

Zillionaire 831

Chapter 831:

Linsey, however, stayed quiet. She hadn't looked at Collin once.

Then Haven spoke, her voice soft but laced with meaning. "I haven't had the pleasure of hearing this lady's name yet. She's been quiet since the beginning. As Ms. Davidson's capable assistant, shouldn't she speak up a little more?"

Dolores looked over and smiled faintly. "Why don't you introduce yourself first? After all, you're the one Mr. Riley brought along." Hearing that, Dustin sighed and rubbed his face, his eyes closing briefly.

He wasn't surprised. Dolores never missed a chance to poke at Collin.

Collin quietly set down his utensils, his tone still polite. "This is Haven Walton. She recently returned from abroad."

Dolores gave a knowing smile. "Mr. Riley and Ms. Walton seem quite close."

Haven's lips curled into a sweet smile. She was ready to agree, but Collin cut in before she could speak. "My grandmother is close with the Waltons. She asked me to help show Haven around."

His tone was even, but there was no mistaking the message. Then he glanced at Linsey.

Her face remained steady and unreadable—as if none of it concerned her.

That flicker of indifference hit Collin hard. A shadow passed through his eyes, and there was a trace of bitterness in his smile.

He wanted to explain more, but Haven's presence held him back.

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If she caught on, she might lash out later—when he wasn't there to protect Linsey.

After everything that happened four years ago, Collin couldn't afford to take that risk.

So he didn't reveal Linsey's identity as Aurora. He didn't even say her name.

Haven fell silent. Her smile stiffened as she realized what had just happened—Collin was distancing himself from her right in front of everyone.

The sting of it was sharp and humiliating.

Just earlier, even Dolores had assumed she was Collin's girlfriend.

Dolores raised a brow, her voice laced with sarcasm. "Oh? I thought you two were a couple."

Haven, eager to keep Collin from saying more, quickly answered, "We're just friends."

A quiet voice broke through the moment. "How can that be true?" Linsey cut in. "Didn't Mr. Riley spend 2.7 billion at a charity auction to buy the Star of the Desert for Haven? That doesn't sound like just friends to me."

Dolores froze. She was stunned—not just by the insane price of the necklace, but by the fact that Linsey, who had been silent, chose to speak up now.

She wasn't the only one surprised. Dustin's eyes widened too. He turned to Collin and asked in a hushed voice, "You bought a necklace for Haven? For 2.7 billion? Why didn't you tell me?" Linsey's words left Collin momentarily speechless.

Haven, on the other hand, blushed deeply. “Collin only bought the Star of the Desert for my birthday. It’s the most touching gift I’ve ever received,” she said with a bashful smile.

Chapter 832:

Collin’s brows furrowed. He wanted to say something more.

But just as the words reached his lips, he stopped.

With the way things stood between him and Linsey now, even the truth might do more harm than good.

She might think he was using money to win her back.

And if she thought that, it would only prove what she had believed four years ago—that he saw her as nothing more than a greedy, shallow woman.

The cold look on his face didn’t go unnoticed. Dustin, sitting beside him, felt the tension and shifted uncomfortably.

Even though he had finally had the chance to see Dolores today, he couldn’t help feeling annoyed. This unexpected group had thrown everything off.

What a headache, he thought.

Meanwhile, Collin’s silence only deepened Linsey’s suspicions.

So it was true. He really had spent 2.7 billion on a necklace for Haven. It was all because her birthday was coming up.

No matter what he had said before, his actions spoke volumes. Linsey also remembered something she had heard earlier— Ivy had a close bond with Haven’s family. Their families were well connected. It wasn’t hard to believe that the two of them had once been set up to marry.

And clearly, Ivy had liked Haven enough to still want her for Collin, even after Haven had left Collin at the altar. With that, the table fell into silence. Everyone returned to their food, each person lost in their own thoughts.

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"I'm going to the ladies' room," Haven said, wiping her mouth with a napkin and standing. She smiled as she looked at Linsey and Dolores. "Would either of you like to come with me?"

Both shook their heads.

"You go ahead," Linsey said politely.

Haven paused for a moment, giving Linsey one last look before walking off.

Once inside the restroom, she made sure no one else was there. Then she let out a deep breath, pulled out her phone, and dialed a number.

"Joanne, hey. How's it going? Did you find anything? I asked you to look into Collin's ex-wife, Linsey Brooks. What did you dig up?"

Joanne responded right away, "I just finished organizing everything. I'll send the file to you now."

"Got it," Haven said, then ended the call.

Yet something inside her twisted uneasily. A creeping suspicion took hold. The woman dining with Dolores... Could she really be Linsey? If she was, then it meant Collin, Dolores, and even Dustin had all been covering for her—hiding her identity.

But why? What were they trying to keep from her? Were they deliberately leaving her out? A sharp gleam entered Haven's eyes.

Chapter 833:

Moments later, her phone buzzed with a message. Joanne had sent the investigation report.

She opened the file quickly—and froze the second she read the contents.

Back outside, the meal was nearly over. Plates were mostly cleared, and the atmosphere had settled down.

A server approached with a tray of drinks, smiling warmly. “To celebrate our grand opening, we’re offering complimentary fresh orange juice. Would anyone like some?”

Linsey glanced at the orange-yellow drink, her throat dry. “Yes, please,” she said softly.

One by one, the others took a glass. A light fruity scent drifted through the air, whetting their appetites once more.

“Smells like orange juice,” Dolores remarked with a smile.

Linsey took a small sip. It was sweet and cooling, just what she needed. Collin, seated diagonally across from her, brought his glass closer to his nose—but the moment he caught a whiff, his expression changed. His brows furrowed sharply. Without warning, he looked up, alarm flashing in his eyes. Just as Linsey raised the glass again, he reached over and grabbed it from her hand.

“Don’t drink that!” Collin said firmly, his voice low and tense.

Startled, Linsey stared at him in confusion. “You...”

Dolores frowned, clearly irritated. “What are you doing, Collin? What does it matter to you if she drinks juice?”

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“There’s mango in it!” he said quickly, not taking his eyes off Linsey.

“Wait, what?” Dolores’s face went pale.

Linsey froze, her heart skipping a beat. Suddenly, whether real or imagined, it became hard to breathe.

Collin reacted instantly. He shoved the plates aside and came around the table to her side, leaning close. “How do you feel?” he asked urgently, concern evident in his tone. “Is your breathing okay?”

Linsey’s chest tightened. Her breaths came in short, uneven bursts. Her body weakened, and she slumped without warning.

“Linsey!” Dolores gasped, leaping to her feet. Panic broke through her voice. “Quick, lay her down flat! I’m calling an ambulance!”

Collin caught her just in time, gently easing her onto the long bench, carefully supporting her head.

Behind them, Dustin’s face had turned grim. He spun toward the server and snapped, “Why was there mango in that juice? Didn’t you say it was fresh orange juice?”

The server looked horrified. “We made mango juice this morning, and at noon we switched to orange. It must’ve gotten mixed in by mistake.”

Linsey’s face had already started to swell and flush red. Her breathing turned more labored by the second. Tears streamed uncontrollably down her cheeks.

Her vision blurred, but she could still make out Collin’s worried face hovering above her—and something in her chest ached at the sight. It was too much. Her face burned, and pain pulsed through her skin. “Leave me alone...” Linsey croaked, her voice hoarse and weak. She tried to push Collin away.

Chapter 834:

The sudden commotion drew the attention of the customers.

“What’s going on?”

“Is there something wrong with the food?”

The restaurant manager rushed over and attempted to calm everyone. “There is nothing wrong with our food. The food is safe for consumption. The customer is having an allergic reaction.”

“You don’t warn customers about potential allergens in your food? You mixed mango into orange juice without any warning! Do you know how dangerous that is?” Dustin snapped, his tone full of anger.

Dustin’s words visibly rattled the manager. “I’m so sorry, sir. We’ll cover any medical expenses for the lady that arise from this,” the manager said apologetically.

Collin felt a dull pang in his chest when Linsey pushed him away. It was just as he feared. She still hadn’t forgiven him for what had happened four years ago.

A pained look appeared on his face, but he managed to hide it.

“Linsey, we need to set the past aside for now. You’re having an allergic reaction and need to be taken to a hospital immediately,” Collin said gently.

Without further ado, Collin lifted the near-unconscious Linsey to his chest.

He was finally holding Linsey like that after four years. Her warmth, scent, and weight were just as he remembered.

His heart skipped a beat as a lump of emotion welled up within him. He didn’t have the time to dwell on this, though, as they were in an urgent situation.

He steadily and purposefully moved as he held Linsey in his arms. Dustin and Dolores, finally over the initial shock, followed suit, shoving through the crowd that had gathered.

“How does an allergy get that bad? That’s really terrifying.”

“True. I hope it’s not deadly.”

Several of the customers seemed shaken by the incident.

Haven returned from the restroom just in time to catch the discussion of the incident.

She had heard the commotion but had been on the phone with Joanne, so she couldn’t find out what was happening immediately. Staring confusedly at the gathered crowd, she turned to a customer and asked, “What happened?”

“A lady just had a severe allergic reaction. They just took her to the hospital.”

Haven’s curiosity immediately fizzled out, and she shrugged indifferently before walking back to her table.

The chairs were empty, save for the cleaning staff, who were tidying up the table.

What was going on?

Had they just left without saying a word? Even Collin was gone!

One of the servers noticed Haven standing there in shock. “Ma’am, didn’t you leave with your companions?”

“The lady at your table had a severe allergic reaction and had to be rushed to the hospital by the others.”

Chapter 835:

It was then that Haven realized the person who had the allergic reaction was from their table—and a woman.

Was it Dolores? Or...

Regardless of who it was, she couldn't understand why Collin would leave her behind like that.

Haven angrily walked out of the restaurant and pulled out her phone to call Collin.

However, she was unable to get through to him.

She could do nothing but stand outside the restaurant, fuming with rage.

After a few moments, she called Joanne. When Joanne answered, she said, “Put the investigation on Linsey Brooks on hold for now. I need you to look into Dolores Davidson from the Davidson Group. I want to know everything about her, including people close to her.”

Upon hearing Haven's words, Joanne responded with a concerned expression. “Gathering information about Linsey Brooks is proving incredibly difficult. I'm starting to think Mr. Riley might be involved. How else could all traces of her, even a simple photograph, vanish? Especially since, four years ago, Linsey was quite a notable designer in town.”

A shadow crossed Haven's face as she reflected on the fruitless files she had recently examined. She muttered with a hint of satisfaction, “Collin must be going to great lengths to keep Linsey's details buried. That actually works in my favor.”

Initially, Haven had believed the woman she saw with Dolores might be Linsey. Now, she doubted that assumption.

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She reasoned that if the woman had indeed been Linsey, Collin would not have remained so composed at the same table.

Furthermore, the woman's striking beauty had sparked a sudden sense of threat and jealousy within Haven.

Out of the blue, Joanne asked, "Weren't you supposed to meet with Collin today? How did it go? Are things moving forward with you two?" A shadow passed over Haven's face as she heard the question.

Driven by pride, she covered up the truth. "He had to handle some urgent business at his company, so he left right after lunch," she replied, then swiftly diverted the conversation. "Let's focus on investigating Dolores."

Joanne sighed in resignation. "Understood, but what's Dolores' connection to Collin?"

Haven chose not to respond.

Meanwhile, Collin carefully placed Linsey in the back seat of his car.

Dolores, following closely, quickly said, "I'll sit next to Linsey."

"Alright, I'll take the wheel," Collin responded, easing Linsey down before heading to the driver's seat.

Dustin, left with little choice, settled into the passenger seat.

As he observed Collin's strained features, it was clear that his feelings for Linsey remained profound.

Chapter 836:

The twists of fate seemed to mock them with their cruel irony.

The vehicle hastened along the highway.

In the back seat, Dolores cradled Linsey, dabbing at her forehead to relieve the sweat.

She lowered the window, allowing the fresh air to flow in.

With a look of concern, Dolores watched Linsey struggle for breath, tears welling up in her own eyes.

Never before had Linsey's allergic reactions been so severe.

However, her allergies had intensified after the births of Zenia and Zander.

At that time, the doctor had advised Linsey to be especially cautious, and ever since, they had taken great care.

They never anticipated facing such an accident today.

Linsey had merely tasted orange juice laced with mango, triggering a frighteningly intense reaction.

The thought of a higher mango content was harrowing.

Dolores, overwhelmed by guilt for not recognizing the mango sooner, let out a quiet sob.

It had been Collin who first spotted the danger.

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“Dominic’s hospital is where we’re headed, right?” Dustin asked.

“Yes, have the utmost confidence in his expertise,” Collin assured.

Caught up in her worries, Dolores was jolted back to reality when Linsey squeezed her hand.

The sharp pinch pulled Dolores from her reverie, prompting her to glance at Linsey, whose expression had sharpened.

Linsey’s slight frown and gentle head shake were subtle, yet unmistakably intentional, catching Dolores’s attention.

As Dolores met Linsey’s slightly anxious gaze, she suddenly realized something important.

Realizing that, Dolores quickly said, “Isn’t there a closer hospital? Let’s just go to that one!”

Dustin turned to Dolores and said, “Dominic is an excellent doctor and is familiar with Linsey and her condition.”

Dustin’s words caused Dolores to grow even more anxious. It was exactly because Dominic was an excellent doctor that she couldn’t let them take Linsey to his hospital.

If it were revealed that Linsey had given birth before and that had caused her allergic reaction to worsen, Collin would finally know about the existence of the two kids.

Dolores knew within her that nothing could remain hidden forever, but she felt that now was not the time for this particular secret to be revealed.

Linsey was weak and unable to defend herself.

If Collin decided to demand custody of the kids, there was nothing they could do to stop him.

It was with this consideration in mind that Dolores made the decision not to let Linsey be taken to Dominic's hospital.

Chapter 837:

"Linsey is in so much pain. We have to get her to the nearest hospital. You're delaying because you don't care about her, but I know she needs treatment immediately," Dolores said sharply.

The atmosphere grew exceedingly tense after her words.

Dustin nervously glanced at Collin, afraid that Dolores' words would enrage him. Collin, however, appeared untouched by her words.

Attempting to smooth things over, Dustin began, "Dolores, we..."

However, before he could finish, he was interrupted by Collin. "Fine. We'll head for the nearest hospital."

Collin stole a glance at Linsey through the rearview mirror and saw her lying in Dolores' arms, her face pale. This image caused a dull pang in his chest.

Fortunately, the nearest hospital was close, so in less than twenty minutes, Linsey was receiving the proper medical care she so desperately needed.

As Dolores was the person closest to Linsey at the time, the doctor called her aside for a private conversation.

As expected, the doctor spoke about how Linsey's allergic reaction had been exacerbated by complications that had arisen during childbirth.

The doctor reminded Dolores that Linsey would need to be particularly mindful of her diet in the future.

"Understood. Thank you, Doctor," Dolores said, visibly relieved.

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The truth had managed to remain hidden.

When Dolores stepped out of the consultation room, she spotted Dustin leaning against the wall not far away.

Dustin rushed over immediately when he saw her and asked, "How is Linsey? What did the doctor say?"

"It was just an allergic reaction. She'll need some medication and a few days of rest," Dolores replied.

Dustin let out a relieved sigh, although the fear that had been on his face didn't completely disappear.

"That was the most severe allergic reaction I've ever seen. It terrified me," he said.

"It terrified me too," Dolores replied with a sigh.

Dustin noticed her troubled expression. In a bid to comfort her, he gently patted her on the back and said, "It's fine now. I'm happy we got her treated in time. Collin, too, helped by driving quickly. He really came through when it mattered."

Dolores glanced around in search of Collin. When she didn't see him, she scoffed and said, "Collin left? Was he rushing off to see his new lover, Haven?"

Dolores believed that Collin was just as unreliable as ever. She couldn't believe she had actually felt gratitude earlier when she had seen how concerned he had been for Linsey.

Dustin frowned at Dolores' statement and said, "Collin's still here. He's in Linsey's hospital room with her."

Chapter 838:

"What?" Dolores asked, her eyes widening in shock. Without another word, she turned and marched toward the room.

"What the hell is Collin trying to do? Linsey is sick! Is he trying to upset her even further?"

Dustin hurried after her, calling for her to wait.

In the sterile quiet of the hospital room, Linsey stirred. Her lashes fluttered open, and the first thing she saw was a pair of deep, unwavering eyes fixed on her.

Those eyes—how familiar they had once felt.

Her chest tightened. For a second, her heart skipped a beat.

Collin leaned in, his face etched with concern. "Linsey, you're awake. How are you feeling?"

She blinked, dazed. And then, like a crashing wave, memories returned. Her gaze hardened. She turned her head sharply, avoiding him.

“Why are you still here?” Her voice rasped, brittle as dry leaves.

He did not flinch at her hostility. His tone remained gentle. “Dolores was called away. I stayed in case you needed something when you woke up.”

“I need nothing,” she snapped. “You may leave now.” The chill in her voice could have frozen steel.

Collin did not move. Instead, as if untouched by her venom, he reached for the pitcher on the side table and poured her a glass of water.

“Your throat sounds sore. Drink some water,” he suggested.

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Linsey turned toward him—only to catch sight of herself in the reflection.

With a swollen face, eyes puffy, and blotchy skin, she looked like a stranger.

Her breath caught. A wave of horror washed over her. Without thinking, she lashed out. Her hand struck the glass in his grasp, sending it flying.

The crash rang out sharply as it shattered on the floor, shards scattering like tiny daggers.

“Collin Riley, are you deaf?” she shouted hysterically. “I told you to leave!”

Why was he seeing her like this?

They were nothing now—strangers. He should not have mattered anymore. And yet, she still cared.

A mix of shame, anger, and something achingly familiar churned inside her.

Collin was taken aback by her outburst, but he regained his composure immediately.

But beneath his calm facade, he felt a mix of sympathy and concern.

“I am sorry,” he murmured, his voice low and strained.

Linsey’s breath hitched as he rose from his seat. “I will clean it up. Then I will leave.”

She stared at him in disbelief as he squatted down. Collin Riley—the famously untouchable founder of CR Corporation—was picking up shards of glass with his bare hands.

A frown tugged at her lips. “Why are you doing this?”

Chapter 839:

He did not look up. “The shards might cut you.”

She immediately understood what he meant.

He was... trying to protect her?

Her throat tightened.

Her eyes burned with the sting of unshed tears. She watched his crouched figure, hands carefully collecting the sharp fragments. A part of her wanted to scoff—to call his concern a performance. But the sight of him like that—quiet, unflinching, real—left her stunned, her defenses cracking.

The door banged open, making her flinch.

“Linsey!” Dolores’ voice rang out. She stopped short at the doorway.

Behind her, Dustin froze mid-step.

Both of them stared at the same scene. Collin was silently gathering broken glass.

“Collin! What are you doing?” Dustin rushed over. “This isn’t something you should be handling yourself. Just let someone else take care of it.”

Collin quietly cleaned the floor, his face calm as he wrapped the glass shards in thick paper. Without looking up, he said, “It’s nothing.” Then he turned slightly to Dolores and spoke politely. “I’ll leave the rest to you.”

He had wanted to say more, but with everything going on, he knew he had no right to meddle in Linsey’s matters.

So he held back and gave Dustin a short glance. “Let’s go.”

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Dustin blinked in surprise. “Huh? We’re just leaving?”

After all, it was rare for Collin to get a moment alone with Linsey.

Dustin couldn’t understand why he was leaving so soon.

“Let’s go,” Collin repeated, his voice steady and low.

Without another word, he turned and walked out, not even glancing back.

Dustin hesitated. He looked at Dolores, unsure. But in the end, he followed Collin out.

Linsey needed rest, and with Collin gone, Dustin knew it wasn't right for him to stay either.

Soon, the room fell quiet, with only Linsey and Dolores left inside.

Dolores sat down beside the bed. Linsey stared ahead, her eyes red, her face blank.

Dolores sighed softly.

No matter what Collin had shown, Linsey's reaction said it all—she hadn't let him go completely.

But now wasn't the time to bring him up. Dolores feared it would only deepen Linsey's pain.

After a pause, she spoke gently. "Linsey, why don't you rest a little more? I'll call Caylee later and ask her to look after Zander and Zenia. You don't need to worry about the kids."

Linsey's eyes shifted slightly. Then she said slowly, "Dolores, I just don't understand what Collin is trying to do."

Chapter 840:

Dolores pressed her lips together. "Me neither. He and Haven seem close, yet there's this strange distance. He bought her a necklace worth \$2.7 billion, but around us, he acts like she means nothing."

She paused, then glanced at Linsey and added, "And today, when this happened to you, he looked so panicked that he left Haven behind. I don't get it."

Linsey stayed quiet, sadness clouding her eyes. "Dolores... Haven is the woman who walked out on Collin at their wedding. She humiliated him."

Dolores's eyes widened in shock. "What? Haven was the bride who left him? She embarrassed him like that, and he's still so kind to her?"

As soon as the words slipped out, Dolores regretted them. She realized she had said too much.

Linsey gave a faint smile, trying to ease the moment. "It's okay. I should've let go of the past. I was the one being foolish."

"No, you weren't!" Dolores said quickly, holding Linsey's hand with care. "You loved Collin with all your heart, and he hurt you deeply. Now that you're back in town, it's only natural for your emotions to be everywhere. You're human, Linsey. Feelings are messy. Don't beat yourself up. Just take it one step at a time."

Linsey looked into her eyes, moved by her words. Her throat tightened, and she nodded softly. "You're right," she whispered, her voice shaking.

Dolores seemed thoughtful for a while as she recalled the meal they had earlier, before adding, "However, just because Collin doesn't hold a grudge towards Haven for running away from the wedding doesn't necessarily mean that he likes her. It could be that he just doesn't care. Gut reactions are often right. I believe he was just being polite to Haven. Nothing more."

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Linsey chuckled softly at this. "I never thought I'd see the day when you defend Collin," she said.

Ever since the incident four years ago, Dolores' attitude towards Collin had changed drastically. She hated him so much that she would have leaped with glee if CR Corporation were to collapse the next minute. This was probably the first time since all those years that Dolores had spoken of Collin without prejudice.

"I'm not defending him. I'm just telling you what I think. You know I'll always side with you," Dolores retorted.

Linsey smiled at this. Her once gloomy mood had lightened significantly because of Dolores.

A thought suddenly crossed Linsey's mind, and she said, "Dolores, working with CR Corporation would be a great opportunity for the Davidson Group. You mustn't throw that away because of the issues between me and Collin."

"Come on. It's not like CR Corporation is the only company we can work with," Dolores said with a pout.

Linsey shook her head and retorted, "CR Corporation is currently the leading company in Grester and even nationwide. There are only a few companies that can be said to be at their level. You have to seize this opportunity!"

Seeing that Linsey brooked no argument on the subject, Dolores reluctantly agreed. "Fine. Let's see what kind of project Collin wants to partner on before coming to a decision."