey, is something wrong? Have you

been pushing yourself too hard?"

Chapter 283 How Can You Forget Your Own Birthday

Linsey's thoughts snapped back to the present with a jolt, and she gave her head a brisk shake. "No."

Her voice carried a tone of finality. She refused to let her mind linger on Gorman's pursuit, nor did she intend to breathe a

word of it to Collin.

She could vividly picture Collin's reaction if she revealed that another man had dared to propose to her- his features would undoubtedly cloud over with displeasure and a hint of jealousy.

With his birthday on the horizon, Linsey was keen on keeping spirits high.

She tilted her head, adopting a more casual tone. "By the way, Collin, isn't your birthday just around the corner?"

Collin blinked, a look of genuine surprise flickering across his face. "I almost forgot."

Linsey raised an eyebrow in mock astonishment. "How can you forget your own birthday?"

Collin shrugged, his expression softening into a reflective gaze. "I've never really celebrated my birthday since I was young. Growing up, there wasn't anyone to celebrate with. A birthday spent alone isn't exactly a cause for celebration," he explained in a subdued tone.

Linsey's heart tugged at his words, and she leaned in closer, her voice warm and insistent. "But now you have me. I'm here

with you-how could we not celebrate?"

A slow smile began to spread across Collin's face, a spark of something like anticipation lighting up his eyes.

"You're right," he responded.

After a thoughtful pause, Collin's mind drifted back to an earlier moment when he had curiously browsed through Linsey's

personal records. He remembered that the space for her birthday had been mysteriously empty. "When's your birthday?" he

inquired, his voice tinged with curiosity.

"I don't know," Linsey replied, her voice soft, her eyes downturned. She shook her head gently, a wistful smile touching

her lips. "I was left at the orphanage's doorstep. We all celebrated our birthdays on the same day there. They just used the

date Ella found me as my official birthday. Sometimes, I really envy people who know the exact day they were born."

A sharp pang of empathy struck Collin, tightening his chest. He took a deep breath to steady himself before reaching out

and gently clasping Linsey's hand.

"How about this? My birthday's coming up in a few days. Why don't we celebrate ours together this year?"

Linsey's face brightened, her eyes sparkling with newfound excitement. "Sure, let's do that. It sounds like it would be a lot

more fun."



With their plans joyfully set, Linsey threw herself into the preparations with gusto. She transformed Vista Villa with festive decorations and meticulously handcrafted several invitation cards. Her dedication was evident, her excitement contagious.

Collin watched her bustling activities with an amused yet affectionate chuckle. "Isn't this a bit much for just a birthday party?" he teased, his eyes crinkling with amusement.

Linsey's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, her sincerity undeniable. "That's exactly why we should go all out-it's a birthday, and it deserves a real celebration! I know you like things more low-key. We'll keep the guest list short-only a few friends.

you actually like."

With a slight arch of his brow, Collin chuckled lightly. "Fine, I'll let you handle it."

As Linsey delicately penned the invitations, her movements precise and thoughtful, she passed the stack destined for Collin's friends to him. "Here, these are for your friends. I'll manage the invites for Dolores and the gang from the orphanage," she said, her tone cheerful yet commanding.

"Absolutely, darling. I'll see this mission through to the very end," Collin proclaimed with theatrical flair, stowing the

invitations away with great care.

The next morning found Collin navigating the quiet corridors of Dominic's private hospital, supposedly there for a check-up

on his lingering leg injury.

In truth, the hospital visit was a facade for a covert meeting to discuss Gorman's latest movements.

Inside the dimly lit office, Dominic feigned a routine examination of Collin's legs, his voice a whisper. "I heard Gorman's been searching for his lifesaver for years-

and guess what? He found her. They met up at Rayhill Hotel last night. Unfortunately, breaking through to Gorman is near impossible-his security is airtight. We tried to close in for some intel,

but his men are like hawks, always one step ahead."

Collin's expression hardened as he processed the information. "Stay on him. We need to identify that woman at any cost," he instructed sharply, his mind racing with strategies.

"Understood," Dominic replied, nodding discreetly before shifting gears. "And, Collin, are you responsible for Kylee's injury?"

Chapter 284 This Is So

Unlike You!

"What are you talking about?" Collin responded, appearing baffled.

Dominic studied him, noting the genuine confusion on his face. If Collin was acting, he was damn good at it. Raising an eyebrow, he said, "Kylee was attacked last night. Someone slashed her face. She was rushed to the hospital-doctors

managed to stop the bleeding, but the cut was too deep. It'll scar."

Collin barely reacted. "That has nothing to do with me." His voice was steady, unaffected. He had only just heard about it.

himself.

His gaze flicked to Dominic, suspicion creeping in. "Why would you think I had anything to do with it?"

He didn't need to play dirty. He never had.

Dominic leaned against the desk, crossing his arms. "Because Kylee went after Linsey." His smirk was almost amused. "Dustin and I both know how you are when it comes to your wife. Who's to say you didn't handle it yourself?"

Collin's expression didn't waver. "I have no reason to go that far. Kylee did this to herself."

If she hadn't tried to set Linsey up, she wouldn't have ended up humiliated and dragged through the mud for days.

Dominic gave a small nod, satisfied enough with the answer. There was no need to dwell on it.

Then, Collin seemed to remember something. "I have something for you."

He reached into his inner pocket, pulling out a small item.

Dominic eyed him warily. "You're being weirdly formal... This isn't bad news, is it?"

Collin shot him a deadpan look before handing over an invitation. "My birthday is the day after tomorrow. Linsey wants.

you at the party."

Dominic blinked, momentarily wondering if he had misheard.

He took the invitation, scanning it quickly. It was real-a birthday invitation.

His head snapped up. "Are you seriously the same Collin I knew? Or have you been swapped out for a lookalike? You've never once celebrated your birthday. What's different this year? This is so unlike you!"

Flipping the invitation open, his gaze landed on the neat handwriting inside- definitely not Collin's.

Dominic smirked. "Ah... This was Linsey's idea, wasn't it?"

"Exactly." At the mention of Linsey, Collin's usual stoicism melted into a rare, effortless smile. "She enjoys a celebration, so

you have to come."

"Of course," Dominic agreed without hesitation.

Collin pulled out another invitation and held it out. "This one's for Dustin. Pass it along."

"Got it," Dominic said, taking it without question.

It was almost surreal-Collin, of all people, was actually throwing a birthday party.

Then again, since it was Linsey's idea, it made perfect sense.

She had Collin wrapped around her finger.

Dustin took the invitation from Dominic and stared at it in disbelief.

"Wow, Collin is becoming a complete stranger to me!" he exclaimed dramatically.

"This is all because of Linsey! If she weren't into birthdays, would he even consider celebrating?"

Dominic smirked. "Definitely not."

"In that case, I need to pick out a good gift." Dustin nodded, stroking his chin in thought.

He glanced at Dominic. "So, what are you getting him?"

They had known each other for years but had rarely exchanged gifts.

Even as close friends, they honestly had no idea what Collin was into.

But lately, there was no question-Collin's world revolved around Linsey.

A knowing smirk crossed Dustin's face. "Of course, I'll make sure to get them something really special."

Chapter 285 I'm Starting To

Feel Left Out!

Dustin leaned forward, his eyes alight with excitement. "I need you to back me up on this," he said earnestly.

Dominic raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "What's on your mind?" he inquired, his curiosity piqued.

In response, Dustin leaned closer and murmured his plan into Dominic's ear.

Dominic's brow furrowed in concern as he processed the idea. He shook his head slightly, a skeptical frown creasing his features. "Are you certain about this? I'm not convinced Collin will react well."

But Dustin remained undeterred, his expression resolute. "What does it matter if he holds a grudge? As long as Linsey is okay with it, that's what counts. Besides, don't you want to see the look on Collin's face when he opens the gift?"

Dominic's hesitation melted away, replaced by a growing intrigue. "You know, that could be quite the sight."

Dustin was emboldened by the notion of stirring up some mischief, his eyes sparkling with mischief. Meanwhile, Dominic found himself drawn to the idea of testing Collin's limits.

With a shared nod, the two quickly bonded over their mischievous intent and began to craft their covert scheme in earnest. As they caught up, Linsey shared exciting news with Dolores.

Upon hearing that she was invited to a joint birthday celebration, Dolores raised her eyebrows in surprise. "A party, out of

the blue?"

Linsey's laughter filled the air. "It's Collin's birthday soon, and since I've never known my own, we figured we'd throw a joint celebration this year."

Dolores responded with a playful chuckle, "You two are practically inseparable- I'm starting to feel left out!"

Quick to reassure her, Linsey wrapped Dolores in a warm embrace and said teasingly, "Listen, no matter how well I get on with Collin, you'll always be my number one. Seriously, propose to me now, and I'll go home and file for divorce!"

Dolores couldn't contain her laughter and playfully shoved Linsey away. "Remember how you used to trail after me like a puppy? It drove me crazy! Now that I've finally shaken you off, I couldn't be happier. Marry you? Not in a million years."

Linsey adopted a dramatically crestfallen look and clung to Dolores, pretending to be devastated.

Dolores changed the subject, her expression turning serious. "I heard about the plagiarism accusations against you. Why

didn't you mention it?"

She was visibly upset, having learned only recently that Linsey had been besieged online for days.

Dolores knew how passionate Linsey was about design, and the allegations had surely taken a heavy toll on her.

Seeing Dolores' worry, Linsey offered a reassuring smile. "Really, I'm okay. I holed up at home during that time and stayed off the grid. I hardly caught any of the backlash, so it didn't really get to me. Actually, the problem was sorted out quickly,

so I didn't see the need to bring it up."

With a soft smile, she reached out and patted Dolores's hand. "You're always swamped with work-I wouldn't dream of troubling you with trivialities. But rest assured, if anything serious arises, you'll definitely be the first one I call."

Dolores replied, a note of concern still lingering in her voice, "Just make sure you're careful, okay?"

Dolores often fretted over Linsey's gullible nature, fearing she had easily fallen prey to deceit.

Fortunately, now that Collin was in the picture, Linsey had a vigilant guardian to keep an eye on her.

The two friends chatted endlessly, unwilling to say goodbye even as the night deepened.

Two days later, at precisely 7 PM, Vista Villa came alive in an unprecedented display of festivity. The once subdued and quiet villa was now a spectacle of enchantment, adorned with such exquisite

decorations that it demanded attention. The garden radiated a welcoming warmth, adorned with birthday banners that fluttered gently against the walls.

Stepping into the transformed space, Dustin stopped dead in his tracks, his eyes wide with astonishment. "Whoa, is this really Collin's place? Or have I somehow wandered into the wrong house?"

Chapter 286 Colin, Make A Wish

As the gift-giving continued Linsey's eyes sparkled with delight at the bounty of thoughtful presents. She instructed the

staff to store them safely, eager to explore their contents once the party subsided.

The highlight of the evening arrived when Linsey, with a dramatic flick of the switch, plunged the room into darkness. A

hush fell over the gathering as she slowly wheeled in a cart laden with a decadently decorated cake.

Her voice, soft yet clear, began to weave through the darkness. "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you... Her song, gentle and heartfelt, perfectly capped the magical evening

Positioned in his wheelchair, Collin observed Linsey as she walked towards him, his eyes alight with a warm glow.

The candlelight danced across her features, casting a serene glow that touched the depths of his soul.

"Go on, Collin, make a wish!" Linsey urged, her voice gentle as she placed the cake before him on the cart.

As Collin's gaze lingered on the cake, Linsey flushed with a mix of pride and embarrassment.

"I made it myself. It may not have the finesse of a bakery cake, but I promise it tastes just fine," she said.



Emotion shimmered in Collin's eyes.

He looked up at her, his voice slightly hoarse with suppressed emotions.

"When did you find the time to do this? I had no due."

Linsey let out a soft laugh, her eyes twinkling with mischief. "Well, it wouldn't be a surprise if you knew, would it?"

A wave of warmth surged through Collin's heart. He reached out, extending his hand towards her.

With a shy smile, Linsey stepped closer and slipped her hand into his.

Their friends, witnessing the tender moment, burst into cheers and laughter.

"Thank you, Linsey," Collin whispered, his gratitude evident in his hushed tone.

Chapter 287 Collin, Do You Even Know The Rules

Dustin let out a chuckle, his eyes twinkling with mischief. "Come on, Linsey, don't sell yourself short. Your cake is incredible-easily rivals anything those fancy

bakers whip up!"

As the candles flickered, Collin closed his eyes and made a silent wish, and after a gentle nudge, Linsey did the same.

The moment they blew out the candles, the villa burst back into life, awash with radiant light.

Laughter and smiles bathed every face as they shared the cake, their celebration simple but filled with warmth and cheer.

As dusk draped the sky in a velvet cloak, Ella, in her later years, bid her farewells early and departed.

The evening was winding down, and the group was poised to disperse when Dustin, caught up in the night's magic, proposed a detour.

"It's still early. Why don't we check out a bar for some extra fun?" he suggested.

Collin was quick to refuse. "No, it's not a good idea. Linsey doesn't drink."

Yet, Dustin wasn't one to relent so easily. "We don't have to drink to have a good time-bars have more to offer than just

alcohol."

He turned his gaze to Linsey, his voice full of encouragement. "I bet you haven't experienced many bars. They're vibrant,

full of life! Don't worry, it's my place, perfectly safe, and we're all here with you."

Linsey's hesitation melted into a playful grin as she turned to Collin. "I want to go, Collin."

Collin exhaled deeply, his head drooping slightly as a gesture of resignation. "Alright, if you're set on going, then let's go,"

he conceded in a reluctant tone.

Witnessing Collin's swift reversal, Dustin and Dominic exchanged glances, their eyebrows raised in silent commentary.

Just seconds earlier, Collin had been staunchly opposed to the plan, but Linsey's mere expression of interest had his resolve

crumbled.

His reversal was not just swift; it was startling.

Before long, they found themselves at Dustin's well-known hangout, his very own bar.

Eager to make the evening unforgettable, Dustin had secured the most lavish private room they offered, complete with plush seating and ambient lighting.

As the group settled into the opulent space, Dustin whipped out a deck of cards,

a sly grin spreading across his face. "Let's add a little thrill-pull a card, and whoever gets the lowest has to brave a round of Truth or Dare," he stated, shuffling the

cards with flair.

Somehow, fate seemed to conspire against Linsey, as she drew the lowest cards.

Attempting to keep the mood light, Collin chose a gentle question. "What was on your dinner plate tonight?"

Dustin scoffed, his face twisting into a mock scowl of exasperation, "Collin, do you even know the rules?"

Clearly, he was hoping for a question that would add more zest to their game night.

Linsey burst into laughter and quickly responded, "Chocolate cake."

Dustin squinted his eyes, leaning forward with a keen interest. "Linsey, are you truly content with Collin?"

"Absolutely," Linsey replied instantly, without a trace of doubt.

Dustin shook his head slightly. "That's not what I meant. I was referring to Collin's sexual prowess. Is he good in bed?"

A blush crept across Linsey's cheeks.

"W-what?" Linsey faltered.

Dustin's smirk deepened. "Why so rattled? Could it be that Collin isn't good in bed? If that's the case, then marrying him has been quite the disappointment. You may not be a widow, but you're practically living like one..."

Shocked, Linsey gestured wildly with her hands. "No, no! Collin is quite good in bed!"

Dustin's eyebrows shot up in feigned astonishment. "Oh? So you two have already... you know..."

He leaned closer, his face the picture of curiosity, clearly itching to uncover more.

But before he could delve any further, Collin interrupted in a flat tone. "Dustin, that's enough-you've posed your question to Linsey already."

Chapter 288 I Can Still Outplay Collin!

Hearing that, Dustin could only sigh with regret. "Alright then." His voice carried a hint of disappointment.

Linsey, having just exhaled a quiet sigh of relief, felt a sudden pang of frustration as she once again met defeat in the next

round.

A sense of helplessness washed over her, leaving her bewildered by her continuous streak of bad luck this evening.

In sharp contrast, Dustin's mood brightened considerably, his eyes alight with mischief and anticipation for the juicy

details yet to come.

However, before he could delve back into the scandalous tidbits, Collin preempted him with a keen interruption. "According to the game's rules, if we choose to avoid a question, we're allowed to just take a drink, correct?" Collin inquired, his eyebrow cocked in a challenge.

"Absolutely," Dustin replied, his voice a mix of intrigue and surprise as he processed the interruption. He then turned his

curious gaze toward Linsey, his question tinged with concern. "But I thought Linsey didn't drink?"

With a dismissive snort, Collin responded, "She doesn't drink, hence I shall drink on her behalf."

He swiftly grabbed the glass resting before him and tossed back its contents in a fluid, decisive motion.

Linsey, caught completely off guard, had no chance to protest.

While she could have managed the question on her own, Collin's protective stance was clear-he was intent on sparing her

from the alcohol, and she was equally determined not to let him drink on her account.

"Oh, come on, Collin, that's totally unfair!" Dustin burst out, his voice tinged with annoyance as his plans for gossip were

cleverly sidestepped.

Collin merely raised an eyebrow, his expression one of smug satisfaction. "I'm Linsey's husband. It's only natural for me to

protect her," he declared proudly, his stance firm and resolute in the dimly lit

room.

Reluctantly, Dustin stepped back, opting to refrain from posing any more questions that could be deemed inappropriate.

Provoking Collin would lead to his own downfall later.

As the game progressed, Dustin found himself on a losing streak.

Collin, ruthless and unyielding, dug deep into Dustin's past heartaches.

"Dustin, I heard your first sweetheart left you because you lacked experience. Is that true?"

"Dustin, rumor has it that you threw yourself into the nightlife after your heart was broken. Can you confirm that?"

"Do you still linger over thoughts of your first love?"

With each probing question about his early romantic life, Dustin's cheeks flushed a deeper shade of red, his embarrassment palpable.

Linsey and Dolores soaked in the scandalous details with evident delight.

"Wow, Dustin, who would have guessed you were such a naïve young man back then?" Dolores remarked, her laughter ringing through the air.

All eyes were on Dustin, expecting his response. Instead, he grasped his glass and downed three hefty gulps as a form of

self-punishment.

With a mix of resentment and resolve, Dustin muttered, "Just you wait, Collin. Once it's your turn to lose, I'll have you squirming with embarrassment!"

Collin just laughed, his confidence unwavering. "Show me what you've got, then make me lose!"

The game escalated into a fierce rivalry between Collin and Dustin.

The tension was palpable, drawing raucous laughter and gasps from the onlookers who were thoroughly entertained by the spectacle.

Ultimately, it was no shock when Dustin succumbed to a resounding defeat.

After downing several glasses one after another, he became so inebriated that he crumpled to the floor, utterly incapable of

standing.

Collin, unable to hide a grin, leaned over him and taunted, "Come on, Dustin, rise and keep going, continue the game- don't just sprawl there like you're out for the count."

Amused yet concerned, Dominic approached Dustin. Realizing Dustin was drunk, he intervened with a chuckle. "Come on, Collin, give Dustin a break. He's well beyond his limit, he's not faking it. We should probably cut him some slack; he's already the evening's entertainment."

Offering a hand, Dominic helped Dustin to his feet. "Let's head out, I'll get you home safely."

Despite his unsteady condition, Dustin resisted, his words slurred but determined. "I'm not going anywhere! I can still outplay Collin!"

With a dismissive snort, Collin retorted, "Alright then, stand up on your own, and I'm all yours for another round."

Linsey observed the scene, her expression one of disbelief. This was a side of Collin she had never seen, his usual calm composure replaced by childish competitiveness.

It was an eye-opener: beneath his cold exterior lurked a playful, almost boyish spirit, ignited by the simplest of challenges.

Chapter 289 Where Did These Come From, Linsey

Linsey could tell that Collin was genuinely content in this setting.

It seemed that he felt most at peace when he was among his friends.

Linsey, watching Dustin stagger slightly from too much drink, decided it was time to step in. In a gentle tone, she said to

Collin, "Come on, cut him some slack. It's just Dustin being Dustin, always a bit wild and carefree."

Collin paused, then nodded slowly, his expression softening due to Linsey's intervention.



"Alright," he conceded, "Dominic, take Dustin home. And be careful out there."

As Dominic led a swaying Dustin out, Dolores also prepared to leave.

She sensed that Linsey and Collin would appreciate some privacy.

"I've got some work piled up, so I better get back," she explained, masking her intent with a professional excuse.

Linsey, ever concerned for Dolores, offered, "Let us drive you back. It's no trouble at all."

Dolores shook her head firmly, her voice resolute. "Really, there's no need. I'm sober, and it's not far. I'll be fine."

The discussion went back and forth until Collin, wanting to ease the situation, called over his assistant. "Take Dolores

home, will you?" he instructed.

"Yes, Mr. Riley," the assistant responded promptly.

With the others gone, the room grew quieter, leaving just Linsey and Collin alone in the soft glow of the remaining lights.

Linsey noticed the flush on Collin's cheeks, an unmistakable sign of the evening's indulgences. With a touch of concern lacing her voice, she said, "Collin, you've had quite a bit to drink tonight. Are you sure you're alright?"

Collin held his liquor with remarkable ease compared to others.

However, noticing Linsey's concerned gaze, he replied with a serene smile, "Just a tad, but it's manageable. A brisk walk in the fresh air should set me right."

Linsey offered a nod of understanding. "Okay, I'll just pop into the restroom quick, and then we can take that walk."

"Sounds good," Collin agreed.

As Linsey returned from the restroom, a waiter intercepted her path.

"Pardon me, are you Linsey Riley?" he inquired.

Startled, Linsey eyed him with a mix of surprise and caution. "Yes, and who might you be?"

In a respectful tone, the waiter explained, "I've been asked to deliver a gift to you. Please, accept it."

But hey Bends already shower has will gifts sather?

Then, the waiter extended a bouquet of stunting rest reuse, their petata vivist and tush

Taken aback, Linsey hesitantly accepted the large banquet, her mind racing with

the rould have sent this to me?" she asked, her curisalty piqued.

The waiter's smile widened politely

widened politely. "A gentleman with undentalche charm!

At that, Lineer's thought mmediately turned to Callin him

the Howers were an unsuspected romantic pasture from

Indeed, they had decided that today would serve as a dual celebration for her birthday as well

This was probably his unique gesture of presenting her with a gift on their important day.

With this heartwarming thought, Linery allowed a radiant emite to grace her features,

As she turned gracefully to make her way back to the room, she remained blissfully unaware of the enigmatte figurs hurking stealthily nearby

From his hidden vantage point, Corman's eyes sparkled with joy as he observed Linesy accepting the roses he had anonymously sent. A smug smile spread across his face.

This woman, who had vehemently opposed the idea of marrying him, was now unwittingly cherishing his rosse.

Her eyes, reflecting the delicate hues of the petals, seemed to dance with unspoken delight

Gorman had been tracking Linsey's every move for some time.

He was aware that tonight was not just any celebration but a joint birthday bash

for Linsey and Collin, peppered with the presence of their close niends.

With this gesture, Gorman aimed to nudge Linsey's worthless husband out of the way.

His confidence surged with the belief that the dissolution of Linsey and Collin's marriage was imminent.

Once she got a divorce, he would approach Linsey anew, beating his love authentically and wholeheartedly

After all, wasn't it said that a grand romantic gesture could sway even the most resolute heart?

Unbeknownst to the dark threads of Gorman's thoughts, Linsey reentered the room, her spirits lifted by the bouquet of roses in her arms.

However, the sight of the bouquet prompted Collin to arch an eyebrow inquisitively and probe, "Where did these come from, Linsey?"

Chapter 290 What Did You

Wish For

Caught off guard, Linsey exclaimed in disbelief, "What? You didn't send this? And

here I was, thinking it was your

charming way of surprising me."

Collin's expression twisted into a puzzled frown. "Absolutely not. I haven't arranged anything of the sort."

Intrigued, Linsey stepped closer to Collin, the bouquet of roses cradled gently in her arms. Her brow furrowed in confusion as she inspected the flowers.

"Then who could be behind this thoughtful gesture?" she murmured to herself.

She delicately sifted through the soft petals, hoping for a hint, yet no card was tucked within to shed light on the mystery.

Speculating with a light chuckle, Linsey suggested, "Could be from another friend."

Collin, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, offered another possibility. "It might be Dustin's doing. He's infamous for his

impromptu gifts and unannounced surprises."

Linsey looked at Collin, her eyes twinkling with amusement. "And how do you feel about that? You make it sound like you

and Dustin have some sort of rivalry, rather than a friendship."

With a light-hearted shrug, Collin replied, his voice tinged with humor, "Oh, I was just joking. Dustin and I are thick as

thieves."

"Alright then," Linsey said, her smile warming as she embraced the unexpected gift. "If these roses are indeed from Dustin, we should graciously accept and appreciate them."

"Sure, as long as they're to your liking," Collin offered, his tone dripping with congeniality.

Laughing heartily, the two shuffled out of the dimly lit private room of the bar, their easy chatter blending seamlessly with

the lively clinks and murmurs of the surrounding patrons.

This lighthearted departure caught Gorman's eye from a shadowy corner where he was lurking. He knit his brows in

confusion, his mind racing.

How peculiar it was that Linsey had accepted roses from another man, yet Collin, seemingly her devoted husband, showed

no sign of jealousy.

Could it be that their marriage had lacked the passion one would have expected?

As he mulled over this anomaly, a mocking sneer slowly spread across Gorman's face.

Just earlier, Linsey's tender declarations had convinced him of their deep, unshakeable connection. Now, it appeared

nothing more than a facade.

Perhaps Collin, conceding to his own inadequacies, had come to accept that he didn't measure up to someone like Linsey?

And with a rival as formidable as Gorman in the fray, Collin was too cowardly to confront the threat openly.

If this was indeed the case, Gorman felt a surge of triumph, sensing victory within his grasp.

His initial plan had been to drive a wedge between Linsey and Collin, capitalizing on the fallout.

Though the plot had deviated from his expectations, Gorman remained unfazed. Any development that tilted the scales in

his favor was a welcome one.

All the while, Linsey hadn't given Gorman a single thought.

After departing from the bar, she ambled along the shore, pushing Collin's wheelchair.

The brisk, nocturnal sea breeze swept over them, its refreshing touch instilling a profound sense of relaxation.

Amidst the serene night, an unusual tranquility enveloped them both.

Out of the blue, Collin's voice broke the silence with a curious tone. "So, what did you wish for when you blew out the

candles earlier?"

Linsey quirked an eyebrow and offered a secretive smile. "That's a secret! If I spill it, my wish won't come true."

"Is that so? What a pity," Collin responded earnestly. "My wish involved you. I bet you're dying to know."

This statement sparked Linsey's curiosity, prompting her to probe, "What did you wish for?"

Collin arched an eyebrow mischievously. "Are you sure you want to know? Lean in closer, and I'll whisper it."

Drawn by his invitation, Linsey leaned toward him, only to be greeted by Collin's soft chuckle next to her ear as he echoed

her earlier words.

"It's a secret. After all, you just mentioned that revealing a wish will prevent it from coming true."

Surprise flickered across Linsey's face as she caught the playful smirk playing on Collin's lips, realizing he had merely been

messing with her.