

Zillionaire 991

Chapter 991:

Just as Linsey opened her mouth, Collin cut in with a smug grin. “You’re kidding, right? Your face practically spelled it out. Even a kid could see you were embarrassed. That expression? It’s a rare one for you. I take it hygiene’s never really been your strong suit. But hey, the hospital’s doing half the work for you now.”

Discomfort had already taken hold of Gorman’s features before Collin even finished his jab.

“Do everyone a favor and shut up, Collin,” Gorman snapped.

Collin shrugged, then retorted, “I’ve carried Linsey plenty of times, and she never felt heavy. But holding your giant head? My wrist almost gave out. It’s no wonder you sound like you’re running low on brain cells. That thing’s just too much weight to handle.”

“Collin, is it a fight you’re after?” Gorman said as he lifted his fist and brought it down hard against the edge of the hospital bed.

The sound echoed—a solid, jarring thud. Right after, he gasped, and his complexion drained of all color. The pain hit instantly. He had just aggravated the injury again.

His stab wound had gone deep, and recovery had been frustratingly slow. That was why he had been confined to the bed, quietly nursing it for days.

But since Collin walked in, Gorman had already flared the injury twice.

“Seriously, can either of you act like grown-ups for once?” Linsey snapped, folding her arms. “You’re both pushing thirty and still arguing like schoolboys. Honestly, Zenia and Zander are easier to deal with than you two.”

With a sharp frown, Linsey turned her attention to Collin. "Seriously? All those hours at the gym and you can't even hold a head up without whining? If that's the best you've got, maybe I should just ask a nurse instead."

Caught off guard, Collin opened his mouth but stumbled. "I..."

Holding Gorman's head hadn't actually been difficult. He just couldn't resist the chance to provoke Gorman and score a few points with Linsey.

But she wasn't buying it. She didn't need to hear excuses to know he was doing it just to get under Gorman's skin.

After a sigh, she swung her frustrated gaze toward Gorman. "And you? You're still recovering. Can't you manage that temper of yours for five minutes? What happens if your wound starts bleeding again? You think you can just replace hospital beds like they're paper plates? Having money doesn't give you a pass to trash everything in reach."

All the while, her hands kept working efficiently, rinsing the remaining shampoo from Gorman's hair like she was running on muscle memory. Once she finished, she reached for the basin with a stiff expression. "I'm going to change the water. You two need a moment to reflect on your behavior."

Not waiting for a reply, she walked off toward the bathroom, the basin in hand and her jaw tight with annoyance.

Both men looked like scolded schoolchildren. For once, neither had anything clever to say.

Inside the bathroom, Linsey finally let the mask slip. The corners of her mouth twitched upward, and a small laugh threatened to escape. Before it could, she slapped a hand over her mouth, stifling the sound completely.

Chapter 992:

Still grinning, she poured out the water slowly, rinsed the basin with deliberate care, and filled it again with fresh, warm water—buying herself a few extra minutes of peace.

Beyond the bathroom door, tension still simmered.

Collin kept one hand steady beneath Gorman's head, though his eyes never wandered far from where Linsey had disappeared.

A confession lingered in Collin's mind—he had goaded Gorman on purpose, and he knew it.

Grudges, it seemed, could not be hidden. Every time he recalled Gorman's actions, he found himself unable to muster even the smallest ounce of patience for the man.

Gorman, for his part, was not shy about showing his dislike. The moment Linsey exited, he resisted Collin's support, stiffening his neck and refusing to rest.

He also continued to glance toward the bathroom, a crease of concern forming between his brows. Regret gnawed at him for letting his temper get the best of him.

Inside, Linsey lingered, her hope resting on the possibility that some distance would cool the heat between them. Perhaps a bit of solitude could untangle the knots.

Unbeknownst to her, tension thickened outside, growing even heavier in her absence.

That was when Dolores, Dustin, and Joanne, having picked up the cue, hurried inside. Dolores froze at the threshold, eyes wide at the scene that greeted them.

Collin and Gorman—who usually acted like they were ready for a brawl—now seemed locked in an uneasy truce, positioned closer than anyone expected.

Neither man moved, and for a split second, it looked as if they had been caught in a living photograph.

Shock rooted Dolores to the spot, and Dustin, hurrying after, almost ran right into her back.

Confusion sharpened Dustin's voice as he called out, "C-Collin, what is happening here?"

He stared with disbelief, blinking rapidly as though trying to clear away a dream.

He could hardly believe his eyes—was that really Gorman stretched out on the bed?

Hadn't he died? Somehow, he was breathing right there before their eyes.

The real surprise was the sudden lack of distance between Collin and Gorman—so close, it almost defied belief.

For two people always ready to clash, this newfound closeness made no sense. When had the hostility faded?

For a moment, Dolores could only stare, thunderstruck. Then, snapping out of her daze, she blurted, "Where's Linsey?"

No hint of shock registered on Collin's face as the newcomers arrived.

The only reaction he gave was a flicker of doubt, noticing Joanne tagging along behind Dolores and Dustin.

Meanwhile, Linsey emerged from the bathroom, carrying a fresh basin of water in her hands.

Chapter 993:

As she caught sight of the group, her face brightened. "Dolores, you made it!" she said, her voice light with surprise.

Dolores rushed over, wasting no time. She seized Linsey's arm, giving her a quick once-over. "Are you alright, Linsey?"

"I'm okay, really," Linsey answered, giving Dolores a gentle look to put her mind at ease.

A nervous laugh escaped Dolores as the tension melted away. "I was worried sick. For a second, I believed you'd left the kids behind and run off somewhere," she teased, her nerves giving way to relief.

With a spark of curiosity, Dolores eyed the basin Linsey carried. "What's going on with the water?" she asked.

A gentle blink from Linsey preceded her reply. "Oh, Collin and I were just about to wash Gorman's hair together," she explained, almost offhand.

"Excuse me?!" The announcement left Dolores and Dustin staring in disbelief, their voices echoing their shock.

Worry etched across Dustin's face as he hurried to position himself between Collin and the others. "Collin, are you sure you're feeling okay? This is a hospital—we can get you checked out, just in case," he said, his voice tinged with concern.

Dolores felt her own surprise double. Even if she had never been particularly close to Collin, she had seen firsthand how fiercely he guarded Linsey and how quick he was to jealousy.

No one in the room was unaware of Gorman's affection for Linsey. So to see Collin putting old grievances aside and lending Gorman a hand—it was the last thing anyone could have expected. Nothing about it felt possible, yet there it was.

Linsey gave a helpless smile and walked over to set the basin of water down. With everyone staring in surprise, she and Collin calmly went back to washing Gorman's hair.

"It's just washing hair. Why is that so shocking?" Linsey said with a light shrug.

Dolores, still in disbelief, blinked a few times. Then she sat quietly at the side, watching the pair work together. After a short pause, she spoke slowly. "I mean, it doesn't surprise me that you're doing this, Linsey. But Collin? Really?"

Collin's face tightened. "What's that supposed to mean? Has Linsey washed Gorman's hair before?" The thought alone made his blood boil.

She had never washed his hair!

The more he thought about it, the more ridiculous it seemed.

Why had he agreed to this in the first place?

He must have lost his mind.

"No, no!" Dolores quickly waved her hands. "Linsey only helped wash Zenia and Zander's hair before. And now she's not doing this alone. You're helping too, so it's the both of you."

Dolores wasn't worried about Collin. She just didn't want him getting jealous and stirring up drama. That would only mean more work for Linsey.

Dustin seemed to accept the situation and took a seat beside her. He smirked at Collin. "Looks like Linsey's doing all the work. Are you just here for decoration?"

Chapter 994:

Collin shot him a cold look, then took the towel from Linsey. "I'll do it. You take a break."

Linsey raised an eyebrow and smiled. "Gladly. Just make sure you rinse it well."

Dolores glanced at the quiet Gorman. “Why so silent, Gorman? I haven’t even congratulated you yet. Surviving all that—luck must be on your side. And thank you for saving Linsey.”

She didn’t feel much about him still being alive.

But to Linsey, it mattered. Now she could finally let go of the guilt.

Gorman paused before replying in a flat tone, “I’m just a bit overwhelmed by all the attention.”

His words were polite, but there was an edge of irritation underneath.

Dolores and Dustin didn’t mind. They were here for Linsey and Collin. Now that things had calmed down, Linsey noticed someone in the distance—Joanne.

She blinked, taken aback, then frowned slightly. “What are you doing here?”

Her voice pulled everyone’s attention toward Joanne.

Dolores’ smile faded. She turned her head, pretending not to notice.

But Linsey caught the change in her mood right away.

Her gaze lingered on Joanne, now a bit sharper.

“The last time I saw you, you were at the Walton family’s residence.” Linsey spoke slowly, watching Joanne closely as she remained silent. Joanne had been lost in thought. She hadn’t expected to see Gorman alive.

A hundred thoughts raced through her mind.

When she came back to her senses, she forced a smile. “Ms. Brooks. It’s been a while.”

She paused, then glanced at Dustin, her voice soft. “I came with Dustin. I hope I’m not intruding.”

Joanne never lost sight of her real goal—getting closer to Jeffery, no matter the cost.

Now that she was part of the Walton family, Gorman’s fate barely registered on her radar.

To her, Kase had already shut the door on Haven. Despite their blood relation, there was no forgiveness left in his heart for that granddaughter.

The thought gave Joanne a quiet sense of relief. With that chapter closed, she could turn her full attention toward Linsey.

As soon as Joanne finished speaking, Linsey’s gaze locked onto Dustin. Her cool stare carried an edge that made her silence sharp.

Years spent around Collin had sharpened Linsey’s demeanor. Her words weren’t the only thing that mirrored his—they shared a look now too.

Dustin met her eyes by accident and felt something cold ripple down his spine.

He had only ever felt that same weight from Collin before.

If Linsey’s mood soured because of him, Collin would follow suit—and he would be the one left to deal with the fallout.

Chapter 995:

But he truly hadn’t meant for Joanne to end up here with him!

“I didn’t mean for this to happen,” Dustin said quickly, fumbling his words. “Joanne wanted some air, and Dolores and I were already out looking for you both, so she came along.”

Dustin let out a light laugh and glanced over at Linsey before offering Dolores an ingratiating smile. “It’s always easier when there are more of us pitching in. We’re all friends, after all.”

But Linsey didn’t flinch. She had seen how crushed Dolores had been over Dustin and wasn’t ready to play nice.

Dolores, still nursing her hurt, turned away and didn’t offer a single word in response.

Out of the group, only Joanne spoke in Dustin’s defense. Her voice was smooth, her tone sweet. “Dustin’s telling the truth. I heard Ms. Brooks and Mr. Riley had gone missing, and I just wanted to help.”

With an innocent smile, she turned to Linsey and added, “I’m really glad you’re safe.”

With a neutral expression, Linsey kept her eyes on Joanne, though a knot of unease had quietly taken root inside her.

There was something about the way Joanne’s gaze lingered—it hovered near Dustin but always circled back to her.

No matter how she looked at it, something about Joanne’s attention felt out of place.

Linsey couldn’t recall ever crossing paths with her before. There shouldn’t have been a reason for any animosity. A sudden thought crept in—was this about Haven?

Maybe Joanne was lying in wait, playing the long game, and just biding her time to avenge her friend.

Whatever the reason, the energy in the hospital room had turned strangely off.

Moments later, Collin rinsed out the last of the shampoo from Gorman's hair and gave a short nod.

"Thanks," said Gorman, taking the towel from his hand with a dry expression.

Without saying a word, Collin grabbed the basin and disappeared into the bathroom.

Dolores, meanwhile, looked like she had seen a ghost. Her wide-eyed stare wasn't aimed at Joanne or even Dustin—it was locked on Collin and Gorman.

"Linsey, what did you say to get Collin to help Gorman wash his hair?" Dolores leaned in beside her, unable to resist whispering the question softly into her ear.

With a faint sigh, Linsey responded gently, "You're reading too much into it. They're around the same age, and they've known each other forever. Things between them aren't as hostile as you think."

Dolores blinked twice, clearly unconvinced. She kept her eyes on Linsey a moment longer, then exhaled like someone who had seen too much. "You're too hopeful."

From her vantage point, Dolores saw things Linsey chose to ignore. Time and again, Collin and Gorman had clashed—always circling the same battlefield: Linsey.

Chapter 996:

In her heart, Dolores was certain of one thing—Gorman wasn't walking away without a fight.

Collin dumped out the basin and walked out of the bathroom, carrying the hairdryer along with him.

On his way past Dustin, he tossed the hairdryer over. "How about you lend a hand for once?"

“You mean me?” Dustin, caught off guard, barely managed to grab it. He glanced over at Gorman.

Gorman hardly reacted. He was busy drying off his hair with a towel, carefully using his uninjured arm.

Linsey, noticing the awkward moment, quickly volunteered. “I can take care of it,” she offered, remembering her promise to look after Gorman. But before Linsey could reach for the hairdryer, Collin swiped it back from Dustin, irritation written all over his face.

“I’ll do it myself. You can just relax,” Collin said, sounding less than thrilled, but still started to dry Gorman’s hair.

Across the room, Joanne watched the entire exchange in disbelief. Stories about Collin had always reached her through Haven, how he threw himself into his work, never leaving any room for romance. It wasn’t just Haven, either. Anyone from Grester who knew Collin would say he was distant by nature.

Yet, the Collin she was watching now seemed nothing like the cold, driven founder of CR Corporation everyone talked about.

A wave of sadness washed over Joanne.

If she were in Haven’s shoes, watching Collin change so much for another woman would be almost too much to bear.

It wasn’t that Collin didn’t know how to love. He had just given all his affection to Linsey.

No matter how captivating or impressive other women might be, Collin never seemed to notice anyone else.

Dolores, meanwhile, caught Joanne eyeing Collin from across the room. She frowned, her mind already working through the possibilities. Had Joanne, who had arrived with Dustin, suddenly set her sights on Collin instead?

“Now that you and Collin are fine, we’ll take our leave now,” Dolores said without hesitation as she turned to Linsey. She gently guided Dustin toward the door.

Her other hand grabbed Joanne and almost pulled them both along. “We shouldn’t bother Gorman right now. We’ll drop by again later.”

Before anyone could process what had happened, Dolores had hustled everyone out of the room.

Left behind, Linsey shot a puzzled look at the closed door, deciding she would ask Dolores about it later.

Just outside, Dolores planted her hands on her hips and faced Dustin and Joanne with a chilly expression. “Thanks for your help earlier. Linsey and Collin are fine now, so there’s no need for so many people in a hospital room. It’s better to give them space.”

Dustin hesitated. “What about you?”

Now that he knew Linsey and Collin were safe, Dustin’s attention was fixed entirely on Dolores.

Chapter 997:

He hadn’t seen her in ages, and he wasn’t about to let the opportunity slip by.

Dolores pulled out her phone and replied coolly, “I’m heading home. Zenia and Zander are waiting for me, and someone has to look after them.”

She knew Linsey and Collin wouldn’t be able to leave Gorman’s side, so she was willing to handle the kids and let Linsey focus on what mattered.

Catching on quickly, Dustin grinned and said, “Then I’ll tag along. It’s been ages since I’ve played with the kids anyway.”

Dolores found herself speechless, her gaze inevitably drifting toward Joanne.

Had Dustin truly dismissed Joanne, who had arrived on his behalf?

Recognition flickered across Dustin's features as he became aware of Joanne's presence, his expression twisting with unease.

The next second, he withdrew his wallet and took out some cash, pressing it into Joanne's palm. "Joanne, this conversation stays between us, doesn't it?"

Joanne barely had time to process the gesture before Dustin continued, "Name your price if this isn't enough. I'll transfer whatever amount you require."

The audacity of his actions left Dolores reeling. When clarity returned, the urge to slap him nearly overwhelmed her.

His mother had explicitly banned their relationship, yet here he stood, brazenly attempting to buy Joanne's silence. What guarantee did they have that Joanne wouldn't turn straight to Hester with this information?

Joanne was silent as she considered his words. When she finally spoke, a knowing smile curved her lips as her eyes found Dolores. "Dustin, surely you realize money isn't what I'm after?"

Throughout their time together, neither Dolores nor Dustin had witnessed such calculating intensity in Joanne's expression. Her words stripped away every pretense, revealing her true nature.

Dustin's pulse quickened. "What exactly are you implying?"

Dolores watched Joanne with sharp attention, every instinct on high alert.

She had harbored suspicions about Joanne's seemingly innocent facade, sensing deeper motives beneath the surface.

So, what did Joanne want?

She had just dismissed money as meaningless to her. Could her true desire be Dustin himself?

Joanne studied their shifting expressions with amusement, her laughter light and dismissive. When she spoke, her voice carried a deceptive softness. "What could possibly hold more value than money in this world?"

The question sent a chill through Dolores, freezing her in place. After letting the tension build, Joanne delivered her answer. "Social standing, naturally."

Her saccharine tone made Dustin's skin crawl, and he found himself retreating a step.

Dolores, however, began piecing together the implications.

Social standing?

Marriage to Dustin paled in comparison to becoming the wife of CR Corporation's founder, a position that would elevate Joanne far beyond her current reach.

Chapter 998:

Linsey and Collin were yet to remarry. If Joanne struck at the right moment, she could wedge herself between them.

Dolores knew with absolute certainty that Collin's devotion to Linsey would never waver.

Still, the thought of Linsey enduring such interference stirred protective anger within her.

Before Dolores could voice her concerns about Joanne's intentions, the woman smoothly pocketed Dustin's money and began counting it. "I'll keep your secret this time, but you'd be wise to ensure Hester never discovers the truth."

After letting the silence stretch, Joanne lifted her gaze to meet Dustin's. "Otherwise, Hester will have us walking down the aisle in the near future."

The color drained from Dustin's face as the reality of a forced marriage to Joanne struck him. Not even the pretense of a smile could find its way to his lips.

With her message delivered, Joanne pivoted toward the exit.

She paused at the threshold, glancing back. "Six o'clock tonight at the Cloudway Mall cinema entrance. We'll need to sell this performance convincingly, or Hester will see right through us."

Within moments, Joanne had vanished completely from their view.

Dolores remained motionless, her suspicious stare lingering on the path Joanne had taken, her thoughts churning with unspoken concerns. Dustin, by contrast, seemed to shed his tension the moment Joanne disappeared. His expression brightened as he turned to Dolores with renewed energy. "She's finally gone. Come on, let's get out of here."

Dolores studied Dustin's face, her brow creasing with concern as she spoke in measured tones. "Do you really trust Joanne that much?"

A low chuckle escaped Dustin's lips, his posture casual yet his eyes steady and unwavering. "Trust me, Joanne couldn't care less about me."

"Really?" Something in Dustin's absolute certainty caught Dolores off guard.

Seeing he had finally captured her full attention, Dustin's expression softened into a tender smile as he reached for her hand. "Come on, let's head downstairs and talk properly in the car."

Unable to resist his gentle insistence, Dolores allowed him to guide her toward the hospital's underground parking garage.

Within moments, they had settled into the quiet sanctuary of the car. With Dustin's fingers still intertwined with hers, Dolores made no move to start the engine.

She hungered for more details about Joanne, so she pressed further. "Has Joanne actually told you she's not interested?"

Dustin's eyebrow arched as the words spilled out almost reflexively. "Joanne's young. I can read these things at a glance, whether a woman's interested or not. After all the relationships I've had..." The words died in his throat as he caught sight of Dolores' expression, silently cursing his thoughtless tongue.

Dolores let out an exasperated sigh and yanked her hand free, her voice dripping with barely contained sarcasm. "Right, I forgot how experienced you are. If you can see through Joanne so effortlessly, you must have me completely figured out by now."

Chapter 999:

Panic flickered across Dustin's features as he scrambled to repair the damage. "Dolores, that's not what I meant at all. I haven't been analyzing you. What I feel for you is pure love, nothing calculated."

As he spoke, Dustin tentatively reached for her hand once more, his confidence returning with a playful grin. "Besides, after all this time we've spent together, you obviously care about me. That's undeniable. I don't need to overthink it."

"Your arrogance is astounding. I don't like you one bit." Dolores turned away with visible contempt and fired up the engine.

Dustin hastily clicked his seatbelt into place, stealing glances at her profile. "Are you still upset with me?"

Her voice remained flat and emotionless. "Why would I suddenly be upset with you?"

Dustin's expression grew earnest as he leaned forward slightly. "I promise I'll handle the situation with my mother. You're incredible, and she'll see that eventually. And if she never comes around, believe me, I'll make all the arrangements and we'll disappear together. We'll leave Grester behind and start fresh somewhere new."

Something flickered in Dolores' eyes at his words, a brief moment of genuine surprise. She collected herself quickly, her tone dismissive.

"Don't be ridiculous."

Dustin's voice carried unwavering conviction. "I mean every word."

Dolores absorbed his words in contemplative silence.

When she finally spoke, her voice carried a weight of finality. "Dustin, listen to me carefully. I won't entertain such a reckless idea. My company has deep roots in Grester, and I can't simply abandon it. You've invested everything into CR Corporation, and I refuse to let you throw that away for my sake. We can't be so selfish."

Dustin studied her resolute profile, his shoulders sagging with resignation. "I understand. But whatever happens, we're not breaking up. Just give me time to figure this all out."

"Okay." Dolores' voice gentled, taking on a tender quality. "Don't rush yourself. There's no need to carry this burden alone."

Sensing the heavy mood settling over them like a shroud, Dolores skillfully redirected the conversation. "Since you're so certain Joanne isn't interested in you, have you noticed if she's set her sights on someone else?"

Dustin's words came haltingly, uncertainty threading through his voice. "Well... I honestly can't say, Dolores. When she visited, I retreated to my room entirely. Today, my focus belonged completely to you. Joanne barely registered in my awareness."

Dolores smiled helplessly. "I trust you."

Her expression shifted, growing thoughtful and grave. "Though I suspect Joanne's interests may lie elsewhere... with Collin, perhaps."

"What?!" The revelation struck Dustin like a physical blow.

Miles away, in the sterile quiet of Gorman's hospital room, Linsey and Collin maintained their devoted vigil over the recovering man.

Having just finished washing Gorman's hair with gentle care, Linsey arranged for a light lunch to be delivered, intending to share the meal at his bedside.

Chapter 1000:

A crisp knock shattered the room's tranquil atmosphere, prompting Linsey to rise and cross to the door.

Expecting the restaurant delivery, she found herself staring in bewilderment at an entirely different visitor.

Joanne stood in the doorway, the same woman who had departed a mere fifteen minutes earlier.

Warmth radiated from Joanne's smile as she lifted a paper bag with practiced ease. "Ms. Brooks, I suspected you might not have eaten, so I picked up something from the restaurant downstairs."

Linsey's eyebrows arched with subtle surprise, though her response remained graciously polite. "How thoughtful of you."

Rather than refusing the unexpected gesture, she accepted the offering, her gentle demeanor masking a flicker of careful assessment. "Would you care to step inside?"

Joanne's innocence appeared effortless, her tone carrying natural composure. "I wouldn't dream of intruding further. You all deserve your peace."

Her gaze lingered meaningfully on the bag now cradled in Linsey's hands.

"I wasn't certain of your preferences," she continued with apparent casualness, "so I selected a variety. I do hope something appeals to you."

Even as Joanne's footsteps faded down the corridor, bewilderment lingered in Linsey's mind.

The notion that this woman had returned solely to deliver food felt implausible, almost absurd.

Lost in contemplation, Linsey lowered her gaze and secured the door behind her, returning to the quiet sanctuary of the hospital room.

Both men turned their attention toward her entrance.

Collin's eyes fixed on the unfamiliar bag in her grasp, his brow creasing slightly. "That's not from the place you ordered from earlier."

With a subtle nod of acknowledgment, Linsey set the bag on the bedside table and began unpacking its contents. "Joanne brought it by."

From his position propped against the hospital pillows, Gorman released a derisive snort. "Collin, your magnetic appeal continues to astound. Already another devoted admirer arrives bearing gifts, bold enough to flaunt her intentions right under Linsey's nose. I'm genuinely curious about your technique with women."

He stretched lazily, adding with mock wistfulness, "Must be nice. Here I am, faithful as a saint all these years, never so much as glanced sideways at another woman."

A muscle ticked dangerously in Collin's jaw.

His voice turned razor-sharp. "You know, spending days in this hospital bed is no excuse for letting yourself go completely. When's the last time you brushed your teeth? The whole room's starting to smell like a garbage dump."

Instead of taking offense, Gorman's grin only widened with pure delight. "Oh, now that's interesting. Are we feeling a little jealous? Getting worked up just because Linsey was kind enough to help me with my hair?"