

Zillionaire 801

Chapter 801:

Upon disconnecting the call, Linsey whirled around to leave and caught sight of Caylee trailing her, a look of distress masking her face, suggesting she was hiding something.

Oblivious to the underlying truth, Linsey assumed Caylee's anxiety stemmed from concern for Zenia and Zander.

To soothe her, Linsey said, "Don't worry, Caylee. Zenia and Zander are resourceful kids. They'll manage."

Caylee snapped out of her daze at Linsey's words, meeting her calm look with a surge of guilt.

It dawned on Caylee that Collin, whom she had discussed with the children last night, must be the "bad man" Zander referred to.

Caylee hadn't anticipated that Zenia and Zander would confront Collin so soon, and now Zenia had been captured by him.

The thought of Linsey discovering this truth filled Caylee with dread. The longer Caylee sat with it, the heavier the guilt pressed down on her. Still, the thought of admitting everything outright froze her in place. All she could manage was a quiet apology, her voice tight with nerves.

"Linsey, I'm really sorry. I should have been watching Zenia and Zander more carefully. When I noticed they weren't in the room this morning, I just assumed they were off playing somewhere else in the hotel."

They continued their urgent pace outside, flagging down a taxi swiftly.

Taking a deep breath to steady herself, Linsey addressed Caylee earnestly, saying, "We all make mistakes, Caylee. I too am at fault. I should have made sure they understood the boundaries since moving into this hotel."

She paused, her voice laden with concern, and said, "They've always been quite bold, ever since we lived overseas."

Caylee listened, her heart heavy with regret.

Caylee gripped her phone, wrestling with the decision to inform Gorman of the situation.

She regretted her previous conversation with Zenia and Zander; had she foreseen the consequences, she would have held her tongue. After all, it was an adult matter that shouldn't have involved the children.

Meanwhile, inside Collin's car, Zenia came to a sudden realization about her situation.

It shocked her that she had been kidnapped by Collin.

"Let me go, you villain!" Zenia shouted, thrashing in Collin's grasp as she attempted to escape.

Collin managed to calm Zenia down and then gently placed her on the seat next to him.

Zenia immediately moved as far away as she could within the seat, eyeing Collin with suspicion.

Internally, however, Zenia was becoming increasingly frightened and anxious.

She desperately missed Zander and hoped he would appear to save her soon.

Chapter 802:

Collin accepted a clean towel from his assistant and, instead of using it himself, he offered it to Zenia, speaking softly.

“Would you like to clean up a little? It seems your lovely dress has gotten dirty.”

Zenia stopped to look at her stained dress, her distress evident as tears began to pool in her eyes.

“My dress... It’s my favorite one!”

The assistant braced for another bout of tears from Zenia.

Yet, Collin continued to show unexpected kindness, gently dabbing the stains on her dress with the towel.

At the same time, he said soothingly, “We’re near a mall. How about we go and pick out a new dress for you?”

Zenia looked up at Collin’s earnest face, feeling a surprising sense of comfort.

Hearing his suggestion, Zenia frowned deeply and said, “Mommy told me never to take things from strangers!”

Collin hesitated at her reaction, then began to ask tentatively, “Is your mother...”

He cut himself off, a wry smile briefly crossing his face as he realized the pointlessness of his question.

Regardless of whether Zenia’s mother was Linsey, Linsey’s dislike for him remained unchanged.

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Moreover, Zenia was unaware of any past conflicts between him and Linsey.

Collin concluded that it was neither appropriate nor useful to seek such answers from a child.

“Okay, we don’t have to go to the mall. I’m going to take you to the police station now, where they can help you find your mom so you can go home,” Collin said gently.

Zenia looked up at him, taken aback for a moment.

Being so young, she inadvertently revealed her thoughts as she asked, “Are you taking me to the police station for them to punish me?”

Caught off guard by her question, Collin responded with a puzzled expression, “Why would I want the police to punish you?”

Zenia hesitated, then wisely avoided mentioning that she had deliberately run into him. Instead, she said, “Because you were angry!”

With a light chuckle, Collin said, “If we make peace, there will be no punishment from the police.”

Confused, Zenia asked, “What’s ‘make peace’?”

“It means that I forgive you, and you forgive me,” Collin explained.

Zenia’s cheeks ballooned with frustration as she retorted, “But I’m not ready to forgive you yet, you villain.”

Collin lifted his brows at her and lightly tapped the tip of Zenia’s nose with one finger. “You keep calling me a villain. I’m curious—what exactly did I do that makes me so terrible?”

Chapter 803:

Zenia fixed Collin with a steady gaze, her lips sealed shut.

Together with Zander, she had crafted their plan meticulously and was determined to keep it a secret from Linsey.

“Are you not in the mood to talk?” Collin asked, his voice soft and his demeanor soothing. “That’s perfectly fine. Just take some time to rest; we’ll arrive at the police station shortly.”

After a brief silence, he said, “I’m sorry, but I don’t have any children’s beverages in the car. Would you like some water instead?”

Zenia gave a small nod without making a sound.

Her throat felt parched.

Collin smiled slightly and requested his assistant to pass a water bottle. He checked the temperature of the bottle before loosening the cap.

Looking back at his assistant, Collin asked, “Is there a straw available?”

“Yes,” the assistant responded, promptly producing a straw and passing it to him.

Collin inserted the straw into the bottle and handed it to Zenia.

Zenia tried to grasp it, but her hands were too small to hold it steadily. Observing this, Collin supported the bottle from below, allowing her to sip comfortably.

Suddenly, his assistant, seated in the front, said hesitantly, “Mr. Riley, the meeting is set to start in ten minutes. We’re likely going to be late.”

Without any apparent worry, Collin said, “Reschedule the meeting for thirty minutes later.”

He seemed unable to fully relax until he had personally ensured Zenia was safe at the police station.

As Collin watched Zenia drink, he noted a resemblance to Linsey in her features.

But then, something about her face tugged at a memory he couldn't fully grasp. It nagged at him, just out of reach.

For a moment, he considered whether she might look a bit like Gorman, but the idea slipped away before it could settle. The doubt annoyed him. Indeed, Collin had overheard Zenia referring to Gorman as Daddy, confirming his suspicions about her parentage.

He suspected his personal aversion to Gorman was clouding his judgment, making him doubt Zenia's resemblance to him.

"I don't need any more water," Zenia said, pulling Collin from his thoughts.

Acknowledging her, he resealed the water bottle.

With a playful smirk, he joked, "Didn't you say you shouldn't accept things from strangers? So why did you take my water?"

Zenia was caught off guard, her cheeks turning a rosy shade.

"Just really thirsty," she retorted firmly.

Collin gently cautioned her, "It's important to remember your mom's advice so she doesn't worry, right?"

As he reflected, Collin thought about how random their encounter had been today. He grew concerned about who else Zenia might approach so recklessly in the future.

Chapter 804:

So he continued, “Also, charging at people like that isn’t a good idea. Someone could get hurt, don’t you think?”

Zenia fixed her gaze on Collin, her eyes wide and still. Slowly, she tilted her head, clearly puzzled by him.

In that moment, she thought Zander bore a slight resemblance to Collin.

Not far from the coffee shop, Zander spotted Linsey and Caylee approaching quickly.

“Mommy! You have to save Zenia!” he cried, tears streaking down his face, his voice thick with urgency.

“My dear, don’t worry. We’ll rescue Zenia,” Linsey reassured him, her eyes scanning the area.

With relief, she noticed several security cameras in view, confident the footage would reveal who had taken Zenia.

Just as she reached for her phone to call security, it rang.

“Hello, is this Ms. Linsey Brooks? Your daughter has been brought to the police station.”

When she heard the police officer’s words, Linsey’s face lit up with relief.

“Great, I’m on my way!”

She told Caylee to take Zander back to their hotel ahead of her, then stepped out onto the curb to flag down a cab and made her way to the police station.

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During the ride, Linsey's hands were tightly clenched, her nerves on edge over Zenia's safety. Her thoughts were chaotic, puzzled over the identity of the bad man Zander had mentioned and curious about who had taken Zenia to the police station.

Arriving at the station, Linsey hurried out of the cab and into the building. She quickly spotted Zenia sitting beside a policewoman.

"Zenia!"

"Mommy!"

Zenia leaped into Linsey's arms, and as she inhaled her mother's familiar scent, tears began to flow freely.

Linsey softly stroked Zenia's back and said, "Everything's okay now. Mommy's here, so there's no need to be afraid."

After a moment, she gently pulled back to inspect Zenia carefully.

"Are you alright? Did you get hurt?"

Zenia, her eyes tearful, shook her head.

At that point, the policewoman interjected,

"I've examined your daughter, and she's fine. Just make sure to keep a closer eye on her. Fortunately, a good Samaritan brought her in."

"I truly appreciate it. I'm so sorry for causing any trouble," Linsey said, her tone full of gratitude. Without wasting a moment, she followed up with a question.

“Would you happen to know the name of the person who helped my daughter?”

Chapter 805:

Linsey couldn't shake the feeling that if that kind stranger hadn't stepped in, Zenia might have ended up in real danger. That thought alone made her determined to find them and express her gratitude face-to-face.

The policewoman paused briefly before responding,

“I'm sorry, but the individual chose to remain anonymous. However, I must say, he seemed like someone not easily crossed. But now that your daughter is safe, perhaps it's best to let it be.”

Upon hearing this, Linsey nodded her understanding and quickly left with Zenia.

She felt frustrated that Zander and Zenia had been so reckless to sneak out that early. Determined to address this, she planned a serious discussion with them for later.

While Collin was heading to the company, he remained completely unaware of everything that had unfolded after he left.

He had an urgent meeting to attend and, having ensured Zenia was safe at the police station, he had no choice but to leave.

Changing into a fresh suit while in the car, Collin reflected on his short time with Zenia, feeling an unexpected sense of solitude. Zenia's vibrant and intelligent nature reminded him of Linsey.

He found himself wondering, almost wistfully, if he and Linsey had had a child in those days, maybe their little girl would have been every bit as sweet and charming as Zenia.

With a self-mocking smile, he dismissed the thought, murmuring to himself, “How could that even be possible?”

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By the time Collin stepped into his top-floor office, he finally caught sight of Dustin, who had been off the radar since last night.

Dustin was slouched on the sofa, deep in his own head, so distracted he didn't even look up when Collin approached.

Caught off guard by the unusual silence, Collin raised his voice just enough to pull him back. "Hey, whatever's eating at you can wait. We've got a meeting to get through first."

Dustin, jolted from his thoughts, stared at Collin briefly before saying, "Oh, yes. Of course."

Throughout the meeting, Collin noticed Dustin's mind wandering. Despite several board members engaging him with questions, Dustin seemed elsewhere.

Finally, Collin was unable to tolerate it any longer, his tone becoming stern as he said, "Dustin, should I throw some water on you to wake you up?"

The coldness in his voice was evident, making everyone tense. Given Collin's recent irritability, the board was surprised Dustin would allow himself to be so distracted.

Sensing the shift in tone, Dustin gave his cheek a quick slap, shook off the haze, and pulled himself back into focus. "No, that won't be necessary. Apologies, I didn't get much rest last night."

Collin gave Dustin a dismissive look, then gestured to the board member and said, "Please proceed."

As soon as the meeting was over and the others were heading out, Collin's stern voice halted them. "Dustin, my office, now." A collective shudder went through the room at his command.

Chapter 806:

The group was certain Dustin was in for a severe reprimand.

Dustin trailed behind Collin into the office, his expression distant and unfocused, completely unaware of the thoughts running through everyone else's minds.

Once the office door shut behind them, Dustin overheard Collin on the phone. "Contact the boxing gym. I'm bringing someone along shortly." The moment he heard those words, Dustin jolted back to awareness, his voice laced with panic as he asked, "Collin, you're not actually thinking of dragging me to the boxing gym, are you?"

Collin adjusted his tie and responded coldly, "You need to sharpen up. We can't afford your lack of focus with the workload we have." Just then, a knock came at the door. "Boss, the gym is prepared for your arrival. Shall we go now?"

Dustin's panic surged, and his first thought was escape. "Collin, hold on, I suddenly feel quite ill..."

"Let's go," Collin said firmly, grabbing Dustin by the collar and steering him forcefully out of the office.

Three hours later, Dustin lay exhausted and soaked in sweat on the gym mat.

He lay there with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, his mind frozen, too shaken to begin processing everything he had just endured.

Collin, drenched in sweat as well, stood off to the side with a calm that didn't match the scene.

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Without a flicker of emotion, he glanced down at Dustin, who was struggling for air, then peeled off his gloves at an unhurried pace. "Get up."

Fear washed over Dustin's face, but he couldn't even lift a hand to protest. "I can't do it, Collin. I messed up. Just let me off the hook. If this keeps going, it's going to kill me."

Collin gave him a distant look, then sat down abruptly on the gym floor, stripping off his gloves and flinging them to the side.

Just then, his assistant arrived with two water bottles, handing them to Collin, who casually threw one to Dustin.

Startled by the unexpected toss, Dustin exclaimed, "Collin, you're really—"

"What are you trying to say?" Collin asked, a hint of challenge in his tone.

Dustin hesitated, then quietly unscrewed the cap of his water bottle and took a sip.

Moments later, Collin's voice dropped to a whisper as he said, "I hope this won't happen again."

Dustin understood right away that Collin was calling him out for spacing out during the meeting. "Yeah, I know. I'm not myself today. I'm sorry."

"Is this about Dolores?" Collin said, tossing the question out so easily that Dustin jolted up, like someone had yanked a string tied to his spine.

"How did you know?" Dustin's shock was evident, his mind racing with paranoia.

Collin sneered, "You disappeared with Dolores after the banquet last night. You think people wouldn't notice?"

Chapter 807:

Dustin's face turned red with embarrassment. "You seem to catch everything, don't you, Collin?"

Taking a breath, Dustin looked at Collin and said, "What if, hypothetically, I ended up spending the night with someone?"

"If you're into Dolores, you can ask her out," Collin suggested. Dustin's cheeks burned with embarrassment at the straightforward response.

However, just a second later, he let out a faint, rueful smile and said, "But I have a feeling she doesn't see it that way..."

Moments later, Collin said firmly, "Then you should try harder." With that, Collin got to his feet and started walking away.

Watching him go, Dustin murmured in disbelief, "But I tried my hardest last night..."

Before Dustin could finish his thought, another water bottle flew at him. It smacked him hard, and he cried out in pain.

Collin, at a loss for words, said, "I was trying to say that you should really try harder to win her over. What were you thinking?"

Linsey had just returned to the hotel with Zenia when Zander and Caylee rushed over, their faces full of worry.

"Zenia!" Zander called out.

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"Are you okay? Did you get hurt?" Caylee inquired with concern.

Zenia's heart settled the moment she saw her mother. "I'm fine," she addressed Zander and Caylee.

Zander breathed out in relief. But then, his eyes shifted to Linsey. Her expression was cold.

“Mommy...” he called gently.

Linsey said nothing. She walked straight to the sofa, ignoring him. Zander’s and Zenia’s smiles faded. Their eyes dropped, a trace of hurt showing.

Caylee bit her lip, clearly torn.

After a pause, she took the kids’ hands and led them over to Linsey. They stood quietly in front of her—one adult and two children—waiting to see how she would react.

The room went quiet. The silence stretched. Finally, Zenia couldn’t hold it in.

She stepped closer, tugged at Linsey’s sleeve, and asked in a soft voice, “Mommy, what’s wrong?”

Linsey looked down at Zenia’s nervous little face, then over at Zander, who stood stiffly with a tense look. Her voice cracked as she spoke.

“Why did you two go out by yourselves this morning? And why did you go so far?”

She remembered that the coffee shop was near CR Corporation. It was nowhere near their hotel.

Chapter 808:

She couldn’t understand why the kids had wandered off that far.

Caylee’s heart sank. Guilt washed over her.

She was the one who had talked about Collin and those places last night.

But she never thought the kids would actually sneak out the next day to find him.

Too much had happened. Things could have gone terribly wrong. Caylee feared that if Linsey found out she was the reason behind it, she would feel let down.

Rather than wait to be exposed, Caylee thought it best to tell the truth herself.

But before she could say a word, Zander suddenly stepped forward. "Mommy, it was me. I took Zenia out. I just wanted to have some fun. It's boring in the hotel."

Caylee froze. Her hands clenched without thinking. Whatever courage she had disappeared in a flash.

She didn't understand why Zander hid the truth.

Her brows furrowed. She stood there, unsure of what to do.

Linsey let out a tired sigh. "I never said you couldn't go out and play. But you're both still kids. If you want to go out, you need an adult with you. I wasn't busy today. I could've taken you. And if I couldn't, Caylee would've gone. But slipping out without telling anyone?"

By the end, her voice shook. Her eyes shimmered with tears as she took their hands. "If something had happened to you... I wouldn't have been there to save you."

Zenia's lips trembled. Seeing her mother so upset broke her heart. "I'm sorry, Mommy. I was wrong. I won't do it again."

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She leaned in slowly, wrapping her small arms around Linsey as tears streamed down her cheeks.

Zander's eyes were tearful too, but he blinked fast, trying hard not to cry.

Zander pressed his lips together, trying to appear braver than he felt. “Mommy, it was my fault. I shouldn’t have taken Zenia out running around.”

Linsey gently dabbed away Zenia’s tears with a soft tissue, then reached for Zander and wrapped both children tightly in her arms, holding them close against her heart.

Her voice was calm and tender when she finally spoke. “I’m not scolding you. I just need you to promise you won’t scare me like that again.”

The two kids nodded earnestly, their voices chiming together. “We promise we won’t!”

A faint smile touched Linsey’s lips at their sincerity.

No matter how she tried, she could never bring herself to be too harsh with them.

Yes, mistakes had to be acknowledged—but she didn’t want them to be afraid of her.

That was the quiet vow she repeated to herself again and again.

Chapter 809:

After all, Zenia and Zander were growing up without a father. So Linsey wanted only to fill their world with as much warmth and love as she possibly could, making sure they felt just as cherished and whole as any other kids.

With that thought softening her gaze, she gently patted their heads and said, “I know living in a hotel room isn’t very comfortable, so...”

Zander’s eyes lit up in an instant, and he bounced on his toes.

“Mommy, are we going home?”

Even Caylee looked surprised by the question.

She had assumed Linsey planned to leave Grester, which would have meant she wouldn't have to go through with what Gorman had asked of her.

The idea of betraying Linsey again made her stomach turn.

But Linsey let out a soft laugh, brushing a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "Grester is our home. I grew up here—and from now on, this is where the two of you will live, too."

Zander's expression faltered at once. His shoulders slumped as he murmured, "Okay then."

But the pout didn't last long. His eyes gleamed again a moment later. "Then I want to live where you grew up for a few more years!"

Linsey tilted her head, her smile full of affection. "When you're all grown up, you'll be free to go wherever your heart leads you."

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Zenia clung to her mother, snuggling against her shoulder, her voice sweet and dreamy. "I never wanna leave you, Mommy..."

Their innocent voices washed away the worry that had been tugging at Linsey's chest.

Then, as if a thought had just surfaced, she glanced over at Caylee.

"Would you come with me in the next few days to check out new places to live?"

But Caylee looked lost, as if her mind were somewhere far away.

“Caylee?” Linsey repeated, watching her closely.

Caylee finally blinked and snapped out of it. “Huh? Oh—yes, Linsey. What’s up?”

Linsey narrowed her eyes slightly, sensing that something wasn’t quite right—but she brushed it off, assuming Caylee was just exhausted from helping with the kids.

“I was saying we can’t stay in a hotel forever. I’m going to start checking out apartments—renting or buying, whichever makes sense. As long as it’s comfortable and in a good neighborhood, that’s all that matters.”

Caylee nodded quickly. “Of course. I’ll start looking into options ahead of time—see what’s available.”

“Thank you,” Linsey said softly. “You’ve been working so hard lately. Take the rest of the day to rest—I’ll watch the kids.”

Chapter 810:

Caylee’s eyes widened with surprise, and she immediately waved her hands. “No, no, it’s really no trouble at all! This is what I’m here for.”

She didn’t know much about design. The only reason she had become Linsey’s assistant was because Linsey had seen something in her—dependability, quiet diligence—and brought her on to help manage orders and occasionally look after the children.

Linsey paid her generously, far more than most assistants earned.

But just before they were supposed to leave for Grester, her grandmother—the only family she had, the woman who had raised her—had fallen gravely ill.

That was when Gorman stepped in. He paid for the surgery—an expensive one Caylee never could have afforded on her own. And ever since, she had always felt indebted to him.

Caylee knew she owed Linsey.

She also knew how hard Linsey worked to raise two kids on her own.

Because of that, she couldn't bring herself to ask Linsey for money.

In the end, she had no choice but to agree to Gorman's request—doing only things that wouldn't harm Linsey or the children, at least on the surface.

Linsey, of course, had no idea what was going through Caylee's mind. After everything that happened today, she realized one thing—they couldn't keep living in a hotel. Zander and Zenia needed a bigger, safer space.

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A hotel room, no matter how nice, would never feel like home.

Luckily, she had managed to save up a decent amount over the years as Aurora. Now, she could afford to rent a cozy apartment in Grester—a place where the kids could finally feel settled.

Buying a house would take more time and come with a lot of complications.

For now, she decided to start by looking around and take it from there.

"Linsey... Have you really decided to stay in Grester?" Caylee asked gently, still unsure.

She remembered Linsey saying they wouldn't stay long when they first arrived.

She hadn't expected her to change her mind so soon.

Linsey turned on the TV and found a cartoon for the kids.

Then she nodded, her eyes steady and full of resolve. “I’ve made up my mind,” she said. “I just won first place in the design competition. If I leave now, I might lose out on some big opportunities that come with that. For my career—and for the kids’ future—staying here is the right choice.”

She paused, then added softly, “Dolores’ company is finally getting back on its feet. She hasn’t said much, but I know she needs me. And Grester... This is where we grew up. It holds our memories. This city gave me friendship, dreams, and roots. I won’t run from it. I’m staying.”

When she first came back, Linsey never thought she would stay. The city had once brought her so much pain.