

# Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

Chapter 497

“She’s my friend.”

Thomas didn’t scold Reese in front of everyone. Though anger simmered beneath the surface, he decided to wait until the birthday party was over to

deal with it.

Glancing around at the others still standing in the lobby, he asked, “Didn’t I already get the hall ready? Why aren’t any of you inside?”

“I thought I was getting Vienna Hall! Why did it end up being Florence Hall instead?” Reese pouted with obvious discontent.

“You really need to start using your brain.”

Thomas threw the words over his shoulder and strode off toward Florence Hall without another word.

Reese was left standing there, humiliated. Did her uncle seriously just say that to her—in public?

Still fuming, she had no choice but to follow with her friends to Florence Hall.

Meanwhile, in Vienna Hall.

With James by her side, Caitlin stepped through the grand entrance. Her eyes widened the moment she took in the stunning scene before her.

The entire ballroom was transformed into a fantasy realm—lavender-hued crystals and roses adorned the walls and ceiling, bathing **the** room in a magical glow. It felt like walking straight into a fairy tale.

“This is... breathtaking.”

Caitlin lifted the hem of her dress and stepped forward like a princess taking a graceful stroll through an enchanted kingdom.

As she approached a pair of crystal doors, a small fairy with translucent wings suddenly popped out from behind a wall of flowers.

Caitlin blinked in surprise. “Patricia?”

Patricia had transformed into a tiny, winged fairy. Wielding a glittering wand, she ran up, giggling, and took her mother’s hand.

“Welcome to the Fairy Kingdom, Mommy!”

“Oh? The Fairy Kingdom?” Caitlin chuckled—it really did feel like a fantasy world.

“Mommy, bend down!”

When Caitlin lowered her head, Patricia placed a delicate floral crown on her.

“Wow, Mommy! You look just *like* a princess!”

“Thank you!” Caitlin’s heart swelled with joy.

was obvious that Sebastian had put in a lot of effort for her birthday.

She followed Patricia further into the hall, where her three sons awaited—each dressed like tiny elves with pointy ears, fluttering wings, **and adorable**

costumes.

“Mommy!” they chirped in unison, handing her a flower each.

“Thank you, my little fairies,” Caitlin said, smiling as she accepted the blossoms.

Led by the children, Caitlin walked down a shimmering, light-studded path. At each step, more friends appeared.

First were Molly and her brother Simon Wendy, both dressed as citizens of the Fairy Kingdom.

“Caitlin, you look absolutely stunning. Happy birthday!”

“Happy birthday!”

“Thank you!” she replied, accepting their flowers before continuing forward.

Next came Felix, Madison, and their son Kyle, all dressed in whimsical attire—full-on cosplay mode.

“Happy birthday, Caitlin!”

“Best wishes!”

Each guest handed her a flower, and Caitlin took them with a grateful smile.

Further down the path, she was greeted by Yates and the boys from VX, all equally dashing in their themed outfits.

“Happy birthday, Caitlin!”

“Happy birthday, fairy queen!”

“Thank you! And Yates—thank you for the song and dance earlier!”

Following them were Nolan Benjamin and Jillian.

“Happy birthday, Caitlin!”

“Happy birthday!”

Jillian, masked and slightly bashful, handed over her flower. Though they hadn't parted on the best of terms, the Majestic Elegance project had made Jillian realize who her real friends were. Compared to Zora, Caitlin had proven to be genuinely kind. Since then, Jillian had been slowly distancing herself from the toxic crowd.

More friends arrived—Hayden, James and Zinnia, Vincent and Hazel, even Raymond, Eliza, Jasper, and Beatrice. Each offered a warm smile and a blossom for Caitlin.

The *men's* eyes shimmered with admiration. The women radiated joy.

“Happy birthday, Caitlin!”

In *no* time, Caitlin's arms overflowed with flowers.

“Thank you, everyone. Truly. Thank you!”

Her heart was full. With so many friends and family gathered, the night felt perfect. And yet, one person was still missing.

“Where's Sebastian?” she asked.

Patricia and her fairy brothers came bounding up, tugging at her skirt.

“Mommy, come quick!”

They led her up a small staircase. At the top, crystal doors slowly **swung** open, revealing a luxurious vintage-style sofa—and lying **on it was** Sebastian.

“What... is this?” Caitlin blinked, confused.

Patricia grinned from the side of the sofa, “Mommy! Our *dadd*

is the Sleeping Elf Prince. He needs a kiss from a beautiful princess to wake **him up!**

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Oh no.

Only Sebastian would come up with something this absurd.

Playing the sleeping beauty prince? Really?

Caitlin couldn't help laughing. She glanced back at the crowd—everyone was smiling, urging her on.

“Come on! Wake the prince with a kiss!”

“Save the prince! He's been asleep for a thousand years!”

“Our prince is about to grow moss from all that waiting!”

Caitlin was exasperated but amused. Setting her bouquet down, she walked over and sat beside him.

Sebastian looked like something out of a storybook—chiseled features, regal costume, his face utterly serene.

With everyone watching, Caitlin leaned in slowly.

Behind her, *her* sons quickly covered Patricia's eyes and turned their backs.

She pressed a gentle kiss to Sebastian's lips. When he didn't stir, she pulled back with a smirk.

“If you don’t wake up now, I’m going to smack you.”

Her *tone* was soft-teasing, not threatening.

Sebastian’s eyes flew open. They glinted with mischief and heat.

“Would you really hit me?” he murmured.

Their gazes locked, and in that moment, it felt as if magic truly surrounded them. Glowing purple lights sparkled around the couple, casting a dreamlike glow over the scene.

“Whoa! Daddy the prince is awake!”

“Daddy’s awake!”

The children jumped with delight.

Sebastian stared deep into Caitlin’s eyes. She helped him sit up, laughing.

“Shameless. The Sleeping Elf Prince? Only you could come up with *this*.”

“I racked my brains for this!” he said, pulling *her* into his arms. “That kiss wasn’t enough—I need another dose.”

The little fairies squealed, covering their eyes again.

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The crowd erupted into applause and cheers. As the kiss ended, Caitlin gave Sebastian a look, warning him silently not to push his luck.

Sebastian grinned, slid off the sofa, and wrapped an arm around her as they returned to the crowd.

From that moment on, the magical birthday celebration officially began.

While Vienna Hall felt like a dreamy, enchanting fantasy, Florence Hall had the lively but ordinary atmosphere of a typical party.

Guests continued to arrive. Reese's cousin Virgil showed up with a few friends. Her parents and other family members also made their appearances to celebrate her birthday.

Zora was among the invited guests and presented a gift she had picked out specifically for Reese.

"Thank you, Zora."

"You're welcome. Happy birthday. Just a little something from me."

"That's so thoughtful of you."

Reese chatted with Zora for a while. Then Yasmin and her boyfriend Connor arrived.

"Yasmin, Connor, thank you so much for coming."

Yasmin handed over a present. "Here's your birthday gift. Wishing you all the best, Reese."

“Thanks, really, thank you.”

Suddenly, Yasmin mentioned, “By the way, I heard it’s Caitlin’s birthday too. She’s apparently having her party in this same hotel. What a coincidence.”

Yasmin’s brother and sister-in-law had gone to Caitlin’s party instead. Yasmin hadn’t been invited, but luckily Reese had included her.

The comment hit a nerve.

Reese scowled. “Yeah. Of all the cursed luck, I end up sharing my birthday with her. Just thinking about it makes me sick.”

Zora, visibly surprised, asked, “Today is Caitlin’s birthday too? And she’s hosting a party here?”

“Exactly. You didn’t know?” Yasmin asked.

Zora didn’t respond but fell into thought. She was curious what Caitlin’s celebration might look like.

Yasmin glanced around and noticed Jillian was nowhere to be seen. “Where’s Jillian? Isn’t she coming?”

“She’s not. She went with her brother to Caitlin’s party,” Reese said, clearly irritated.

“What? Why would she do that?”

“I don’t know. She’s been acting off lately. She even bailed on a few invites.”

Zora nodded subtly. Jillian had also turned her down for shopping trips.

Still curious, Yasmin said, “I’m going to text Jillian, ask what Caitlin’s party looks like. I bet **it’s** nothing compared to ours.”

No one objected. Yasmin sent a message, and Jillian replied with **a** short clip of the venue, making sure no **faces were** shown.

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Yasmin opened the video and gasped. “Wow. That’s stunning. Is that Vienna Hall?”

**Reese** and Zora leaned in for a better look. The jealousy was instant.

The venue was gorgeous, almost surreal. Just the decorations must have cost a fortune, not to mention everything else.

The women couldn't hold back their envy.

“Seriously? It's just a birthday, not a royal wedding.”

“She only pulled this off because of Sebastian. Without him, she's just average,” Zora scoffed.

Noticing Reese's sour expression, Zora added, “But Florence Hall is still amazing. Our party has way more energy.”

“That's right. My uncle didn't even try that hard. If he really wanted to, he could crush Sebastian's efforts without breaking a sweat.”

Reese muttered under her breath, “Whoever ends up marrying my uncle **is** going to live like a queen. Just thinking about it makes me jealous.”

She said it casually, but Zora was paying close attention. Her gaze drifted to where Thomas sat, alone on a nearby sofa.

Now that was an opportunity worth chasing.

If she could get close to Thomas, maybe even marry him, she would have the full backing of Talon Quarters. She could do whatever she wanted in this city.

Abel? He was history. That man had already outlived his usefulness. With prison looming over him, there was no reason to keep him around.

Thomas, on the other hand, was power, wealth, and influence wrapped in one dangerously attractive package.

Reese continued greeting guests and introduced Zora to her family, including her cousin Virgil and, most importantly, her uncle Thomas.

By chance or luck, Zora was seated right next to Thomas, giving her the perfect opportunity.

“Mr. Quick, it’s truly a pleasure. I’ve heard so much about you.”

She had only heard of Thomas through rumors and whispers, tales of Talon Quarters and its intimidating reach. Seeing him up close, she was instantly taken aback.

Compared to him, Abel was nothing.

Thomas had a presence that could rival Hollywood's top leading men.

The more she looked, the more obsessed she became. She wanted what Caitlin had. Influence. Power. The attention of powerful men.

There's a saying: behind every successful woman is a line of exceptional men

That was the only difference between her and Caitlin. Caitlin had more powerful men behind her.

Zora tried to keep the conversation going. Thomas remained cool and mostly uninterested.

Still, she pressed forward, searching for common ground.

Then she said something that finally caught his attention.

"I'll be competing against Caitlin in the upcoming World Design Expo. We agreed to a public design face-off. Would **you be** interested **in attending?**"

Thomas paused before nodding slightly. "Sure. I'll be there."

Zora smiled with satisfaction. That was a start. Now she just needed to keep the momentum going.

Meanwhile, in Vienna Hall, the fantasy masquerade was already in full swing

Games, surprises, and live performances kept the energy high and the smiles wide.

Even Caitlin, usually reserved and composed, had relaxed and joined in the fun, mingling freely with her guests.

Yates and the VX boys danced and sang around her, their charisma lighting up the room.

Every pair of eyes was drawn to her.

Tonight, she was the star of the show, radiant and unforgettable.

As the round stage curtain slowly opened, everyone took their seats, ready for the next big surprise.

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Caitlin sat with the kids on a swing chair woven with flower vines, eyes fixed on the stage.

As the grand curtain slowly lifted, the entire room fell silent. Center stage stood a pristine white piano, and seated behind it was a man,

A single spotlight beamed down from above, illuminating the man where he sat.

His golden hair shimmered under the light, and his hands, almost ethereal, rested on the keys. The moment his fingers moved, the first notes rang out like magic.

The melodic piano music spread through the hall, smooth and graceful.

Gasps quickly followed as people began to recognize the performer.

“Oh my god, that’s the world-renowned piano prince, Federico Colli!”

“It’s really Federico! I can’t believe they got him!”

“If Federico’s here, that must mean the entire European Royal Orchestra is here too!”

Caitlin and the others listened quietly. Her eyes fell on the pianist. True to his reputation, Federico’s elegance and mystique gave him the aura of nobility. His refined Italian charm made the title of “Piano Prince” more than justified.

Those who followed classical music knew Federico was famous for collaborating with the European Royal Orchestra. Every international performance featured his piano solos, and his concerts were nearly impossible to get tickets for.

To have him perform live tonight was no small feat.

Nolan leaned over to Sebastian and whispered, “Not bad for the international act, huh?”

“Yeah,” Sebastian nodded, clearly impressed. He was grateful Nolan had managed to pull strings to bring in such big names. It really elevated **the** whole

night.

As Federico’s solo concluded, more lights lit up across the stage, revealing the rest of the orchestra.

The conductor, dressed in a classic tailcoat, stepped forward and bowed toward Caitlin and her table. The rest of the orchestra followed suit.

As the baton waved, the performance began.

Powerful and majestic. Dreamy and romantic. Touching and profound. Each movement tugged at emotions in its own way.

It was everything *one* would expect from the famed European Royal Orchestra. Their music didn’t just entertain—it moved the soul.

The performance was a stunning success. As the final note faded, the entire room rose to its feet, thunderous applause echoing through the hall.

The *conductor* and the musicians stood to bow. Federico also stood beside his piano.

Then something unexpected happened.

Federico walked to the other side of the piano, picked up a bouquet of flowers, and made his way toward Caitlin.

Everyone assumed he was simply delivering birthday wishes on behalf of the orchestra. But when Federico reached her, he spoke familiarity.

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“My dear Trinity, it’s been too long. Happy birthday.”

“It really has, Federico. Thank you.”

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He gently took Caitlin’s hand and kissed the back of it, a charming European gesture.

It was a small kiss, but it set off a flare in Sebastian’s chest. The intensity in Federico’s eyes, the look of affection that couldn’t **be** hidden—Gebastiani felt it

all.

Jealousy hit hard.

What the hell? How did this guy know Caitlin?

“I didn’t expect to see you here. Do you have any idea how long I’ve been trying to find you, Trinity?” Federico said, voice low and sincere, eyes locked on hers like no one else in the room existed.

“I’m sorry, Federico. I didn’t stay in contact, and I regret that. But I’m really glad you’re here tonight. Thank you for coming”

Federico shook his head gently, smiling. “So, that means I’m welcome at your birthday celebration?”

“Of course. The entire orchestra is welcome. We’re honored to have you.”

“Thank you.”

Unable to contain his joy, Federico leaned in and gave Caitlin a soft, friendly hug.

That was enough for Sebastian.

He stepped up, placed a firm arm around Caitlin's shoulder, and spoke to Federico with a calm but assertive smile.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Colli. I'm Trinity's fiancé."

Federico looked surprised. He glanced between the two of them, trying to process the shift.

When he had known Caitlin, or rather, Trinity, she had been fiercely independent. She had turned down his advances, and he'd respected that. He'd even said he'd wait.

Now this?

"Oh, Trinity. You never mentioned having a fiancé. You once told me you didn't believe in marriage."

"Well," Caitlin glanced at Sebastian, smiling, "things change. I met someone who made me want to believe."

Federico looked stunned. "But... I love you."

The words landed like a punch in the gut to everyone around them.

A world-renowned piano prince just confessed his love. Publicly.

Wendy muttered under her breath, “If Federico confessed to me, I’d marry him on the spot.”

Benjamin, standing nearby, smacked the back of her head. “Don’t even think about it.”

Wendy shot him a glare. Why was he always up in her business?

Molly leaned toward her group. “This doesn’t look good. My brother’s in trouble.”

“Yeah, he’s got serious competition.”

Benjamin leaned into Sebastian’s ear. “You’re getting challenged right to your face. What are you gonna do?”

Sebastian’s jaw tightened. His eyes snapped toward Nolan, shooting daggers.

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This was your idea?

You brought him?

You brought her ex-crush who just declared love for her in public?

Nolan, who had genuinely believed he was doing something good, felt his stomach drop. He had really screwed up.

What now?

Federico had the looks. The talent. The class. He was every bit Sebastian's equal, if not more.

Panic set in.

Nolan silently prayed he could disappear and avoid the wrath that was surely coming.

Meanwhile, Federico was still deep in his heartfelt reunion. "You don't know what these years have been like for me. I thought of you constantly. **I've** been waiting."

“I’m sorry, Federico. We can be good friends,” Caitlin said gently, not wanting to ruin the evening.

“You mean... you’re willing to give me a chance? We can start as friends, get to know each other. I’ll share everything I have with you.”

He was clearly misunderstanding her.

Sebastian’s face darkened. His fists clenched.

Just as he was about to lose it, someone stepped in to stop him.

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Hayden stepped forward, clasped Federico’s hand tightly, and smiled. “Nice to meet you, Mr. Colli. But if you want to pursue Trinity, **you’ll** have tin line. I’m one of her admirers too.”

Federico looked at him in surprise, wincing slightly as his hand was nearly crushed.

It was obvious to everyone that Hayden was trying to lighten the explosive tension in the room.

“Mr. Colli, I’m also in love with Trinity! A thousand times more than you are! If you want to chase her, you’re behind me,” Yates chimed in, grabbing Federico’s other hand.

Now both of Federico’s hands felt like they were being tortured. Were all the people here this passionate about welcoming guests?

The scene was spinning out of control. Then the boys from VX stepped forward.

“Mr. Colli, don’t forget about us! We’re Trinity’s devoted fanboys too. You’ll have to take your place behind us.”

Federico was officially overwhelmed.

Even James, Benjamin, and Nolan joined in to show support. Then Simon raised his hand. “Count me in too! Trinity’s admirer right here.”

Though he used to pursue Caitlin, Simon now loved Molly. This was just his way of backing up Sebastian.

Standing nearby, Madison nudged her husband. “Not joining them?”

Felix chuckled and wrapped an arm around her. “With so many already, I think she’s covered.”

Jillian watched the whole thing unfold and felt a wave of envy. She couldn’t deny it—Caitlin really had that magnetic charm. Even as a woman, Jillian found herself completely in awe.

The scene looked like a battle of the gods. Every man standing there was handsome in his own right. Federico was starting to realize he may not have a

real chance.

Caitlin finally stepped in.

“Alright, everyone. Federico traveled a long way to be here, and he’s our guest. Let’s give him and the orchestra a warm welcome.”

“Welcome! Welcome!”

The men finally let go, each offering sincere greetings instead of crushing handshakes.

Federico shook *out* his aching hands, stunned by just how “warm” the welcome had been.

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He now understood why Trinity had so many admirers. She was truly extraordinary. Maybe he’d never get the chance to win her heart, but being her friend wouldn’t be so bad.

He moved to speak to her again, but a group of children ran up, dragging Caitlin away.

“Mommy! Come on, we’ve got more surprises!”

Federico blinked. Trinity had kids? More than one?

Sebastian stepped beside him and said quietly, “Mr. Colli, as you can see, we’re engaged. And yes, those are our **children.**”

Federico looked stunned, but he nodded. “understand. Just promise me you’ll make her happy.”

“I will.”

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They shook hands, and the invisible battle finally came to a peaceful close.

The hall shifted once more. Mist curled through the air, turning the scene into a fairytale-like realm.

Soft light drifted across the room as a towering seven-layer cake was rolled out. The cake was adorned with cartoon figures—Sebastian, Caitlin and their four kids. And one more: James.

Everyone who knew the family, good that today was also James's birthday.

But tonight was mainly about celebrating Caitlin. James had chosen to be her quiet support.

The candlelight flickered, casting a gentle glow

everyone's faces.

“The birthday cake is here!”

“Time to make a wish!”

Guests began singing the birthday song.

Sebastian gazed at Caitlin. “Caitlin, make a wish.”

“Mommy, make a wish!” the kids chimed in.

“Harrison, make one with me,” Caitlin said, pulling her brother close to share the moment.

She folded her hands, closed her eyes, and made a silent wish.

James did the same. His wish? That all of Caitlin’s dreams would come true.

When their eyes opened, they blew out the candles together.

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Cheers rang out as the lights brightened again. Sebastian took Caitlin's hand and helped her cut the cake.

The celebration continued in full swing. Laughter filled the air, kids munched happily on cake, and then Sebastian stepped forward again with a gift.

He opened a sleek black velvet box, revealing a dazzling blue diamond necklace. The piece had been custom-designed for Caitlin by the chief designer at Nolan's jewelry company.

Sebastian carefully placed the necklace around her neck, the brilliant stones setting off her beauty like a queen in a fairytale.

"That necklace is stunning."

"Mr. Vanderbilt is so romantic!"

"All the single guys here better take notes--this is how it's done!" Madison teased with a laugh.

After placing the necklace on her, Sebastian leaned in to kiss her cheek. Then he asked with a smile, "My beautiful fairy, may I have this dance?"

Caitlin nodded, and the two took the stage hand-in-hand.

A waltz began to play.

The couple danced with effortless grace. Every movement was in sync, every glance full of affection,

They were mesmerizing.

“This feels like a wedding.”

“They’re perfect for each other. They should just get married already.”

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“**They** will. **It’s** just **a** matter of time.”

“I bet their wedding will be even more extravagant than this!”

On stage, Sebastian and Caitlin only had eyes for each other. The music carried them as they spun and glided.

“About Federico,” Sebastian murmured as they danced. “When did you meet him?”

Even though the threat was over, he still felt a twinge of jealousy. The guy was just too talented and charming.

“I studied piano with him once,” Caitlin replied casually. “Technically, he was my teacher.”

“You saw him as a teacher. He saw you as something else,” Sebastian grumbled, giving her waist a gentle squeeze.

Caitlin giggled and leaned into him. “Still jealous? You should know I’ve always had a few admirers. Can’t handle a little competition?”

Sebastian sighed, half-playful, half-serious. “Sometimes I wish I could turn you into a gem and embed you right here in my chest... or hold you in my mouth, like a precious pearl.”

His words made her laugh out loud.

The two continued their dance, completely immersed in each other.

Meanwhile, at the edge of the room, in the shadowy corners of the hall, Zinnia received a message on her phone.

As her *eyes* scanned the screen, a ripple of panic spread across her face.