

Zillionaire 931

Chapter 931:

When she heard that, Haven paused, doubt creeping into her voice. “Really? If Collin doesn’t have feelings for Linsey, then why did he show up that day, demanding to know if she was seriously going to marry Gorman?”

She stopped for a moment, a flicker of annoyance crossing her face as she continued, “And during that banquet not too long ago, Collin told me directly that he still wasn’t over his ex-wife. And isn’t Linsey the one he used to be married to?”

Joanne gave a short laugh after a beat of silence. “Men love to think they’re noble when they’re really just being possessive. That’s exactly why we planned to remove Linsey—for good. To stop Collin from chasing her ghost.”

Joanne’s smile slowly slipped away, replaced by a cold edge in her voice. “Linsey survived, so we’ll need to rethink our strategy.”

Concern furrowed Haven’s brows. “Are you absolutely certain Kylee won’t turn on us? What if she talks?”

“She won’t,” said Joanne with steady assurance. “I looked into Kylee’s background thoroughly. Her hatred for Linsey runs just as deep as ours. I promised her that everything she’s done won’t be for nothing, and that we’ll stand by her in getting the payback she wants. So of course, giving us up isn’t something she’ll even consider.”

Even with Joanne’s confidence, a sense of dread still gnawed at Haven’s gut.

The silence stretched as she tried to gather her next words, but something else interrupted her train of thought.

A knock interrupted them, followed by a muffled voice beyond the door. “Miss Haven, Mr. Walton says Mr. Riley and his girlfriend have arrived and are waiting downstairs.”

The announcement struck Haven like a slap—her face drained of color as she swung toward Joanne, stunned.

“Collin?” she gasped. “And his girl? Since when does he have a girlfriend? How... how is that even possible?”

Joanne’s expression mirrored Haven’s—surprised and puzzled.

The news rattled them, but it hit Haven the hardest. Panic swept over her, unraveling her composure by the second.

“Joanne, what do we do now? Collin’s never come here before—not once. Why would he show up today of all days—and with a girlfriend? And why didn’t we know about it? Could he really be...”

A shiver ran down Haven’s spine, and Joanne could see it written all over her face.

Joanne quickly shut it down. “No. That’s not possible.”

Meeting Joanne’s eyes, Haven forced a smile that didn’t quite reach her lips. Her voice dropped to a whisper as she said, “You’re thinking it too, aren’t you? You think Collin’s girlfriend might be Linsey.”

Before Joanne could speak, the servant’s voice returned, more insistent this time. “Miss Haven, Mr. Walton says to come downstairs immediately.”

“Go away!” Haven barked, her voice sharp and unraveling. Her entire body was beginning to shake beneath the weight of her panic.

It didn’t feel real—Collin was actually here. And there was a terrifying chance he hadn’t come alone. Linsey might be with him. If that were true, then Collin had never truly let Linsey go.

Chapter 932:

With Linsey still breathing, Haven couldn't shake the dread that Collin was here to call her out—to make her pay.

Still, Linsey had survived. So even if Collin still harbored feelings, what right did he have to show up and accuse her of anything?

She clung to one fragile thought—Gorman was the one who died, not Linsey. Surely Collin wouldn't do anything reckless over that.

Joanne stepped forward and laid a firm hand on Haven's trembling shoulder, trying to ground her before the panic swallowed her whole. Turning toward the door, Joanne raised her voice just enough to be heard. "I'll help Haven prepare. We'll be down in a moment."

"Understood, Ms. Ellis," the servant answered before footsteps faded down the hallway.

Facing Haven again, Joanne offered a calm nod. "You're not facing this alone. I'll go down with you and find out exactly why Collin came." After a short pause, her voice lowered into something steady and sharp. "Whatever he throws at us, don't lose your cool. He may be powerful, but unless he has solid proof, he can't touch us."

Each word from Joanne chipped away at Haven's fear, steadying her one breath at a time.

It finally clicked—Collin had nothing to go on. Joanne had made sure every loose end was tied, every clue buried.

With that realization, the fear began to fade, replaced by a slow, creeping confidence.

A soft sigh escaped her lips as she finally managed a smile. "Joanne, you've stayed by me through everything. When this blows over, I'll make good on my promise. I'll make your wish come true."

Joanne's eyes shifted for a brief moment before she offered a gentle smile. "That can wait. What matters most now is whatever you're dealing with."

Everything she had poured into Haven's plan came from her own desires, not pure loyalty.

Her goal was to win Haven's trust so she could use the Walton family's influence to get closer to the man she had quietly longed for. If Haven ended up marrying Collin, it would actually work out even better for her.

Her background lacked status, and without borrowing someone else's connections, she knew she might never get near him on her own.

That was why she had placed all her hopes on Haven.

But if Haven proved useless to her, she would have no choice but to act quickly and find another path forward.

At that same time, Linsey and Collin sat in the Walton family's living room, speaking with Haven's father, Kase Walton.

Kase's eyes moved between Linsey and Collin with a warm expression, though his tone carried something deeper. "I truly didn't expect the two of you to have such a solid bond—after four years, you still managed to clear things up and get back together."

Letting his gaze drift away, Kase released a quiet sigh tinged with emotion. "Back when Ivy and I used to talk, we thought there was a real chance of becoming in-laws. We spent quite some time feeling happy about it, believing Collin and Haven might end up married. It's unfortunate. Some things really are beyond our control."

Chapter 933:

On the surface, it sounded like he was complimenting Linsey and Collin's renewed connection. But then he shifted the conversation to the almost-marriage between Collin and Haven.

Kase even went as far as mentioning Ivy directly, making it clear through implication that Ivy held a strong preference for Haven.

Linsey didn't dwell on his remarks. She barely knew Kase, and there was no reason to be affected by the opinion of someone unrelated to her life.

Collin, on the other hand, couldn't tolerate even the smallest hint of doubt when it came to Linsey's place in his heart. Without holding back, he responded, "Mr. Walton, that's not how it is."

"Walton, no matter what my grandmother may have thought, I've never had feelings for Haven. The only woman I love is Linsey."

While speaking, Collin gently took Linsey's hand in his. He gave her a warm smile before turning back to Kase. "I haven't properly introduced my girl yet. This is Linsey Brooks, an incredibly talented designer."

Linsey listened quietly, her chest filling with warmth. His words made her heart soften with affection.

She didn't say anything, but her fingers curled more tightly around his in silent response.

Kase's face stiffened for a second; he was clearly caught off guard by Collin's words, but he managed to recover quickly.

A strained smile formed on his lips, and he opened his mouth to speak. Before he could get a word out, Collin calmly continued without hesitation, "As for my grandmother, she met Linsey more than four years ago and liked her right from the start. Later on, I made some terrible choices that hurt Linsey and led to our divorce. Back then, my grandmother was furious with me. She scolded me for not treasuring such a wonderful wife and refused to speak to me for a long time."

Kase's face darkened in an instant, his earlier composure slipping. Meanwhile, Linsey turned toward Collin, surprise flashing in her eyes as she subtly tried to stop him with a glance.

She assumed he was exaggerating the story just to get under Kase's skin.

Collin noticed the look she gave him and deliberately added in a steady voice, "Mr. Walton, if you don't believe me, feel free to ask my grandmother directly."

Collin's words confirmed what Linsey had longed to believe. Indeed, from their very first encounter, Ivy had shown her an exceptional kindness that couldn't be feigned.

Through the seasons that followed, Ivy had tended to Linsey with genuine care, her concern radiating through every gentle gesture.

When her marriage to Collin crumbled, Linsey chose divorce and departed Grester, severing her connection to Ivy without a proper farewell.

Never had she imagined that Ivy would champion her cause after learning of the bitter disputes between her and Collin.

The smile drained from Kase's face, leaving only stone.

He fixed Collin with an unwavering gaze and demanded, his voice sharp as winter frost, "Are you implying that Ivy's warmth toward our family was nothing but calculated pretense?"

Chapter 934:

Collin's response came wrapped in a serene smile, a deliberate contrast to Kase's barely contained anger. "Have you forgotten, Mr. Walton? My grandmother and your wife shared a deep friendship. She envisioned a union between Haven and myself because of their bond. But Haven thought little of me—even fleeing our wedding ceremony. That event prevented our families from forging stronger ties."

The reference to Haven's wedding day escape from five years past painted Kase's features with unmistakable discomfort.

He hesitated, then managed to say weakly, "Haven has come to regret that choice, but..."

"I harbor no resentment toward Haven for her decision," Collin interjected smoothly. "I merely speak the truth. In fact, I owe Haven my gratitude. Had she not fled, I would never have met Linsey."

As he spoke these words, his typically austere expression melted into something surprisingly tender.

"Perhaps fate was guiding us all along." Collin turned once more toward Linsey, his gaze softening with an affection that transformed his entire countenance.

With each passing moment, Kase's irritation mounted dangerously.

Were it not for the Walton family's reputation and the demands of social grace, he might have risen and stormed out, unwilling to endure further subtle insults to his family's dignity.

A sudden disturbance near the staircase captured everyone's attention. All eyes shifted to witness Haven and Joanne descending in succession, their presence commanding the room.

Kase, the sting of Collin's earlier mockery still fresh, felt a surge of misdirected anger toward Haven.

In his mind, a persistent thought burned: had Haven not abandoned her wedding to Collin, the resulting alliance would have elevated the Walton family to uncontested dominance in Grester's social hierarchy.

The more Kase dwelled on the situation, the hotter his fury blazed. He lashed out, "Mr. Riley and Ms. Brooks have been sitting here awaiting your presence! Is this how you've chosen to honor our guests? Have the lessons of hospitality we instilled in you evaporated so completely?"

Though Haven had steeled herself for the inevitable sight of Collin beside Linsey, the reality of them seated together sent a crushing weight through her chest, constricting her breath.

The scene before her felt impossibly wrong.

With frustration etching into her bitten lip, Haven could only advance obediently under the weight of Kase's merciless stare.

“Forgive me, Grandpa. My preparations took longer than anticipated. I never intended to keep everyone waiting.”

Kase’s hand had always fallen heavily upon Haven’s shoulders, particularly since that fateful day five years ago when she fled her own wedding.

Had the abandoned groom merely been the Riley family’s eldest son with his disability, perhaps forgiveness might have come easier.

But Collin’s true identity—founder of the formidable CR Corporation, a man of aristocratic lineage and unfathomable wealth—made her transgression unforgivable.

The revelation of Collin’s true stature had plunged the family into a maelstrom of regret so profound it defied expression.

Haven’s return home had carried with it a fragile hope: that following Collin’s divorce, she might win him over.

Yet in her calculations, she had failed to account for the most devastating possibility—Collin’s heart had always belonged irrevocably to Linsey.

Chapter 935:

Kase’s face darkened with irritation as he snapped at Haven. “Sit down quickly! Don’t forget to greet our honored guests.”

“Understood,” Haven replied with a slight nod, her tone respectful.

Watching the exchange unfold, Linsey felt a strange knot of emotions tighten in her chest.

She hadn’t expected Haven—so graceful and confident in public—to appear so meek at home.

It became clear to Linsey that Kase truly had a hold over Haven.

While Linsey was still caught up in her thoughts, a sudden, piercing stare caught her attention.

She turned her head in confusion and met a pair of wide, shocked eyes.

Joanne quickly looked away, startled, and whispered in a small voice, "I'm sorry."

Linsey responded with a soft shake of her head, "Don't worry about it."

Though they had never met before, Linsey couldn't shake the feeling that there was something oddly intense about the way Joanne had looked at her.

What Linsey didn't realize was that Joanne was completely overwhelmed by what she saw.

Joanne was so stunned that her breathing had become uneven.

She was in disbelief—Linsey resembled Jeffery far too closely.

At that moment, Haven wasn't paying any attention to Joanne's reaction.

After settling into her seat, she glanced toward Linsey, her expression difficult to read.

The moment her eyes met Linsey's steady stare, a flicker of panic made her look away. She shifted her focus toward Collin instead.

"Collin, did you have something you wanted to talk to me about today?" Haven asked softly, her voice gentle, and her smile still as pleasant as ever.

She behaved as though Linsey wasn't even there.

To any observer, seeing Linsey and Collin side by side would naturally suggest they had already patched things up.

Still, Haven chose to act unaware, clearly avoiding any confrontation or direct acknowledgment.

Collin, however, had no intention of sparing Haven's feelings. He cast a cold, detached glance her way, and the moment he spoke, Haven's expression froze.

"Back at the auction banquet, I placed a winning bid on a necklace called the Star of the Desert—a gift meant for my girl. Tell me, have you seen it anywhere?"

"A necklace?" Kase, unaware of the deeper issue, brushed it off casually. "So you misplaced something expensive. Isn't that a matter for the police? Why bring it up here?"

He shot Collin a look of irritation, completely missing Haven's growing unease that was creeping across her face.

Collin kept his composure and calmly replied, "If I didn't have proof, I wouldn't have brought my girl here in the first place."

Haven's heartbeat quickened at his words, a sudden jolt of panic hitting her.

Collin turned to his assistant, who handed him several photographs. He began placing them one by one on the coffee table.

The first photo captured a moment from the CR Corporation auction—inside a velvet-lined case rested the Star of the Desert, glittering with brilliance and precision-cut diamonds.

The next image showed Haven smiling proudly, a necklace draped around her neck, impossible to miss.

Chapter 936:

Even a quick glance was enough for anyone to see both photos featured the same piece of jewelry.

Haven stared at the pictures, her face draining of color as her lips began to tremble.

Back then, determined to make Linsey believe she truly intended to marry Collin, Haven had slipped into his place and quietly taken the Star of the Desert while his attention was elsewhere.

Back then, Haven truly believed that Collin had bought the necklace as a birthday gift for her.

That belief made it easier for her to take the necklace without asking, thinking it was harmless.

In her mind, the necklace already belonged to her, so wearing it a little early didn't seem wrong.

Still, she didn't have the courage to wear the Star of the Desert openly in front of Collin.

After convincing Linsey that the piece belonged to her, she left Gorman's residence without a second thought.

What she didn't expect was to bump into several high-society girls from Grester along the way.

The moment they noticed the Star of the Desert around her neck, they gushed over it, pouring out compliments that fed her pride.

But she had no clue that someone had secretly taken pictures of her at the time.

Now that Collin had shown her those very photos and started questioning her, she had no idea how to explain herself.

Worse still, she had flaunted the necklace in front of Linsey on purpose. What truly blindsided her, though, was that Linsey hadn't died at Kylee's hands and had somehow patched things up with Collin. A single misjudgment had snowballed into a mess she couldn't untangle.

A hollow laugh threatened to escape Haven's lips. She realized she had trapped herself without even knowing it.

Kase, who sat beside her, also saw the pictures clearly.

Though shocked at first, he forced out a tight smile. "This is all just a mix-up. Haven will return the necklace right away."

Haven sat frozen in place, unable to respond or even lift a hand.

With a subtle smirk, Collin turned his gaze toward Kase. "A moment ago, you were ready to get the police involved, and now you're calling it a misunderstanding?"

His fingertip landed squarely on the auction image and continued, "This necklace was purchased for 2.7 billion dollars. You really think something like that can be dismissed so casually?"

Though his tone carried a calm edge, the quiet threat in his voice was impossible to miss.

Tension hit Haven like a wave. Her shoulders trembled, and fear showed plainly across her face.

All this time, she had leaned on Ivy's goodwill, forgetting entirely that Collin—who built CR Corporation from the ground up—wasn't the kind of man to be taken lightly.

With her nerves barely holding, Haven forced herself to say, "I... didn't do it on purpose..."

She bit down on her lower lip and softened her posture, adopting a helpless look. "I was seated next to you at the auction. I mentioned my birthday was coming soon. Then you placed a bid. When people

started saying you bought the Star of the Desert for me, you didn't correct them. You didn't say it was for anyone else either. So, of course, I believed it was meant for me."

Chapter 937:

She drew in a shaky breath before continuing, "That day, when I visited your home, I saw the necklace. I thought... maybe it was your way of surprising me."

Before she could say more, Collin let out a cold, mocking laugh. Worse than the sound was the way he looked at her—cold, cutting, unforgiving.

Her words caught in her throat, and the fragile expression she had managed to wear vanished in an instant.

The weight of his presence pressed down on her, leaving her completely powerless to respond.

Even the Walton household staff, scattered quietly around the room, stiffened so much that not a single one of them dared to breathe.

Not a single sound echoed through the room—only the frantic rhythm of Haven's heartbeat filled her ears.

Not even Kase had words to fill the stillness, a flicker of discomfort tightening in his chest.

Right when it seemed Collin might explode in fury, Linsey, who had remained silent until now, gently reached for his sleeve.

"Collin, you're scaring everyone," she said, her voice soft as a breeze, melting the tension carved across his face.

A small smile tugged at Collin's lips as he glanced over at Linsey. With a slight lift of his brow, he asked in a low voice, "Did I startle you too?"

With a playful glance, Linsey gave him a look that was part scolding, part fondness. Her eyes told him clearly—she would take it from here. Catching her signal, Collin didn't say another word. He simply lowered his head and brushed his fingers gently along hers.

The sight left everyone in the room frozen—Haven included. Witnessing Collin, the feared powerhouse of Grester, show such unfiltered affection was nothing short of shocking.

No one in Grester had ever seen Collin like this. People spoke of his ruthlessness and strength, not this version of him—tender and completely taken.

Jealousy twisted inside Haven as she watched the interaction unfold.

Everything Linsey had now was supposed to be hers.

In just a few seconds, all that envy she had tried to bury came flooding back.

The fear she had felt toward Collin gave way to something darker, and her eyes locked onto Linsey, brimming with spite.

Linsey noticed. Calm and composed, she returned Haven's gaze without flinching, fully aware of what was behind it.

Rather than respond with irritation, she let a small, knowing smile lift the corners of her mouth.

A flicker of tension crossed Haven's face, her brows knitting the moment she heard those words.

Without sparing a glance at Collin's hand toying with hers, Linsey began to speak, her voice calm but deliberate. "Ms. Walton, I assume you realize we didn't come all this way just to take back the Star of the Desert."

The mention made Haven's heart lurch. Instantly, her mind flew to the one thing she hoped wouldn't be brought up—Gorman's sudden death. Right on cue, Linsey's tone deepened, a weight settling into each word. "As Collin explained earlier, it's reckless to accuse someone of theft without solid proof..."

She paused. Her eyes, cool and measured, landed on Haven once more.

"Or a murderer."

The final word struck a nerve with Haven.

She reacted violently, shouting angrily, "What are you trying to say, Linsey? Are you accusing me of murder now?"

Chapter 938:

Realizing she might have overreacted, she quickly adjusted, covering her panic with a scoff. "First I'm a thief, now a murderer? What's next? Is CR Corporation handing out criminal charges now too?"

Kase, sitting beside her, didn't try to hide his growing irritation. His eyes met Linsey's with a stormy glare.

It boiled his blood to see someone like Linsey, who came from nothing, daring to speak so boldly in front of the Walton family—all because Collin happened to like her.

In his mind, without Collin's support, she wouldn't even deserve to stand in the same room as Haven, let alone talk back to her.

That thought only fueled the fire in him.

With a sharp exhale and a bitter smile, Kase scoffed loudly, letting his authority fill the room like a heavy fog.

“You really are something else, Ms. Brooks. You’re a designer, but the things you involve yourself in go far beyond what any designer should ever touch,” said Kase, his tone growing colder as his eyes narrowed on Linsey. “Since you’re Collin’s girl for the time being, I’ll excuse your involvement in recovering the necklace. But tell me—what business do you have digging into Gorman Green’s accident?”

He paused, letting the weight of his next words settle with a smug tilt of his mouth. “Word has it you vanished overseas with Mr. Green after your divorce. Just returned recently, haven’t you? It’s been, what—four years? Makes me wonder what exactly went on between the two of you during all that time.”

Linsey didn’t flinch. She met his stare with a quiet strength, her composure as steady as ever.

Though this was the first time they had spoken, Kase clearly hadn’t walked in blind. His knowledge of her past was too precise to be casual.

Linsey’s thoughts drifted briefly to something Collin had once mentioned—how Ivy’s respect for the Walton family came from her fondness for Carly Walton, Haven’s grandmother.

That connection now seemed far more curated than coincidental. Kase had clearly gone to great lengths to preserve Ivy’s loyalty, using Carly’s memory as leverage.

It was also painfully obvious now that Kase had long envisioned Haven as Collin’s rightful match.

Linsey, however, had derailed those expectations entirely.

No wonder Kase bristled with such barely disguised contempt toward her—more so than even Haven herself.

Still, the realization didn’t rattle Linsey in the slightest. If anything, the bitterness amused her.

"I appreciate your concern, Mr. Walton. But the issues you've raised don't really relate to today's matters. That said, since you seem genuinely invested in Collin's personal affairs, I'll offer you this—he and I understand one another completely. There is no room for doubt between us."

Linsey's voice was calm and soft, her demeanor unhurried and poised. That level of calm only made Kase's attitude seem all the more forceful and intrusive.

For a man his age to be so fixated on the love life of someone else's son, and a woman he had no blood relation to, was deeply inappropriate. To any outsider listening, his line of questioning would have sounded downright intrusive.

"You—" Kase snapped, but whatever authority he hoped to wield crumbled beneath Linsey's composed reply, leaving him red-faced and rattled.

Chapter 939:

Anger rushed to his wrinkled face, turning it red.

Just as he looked ready to explode, Linsey cut in with a quiet steadiness in her voice. "You already know Gorman was murdered, Mr. Walton. But did you know the knife used on him was supposed to end up in me instead?"

The weight of her words slammed into the room, stopping Kase like he had been struck by lightning.

Off to the side, even Haven, who had said nothing this entire time, visibly stiffened. Her face had turned ghostly pale.

She wasn't just a witness to the mess. She was the mastermind behind every step that led to it.

Back when she had devised the plan, Haven never once considered the fallout of getting rid of Linsey.

To her, Linsey was just an orphan who could be erased without consequence.

But the moment she saw Collin's protectiveness, everything shifted. His affection wasn't shallow or fleeting. He didn't just care for Linsey — he loved her.

Because of that, Linsey's survival now carried the same weight as Gorman's death.

One had already been buried. The other had returned, standing at Collin's side with purpose.

That terrifying thought made Haven's heart pound so loudly she could feel it in her throat.

She pulled in a shaky breath, forcing herself to stay still even as panic pressed down on her chest.

The only thing keeping her calm was the belief that they had come up empty-handed. Kylee was the one who had done it, and she hadn't been involved at all.

And with that thought came a flicker of reassurance. Even if Linsey hurled the accusation at her directly, there was no evidence.

Haven forced down the wave of panic building inside her and managed to pull together a strained smile.

"Linsey, we've crossed paths before, but today is the first time we're truly being introduced. I have to say, I've always admired you. Honestly, I completely understand why Collin would be drawn to you. I won't deny that I used to have feelings for him. Still, as a member of the Walton family, I know better than to hold onto something that doesn't serve me. I'd never do anything that would bring disgrace to our name," Haven said.

Her voice remained calm, every word carefully chosen, delivered with the kind of weight that made it seem heartfelt.

She took a moment before continuing, "About Gorman's death... I really have nothing to explain. At the bridal shop that day, someone came charging out with a knife, and I was just as stunned as anyone else. I panicked. I ran without even seeing the attacker's face clearly. So why are you pulling me into all this?"

While speaking, Haven kept her posture modest, her face shaped into a look of sincerity.

If Linsey hadn't already spoken to Kylee or uncovered the truth herself, she might have actually believed the act.

Linsey couldn't shake the thought that Haven had likely worn that very same look and used that exact tone when she had twisted Kylee into carrying out her wishes.

Considering Kylee's built-up resentment toward her, Haven had likely found it all too easy to manipulate her into going along with the plan. With very little effort, she had probably nudged Kylee in the right direction, letting her remove whatever—or whoever—stood in Haven's way.

Chapter 940:

What none of them saw coming, including Linsey herself, was that Gorman would throw himself into the chaos and take the fatal strike that had been meant for her.

The image of the blood spreading across the floor of the bridal shop came rushing back, and Linsey's heart ached as though it were happening all over again.

She had never felt any fondness for Gorman—that much was true. Yet, even with that, she couldn't ignore the fact that he had given his life to protect her.

Whether it was to ensure her own safety or to avenge Gorman's death, Linsey knew one thing for certain—she had to uncover the person truly responsible and make sure they paid the price.

After a moment of silence, Linsey pulled out her phone and tapped on a file. She set it down gently on the table, and soon, Kylee's voice began playing through the speaker.

“It was Haven who told me to kill Linsey. She handed me the knife.

And no one but her could've known the exact time Linsey would be at the bridal shop that day."

As the words echoed through the room, Haven's eyes grew wide with disbelief.

"That's a lie! She's making it all up!" Haven screamed, her voice cracking as she glared at Linsey, her face twisted in outrage. "You're framing me! You went as far as forging evidence just to trap me!"

Haven's shouting didn't stop there. In the next breath, she sprang to her feet, pointing at Linsey with a trembling hand, her eyes wild and burning.

"Linsey! I knew it! You've been plotting against me from the start! You're still alive, aren't you? I never told Kylee to kill you. It's obvious you got tired of Gorman keeping you on a leash, so you used Kylee to get rid of him! You're the one behind everything! You scheming, cold-hearted snake!"

As Haven's fury boiled over, Joanne, seated next to her, instinctively reached out to hold her back.

But then, an idea slipped into Joanne's mind as her eyes landed on Linsey's face, which carried an eerie likeness to Jeffery's.

Something inside her whispered that there was more to their connection than anyone had let on.

That one thought changed everything. Joanne quickly realized she could no longer afford to go after Linsey because of Haven.

A wave of regret surged through Joanne as she pondered her past schemes against Linsey.

By sheer luck, her clandestine moves had left no trace leading back to her.

If Linsey truly had any link to Jeffrey, Joanne felt certain she could clear her name.

She could not afford the slightest tarnish on her standing with Jeffrey, as it would unravel years of careful planning.

Taking a deep breath, Joanne steadied herself, masking her unease. Unbeknownst to her, Collin had noticed the faint shift in her demeanor.

Suspicion glinted in his eyes, and a wry smile tugged at his lips. He had long observed Joanne's eager support for Haven, yet today she sat silent, as if deliberately distancing herself. The stark change in her behavior stood out sharply.

Meanwhile, Haven's accusations fell flat against Linsey's composure. In a cool and detached voice, she said, "I never told you Gorman restricted my freedom, Haven."

Those words left Haven visibly thrown.

The recording of Kylee's pointed allegations against Haven was solid proof.

With calm precision, Linsey displayed several photos.