

Zillionaire 471

Chapter 471 Can I Invite A Few New Friends

Carol felt a pang of disappointment "Linsey's husband doesn't care about her at all something's definitely off about this child. Think it over again-maybe you've

missed a cur

Noticing Carol's displeasure, Alexa grew anxious

In front of her daughter, she had no room for mistakes. Making sure Carol was satisfied was her top priority

Her mind raced until suddenly, a thought struck her

"Oh! Miss Lawson, during my investigation, I found out that Linsey had a fiancé she was deeply in love with for years-Felix, the son of the Wells family. But for some reason, on the day of her wedding she abandoned and married someone else instead."

She hesitated before adding, "Do you think she might still have feelings for Felix? Maybe marrying someone else was just her way of getting back at him."

A spark of interest lit up Carol's eyes. She tapped her fingers thoughtfully. "That's entirely possible. If she was in love with Felix Wells, there's a good chance the child she's carrying is his."

A triumphant smile spread across her lips. She turned to her bodyguard. "Find out where Felix is. He might be the key to bringing Linsey down completely."

When Carol returned home with Alexa, they unexpectedly ran into Jeffery, who hadn't gone out that day. "Jeffery, you're home? Didn't you go to work?" Carol asked.

After hearing from Alexa about everything Jeffery had done for her, Carol was in a fantastic mood. She cheerfully ran up to her brother, linking her arm through his with a bright, affectionate smile.

Jeffery chuckled. "What, do you wish I worked all the time? Even I need a break sometimes." Jeffery couldn't help but smile as soon as he saw Carol.

Carol pouted playfully. "You've got me wrong, Jeffery. I actually wish you'd stay home every day so I could see

you more."

He tapped her nose fondly, amusement twinkling in his eyes.

They chatted and laughed for a while before Jeffery's gaze shifted toward Alexa, who stood quietly nearby.

His first thought was of her supposed illness. Without thinking, he asked with concern, "Alexa, how have you been feeling lately?"

Alexa's heart skipped a beat. A flicker of panic crossed her face as she worried he might unknowingly expose

the lies she had told Carol

Quickly composing herself, she forced a polite smile, lowered her head, and answered softly, "Thank you for your concern. Mr. Lawson. I've been feeling much better

Jeffery gave a small nod. "That's good to hear just don't overwork yourself I always see you running around make sure you get some rest

Alexa smiled again. "I will Thank you

Seeing Jeffery show concern for Alexa only deepened Carol's trust in her. It reinforced her belief that Alexa had been telling the truth.

After all, why would Jeffery pay so much attention to a mere servant unless she was handling important matters for him?

Feeling even more pleased, Carol turned to her brother with a sweet smile, gently tugging at his arm. "Jeffery, my birthday party is coming up in a few days. Can I invite a few new friends?"

Chapter 472 I Still Don't Trust Carol's Intentions

Carol wasn't about to let such a golden opportunity slip away she had to find a way to get Linsey to attend

her birthday party

Jeffery didn't hesitate "Of course, it's your birthday. You can invite whoever you want. Your party can certainly

accommodate a few extra guests"

A subtle smile played on Carol's lips. "A few days ago, I visited CR Corporation and met an exceptional designer. I'd like to invite her."

As she spoke, she carefully observed Jeffery's reaction, searching for any hints in his expression.

Jeffery's brows furrowed slightly. He cast a glance at the servants nearby before leading Carol inside, lowering his voice. "Carol, why did you go to CR Corporation again?"

He sighed, clearly exasperated. He wanted to tell her-once and for all-that she needed to stop holding onto any hope regarding the founder of CR Corporation, especially since he was already married.

But seeing the look in her eyes, he swallowed his words.

It was rare for Carol to be so deeply affected by a man. He didn't want to be too harsh.

Hopefully, she would come to her senses on her own.

Carol, meanwhile, misinterpreted his silence entirely.

She assumed Jeffery was still struggling to help her get closer to CR Corporation's founder.

"Jeffery, I just want to invite Mr. Riley to my birthday party. Nothing more. Don't worry about me," she assured

him.

Jeffery studied her for a moment before something occurred to him. "He won't be able to attend. I heard he's not in town right now. Must be handling something important."

Carol's brows lifted slightly. "Mr. Riley isn't in town?"

Jeffery nodded. "Yeah. We were supposed to have a meeting, but he postponed it-said he had urgent business in a neighboring city"

Carol lowered her gaze, and in an instant, the pieces clicked together.

So that was it.

Linsey must have taken advantage of his absence to visit the hospital for a secret prenatal checkup.

Which meant-without a doubt-the child she was carrying wasn't Mr. Riley's!

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pter 472 1 Still Don't Trust Carol's intentions

A glint of mockery flickered in Carol's eyes.

Linsey, that shameless woman, dared to cheat and Riley?

This time, Carol wouldn't let her get away with it.

get pregnant with someone else's child while married to Mr.

Meanwhile, after finishing their shopping, Linsey and Dolores headed to a nearby restaurant for a meal

"Linsey, I still don't trust Carol's intentions. You need to be careful-don't walk right into a trap. Dolores twirled her fork in her spaghetti, her tone serious,

Linsey shared the same suspicion. She nodded, but the thought dampened her appetite.

"Don't worry. I'll be cautious." She hesitated before adding softly, "Honestly, I don't interact with Carol much She's a Lawson-we come from completely different worlds. We only talk about design, nothing more."

Dolores scoffed, "That's what I'm worried about. A spoiled rich girl like her could easily make things difficult for you. Don't be too obedient. Don't just follow her orders blindly."

Chapter 473 Let Me Be

There For You Too

Dolores concern made Linsey smile. "You don't have to fuss over me. I'll be just fine."

Shifting the focus, she asked, "By the way, I haven't checked in on you. How have you been?"

As she spoke, she poured soup into her bowl, too preoccupied to notice the brief flicker of sadness that crossed

Dolores's face.

"What could possibly be wrong? I'm doing great." Dolores kept her voice light, her lips curving into a smile.

She didn't want to b

to burden Linsey with her troubles.

There were two reasons. First, Linsey was expecting. If she shared what was on her mind, Linsey would undoubtedly worry and drain herself over it.

As she thought of the other reason, a trace of sorrow flickered in Dolores' eyes

If things fell apart, Linsey wouldn't be caught in the fallout

Linsey's voice was gentle. "You shouldn't push yourself too hard. No matter how demanding work gets, nothing matters more than your well-being "

Dolores let out a soft chuckle. "If I slow down, who'd hold everything together?"

Linsey felt warmth spread through her chest. Reaching across the table, she took Dolores' hand, her tone sincere. "You don't always have to carry everything alone. Let me be there for you too."

Dolores arched an eyebrow, her gaze playfully shifting to Linsey's belly. "Let's revisit that idea after the baby

arrives "

She then nudged a dish toward Linsey. "Eat up. You said you were starving, but you've barely touched anything."

Linsey exhaled with a small smile. "I was hungry a moment ago, but now, I don't know why I've lost my.

appetite."

Before Dolores could respond, Linsey's phone buzzed. She glanced at the screen, and immediately, a soft, radiant smile spread across her face

Dolores didn't even need to ask. "Let me guess-Collin?"

Linsey's eyes twinkled. "Yep."

As if something had just clicked, she quickly added, "Oh! I can't let him find out I

went to the hospital for a check-up today. This stays between us."

After reminding herself and Dolores, she finally picked up.

"Linsey, where are you?"

The second she heard Collin's voice, an odd sense of unease settled in her chest

"I'm out having lunch with Dolores. Why?" she responded softly.

Collin chuckled. "You didn't answer quickly-I thought you were napping"

Linsey pursed her lips. "You think I sleep that much? It's already past noon. How could I still be in bed?"

Then, she teased, "What's with the sudden call? Didn't we talk last night?"

There was a brief pause before Collin's deep and affectionate voice came through. "I just miss you, sweetheart."

Heat crept up Linsey's neck, and within seconds, her cheeks flushed.

Across the table, Dolores remained quiet, but her amusement said it all-she was enjoying how flustered Linsey

had become..

Trying to keep her composure, Linsey playfully retorted, "You're impossible. Aren't you supposed to be focused on your trip? Why aren't you working?"

Chapter 474 That's Unusually Healthy For You

Linsey was unaware that, at this very instant, on the other end of the line, Collin was holding a signed agreement with a renowned jewelry designer.

This designer was in exceptionally high demand, with every available slot in her schedule fully reserved for the

year.

Collin had spared no effort, going to great lengths-both financially and strategically-to bypass the long wait and secure an exclusive commission.

The designer had guaranteed that a pair of rings, crafted to perfection, would be ready within the week, meeting his exact standards.

The mere thought of soon having those exquisite rings in hand and proposing to Linsey sent a surge of excitement through him.

The moment he received confirmation, he dialed Linsey without hesitation.

His emotions were overwhelming, filling him with the urge to share the news immediately.

But he knew he had to wait.

He wanted everything to be flawless-a breathtaking surprise and a proposal she would never forget.

"Relax, I only called after handling everything." Collin reassured her with ease.

In truth, this so-called business trip to the nearby city had nothing to do with work.

His sole purpose for traveling was to set the stage for the perfect proposal

For this, he had even pushed aside several pressing work matters.

Hearing his words, Linsey felt relieved. "That's good

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As she spoke, she scooped up a spoonful of soup and took a sip.

Just a moment ago, it had seemed rather plain and ordinary.

But now, for some reason, it tasted richer, with a subtle sweetness she hadn't noticed before

"Make sure to eat properly while you're away. I worked hard to get your stomach back in shape-you can't let bad habits undo all that progress."

"I know, don't worry. I'll be careful," Collin assured her.

Then, with curiosity, he said, "What's on your plate today? Maybe I'll steal some meal ideas from you."

Linsey chuckled and listed the dishes in front of her.

"What? That's unusually healthy for you." Collin was surprised

In the past, Linsey's meals always included something fried or indulgent

But today, everything she mentioned was unexpectedly light and nutritious He hadn't seen that coming

Linsey paused, caught off guard by his keen observation she hesitated before saying. I just felt like something lighter today"

Collin playfully teased, "But Dolores likes strong flavors too Did you two make a part to switch things up?"

Linsey faltered for a second.

She was never great at hiding things from Collin.

She glanced at Dolores, who shot her a questioning look.

Dolores mouthed, "What's going on?"

Linsey quickly muted the call and whispered, "He thinks it's strange that we're eating so clean today"

"Just be honest. It's not a bad thing," Dolores suggested without hesitation Linsey considered it for a moment and thought that Dolores made a good point. She unmuted the phone and said, "Collin, there's something I need to tell you." "what is it?"

His voice was soft, full of warmth. "What

A nervous flutter filled Linsey's chest.

She had planned to wait and tell him in person once he was back.

But since he had noticed, she couldn't bring herself to keep it from him any longer. "You were wondering why I chose such a light meal, right? Well, the reason is..."

Chapter 475 He Wouldn't Betray You

Linsey had barely begun speaking when a woman's voice suddenly rang out from Collin's end "Mr. Riley, why are you hiding here? Let's have dinner together tonight."

A brief pause followed before the woman seemed to realize he was on a call "Oh, I'm sorry! I didn't notice you were busy"

"It's alright," Collin responded casually, then placed a finger to his lips, signaling the woman to stay quiet,

Linsey blinked and asked softly, "Collin, are you busy?"

Rather than answering, he redirected the conversation. "What were you about to say just now?"

Lowering her gaze slightly, Linsey hesitated. She wanted to ask about the woman's identity.

But if Collin had intended to explain, he would have done so already.

Yet, he didn't.

A feeling she couldn't quite shake told her he was deliberately avoiding the subject.

"It's nothing important. Just wanted to remind you to take care of yourself while you're away," she responded.

Collin chuckled lightly. "Alright, you too."

Linsey wanted to say more, but before she could, he spoke again. "Finish your meal. I have to go now."

Left with no choice, she replied softly, "Okay."

The moment the call ended, Linsey's heart grew heavy.

Why wouldn't he just explain?

Across from her, Dolores had been observing closely. Seeing Linsey's once- radiant smile fade into a troubled expression, she frowned in confusion.

"What's wrong? Weren't you about to tell Collin about the pregnancy just now?" Dolores asked.

Linsey bit her lip, brows drawing together. "I heard a woman talking to him."

Dolores looked puzzled "Didn't you say he's on a business trip? It's probably just a colleague."

She Linsey's unease only deepened. She met Dolores' gaze and spoke slowly, deliberately. "Dolores, I'm not

imagining things. Something feels off I just know Collin is keeping something from me. And that woman, not

isn't just a work acquaintance."

Dolores was caught off guard.

"Linsey, are you saying Collin is cheating on you?" The idea seemed almost impossible.

She had seen the love between them firsthand-how could it suddenly be in question?

Linsey shook her head, frowning "I don't think it's that. But I do feel like he's hiding something important."

Dolores thought for a moment before taking her hand seriously. "Linsey, if you're having doubts, you need real proof Worrying over nothing won't do you or the baby any good"

But Linsey's concern didn't fade.

Sensing her lingering unease, Dolores tried to reassure her. "Come on, don't overthink it. I haven't spent much time with Collin, but from what I've seen, he genuinely loves you. He wouldn't betray you."

After a moment of thought, she added, "If something really is going on, you'll find out when he gets back. Just ask him directly."

Linsey let out a slow breath, feeling some of the weight on her chest lift. "Yeah... You're right. Maybe I was overthinking

Maybe it was just her pregnancy hormones heightening her emotions.

Dolores gave her a reassuring squeeze. "It's not your fault. Don't put too much pressure on yourself."

Chapter 476 Are You Not

Feeling Well

Linsey's thoughts were a mystery to Collin.

He sighed with relief after ending the call

It was lucky that Linsey hadn't caught on to anything if she had, it would have spoiled the elaborate surprise

he was organizing

Next to him, Jacquetta Turner, the jewelry designer, offered a warm smile. "Was that your wife, Mr. Riley?"

Nodding lightly, Collin returned her smile. "It was."

With a hint of embarrassment, Jacquetta said, "I hope I wasn't interrupting"

Collin waved it off with a chuckle, "Not at all. My wife has a sharp eye for design. I was worried that she might recognize your voice, so I ended the call quickly."

Considering Jacquetta's reputation in the design community, it was possible that Linsey, a fashion designer, could recognize her..

To protect the secret he had been meticulously preparing, Collin knew caution was key.

When she heard this, Jacquetta's interest immediately sparked. "Your wife designs too? How wonderful! I'd love to meet her someday,"

"Absolutely," Collin replied with genuine warmth. "Her name is Linsey, and she's an excellent fashion designer."

Comforted by Dolores' supportive words, Linsey managed to push her suspicions aside for the next couple of

days.

She resolved to patiently await Collin's return before confronting him directly.

Only afterward would she finally share the joyful news of her pregnancy.

On a typical workday, Linsey was at her office.

Her colleague tapped gently on her office door, checking if she wanted anything. "Hey Linsey, we're ordering

coffee. Want your usual?"

Battling fatigue, Linsey almost requested her favorite coffee out of habit.

"I think-" She abruptly hesitated, changing course mid-sentence. "Actually, my

stomach's bothering me today. Could you bring me hot milk instead?"

"Linsey, are you not feeling well? I have some antacids if that might help, her colleague suggested kindly

Linsey quickly shook her head "No, thanks"

"Okay then, her colleague replied, who then left without further questioning. The

door closed, and silence returned to Linsey's office

She breathed a sigh of relief in the silence

Lowering her head, she tenderly touched her stomach.

Exhaustion from the day nearly made her forget she was pregnant.

During this period, avoiding coffee and limiting medication was essential

She reminded herself to keep these precautions in mind.

Thirty minutes later, there was another knock. Her colleague reappeared, this time with a cup of hot milk and an envelope in hand.

"Linsey,

while I was at the cafe for the coffee, someone was delivering this to you, so I picked it up."

Taking the envelope with a hint of curiosity, Linsey thanked her, "Thank you."!! Her colleague grinned. "I took a quick look, and it's an invite to Miss Lawson's birthday party! She must really value your work to send one your way."

Linsey pulled the invitation from the envelope. It was indeed for Carol's twenty- sixth birthday celebration.

It seemed Carol meant what she had said recently about sending an invitation Linsey pursed her lips. Attending wasn't something she looked forward to. However, she kept that thought to herself.

"It's probably just a formality," Linsey replied casually.

Her colleague disagreed immediately, saying, "I wouldn't say that. The Lawson family is quite selective about their party guests. They maintain a very exclusive guest list each year, with no details ever made public. It sounds like it will be quite the elaborate affair."

Chapter 477 You Seem Pretty Excited About This

Linsey let out a light laugh. "You seem pretty excited about this."

Without dwelling on it, she passed over the invitation. There's no name on it anyway. Go ahead. With such a huge crowd, she won't be able to tell who's who."

Her colleague's eyes widened in alarm as she quickly waved her hands. "Linsey, I wouldn't dare! If Miss Lawson found out, I'd be finished-and you might get caught up in it too."

Linsey observed her colleague's anxious expression and was taken aback for a moment.

Carol's reputation was no joke-everyone seemed too intimidated to take any risks around her.

"Hey, Linsey." Her colleague shot a glance at the invitation on the desk. "I just realized you're the same age as Miss Lawson."

Linsey shifted her gaze to the card, only now noticing that she and Carol were indeed born in the same year. "That's right," she acknowledged.

Her colleague sighed. "Both twenty-six, yet you're so composed and reliable- always calm and collected. Meanwhile, she..."

Noticing her colleague's hesitation, Linsey chuckled. "Alright, let's leave it at that."

After a brief pause, she added, "You should be mindful of what you say. If the wrong person hears, it could land you in trouble."

Her colleague stuck out her tongue playfully. "Got it. I'll be more careful next time."

Once her colleague stepped out, Linsey picked up the invitation again.

As expected of the Lawson family-every birthday bash they threw was as grand as a wedding

She skimmed through it briefly and didn't give it much thought.

She had already planned to make up an excuse and skip the event.

Carol probably wouldn't even notice if she was missing.

But the day before the celebration, someone from the Lawson household arrived at CR Corporation once again "Miss Lawson personally selected this dress and jewelry for you." The attendant presented an elegantly p at CR Corporation's entrance tomorrow night wrapped gift box. "She has also arranged for a car to pick you up

Please be sure to wear these to the party."

Carol's attendant handed over the package in front of the entire Fashion Design Department, making it

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impossible for Linsey to refuse.

"Thank you." She honestly didn't know how to respond.

Carol seemed far too invested in her presence. Why go out of her way to send an

outfit and even arrange transportation?

Was Carol afraid she wouldn't show up?

Well, that had been the original plan..

But now, it seemed she had no choice.

After all, their ongoing collaboration on the dress design project was still in

motion. It wouldn't be wise to strain their professional ties.

Once Carol's people left, Linsey's colleagues immediately swarmed around her, whispering with curiosity and

envy.

After finally breaking free from the chatter, Linsey retreated to her office, her gaze landing on the dress box sitting on her desk. A sense of unease crept in.

Why was Carol so determined to have her there?

After a moment of thought, Linsey opened the box and examined the gown inside.

A careful inspection confirmed that it was a simple yet sophisticated evening dress-nothing out of the ordinary.

Since avoiding the event was no longer an option, she decided not to overthink it.

She still couldn't tell whether Carol's interest in her was friendly, antagonistic, or something else entirely.

Maybe tomorrow night would finally give her some answers.

With that in mind, Linsey set her worries aside.

All that was left was to end Carol's grand celebration

Chapter 478 They Really Do

Look Alike

The following evening, Linsey changed into her evening gown at the office before making her way to the company's entrance.

As expected, the moment she stepped outside, a sleek car was waiting nearby- the one Carol had arranged for

her.

Linsey slid into the backseat, and without a word, the driver pulled away, taking her straight to the hotel where the grand celebration was being held.

Upon arrival, she stepped out and immediately noticed the lively scene at the entrance. A steady stream of elegantly dressed guests filled the area, arriving for Carol's lavish birthday party.

Without sparing them much attention, Linsey made her way inside.

Just then, faint whispers reached her ears-hushed yet filled with curiosity.

"She looks so much like..."

"I know! It's uncanny!"

"Which elite family is she from? I don't think I've ever seen her before."

"Could she be a Lawson?"

Hearing the murmurs, Linsey instinctively turned her head and found a small group discreetly glancing in her

direction.

The moment her gaze met theirs, they quickly looked away, feigning innocence.

Their reaction puzzled her even more

What exactly were they whispering about?

Linsey blinked in confusion but didn't dwell on it, continuing toward the banquet hall

Just as she stepped inside, someone walking out accidentally collided with her.

Caught off guard, she gasped softly, stumbling sideways.

For a brief second, her mind went blank-her body's first instinct was to shield her abdomen.

"Careful!"

A firm arm caught her just in time, steadying her securely

Linsey's breath hitched in surprise. It took her a moment to regain her composure

"Thank you," she murmured, still slightly shaken.

She had no idea that the man who had caught her was just as stunned.

When he remained silent, Linsey frowned slightly and turned to face him-only to freeze in shock.

The man standing before her had a strikingly familiar face. He looked like a male version of herself

"You... Linsey hesitated, slowly raising her hand as if to confirm what she was seeing, her expression conflicted

Jeffery, too, was at a loss.

He didn't even resemble his own parents this closely.

So why did this complete stranger look almost identical to him?

More whispers of astonishment rippled through the crowd.

"Seeing them side by side now, they really do look alike."

"Right? The moment I saw her, I thought she was a softer, more delicate version of Jeffery."

"Could she be an illegitimate daughter of the Lawson family?"

The second those words were uttered, Jeffery's dazed expression hardened. A sharp glint flickered in his eyes as he turned toward the gossiping guests. His voice remained steady, but the weight of his presence alone sent a chill through the group.

"Mind your words. If I hear any more baseless speculation, don't be surprised if you're escorted out-and permanently cut off from us."

His parents had always been devoted to one another. The idea of an illegitimate child was beyond ridiculous.

The once-chatty onlookers instantly shrank back, their faces turning pale. "S-

sorry, Mr. Lawson. We didn't mean anything by it," they stammered, bowing their heads in apology

Chapter 479 Don't Let This Ruin Your Night

"Alright, enough standing around. Get inside." Jeffrey said

"Yes, Mr. Lawson" The group quickly paired up and hurried into the venue

Linsey was still piecing together what had just happened when she caught Jeffery shooting her a sharp, almost

ley look

Buh? What was going on?

Why was he glaring at her?

Jeffery was already irritated by the earlier gossip, and now, even seeing Linsey made his mood worse

"Watch where you're going Don't block the way," he said curtly before striding past her without another glance.

Linsey blinked, momentarily stunned, then almost laughed in disbelief. Was he serious? He had been the one to barrel out and bump into her!

Taking a steady breath, she reminded herself not to let some arrogant man ruin her night.

Lifting the hem of her gown, she continued inside.

It was then that she recalled how the others had addressed him-and suddenly, everything clicked. He was Jeffery, Carol's brother and the future head of the Lawson Group.

No wonder both siblings seemed equally insufferable. It must run in the family. This brief encounter only cemented Linsey's already low opinion of the Lawsons.

She just hoped that once this party was over, she would never have to cross paths with them again.

Yet, despite Jeffery's attempt to shut down the whispers, word of a mysterious woman resembling him had already spread like wildfire.

It wasn't long before the rumor reached Carol.

"Carol, have you heard? There's a woman at your party who looks exactly like your brother."

Carol's expression darkened instantly. "What?" she asked, her movements slowing

Her friend leaned in. "You don't get it? People are saying she might be your father's illegitimate daughter!"

A cup flew through the air, slamming hard against the woman's shoulder before crashing to the floor. Water splashed everywhere, soaking her dress.

The lounge fell into stunned silence. No one had expected Carol to lose her temper so suddenly,

Another woman quickly stepped forward in alarm "Card, don't be upset Annie didn't mean anything by je she was just repeating what people are saying outside"

Annie Anderson, whis had yelped in pain, shopped back to her senses. When she saw Carol's furious expression, a chill ran down her spine

"Carol I'm sorry! I shouldn't have said that Please don't be mad, Annie stammered, her mice shaking,

Dvery socialite in Grester's elite circles knew one thing stay on Carol's good side

at all costs Before befriending her, they had all been warned repeatedly by their families

And now, she had unintentionally set Carol off

Gritting her teeth, Carol seethed, "Whoever started this nonsense I'll make sure they regret it!

Her friends immediately rushed to calm her. "Carol, it's your birthday. Don't let this ruin your night"

"We'll find out who's behind it, and if anyone keeps spreading it, we'll make them apologize to you personally!"

"Exactly! Just ignore it, Carol. Don't let these baseless rumors bother you." Marrying A Secret Zillionaire
Happy Ever After

Chapter 480 Who Dared Upset My Sister

Carol sat stiffly, surrounded by people trying to console her Despite their efforts, her flawlessly made-up face

remained tense

"Who exactly is this woman?" she asked, her voice cold and distant.

Annie hesitated, biting her lip as she glanced around for support. Finally, she spoke, her voice uncertain.
"I haven't seen her myself. It's just rumors-maybe people are exaggerating..

Before she could say more, the lounge door swung open.

"Who dared upset my sister?" Jeffery's voice carried a lighthearted edge, but when his eyes landed on Carol's distressed expression, his demeanor shifted. His face hardened as he strode toward her. "Carol, what happened?" Immediately she saw him, the emotions she had been holding back broke free. Tears welled up in her eyes as she sobbed, "Jeffery!"

Without hesitation, Jeffery pulled her into a comforting embrace, gently patting her shoulder while his gaze swept over Carol's friends.

"Someone explain-what's going on?" he demanded. His eyes briefly rested on the faint bruise on Annie's shoulder. His voice dropped as he asked, "Did Carol hurt you? I'm sorry. Go take care of that first."

Annie, touched by his concern, felt a flicker of warmth replace her earlier resentment. "It's nothing, Mr. Lawson. I was out of line when I spoke to Carol."

Jeffery's expression shifted as he glanced down at his still-crying sister. With a sigh, he turned his attention to the mess on the floor. "There's water everywhere. Have someone clean it up before Carol slips."

As if on cue, Alexa walked in to tidy up.

"Carol, stop crying, or you'll ruin your makeup. Just tell me what happened to upset you this much?" Jeffery said as he handed her a tissue and gently dabbed at her tears.

Alexa, silently wiping the floor, couldn't help but speak up. "Miss Lawson, whatever it is, just tell Mr. Lawson. He'll handle it for you."

Carol sniffled and glanced at her brother with grievance and frustration. "Annie said a woman at tonight's birthday party looks just like you. People are saying she's Dad's illegitimate daughter!"

The cup Alexa had just picked up slipped from her grasp, shattering against the floor. The sharp sound cut through the room, drawing everyone's attention.

Startled, Carol snapped, "Be more careful! Didn't they train you properly before you got this job?"

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Alexa quickly masked the flicker of guilt in her eyes and bowed her head. "I'm so sorry, Miss Lawson. I'll be

more careful."

Carol's words echoed in Alexa's mind, and her thoughts immediately turned to Linsey

From the first moment Alexa saw Linsey, she had noticed how much she resembled Myla

Later, when she met Jeffery, the similarities between him and Linsey became impossible to ignore

One thing was for sure; if Myla ever crossed paths with Linsey, she would ask questions. And when that happened, Carol would be in trouble.

Jeffery barely reacted, his expression unreadable. Still, his tone was calm as he said, "Alright, Carol, it was just

a mistake