

Zillionaire 921

Chapter 921:

For several long seconds, the world around her seemed to grind to a halt—everything became motionless, smeared, and unreal.

“Linsey!” Collin’s voice cut through the chaos, firm and urgent, as he grabbed her shoulders with both hands, anchoring her in place. His voice snapped her back to reality.

Her breathing came in shallow bursts, eyes wide and dazed as she locked onto Collin’s face, completely stunned. When she tried to speak, the words came out in a dry rasp, barely a whisper. The sentence broke off in her throat, her gaze drifting and then fixating on one point as if the rest of the world no longer existed.

“Linsey, listen to me.” Collin’s voice lowered but didn’t lose its edge. Slowly, deliberately, he said, “It was Kylee who stabbed Gorman. You had nothing to do with it. Stop blaming yourself.”

Linsey’s chest rose sharply as she gasped for air, tears welling as she stared at him, her voice cracking. “How did it come to this? How is Gorman... gone? Didn’t they get him to the hospital in time? Why couldn’t they save him?”

Collin held her tighter, trying to still the tremor in her body. After a long pause, he finally replied, his voice grim, “The knife she used wasn’t ordinary. It was custom-made, razor-sharp. He lost too much blood. By the time they got him there, his breathing was already shallow. The bleeding was just... too much. They couldn’t bring him back.”

As the words sank in, Linsey’s strength vanished, and her body gave way, collapsing backward in a daze.

“Linsey!” Collin’s voice rose with urgency as he lunged forward, catching her just in time. Though his arm cushioned her fall, the jolt slammed his hand into the sharp edge of the headboard. Pain flared instantly, but he didn’t flinch. His entire focus was locked on her.

“Did you hit anything? Are you hurt?” he asked, scanning her face with visible worry.

A blink brought her back to the present. Still disoriented, Linsey reached for his hand and drew it toward her. Her eyes immediately caught the angry red scrape along his knuckles, the bones beneath the skin stark and tense.

“Your hand,” she murmured, her voice trembling as she stared down at the mark, head bowed and vision swimming.

“I’m okay,” Collin assured gently, though a subtle furrow formed between his brows, the pain in his heart greater than any wound.

Without warning, a single tear slid down from Linsey’s lashes and fell onto the back of his hand. That drop, cool yet burning, made his fingers flinch slightly, a reflex born from emotion, not pain.

“Linsey...” Collin exhaled softly, the weight of everything pressing into his chest.

Without saying more, he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her close. Resting her head on his shoulder, Linsey allowed the last of her restraint to break. Her tears flowed freely now, blurring everything, and soaking into the quiet comfort of his embrace.

There had been a time when Linsey couldn’t even bear the sound of Gorman’s name; her hatred ran that deep. Never, not once, had she thought his life would end so abruptly. What devastated her more than the loss itself was the cruel irony that Gorman had died protecting her.

The truth gnawed at her until she buried her face in her hands, sobbing with her eyes squeezed shut.

After what felt like a lifetime packed into thirty seconds, she finally looked up. Her fingers wiped away the streaks on her cheeks, but her gaze remained intense, locked on Collin.

“How did Kylee get released?” she asked, her voice rough but steady. “Her sentence wasn’t even over.” Earlier, Collin had mentioned the blade Kylee used—one that wasn’t just ordinary, but custom-forged.

A detail like that gnawed at Linsey's thoughts. Someone with power had to be involved, someone capable of pulling strings and arming Kylee with something so deadly.

She no longer doubted it—this wasn't chance. Something darker was at work beneath the surface.

Chapter 922:

Collin gently wiped away Linsey's tears with a tissue before speaking. "Kylee couldn't have orchestrated such a complex plan on her own. Not only did she know exactly when Gorman would escort you to the bridal shop, but she also infiltrated the place disguised as staff. Someone else must be pulling the strings behind her."

Linsey looked at Collin, the storm in her expression slowly calming. "She refused to reveal her accomplice, didn't she?"

"Indeed." Collin nodded without hesitation. "The authorities are working hard to gather evidence as we speak. With Gorman being a Green, simply apprehending Kylee for the assault won't be enough to deliver justice." His words instantly took Linsey's mind to Gorman's parents abroad.

She had met them during her time overseas.

Gorman's father had carried himself with a dignified authority, while his mother radiated grace and warmth. Both had welcomed her with unexpected kindness.

Back then, she couldn't shake the feeling that Gorman had briefed them beforehand, as they seemed unphased by her having two children already and had subtly hinted at their hopes for her to join the Green family.

Ultimately, she had declined, doing so with gentle but firm resolve.

Upon returning to Grester, Gorman's parents had faded from her life.

Lowering her gaze, Linsey pressed her lips into a thin line and whispered, "When Gorman's parents find out about his fate, they'll be devastated. I dread having to face them."

Darkness clouded Collin's eyes. He took Linsey's hand in his, his voice steady and resolute. "I stand by you. Whatever storms come, we'll face them together."

After a moment of quiet reflection, Linsey lifted her chin. "Collin, I need to confront Kylee. Maybe I can coax the truth out of her."

"Alright, I'll make the arrangements," Collin promised, without a moment's hesitation.

After a brief pause, Linsey prepared to leave. With her children out for an outing with Dolores and Dustin, she freshened up and followed Collin to the police station.

Kylee's murder, committed while already incarcerated, had only made her crimes even more heinous.

Whether or not they uncovered the puppeteer manipulating her, Kylee would face the full, unforgiving weight of justice for her actions. Thanks to Collin's influence, Linsey quickly received authorization to meet with Kylee.

At the threshold, however, she turned to Collin with quiet determination. "I need to face her alone. Please wait for me here."

Collin's brow furrowed in disapproval. He was clearly troubled by her request. "I'd rather accompany you for your safety."

A gentle smile touched Linsey's lips. "The room will be guarded, and Kylee has been thoroughly searched and restrained. There's no danger." She hesitated briefly before lowering her voice to a confidential murmur. "Besides, Kylee has always harbored feelings for you. Your presence would only make her more defiant and secretive."

Chapter 923:

Collin's frown deepened, a clear sign of confusion. Linsey's reasoning eluded him.

Yet, seeing her unwavering resolve, he relented and stopped protesting.

"Very well, I'll keep watch outside. Don't linger too long," he said.

Linsey gave a reassuring nod. "I won't. Visitation rules here are quite strict anyway."

Shortly thereafter, guided by a stern-faced officer, Linsey stepped into the austere interview room.

Kylee, hunched at the institutional table, barely reacted to Linsey's entrance, offering only the slightest tilt of her head. Linsey approached with measured steps and sat across from her adversary, her face impassive as she observed Kylee, who was withdrawn, her head bowed.

With unflinching directness, Linsey broke the heavy silence. "Are you aware that Gorman is dead?"

Kylee lowered her head, releasing a bitter laugh that rippled through her frame like ice cracking.

"I know, of course I know." Her gaze snapped upward, locking with Linsey's in a predatory stare. A twisted smile curled across her lips, her face radiating the feverish glow of someone intoxicated by their own malice. "That knife was made for your death. Any soul pierced by its edge would bleed out in moments—even a shallow wound would drain them dry before help could arrive."

The sound that escaped Kylee wasn't quite laughter—more like something broken rattling within her chest. Even the seasoned officers shifted uncomfortably.

She had fully crossed into madness.

Linsey regarded Kylee with an icy composure. "Yet Gorman lies dead, though he was never your intended victim."

The satisfaction drained from Kylee's features, leaving behind something feral and raw as her stare bored into Linsey.

Silence stretched between them before Kylee erupted. "You got him killed. The knife was meant for you alone! But Gorman—that fool threw himself in my way, shielding you with his worthless life! How dare you blame me for his heroics?"

Each word tore from Kylee's throat, her eyes blazing crimson with a fury bordering on hatred. "He ruined everything! Your corpse should be cooling on that floor, Linsey! What cursed luck keeps you alive? Why do you get to live?"

Linsey absorbed the tirade with marble stillness, her expression carved from stone.

When Kylee's rage finally exhausted itself, Linsey's voice cut through the aftermath like a blade. "Who helped you get that knife?"

Kylee's fierce mask cracked and fell away. Then she smiled—slow, predatory—studying Linsey like a cat toying with wounded prey.

"What? Getting scared now?" Kylee laughed triumphantly. "Finally realizing I'm not the only one in Grester who wants you dead? Does that terrify you?"

Linsey remained calm. "You're already caught, and the Green family will be here soon. The person behind you should be the one panicking, not me. With their influence, it's only a matter of time before they trace everything back to the source."

Chapter 924:

Kylee's face darkened, her glare sharpening to razor points. "What exactly are you trying to say?"

Linsey chuckled softly. "I actually feel sorry for you. You've destroyed your entire life for someone who's probably sitting at home right now, completely relaxed. They think you're stupid enough to take all the blame alone. After all, didn't they promise to deal with me later?"

The word “stupid” hit Kylee like a slap, and anger flashed across her face.

But she suppressed her fury and sneered instead. “At least you understand. Even if I go down, others will come for you.”

Linsey absorbed this, then released a sharp laugh. “I credited you with more intelligence. Clearly, I overestimated you.”

Before coming here, Linsey had recognized that conventional interrogation would yield nothing from Kylee.

Hatred ran too deep in Kylee’s veins—she would rather die than grant her peace.

So Linsey chose a different weapon: cranking up her arrogant bravado to the extreme. She would force Kylee to see who truly held the power to offer her the greatest benefit now.

Until that name passed Kylee’s lips, she would know no rest. Linsey was determined to get her answer today.

“Come again?” Kylee’s expression darkened, her voice heavy with rage. “Linsey, don’t think you’re better than me just because you’ve won a few times. Your moment will come... just wait.”

Before she could finish, Linsey interjected sharply, “One day, I’ll have all of you locked up in prison. And when that happens, I’ll be living so well, you’ll choke just watching.”

Kylee froze, her eyes wide in stunned silence. The mere thought of that reality sent a shiver through her.

“Never going to happen!” she retorted, her voice rising with fury. “Don’t get ahead of yourself, Linsey! I’m not the only one in Grester who wants to see you fall. There’s more—”

“You mean Cynthia Keller? Marisol and Felix Wells? Maybe Joanna Saunders, too? And let’s not forget Fernanda and Huntley Rileys.” Linsey’s voice stayed level, almost amused, as she ticked off each name. With every mention, Kylee’s face drained of color. “Every one of them tried to destroy me. Funny thing is, they all lost. And me? I’ve got kids with Collin now, and we’re on the verge of remarrying. Once I’m officially the wife of CR Corporation’s founder, tell me—who in this city would even dare touch me? Are you really that naive to think your accomplice holds more weight than Collin?”

At that, Linsey tilted her head slightly, eyes wide with faux innocence, a look that only deepened Kylee’s frustration.

“You shameless cunt!” Kylee screamed. “Is there anything you can do besides cling to Collin like a parasite?”

A slight arch of Linsey’s brow was the only reaction she gave. “Cling to him? I must be amazing if he keeps me around.”

“So this is the real you,” Kylee hissed, venom in her voice. Her glare was sharp enough to cut. “From the very beginning, you plotted everything. You wormed your way into his life for money, for power. You’re disgusting! One day, Collin will see through you—he’ll see the monster you really are!”

Chapter 925:

Linsey’s chin lifted ever so slightly, her voice calm but pointed. “You really think Collin doesn’t already know I’m a woman drawn to vanity? If that were some grand revelation, then why would he have divorced me four years ago in the first place?”

After a brief pause, she continued, “The difference now is that I’ve given birth to his children. Even if he can’t stand me, those kids tie us together. Like it or not, that’s leverage. So tell me—don’t you think that counts for something?”

Doubt crept into Kylee’s eyes, and her voice cracked. “Wait... you’re telling me you actually had Collin’s children?”

That revelation didn’t align with anything she had heard before.

Never once had anyone mentioned something so important. Not even Haven. And Haven had made it crystal clear that she was desperate to marry Collin. If Linsey already had children with him, why hadn't she said anything?

If what Linsey was saying was true, then Collin might feel obligated to take her back, for the children's sake, if nothing else.

Suddenly, every promise Haven had whispered to Kylee seemed fragile. How could she deliver on any of them now?

Backed into a corner, Kylee clung to the little hope she had left. All she could do was pray that Haven would still marry Collin and get her out of prison, like she had sworn she would. But Linsey's words had shifted everything.

Now it made perfect sense why Collin had been so gentle with her at the bridal boutique.

She had believed Haven's story about the 2.7 billion-dollar necklace, convinced it was a gift from Collin.

Now it was clear. The entire thing had been a lie, carefully spun to keep her in the dark.

"You really think I'd lie to you?" Linsey lifted an eyebrow. "If I were lying, then why is Collin being kind to me again? Do you honestly think he's fallen for me?"

"No way!" Kylee couldn't bring herself to believe it.

How could Collin possibly fall for someone like Linsey? If he had truly loved her, he wouldn't have ended their marriage four years ago.

It had to be because of the kids!

Collin was only trying to get back with Linsey because of their children.

Kylee's thoughts spun out of control, and her heart raced. It now seemed clear that Haven wouldn't be marrying Collin after all.

She had messed up again!

The more Kylee thought things through, the more she regretted her choices.

Why had she believed everything Haven said so easily?

Her anger had clouded her judgment.

As soon as she saw a chance to ruin Linsey, she lost sight of everything else.

But now, she hadn't just failed to kill Linsey—she had ended up causing Gorman's death by mistake. He was the only heir of the Green family.

Once the Green family returned to Grester to deal with her, she was going to pay dearly! She really hated Linsey.

Chapter 926:

But with things the way they were, her only choice was to depend on Linsey—who seemed to have gotten back together with Collin. Haven had promised to help her escape prison if she managed to kill Linsey.

But they hadn't expected that she would end up killing Gorman instead!

Could Haven's powerful family really save her now?

Kylee ran through all of this in her mind in under thirty seconds.

She hesitated for a moment, then looked at Linsey, her eyes filled with doubt. “Why would you get me out, Linsey? I was trying to kill you. You lived, but Gorman died instead. Haven’t you thought about getting revenge for him?”

Kylee no longer trusted Haven, but that didn’t mean she was on Linsey’s side either.

They were still enemies.

Linsey had already guessed that Kylee would ask that, so she answered without flinching. “Isn’t it obvious? That day at the bridal boutique, I was forced to be there with Gorman. I never liked him—not even a little. So why would I want revenge? Honestly, what matters to me now is figuring out who helped you with all this. If I don’t know, I’ll always be looking over my shoulder.”

She paused for a second, then added, “Yeah, I know Collin will make sure I’ve got protection, but that doesn’t mean I can let my guard down. You can’t defend yourself from an enemy you can’t even see coming.”

With nothing more to say, Linsey didn’t bother dragging the conversation out. She stood up and said, “You know what? Forget it.

Clearly, you’re not willing to work with me. I’ll figure something else out.”

Without waiting for a reply, Linsey turned and started walking toward the door. She knew exactly what she was doing—this was a strategic move. Kylee wouldn’t be able to ignore it.

And just like she predicted, before she had even taken her third step, Kylee blurted out in panic, “Linsey! I’ll tell you everything—just don’t leave me hanging like this. Please, help me!”

Linsey came to a slow stop but didn’t bother turning back to face her. Kylee clenched her teeth and muttered, “But I want it in writing—you’ve gotta promise you’ll get me out of this place.”

Outside the room, Collin had just finished checking some work emails when he noticed Linsey stepping out.

He got to his feet right away, walked over to her, and brushed his hand gently across her forehead.

“So? How’d it go in there?” he asked.

Linsey paused, then met Collin’s gaze and said, “It’s Haven.”

Collin’s expression remained unchanged, and he simply replied, “Okay.”

Linsey frowned, dissatisfied with Collin’s reaction. “You don’t seem bothered. Why? Do you not believe me? Kylee told me herself. She mentioned it, among other things.”

Collin let out a soft chuckle, an amused look on his face.

He then wrapped an arm around Linsey as they walked outside and said, “How could I not believe you? I already suspected it, so I wasn’t really surprised to hear it from you.”

Chapter 927:

Linsey’s frown softened upon hearing this.

She had to admit that Haven’s lingering presence in their lives bothered her.

Although it was true that Haven and Collin had never gotten married, Linsey knew it was because Haven had run away at the last minute. That was the only reason she had gotten a chance to meet Collin.

Collin and Linsey both got into the car.

Once inside, Linsey said, her voice laced with jealousy, "I thought you still had feelings for Haven. You two almost got married."

Collin regarded Linsey with a mix of helplessness and affection. He then took her hand in his and said, "Back then, my expectations for marriage weren't high, and my grandma was quite eager to see me settle down, so I agreed. When I found out Haven had run away, my only worry was that Grandma wouldn't be happy."

The earnest look on Collin's face left no doubt that every word he spoke was the truth.

"Until I met you, I didn't see the beauty in marriage. Now, every day I spend with you is bliss."

The butterflies in Linsey's stomach began to flutter furiously. Turning away to hide her blush, she muttered, "How did you grow so sentimental in just four years?"

"Sentimental?" Collin asked, his eyebrows raised.

He then jabbed Linsey playfully and pulled her into an embrace.

"If you still think I'm being sentimental, then you haven't grasped my true feelings."

Collin paused for a moment before continuing, "That means I have to say how I feel more often so you can get used to it."

Linsey leaned against his chest, a satisfied smile on her lips.

Then a thought popped into her mind.

She sat up, fixed his collar, and said, “What about the Star of the Desert? It’s not so much the ridiculous amount spent on it that bothers me, but the thought behind it. You said Ivy wanted you to take care of Haven, but that still doesn’t explain why you spent so much on a necklace for her.”

Collin was slightly taken aback by her words. Brows furrowing lightly, he replied, “I bid on the Star of the Desert for you, not Haven.”

Then a look of realization crossed his face, and he asked, “Did those ridiculous rumors reach you? Don’t believe what was said. I bid on the Star of the Desert for you, not her. Do you understand?”

Blinking in astonishment, Linsey slowly raised a finger to her chest. “Wait... you’re actually giving the necklace to me?”

“Yes. I saw how much you liked it during the auction that night. That’s the only reason I stepped in and kept bidding against Gorman. I didn’t think twice about it. I just wanted to get the necklace and give it to you when the time felt right.” Collin added, “At the time, I didn’t know what you really felt, and I didn’t want to make things difficult for you. That’s why I kept quiet about it.”

Linsey narrowed her eyes and gave Collin a pout, suspicion flickering across her face. Her voice danced between playful and irritated as she said, “But you already gave the Star of the Desert to Haven. She showed up at Gorman’s just a few days ago wearing it. I saw it myself, and there’s no mistaking it was the real thing.”

Chapter 928:

As soon as she said it, Collin’s face tightened, like a storm brewing. “Come again?”

His sudden shift unsettled Linsey, and she quickly repeated herself. “I’m telling the truth—I saw it around Haven’s neck. Honestly, I’d been meaning to talk to you, to ask for help. But the moment I saw her wearing that necklace, I froze. I kept wondering if maybe I was too late. That’s why I looked so stunned when you showed up at the bridal shop.”

Linsey’s words only carved deeper shadows across Collin’s face, his jaw tensing as the weight of it sank in.

A bitter chuckle escaped him, laced with disbelief. "So someone really had the guts to rob me blind."

He reached for Linsey's hand and held it with a steady, comforting grasp. "When I won the Star of the Desert, I tucked it away in the desk drawer in my study. It just hit me—Haven had dropped by not long ago and used my grandmother as some excuse to slip into the study while I wasn't paying attention."

Regret flickered in his eyes like a dying ember. "I should've been smarter. Should've checked the place the second she left."

Everything clicked for Linsey at last, and a soft, ironic laugh slipped past her lips as the truth unfolded in her mind.

It dawned on her—she had completely misread Collin from the beginning.

All this time, she had convinced herself that he was planning a future with Haven, and that belief had fueled the harsh words she had thrown at him.

On the flip side, Collin had concluded she had given her heart to...

Gorman.

A single honest conversation could have straightened everything out, yet they let silence stretch the distance. So much time lost over nothing but a miscommunication.

When Linsey didn't speak, Collin felt the weight in his chest press harder, the quiet gnawing at him.

With guilt etched into his features, he dropped his gaze and murmured, "This is all on me. I should've made it clear how I felt from the start. Instead, I let you doubt, made you second-guess if you could even talk to me."

His words stirred something deep in her chest, and a lump tightened in her throat before she could stop it.

She turned her head just a little and met his gaze, her eyes glossy with unshed tears. Her voice came out soft and measured as she said, "Four years is a long time, Collin. People change. And you never came for me during all that time. So how could I possibly know if your feelings had stayed the same?"

Collin's head turned slowly, and the shock in his eyes stripped away the usual calm. For once, he looked completely unguarded.

His voice came out unsteady. "Are you telling me you never, actually tried to avoid me?"

Linsey gave a small blink, caught off guard by the question. "I was hurt at first, badly. I wanted to put Grester behind me, leave you and everything else behind. But after a while, that hurt mixed with something else. I still hoped you'd show up. I kept wishing you'd come and say you were sorry... like you meant it."

Chapter 929:

Tears welled up in Linsey's eyes, her voice cracking under the weight of everything she had held in. "I held on, hoping you'd come... but you never did. After a while, I convinced myself you'd stopped loving me."

"That's not true!" Collin blurted.

Yet the rest of his words never came. Everything he wanted to explain tangled in his throat.

With quiet anguish, Linsey looked him straight in the eye. "You're the head of CR Corporation, Collin. You have eyes and ears everywhere. How could you not find me? When I first left for another country, I lived in fear you'd show up at my doorstep. But months passed... and I realized it was foolish of me to think you'd even try."

Collin shook his head slowly, eyes searching hers, weighed down with regret and silent fury—mostly directed at himself.

A strained smile flickered across his lips, but there was no joy behind it. “I swear to you, Linsey, I searched. For four years, I turned over every stone, hunted for any trace of you. Nothing came up. It was only after you came back to Grester that I finally heard a whisper of your name. Until then... I knew nothing. Not about you. Not about Gorman.”

Linsey’s fingers stilled mid-motion, the breath hitching in her throat. “You were really... looking for me?” she whispered, stunned.

“Every single day,” Collin said, raising his hand like a solemn vow. “I sent people to search high and low. I flew across cities and crossed borders, trying to figure out where you’d gone. I never stopped. I just... I could never catch up to you.”

He drew in a heavy breath, his face clouding over with grim recognition. “There was a time I even went straight to the Green Group’s headquarters—the city where you and Gorman lived for four years. I left empty-handed. No records. No sign of you anywhere. I even deployed people to dig discreetly. But all I uncovered was that Gorman’s parents had been running things. They claimed they had no idea where he was.”

That was the moment everything fell into place for Linsey.

A strange laugh nearly bubbled out of her, but it collapsed into a breathless murmur. “So Gorman... with his family’s help... they wiped me clean from the map on purpose.”

The car seemed to tilt for a second, but she steadied herself with a shaky breath. “After Zander and Zenia were born, I was eager to work again. Gorman told me I should rebrand, leave the name Linsey behind. He made it sound reasonable—said the past would only haunt me, that gossip would ruin everything. I didn’t question it. I went along with it and became Aurora, thinking I was starting over on my terms.”

Her breath caught as the realization sank in. “It wasn’t about protecting me. Gorman planned it. He erased me. And with the Green Group covering his tracks, you never had a chance of finding me.”

A shadow crossed Collin's face, and a cold dread settled deep in his chest.

"If Dolores hadn't pushed me to enter that design competition... if I'd just kept saying no and stayed away from Grester like I meant to, maybe we really would've gone our whole lives without ever seeing each other again," Linsey said, her voice shaking as the words slipped past clenched teeth and her breath caught in her throat.

Chapter 930:

Collin leaned forward and gently cupped her face, as if trying to hold the moment in place. A fragile smile tugged at his lips. "No wonder Gorman refused to back off. Four years by your side. Schemes, lies, control—and still, you never gave him what he wanted. Honestly, if I were in his place... maybe I would've lost it, too."

Leaning into his touch, Linsey fought back the sting of heartache threatening to rise within her.

Then she said with quiet resolve, "No, you would never do anything that would hurt me. Just like you did four years ago, when I was the one who kept pushing for the divorce. You didn't want it, but you still agreed to let me go because it was what I asked for. Collin, I understand the kind of man you are. Even if everyone else walked away from me, I know you'd never stand by and let me get hurt."

Tears glistened at the corners of her eyes, but for the first time in what felt like forever, she let herself breathe—and smile.

"That's exactly why I love you," she whispered, the words blooming like a promise.

Meanwhile, across town in the Walton family's estate, inside Haven's dimly lit room, she sat stiffly, her fists clenched so tight her knuckles had turned white, panic etched into every line of her face.

"Relax, Haven. There's nothing that ties this back to you. I made sure every trace is gone," Joanne murmured, trying to soothe her.

Fear clouded Haven's expression as she yelled through a strained throat, "Kylee's a complete idiot! She didn't just miss Linsey—she killed Gorman! Do you realize what that means? Gorman was the Green Group's only heir!"

She paused, brows furrowed, her voice sharpened with urgency. "Do you even grasp what the Green Group represents? It's second only to CR Corporation in power!"

Joanne kept her lips tight and answered softly, "Haven, you were there and saw it with your own eyes. Kylee's knife was without a doubt meant for Linsey. No one could've known that Gorman would suddenly jump in and take the blow for her."

Each word fell softer than the last, revealing her own confusion—she was just as shaken by how everything had unraveled.

A dry laugh escaped Haven, ending in a sharp snort. "If Linsey had died, people would've moved on. But now Gorman's the one in a coffin. And if the Green family ever finds out I was the one pulling Kylee's strings..."

The rest of her words withered on her tongue—fear held them back. If the Green family came knocking for blood, not even the Walton fortune could buy forgiveness.

Besides, there was no chance the Walton family would ever actually hand over their entire fortune just to protect her. That realization made her fists tighten, nails digging into her skin until angry red crescents bloomed on her palms.

"Why?" Haven asked through clenched teeth, her head lowered as she sucked in a harsh breath. Her tone turned icy as she continued, "Why is it that every man seems to fall so hopelessly in love with Linsey?"

What is it about her? Is it just that she's a bit more attractive than the rest? What gives her that kind of hold, the kind that draws in both Collin and Gorman, the most eligible bachelors in town?"

Joanne pressed her teeth into her lip, sympathy clouding her face as she glanced at Haven. "Haven, don't let yourself think that way. From everything I've observed about Gorman, his feelings for Linsey

seemed real. If they weren't, he wouldn't have been so determined to marry her. But when it comes to Collin, I wouldn't be so quick to assume the same. If you ask me, he's probably just irritated that Gorman tried to marry the woman he used to be married to. Men can be like that, right? Their pride gets in the way, especially someone like Collin, who built the entire CR Corporation from the ground up."