

Zillionaire 1011

Chapter 1011:

Then, spotting Joanne still by Linsey's side, he gave a polite nod. "I won't keep you and your friend any longer. Let's catch up again sometime soon."

Linsey blinked, caught off guard for a moment. From Jeffery's response, it seemed clear he had no idea who Joanne was. Still, Joanne's earlier look at Jeffery suggested she had known him for quite some time.

Before Linsey could say anything, Joanne, who had kept quiet until now, suddenly said, "Mr. Lawson, don't you remember me?"

Linsey held back her farewell and watched, curiosity sparking in her eyes. She couldn't help but wonder what kind of history Joanne shared with Jeffery—enough to make her reach out to someone who looked so much like him.

Joanne's words made Jeffery pause. He studied her face, puzzled.

"Sorry? Have we met before?"

He looked hard at Joanne, but no memory seemed to surface.

All at once, Linsey dropped her gaze to the floor. She didn't have to look at Joanne to sense the sting of disappointment and heartbreak in that moment.

Jeffery's confusion looked entirely genuine. It became clear to Linsey that any feelings Joanne had for Jeffery were one-sided.

Linsey decided to keep her thoughts to herself, watching quietly from the side.

Joanne stood in stunned silence, her eyes glimmering with hurt.

Joanne was just about to say more when a woman appeared beside Jeffery. "Jeffery, what's happening?"

Both Linsey and Joanne turned to see a young woman with a visible baby bump making her way over.

At the sound of her voice, Jeffery turned at once, quickly reaching out to support the woman's arm and gently drawing her close.

Even Linsey couldn't hide her surprise at the unexpected scene unfolding before her.

Joanne stood frozen, completely caught off guard. She hadn't imagined that Jeffery would already be married, let alone with a baby on the way.

The surprise left her expression stiff and awkward. Thankfully, Jeffery and the woman beside him were focused on Linsey, unaware of Joanne's visible discomfort.

Jeffery said gently to the woman at his side, "Alicia, let me introduce you. This is Linsey Brooks, the one I told you about."

Then he turned toward Linsey and added with a smile, "Linsey, this is Alicia, my wife."

Jeffery's face lit up with a joyful smile as he continued, "It's been six months since we got married, but we haven't been able to hold the ceremony yet. We've talked it over and decided to start planning the wedding once Alicia gives birth."

Upon hearing Linsey's name, Alicia Lawson offered a sincere and welcoming smile. "Linsey, it's a pleasure. Jeffery has spoken of you often. I'm truly glad to finally meet you."

Jeffery had shared quite a bit with Alicia about Linsey before. He had expressed genuine hope that one day Linsey would return to the Lawson family.

Chapter 1012:

Since Alicia had also grown up without parents, she felt a natural sympathy for Linsey's past and understood why she might have stayed distant from the Lawson family.

Meeting her in person now, Alicia realized Linsey bore an even stronger resemblance to Jeffery than she had expected. Anyone who had spent time around Jeffery would never question their bond as siblings.

Although Alicia didn't stand out at first glance, there was something naturally warm and pleasant about her presence. Linsey felt that warmth almost instantly and responded with a soft smile. "I didn't know Jeffery had gotten married."

The moment made her realize how much could change in just four years.

Linsey offered a soft smile and glanced at Alicia's rounded belly. "You must be about six months along, am I right?"

Alicia's face brightened with delight as she gently touched her stomach. "That's exactly right. We just had a check-up two days ago."

As Linsey took another look at Alicia's baby bump, a faint memory flickered in her mind—her own pregnancy with twins four years ago.

"I'm really happy for you both," Linsey said, her voice sincere. She shifted her attention to Jeffery and added, "Take good care of her. Being pregnant isn't easy."

Jeffery chuckled warmly and pulled Alicia a little closer. "I will. You don't have to worry about that."

Then, in a genuine tone, he added, "Sorry for keeping you this long. We'll catch up again sometime. It's time for us to head back."

Although Jeffery wished he could talk more and introduce Alicia to Linsey properly, he knew it wasn't the right moment since Linsey wasn't alone.

"Sounds good," Linsey replied without hesitation.

Alicia gave Linsey a polite wave and offered Joanne a slight nod before walking off beside Jeffery.

Even after the couple disappeared down the hall, Joanne didn't say a word.

Linsey cast her a quiet glance, noticing the pale shade on Joanne's face. She pressed her lips lightly together and said, "The elevator is just ahead. I'll leave you here."

Since their relationship was distant, Linsey didn't feel it was her place to offer any words of comfort in that moment.

And besides, Jeffery already had a wife, and soon, they would be parents. Any hope Joanne had held onto had likely faded away.

Watching Joanne remain frozen in place, Linsey paused briefly, then turned, intending to leave her with a bit of quiet.

"Linsey." She had only just started to turn when Joanne's voice reached her—raspy and tight, as though it scraped its way out of her throat.

Turning back slowly, Linsey met the sight of Joanne's reddened eyes. For a second, she stood frozen. Then came the words that completely threw her off guard.

"You have to help me," Joanne said, each word deliberate, her gaze locked onto Linsey's face.

Linsey was startled, her eyes widening. "What did you just say?" In that brief pause, she truly hoped Joanne was simply seeking comfort for her heartbreak.

Chapter 1013:

But the truth unraveled far more quickly than she expected, and it was worse than she imagined.

Joanne continued without flinching, “I’ve done my research. I know you and Jeffery are blood relatives, and I know how much he trusts you. I need you to step in. That woman isn’t good enough for him. I want them to get divorced.”

Linsey’s breath hitched. She took a sharp step forward, standing toe-to-toe with Joanne, her eyes full of disbelief. “Joanne, what on earth are you saying? Jeffery is already married. You saw them together, didn’t you? They’re happy. Alicia is carrying his child.”

“So what?” sneered Joanne, curling her lips in open disdain. “I’m familiar with every well-known young woman in Grester, even those from other parts of the country. Alicia clearly comes from an ordinary family, and her appearance is nothing special. She isn’t worthy of being Jeffery’s wife. As for me, I’ve spent years working tirelessly, earning recognition after recognition, all for the sake of one goal—to marry into the Lawson family and stand beside Jeffery...”

Her voice faltered as Linsey suddenly interjected, her tone sharp and impatient, “That’s enough. I don’t want to hear another word.”

After taking a moment to steady herself, Linsey said firmly, “You should leave now. The bracelet you gave me—I’ll make sure it’s returned to you exactly as it was. Don’t come to me again. I won’t involve myself in something so ridiculous.”

She had no idea how Joanne could summon the nerve to make such an outrageous request.

Even if Jeffery were single, Linsey would never manipulate their sibling bond to steer him toward someone like Joanne.

It had never been her intention to interfere in anything related to the Lawson family.

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Now that Jeffery had a wife and a baby on the way, there was no possibility she would stoop to something so disgraceful.

“It doesn’t matter what you think of Alicia. You have no right to pass judgment on her. If Jeffery chose to marry her, then in his eyes, she’s the one who matters most.”

Without waiting for a reply, Linsey turned and strode off, leaving Joanne behind. She didn’t glance back, not even once, as she rounded the corner of the corridor.

When she returned to Gorman’s hospital room, she shut the door behind her with a firm push and leaned against it, her strength slipping away.

The sound of the door caught Dolores’s attention. She walked over quickly, her face tightening with worry when she saw Linsey’s shaken expression.

“Linsey, what happened?” asked Dolores, reaching out to take her hand with concern.

Letting out a steady breath, Linsey answered quietly, “It’s nothing.”

“You were gone a while. Did Joanne say something to upset you?” Dolores said gently.

Together, they moved further into the room.

Dustin, who was focused on arranging breakfast for Gorman, paused and looked up.

The moment Gorman noticed Linsey’s troubled face, he set the utensils aside and asked with concern, “Is everything alright?”

Chapter 1014:

Once she had taken her seat, Linsey glanced at their faces—each of them watching her intently with quiet concern—and finally let out a long, weary sigh.

Linsey hesitated briefly before speaking in a measured tone. “I just crossed paths with Jeffery. It wasn’t meant to be a big deal, but I had no idea he was married. And then Joanne actually asked me to help her sabotage his marriage...”

She went on to share a quick summary of the encounter.

Dustin absorbed the story and then burst into a loud chuckle. “I knew Joanne wasn’t into me! This is perfect! I’ll head home and tell my mom to get Joanne off my back. No more wasting time faking a relationship with her.”

Dolores gave Dustin a light smack on the arm, chiding, “Is that really what you’re focused on right now? Just shut up!”

Clearly, Joanne’s words to Linsey had stunned Dolores as well. After a brief pause, Dolores said softly, “But Jeffery getting married so discreetly? I’ve been in Grester for years and never caught wind of it.”

Dustin immediately chimed in, “Yeah, I haven’t heard a single thing about it either. The Lawson family has been remarkably tight-lipped over the past few years, keeping everything under wraps without even the faintest rumor slipping out. It’s honestly quite peculiar and makes you wonder what’s going on behind the scenes...”

Gorman noticed the slight crease in Linsey’s brow and spoke up to ease her mind. “Joanne doesn’t have the power to pull off anything major. She was probably just probing to see if you would go along with her scheme. Don’t stress over it.”

“Exactly, Linsey,” Dolores chimed in. “Joanne sneered at Alicia for her humble roots, but by that logic, Joanne’s just a stand-in for Haven in the Walton family, with no real sway. Plus, Jeffery doesn’t even recall who she is. Anything she tries will only make him like her less.”

Linsey’s unease lingered, especially as her gaze fell on the bracelet Joanne had given her.

Pointing to the small box, she said to Dustin, "Please return this to her, and make sure to repay her for the food and supplements she has brought over. I don't want to owe her anything."

Dolores laughed lightly and nudged Dustin. "You heard Linsey. Get moving."

"Got it. I'll even toss in some extra to cover her trouble, so she can't hold anything over you, Linsey," Dustin said with a nod, standing to relay instructions to his team outside.

Linsey sighed. "I've been trying to puzzle out Joanne's intentions for days, and now that I know, I'm even more on edge. The way she spoke was just... unsettling."

Dolores gave Linsey's shoulder a reassuring pat. "It's alright. Joanne's not capable of much. If you're concerned, just give Jeffery a heads-up. The Lawson family may have lost some ground these past couple of years, but they're not about to let Joanne push them around."

"Every time Jeffery's involved, things go south for me. I need to steer clear of the Lawson family from now on," Linsey said, shaking her head with a resigned air.

At that, Dolores' expression shifted, as if recalling something significant. She said pointedly, "Jeffery knows you're back in town. He might not act on it, but the Lawsons? That's another matter... Four years ago, they were desperate to get on your good side. Now that they know you're here, who's to say they won't try to reach out again?"

Chapter 1015:

Linsey's face stiffened for a second. "It's already been four years. I doubt they'll bother anymore. Even though I'm their daughter by blood, there's barely any bond between us. We're like strangers passing on the street."

She paused, then added with calm certainty, "Besides, Alicia's pregnant now. The Lawsons are probably pouring all their attention into the baby. I'm the last thing on their minds."

Dolores gave her a thoughtful look. “That may not be true.”

Linsey was Myla and Cruz’s biological daughter. They hadn’t been able to do anything for her for over twenty years. Now that she was finally back, they might try even harder than they had four years ago.

The Lawsons had always carried guilt when it came to Linsey. Gorman had seen everything that happened between her and the Lawsons back then. He could tell—Linsey no longer held any feelings for them. No anger, no warmth. Just emptiness.

With that in mind, he spoke gently. “Let’s take things as they come.”

Linsey gave a small nod. “I know.”

After lunch, she noticed Gorman looked tired. “You should get some rest. We’ll come back later.”

The hospital room was packed, and Gorman hadn’t had a proper chance to relax.

As Dolores and Dustin stood to leave, Gorman suddenly said, “Linsey, I’d like a moment alone with you.” At that, Dolores and Dustin froze.

They sat back down immediately. Dolores smiled at him, eyes sharp. “Why not tell all of us? If something’s wrong, we can help.” She nudged Dustin’s arm with her elbow.

Catching on, Dustin added, “Yeah, we’re all friends here. Why just Linsey? We want to hear it too.”

They hadn’t come today just to visit. They were here to keep Gorman from getting too close to Linsey again.

They knew his style—how he played the sympathy card, especially now with his injuries still healing.

They feared he would elicit Linsey’s sympathy. And they weren’t going to let that happen.

Gorman looked at them calmly. He stayed quiet for a few seconds, then gave in.

“Okay,” he said with surprising patience, his eyes locking on Linsey again.

Something about the way he looked at her made her freeze. There was a depth in his eyes she couldn’t place. She simply thought it was sadness.

Dolores and Dustin, seeing the way he looked at Linsey, grew uneasy.

They were about to speak up when Gorman broke the silence.

“I’m leaving Grester tomorrow. My parents and I are flying out,” he said. That silenced them at once. The teasing words they had prepared vanished.

They stared at him in disbelief.

None of them expected that. It felt too sudden.

Even Linsey found herself struggling to process the news.

A flicker of confusion crossed Linsey’s face. “You’re leaving tomorrow?” Her eyes shifted instinctively to Gorman’s injury, a clear trace of disapproval in her look. “But you’re not fully recovered yet.”

Chapter 1016:

Gorman managed a soft smile, revealing a fragile side that rarely showed.

“I talked to my parents and the doctor last night,” he said, his voice calm but tired. “They all agreed my condition is stable enough. As long as there’s a trained medical team with me, flying shouldn’t be a major risk.”

Linsey’s face hardened with worry, and for a moment, no words came to her.

No matter how things played out, the decision to stay or walk away belonged entirely to Gorman. Linsey had neither the grounds nor the authority to ask him to remain.

Trying to talk him out of it now might only spark confusion or conflict.

With a quiet breath, she looked down and said, barely above a whisper, “If that’s the path you’ve chosen...”

Gorman’s smile faded into something more sorrowful. “You know I don’t want to go, Linsey. But staying isn’t an option anymore.”

That vague confession pulled the silence back between them.

Linsey hesitated, every possible response feeling wrong in her throat.

If she spoke too sharply, she might wound Gorman’s pride. But if her voice came across too softly, there was the risk he would take it the wrong way.

As Linsey weighed her words in silence, her eyes flicked toward Dolores in a quiet cue.

Dolores caught on to her meaning at once.

Without giving it a second thought, Dolores latched onto Dustin’s arm. “Dustin, I need some air. Walk with me.”

“Wait, what?” Dustin blinked, confused, but allowed himself to be led out of the room without protest.

The moment the door shut behind them, reality hit. Dustin leaned closer, his voice hushed with concern. “Why did you just leave them alone like that?”

Dolores let out a sigh, more resigned than frustrated. “It’s what Linsey wants. I’m just giving her the space she asked for. She won’t open up with us hanging around. Gorman’s leaving soon, and this might be the only time they get to talk honestly.”

“Still...” Dustin frowned, clearly uneasy. He hadn’t forgotten that he was acting under Collin’s instructions—to keep a close watch on Gorman.

Rolling her eyes, Dolores shot him a glare. “Come on, Dustin. Don’t start with the ‘buts.’ Even if Collin were standing here, he’d have no choice but to respect Linsey’s decision. If you’re helping him, that means respecting her too.”

She folded her arms tightly, her tone sharpening as she said, “Yes, Gorman has feelings for her. But Linsey’s already made her stance clear. Collin doesn’t need to act like she’s going to fall for someone else the second she’s left alone. She’s not a possession—she’s allowed to talk to her friends without being treated like a security threat.”

With that, Dolores turned on her heel and started walking away.

Dustin hurried after her, his voice more earnest this time. “You’ve got it wrong. Collin’s not being possessive. He’s just afraid Gorman might hurt her again. That’s all—he just wants to make sure she’s safe.”

Chapter 1017:

Dolores came to a halt after only a few steps. The earnestness in Dustin’s voice had stripped away whatever annoyance had flickered within her. Truthfully, she hadn’t been upset—she only wanted to hurry him out of the room.

As she stood still, Dustin followed suit, his tall figure coming to a steady stop right beside her.

For the briefest moment, Dolores had the strange sensation of being wrapped in his arms, though he hadn't moved a muscle.

Lately, Hester's meddling had made it nearly impossible for Dustin and Dolores to have a proper conversation.

Recognizing this, Dolores decided she no longer wanted to keep her distance from him intentionally.

With a mischievous grin, Dolores teased, "You're always so quick to defend Collin. Someone who didn't know better might think you two were brothers or something."

Seeing Dolores' mood lighten, Dustin let out a quiet sigh of relief, his own expression softening into an easy smile. "Naturally, Collin and I have a solid bond," he replied warmly.

Dolores didn't dwell on it, responding offhandedly, "You're always so loyal to Collin, following his every word without question. I haven't seen him go out of his way for you much in return."

She playfully tapped Dustin's forehead and continued, "You need to think for yourself sometimes. Sure, Collin's older and technically your boss, but that doesn't mean you should just do whatever he says without considering your own needs."

Dolores meant to gently nudge Dustin to prioritize himself instead of constantly putting Collin's feelings first.

But her words inadvertently stirred memories of Hester's recent biting comments, mocking Dustin for not measuring up to Collin. Hester hadn't just mocked him—she had also belittled Dolores.

"Dustin, what's on your mind?" Noticing Dustin's sudden distraction, Dolores worried her remarks about Collin might have upset him. "Okay, I'll lay off talking about Collin. You really do stick up for him no matter what."

Dustin snapped out of his thoughts, a swirl of emotions flickering in his gaze.

“That’s not it…” he said, lowering his eyes briefly before meeting Dolores’ gentle features. Hesitantly, he added, “You’re calling me out, but aren’t you the same with Linsey? You’re always there for her, doing whatever she needs. These days, you’ve been helping with Zenia and Zander, and today you even dropped everything to come to the hospital with her to check on Gorman, setting your own work aside.”

Dolores blinked, then laughed softly. “What are you getting at? Linsey and I have been best friends for years—practically sisters. Helping each other is just what we do.”

She was about to mention that she had been on vacation recently when her phone buzzed in her pocket.

“Hang on, I need to take this,” she told Dustin.

Glancing at the screen, she saw Glenda’s name.

“Ms. Davidson, sorry to disturb you. Zenia and Zander are asking for their favorite picture book, but I can’t find it. Zenia said you read them a bedtime story last night to help them fall asleep,” Glenda said.

Chapter 1018:

Dolores nodded. “It’s in the dressing table drawer in their room. I left it there this morning. I think I stopped at page seven last night, so you can pick up from there.”

Standing nearby, Dustin overheard the call and realized it was about Zenia and Zander again. His brow furrowed slightly.

Zenia and Zander were Collin and Linsey’s children, and their care should fall to their parents, not Dolores. She wasn’t their nanny, after all.

In that fleeting moment, a wave of frustration surged within Dustin, impossible to ignore. Hester's sharp words from the other day echoed relentlessly in his mind.

Meanwhile, in the hospital room, a heavy silence hung in the air. Gorman's lips curved into a faint smirk, but his eyes held no trace of warmth.

Gorman kept his gaze fixed on Linsey, as though the world could disappear around them and he would still hold on to this one moment.

"You know, it makes me happy," Gorman said in a tone so gentle it nearly blended with the silence.

His words caught Linsey off guard. She tilted her head and asked, "What are you talking about?"

Gorman's eyes softened as he explained, "It's just... I appreciate that you're still willing to be alone with me. It means you haven't come to hate me, not truly."

Linsey's lips curved into a gentle smile when she heard him say that. "If you want to know the truth, you've always been important to me. If you hadn't done those things after you went back to Grester, I'd still call you a good friend. I haven't forgotten how much you helped me."

After a moment, she lowered her eyes. "Maybe you should count yourself lucky that Zenia never suffered any lasting damage from your plans. She actually still thinks of you as a friend, you know."

Gorman said nothing, his silence lingering as he just watched her, patient and unhurried.

Suddenly, something seemed to spark in Linsey's memory. "Oh, before I forget, I always knew about Zenia calling you Daddy when nobody was around. That really shouldn't happen again. She already has a father."

That startled him for a second. Gorman blinked, surprise flickering across his features. "You were aware of that?"

Linsey met his eyes and gave a quiet nod. "I knew about it from the very beginning," she said, not a trace of doubt in her voice.

The memory must have struck her as amusing because she let out a soft chuckle. "Tell me, Gorman, did you really think you meant more to Zenia than I did?"

Only then did understanding dawn on his face, and a genuine laugh escaped him. "So Zenia confessed everything to you."

"That's why I've never doubted that my children are honest with me. Still, I'll admit you were clever enough to draw them in and send them to Collin all on their own," Linsey said, her tone even, her words carrying a quiet pride.

Nobody could have guessed that Gorman would go so far as to buy Caylee, and that decision caught her completely off guard.

As a result, she made the tough call to fire Caylee, though before she did, Linsey slipped her enough money to ensure Caylee's grandmother could still get the surgery she needed.

Chapter 1019:

Rarely did Linsey offer second chances to those who broke her trust, even if Caylee's actions weren't unforgivable in the end.

A wry chuckle escaped Gorman. "I never meant for Zenia and Zander to go looking for Collin. All I wanted was for them to see Collin in a bad light and stick with me. Never in my wildest dreams did I think they'd stand up to Collin for your sake."

"You really can't tell what kids will get into next," Linsey agreed, a small smile tugging at her mouth. "They always find ways to surprise."

The more they talked, the more bitterness crept into Gorman's face. "You know, it's only hitting me now that every single move I made since coming back to Grester just ended up bringing you and Collin closer."

One eyebrow arched, Linsey answered plainly, "My heart never wavered when it came to Collin. Whether or not you tried to interfere, I still would've chosen him."

A heavy sigh escaped Gorman as he tipped his head back, staring at the ceiling. "So, I'm about to leave, and you're still rubbing it in?"

Linsey's eyes didn't leave him as she replied, "Let's be honest, Gorman. If I'm a little harsh now, maybe it'll finally help you let go."

She paused, letting the moment hang between them, before continuing, "I hope your trip tomorrow is smooth. And if life ever brings you back to Grester, you can count on Collin, Zenia, Zander, and me to welcome you with open arms."

For a moment, Gorman's eyes shone with unshed tears. With a half-smile, he finally looked at Linsey and raised his eyebrow. "Maybe you don't realize it, but Collin's been working in the shadows to push my family out of Grester. Even if I wasn't leaving tomorrow, he would've found a way to get rid of me sooner or later."

Stunned by Gorman's words, Linsey froze for a moment.

Observing her reaction, Gorman knew his words had struck a chord.

He pressed on, "Collin began laying the groundwork yesterday. As the founder of CR Corporation, with his cutthroat strategies, I'm certain he can dismantle my family's influence in Grester within a week. He has effectively blocked any path for my return."

With a soft sigh, Gorman forced himself to look away from Linsey. "You should go now. I know you weren't planning to see me off tomorrow. After today, our paths won't cross again."

It took Linsey several moments to steady herself. She drew a deep breath, rose to her feet, and said, "Take care, Gorman."

Gorman's frame quivered slightly as he shut his eyes, listening to the sound of her footsteps gradually receding.

Suddenly, he called out, "Watch out for Joanne. Unless it's unavoidable, don't be alone with her."

Linsey paused briefly, then responded, "Got it. Thanks for the heads-up." A moment later, the hospital room door closed with a gentle click.

Gorman slowly opened his eyes, tears tracing paths down his face.

In truth, he had little to worry about.

Linsey was sharp—more than capable of handling herself.

With him gone, the biggest threat around her would vanish. At the very least, Collin would be there to protect her.

Chapter 1020:

With that thought, Gorman's lips twisted into a bitter smile, his reddened eyes brimming with unspoken grief. He resolved never to return to Grester.

When Linsey rejoined Dolores and Dustin, Dolores had just ended her call with Glenda.

"Linsey, that was quick," Dolores said, mildly surprised.

Barely ten minutes had passed since she and Dustin left the hospital room.

Dustin had been on the verge of saying more to Dolores, but Linsey's arrival silenced him.

"There wasn't much to discuss," Linsey replied, approaching Dolores.

The two linked arms instinctively and started walking together. Dustin trailed quietly behind.

"Gorman told me he's leaving Grester with his parents tomorrow. We won't need to look after him anymore," Linsey said softly after a few steps.

Dolores' eyes widened in shock.

"What? Gorman's actually leaving?" She stopped short, gently tugging Linsey back, her face etched with disbelief. "He wanted to have a word with you in private just to tell you that?"

Linsey nodded, her expression composed. "Yeah, he must have decided this morning. He has chosen to leave, and I have no reason to stop him."

Dolores quickly agreed, "If you tried to convince him to stay, he might misread it as you still having feelings for him."

Linsey nodded firmly in agreement. She knew she couldn't afford to get tangled up with Gorman again. Doing so would only cause pain for both of them.

Having reconciled with Collin, she felt it would be unfair to give Gorman any false hope.

After a brief pause, Dolores added, "It's probably for the best that Gorman's leaving. Once he's out of town, some time away might help him move on."

Staying here would mean Gorman constantly witnessing Linsey and Collin's closeness—a sight even the strongest heart would struggle to endure.

“Yeah, that’s what I think too,” Linsey said, her mind drifting to something else she had just recalled.

Recent memories of Gorman’s words replayed in Linsey’s mind, especially what he had said about Collin quietly squeezing out the Green family in Grester.

With a casual glance toward Dustin, she asked, “Have you heard what Collin’s been working on these days?”

Dustin blinked, pulled suddenly out of his thoughts, momentarily caught off guard. “What? Collin hasn’t done anything out of the ordinary. He’s just been tied up with company matters. Why are you asking?”

That prompted Linsey to share what she had heard from Gorman. “Back in the day, Gorman was every bit as powerful in Grester as CR Corporation. He always thought of Collin as his greatest rival. Do you think Collin’s finally managed to edge out the Green family for good?”

Lines creased Dustin’s forehead as he replied, “Collin’s never said a word about that to me.”