

Zillionaire 231

Chapter 231 Linsey, You're

So Naive

Linsey had just learned that Jude, a renowned designer in the industry, had accused her of plagiarism.

But she hadn't plagiarized anything. The dress was entirely her own design.

Realizing how serious the situation had become, she stood up and hurried to Coen's office.

"Coen, I need to talk to you. This is important," she said.

Seated at his desk, Coen looked up and took in her anxious expression. He smiled faintly. "I know why you're here. It's about what's happening online. Sit down and have some coffee. No need to rush."

Linsey was in no mood to enjoy coffee. She leaned forward, her voice urgent. "Coen, I swear I didn't plagiarize. You have to

believe me."

Coen nodded, unfazed. "I believe you."

He paused, his tone turning serious. "But you've seen the reaction online, right? This has gotten big, and it won't go away overnight. We need time to handle it. For now, lay low. Don't come to work. Just go home and rest."

Linsey had been bracing for blame, worried Coen might hold her responsible for the fallout.

But hearing his words, she felt a wave of relief.

At least he was on her side.

After a brief hesitation, she asked, "How is the company planning to handle this?"

"That's not your concern," Coen said firmly. "My superiors and I will take care of it."

He gave her a measured look. "Right now, the most important thing is for you to gather all the evidence proving you didn't plagiarize and bring it to me."

Linsey straightened, determination taking over. "I'll get on it right away."

Every part of that design was hers. She had drafts, sketches, and notes that showed exactly how the dress had come

together.

It didn't take long to collect everything. Once she had it all, she returned to Coen's office and set the files on his desk.

"Is this enough?" she asked.

Coen flipped through the documents, scanning them briefly before giving a firm nod. "This is perfect. With this, we should be able to clear things up soon."

Linsey let out a breath she hadn't realized she was holding.

Then Coen added, his voice steady, "Let us handle your Twitter account. We'll release a statement to clear your name. Until then, ignore the rumors. Just focus on resting and getting ready for your next big project."

Linsey listened carefully to all of Coen's instructions and cooperated fully.

She looked at him with gratitude. "Coen, thank you for believing in me."

Coen smiled. "Of course. I've seen your dedication and hard work since you joined the company. I know your character."

Feeling reassured, Linsey left the office, convinced that Coen was on her side. The moment she was gone, his smile faded.

His expression darkened with quiet disdain.

Shaking his head, he muttered under his breath, "Linsey, you're so naive. Do you really think we're going to go out of our way to clear your name? You're just a rookie designer. Why would we risk offending Kylee and Jude for you? I won't waste

my time on something so pointless."

Chapter 232 Linsey Is Immensely Talented

Coen relaxed in his chair, utterly untroubled by Linsey's predicament.

Sacrificing Linsey seemed a small price to pay for securing his own role.

Moreover, it presented an ideal opportunity to get on the celebrated Kylee's good side.

To Coen, the choice was clear.

How could Linsey, a novice in the field, ever measure up to someone of Kylee's stature?

With this rationale, he smoothly destroyed all evidence pertaining to Linsey.

Across town, Kylee was preparing for the evening's red carpet event.

The day's uproar over the plagiarism claims seemed to barely touch her.

Remaining poised, she was trying on a dress Cynthia had crafted.

After Kylee slipped into the gown, Cynthia wasted no time in praising her. "Kylee, you look absolutely stunning in this

dress. No one else could wear it as perfectly as you!"

Kylee, however, gazed at her reflection, her face void of emotion.

Noting the silence, Cynthia approached cautiously. "Kylee, is there a problem? Does the dress not fit well?"

Kylee let out a soft sigh and fiddled with the dress's hem, her enthusiasm waning "Cynthia, your designs just don't hold a

candle to Linsey's."

At Kylee's words, Cynthia's expression hardened.

Despite this, Kylee pressed on, oblivious to the effect of her words. "After I tried on Linsey's dress, this one seems so plain."

A pang tightened in Cynthia's chest, but she managed a forced smile. "I'm sorry, Kylee, I promise to elevate my next design

to meet your expectations."

Since she secretly committed to collaborating with Kylee, Cynthia had dedicated herself to this dress design.

She believed her efforts had been successful, but Kylee's critique suggested otherwise.

This new understanding deepened Cynthia's frustration and bitterness.

Kylee remained unfazed by Cynthia's remarks, calmly asserting, "Linsey is immensely talented. You could work another decade and still not reach her level.

Cynthia's face nearly crumpled at these words as she clenched her teeth, struggling for a reply.

"Yet, because Linsey stands out so, I must ensure she's out of the picture completely," Kylee declared, her smile widening.

The idea that Linsey might never get back up, possibly even facing disdain from Collin due to the allegations, filled Kylee

with a dark pleasure.

As time flew by, the red carpet event kicked off. Kylee, a highlight of the evening, made a striking entrance.

The recent scandal had primed the crowd's focus on her the moment she stepped into view.

The press swiftly pivoted their cameras towards her upon noticing her outfit change.

"Kylee's got a new dress on. It seems that accusation against the novice designer might hold water," one journalist

remarked.

"Remarkable, she's with CR Corporation and still dares to make such bold moves. Truly astonishing," another added.

Following her red carpet appearance, reporters flocked around Kylee, inundating her with a barrage of questions.

Chapter 233 I Believe She Won't Repeat This Mistake

"Kylee, why did you change the dress you were supposed to wear today? Does this mean Linsey really plagiarized Jude's

work?"

"Kylee, why did you originally decide to collaborate with Linsey?"

"Kylee, who designed the dress you're wearing now?"

Kylee kept her smile polite. "I'm sorry, but these questions aren't related to today's red carpet event."

With that, she turned and walked away.

The reporters wanted to push further, but Cynthia, who had been following closely, stepped forward to block them.

"Please, no more questions. Kylee's upset because of what happened today." She let out a dramatic sigh. "At least tonight's red carpet went smoothly. Let's give her some space and time to clear her head."

A reporter raised an eyebrow. "And who are you?"

Cynthia flashed them a confident smile. "Hello, everyone. I'm Cynthia Keller, a designer at CR Corporation. The dress Kylee

wore earlier was my design."

That caught the media off guard. A brief silence hung in the air before murmurs broke out.

"CR Corporation really changed designers? That basically confirms Linsey's plagiarism."

"Even her own company isn't standing by her. She's done for."

Cynthia let out a deliberate sigh and said, "Since Linsey is a designer at CR Corporation, I hope everyone can give her another chance. I believe she won't repeat this mistake. From now on, she'll focus on designing properly."

Though her words sounded like a defense, they did the opposite. She had just sealed Linsey's fate.

The reporters exchanged knowing glances before pressing on. "Ms. Keller, are you saying Linsey really did plagiarize?"

Feigning surprise, Cynthia covered her mouth and hesitated. "Oh, that's not what I meant. Let's not spread rumors. We should focus on Kylee's upcoming film projects."

With that, she turned and walked away, a smug smile creeping onto her face.

Within moments, the interview spread online, reigniting the scandal surrounding Linsey's plagiarism.

Kylee's and Jude's fans flooded CR Corporation's official account, demanding

answers.

"Are you really going to ignore this? Your own designer just admitted it! Linsey hurt Kylee! Linsey needs to come out and apologize right now!"

"How dare Linsey! Did she really think Jude's fans wouldn't notice? I've been following Jude's work for years! And now Linsey, a rookie designer, pulls something like this? It's an insult to the entire profession!"

Despite the flood of questions pouring into CR Corporation's account, there was no response.

Frustrated and angry, people turned their attention to Linsey's account, eager to vent their outrage.

"It's been days, and you still haven't admitted your mistake. How shameless can you be?"

"Even your own colleague is confirming you plagiarized. What's your excuse now?"

"You can't stay silent forever. After this, no one's going to hire you in the design world."

"Linsey's photos and personal details are everywhere now. I doubt any company will risk taking her in after this mess."

Chapter 234 You're Home

Early

"I'm not a fan of Kylee, but this? This is just shameless. It's outright plagiarism!"

Before long, someone noticed they could no longer leave comments under Linsey's account.

A few tried refreshing the page and logging back in, only to find that her profile had been deactivated.

"Damn. Linsey really shut it down."

"Looks like she couldn't handle the heat."

"Linsey, do you think deactivating your account makes this go away? Think again. Everyone, keep spreading the word! People need to know who she really is-a plagiarist!"

Meanwhile, Linsey had already left work and gone home, completely unaware of the storm brewing online.

She still believed her supervisor and the company would handle the situation, so she deliberately avoided checking the comments. There was no point in stressing over it if the issue was already being taken care of.

In the study, Collin was deep in thought when he heard the front door open earlier than expected.

He wheeled himself out to meet her. "Linsey? You're home early. Something happen at work?"

There was a slight edge of concern in his voice.

He knew her well enough to tell when something was off. Linsey was dedicated to her job. Leaving early wasn't like her.

She hesitated for half a second, caught off guard by how quickly he noticed.

But she didn't want to worry him. If the company was already handling it, there was no need to make a big deal out of it.

She smiled as she set her bag down. "Yeah, I finished early, so they gave me some time off. That's all. You look surprised.

Aren't you happy to see me?"

Collin had been busy digging into Gorman's affairs and hadn't kept up with what was happening online.

He took her words at face value, relieved that she had some time to rest.

"You've been pushing yourself too hard lately. It's good you finally have a break," he said, his tone gentle. "Since you're free, how about we go out and get some fresh air?"

Linsey blinked at him, then smiled. "That sounds nice."

The next morning, she was ready for their walk.

"Where are we going today?" she asked, lacing her fingers through his. "We've been to all the parks around here. Maybe the

mall this time?"

Collin smiled and squeezed her hand. "It's a surprise. Just trust me and follow along."

Linsey raised an eyebrow, caught off guard but intrigued. Without hesitation, she followed him across the open space-only to stop dead in her tracks.

A helicopter sat before her, its sleek frame gleaming under the sunlight. She blinked, her mind scrambling to catch up.

"This..." Her voice trailed off as she struggled to process what she was seeing. She had never been this close to a helicopter before, and now one was right in front of her.

She turned to Collin, wide-eyed.

He had said they were just going for a walk. A simple outing.

But somehow, he had arranged a helicopter.

Linsey wasn't sure whether to laugh or shake her head. "Where exactly are you taking me?"

Collin only smiled, his expression teasing.

"If I told you, it wouldn't be much of a surprise." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a blindfold, holding it up with

a grin. "Now, be good and crouch down a little so I can put this on."

Linsey let out a laugh, shaking her head but playing along. She crouched slightly, letting him gently tie the blindfold over

her eyes.

Chapter 235 I Haven't Been Swimming In Ages

The world before Linsey had dissolved into sheer darkness.

Every sound in the vicinity sharpened, becoming clearer and more pronounced.

A wave of discomfort washed over Linsey, prompting her to inch closer to Collin. "Honey, please don't leave me here alone," she murmured, her tone imbued with warmth.

Blindfolded, her lips moved slightly as she spoke, drawing Collin's gaze.

As he watched her, a sudden tightness gripped his throat. The desire to kiss her was almost overwhelming.

Nevertheless, Collin resisted the impulse.

The timing was off.

Under his direction, Linsey climbed into the helicopter.

Time seemed elusive, but with each dragging minute, her anticipation intensified. She was keen to discover their

destination.

At last, the helicopter began its gradual descent, stirring her excitement further.

Once they landed, Collin's voice broke the silence calmly. "Alright, you can take it off now."

Quickly, Linsey removed her blindfold.

As her vision adjusted to the brightness, astonishment overtook her.

An island! It was an island!

She had envisioned perhaps a quaint rural locale or a mountainous area near Grester, but an island was an unexpected

delight.

The breeze flirted with her dress, lifting it slightly.

"Collin! What island is this?" Linsey surveyed the enchanting landscape. "I've never stumbled upon anything like this online."

Collin let out a gentle chuckle. "It's a private island. Here, we can enjoy ourselves without interruption from the outside

world."

Linsey's wonder grew. "A private island? How on earth did you secure permission to come here?"

On the verge of confessing the island was his, Collin caught himself. With a composed expression, he responded, "I

borrowed it."

Linsey's smile turned knowing "Let me guess, Dustin helped you, right?"

After all, Dustin was from the Wade family. It wasn't surprising he might have his own private island.

Collin remained silent.

As Linsey marveled at the island's beauty, her smile brightened. "Dustin might be full of himself, but he really looks out

for you."

Just then, she caught a shift in Collin's expression.

This jealous man!

Amused by his reaction, Linsey stepped forward and planted a kiss on his cheek.

"But in my heart, you're still the one. Only

you would think to bring me here. Thank you, Collin."

A flicker of emotion crossed Collin's eyes, and a subtle smile graced his lips.

He then guided Linsey towards the villa on the island.

Entering the villa, Linsey couldn't contain her amazement. "Dustin built a villa here

too? The wealthy really have more money than sense."

The true owner of the island, trailing quietly behind her, kept his thoughts to himself..

If only he could be truthful with Linsey about his wealth, he longed to tell her.

He would do anything to fulfill her wishes.

The villa was well-appointed, featuring all the amenities they could possibly need, including a swimming pool in the backyard.

Linsey's expression lit up. "I haven't been swimming in ages."

Chapter 236 This Swimsuit Just Feels Wrong

Collin suggested, "Why don't you go for a swim then?"

Linsey, appearing troubled, replied, "But I didn't bring a swimsuit."

She hadn't packed anything else either, unaware that Collin had planned this

outing.

Upon hearing her concern, Collin said with a raised eyebrow, "No worries, I'll have someone fetch a swimsuit."

Linsey, surprised, responded, "Really?"

Indeed, within thirty minutes, a swimsuit was delivered.

Linsey quickly opened the bag, but upon seeing the swimsuit, her cheeks flushed red.

Her heart thumped audibly, overwhelmed.

Reacting impulsively, Linsey pushed the swimsuit back into the bag, her

expression one of shock.

Collin, who had not yet seen it, was baffled by her reaction and asked, "What's the issue? Changed your mind about

swimming?"

He was ready to suggest a change in their plans when Linsey, biting her lip and visibly torn, informed him, "Maybe there's been some confusion with the staff? This swimsuit isn't what I usually wear."

She paused, searching for the right words, and added, "This swimsuit just feels wrong."

Collin, puzzled, sought clarity. "What's the problem with it?"

Linsey, blushing deeper, hesitated then confessed, "It's a bikini and it's too revealing. I'm not comfortable wearing this."

Now understanding, Collin couldn't resist a tease. "We're alone here. What do you have to be shy about?"

Linsey shot him a playful glare, not anticipating his jest. "No way! Why should I be the only one dressed like this? That's hardly fair!"

Collin, intrigued, suggested, "Oh? Perhaps I should join you in the water?"

Linsey queried, "Can you swim?"

She glanced at the wheelchair under Collin.

He replied in a casual tone, "Not very well. I might need you to rescue me if I end up swallowing water."

Linsey, amused yet speechless, frowned and crossed her arms. "You better stay out of the water. You're too heavy for me to pull out. We'd both end up drowning if I tried."

Collin, nodding solemnly, responded, "That's unfortunate. I guess I'll have to support you from here on

However, he then asked someone to fetch a more conservative one-piece swimsuit for her.

Despite their many shared private moments, Linsey remained timid.

Collin knew better than to press her on such issues.

Once she changed, Linsey entered the water.

Initially, Linsey felt rusty as she hadn't swum in some time.

Yet, within minutes, she was smoothly swimming back and forth across the pool.

Collin, unable to join in the water, contentedly watched from the side.

Observing Linsey swim with such freedom brought a genuine smile to his face, sharing in her joy as though it were his.

At that moment, everything felt utterly idyllic.

It was just them, reveling in their secluded slice of the world, free from any external interruptions.

Chapter 237 Did I Scare You

For a fleeting moment, Collin felt a wave of happiness. Suddenly, his mood darkened as he remembered Gorman's imminent return to Grester.

He knew the arrival of Gorman heralded nothing but trouble. Gorman would undoubtedly strive to complicate his life.

This was the reason behind Collin's diligence in monitoring Gorman's whereabouts, preparing for the direst scenarios, and ensuring that Linsey remained uninvolved.

As these concerns flooded his thoughts, Collin's forehead creased, and his face took on a graver expression.

From her spot in the pool, Linsey caught the transformation in Collin's face. He seemed engulfed in his thoughts, burdened by some silent distress.

She halted her swimming and cleared the water from her face.

Lately, Collin had been a fixture at his desk, seldom breaking away from his work.

Often when Linsey returned from her job, she would find him engrossed in his work in the study, the hours slipping by

unnoticed.

Without her reminders, Collin might toil away into the night, neglecting even to sleep.

Concern etched on her face, Linsey felt compelled to coax him into a moment of leisure.

Since the pool was not an option for him...

A playful idea struck her.

She grinned mischievously, inhaled deeply, and plunged into the cool water.

It was only when Collin emerged from his ponderings that he noticed Linsey had not come up for air.

His concern deepened, and he wheeled himself closer, calling out, "Linsey!"

No reply came. He called her name again and again.

His gaze fixed on the undisturbed surface of the pool, fear gripped him.

Had something happened to Linsey?

In a surge of alarm, Collin attempted to stand from his wheelchair.

Just then, Linsey exploded out of the water with a dramatic splash, close to where Collin sat.

Jolted, Collin looked at her, his eyes wide, with astonishment.

"Collin! Did I scare you?" Linsey chuckled, her face alight with mischief as she saw his amazed expression.

Relief washed over Collin, and he sighed deeply. "You're okay."

Linsey blinked and replied, "Of course I'm fine! I'm a great swimmer-nothing's going to happen to me."

She burst out laughing. "I knew I could scare you! I told you, you're not invincible!"

As he realized Linsey had orchestrated the whole scene to startle him, Collin's initial shock gave way to amusement.

He shook his head, half-exasperated. "You're childish."

His tone carried a hint of reprimand, yet his eyes softened with affection and amusement.

Unperturbed by his mild scolding, Linsey splashed water towards him. "Humph! What's wrong with being childish?"

The water drenched Collin's clothes in an instant.

Collin looked down at his soaked attire and narrowed his eyes, his voice dropping to a teasing murmur. "Linsey, are you sure you want to provoke me like this? Aren't you afraid I might retaliate?"

Confident that Collin wouldn't actually follow through, Linsey grinned victoriously. "You can't even get in the water, so how are you going to catch me?"

Collin's expression suddenly turned mischievous. "What if I told you I could catch you?"

"I don't believe you. If you can, then do whatever you want," Linsey challenged, her confidence unshaken.

"Really? Do as I please?" Collin's gaze intensified as he watched her, a playful challenge dancing in his eyes.

Chapter 238 I'll Honor The

Bet

Linsey's face was smug.

Collin had only intended to teach her a slight lesson. He reached out to pull her from the pool.

But Linsey swiftly swam backward, avoiding his attempt. She chuckled, a sound full of delight, as she moved farther away.

"Collin, come back to me when you can actually catch me!"

Seated in his wheelchair, Collin watched her glide towards the pool's center, his frustration evident.

If he weren't maintaining the façade of being disabled, he would have already enveloped Linsey in his arms.

Still, Collin had other means to make her come to him willingly.

A mischievous twinkle lit up his eyes, and a smirk crept across his face.

He then pressed his hand against his temple, emitting a soft groan as if in pain.

"Ugh..." Collin clasped his head, feigning a severe discomfort.

Linsey, noticing his act from the water, swam back immediately. Concern furrowed her brow.

"Collin, what's wrong?" she asked, her voice laced with worry. "Is your head hurting? Did the splash I made earlier chill you?"

Collin, his face turned slightly away, responded in a detached tone, "It's nothing. Don't worry about me. I'm just going to

rest in my room for a while."

When she saw his apparent distress, Linsey's worry deepened.

She climbed out of the pool quickly and rushed to his side.

"Collin, wait..." she called out, eager to delve deeper into his condition.

Before she could say more, Collin caught her wrist. "See? Didn't I catch you?" he said, raising an eyebrow.

Linsey stood frozen for a moment, her mind piecing together that she had been tricked.

This clever, cunning man! And she had been genuinely concerned for him!

She had completely fallen into his trap.

Biting her lip in irritation, Linsey tried to pull away.

However, Collin gave her no chance to escape. With a gentle pull, he drew her onto his lap and held her firmly in place.

"Still trying to run?" Collin's whisper brushed against her ear, sending a tickle across her skin.

Linsey glared at him. "You're so sneaky!"

Collin chuckled, unaffected by her accusation. "Didn't you say that if I caught you, you'd let me do whatever I wanted? Are you backing out now?"

Linsey gave him an exasperated look, immediately noticing the playful gleam in his eyes.

What a miscalculation. How had she never realized before that this man was full of surprises?

But then again, Collin wouldn't actually harm her... right?

After a moment's thought, Linsey decided to play along reluctantly. "Fine, I'll honor

the bet. What do you want me to do?"

Collin's expression softened, and a faint smile appeared on his lips. "You just have to promise me one thing, but I haven't

decided what it is yet, so you'll owe me for now."

Linsey agreed without hesitation. "Alright."

After all, whether she followed through later was entirely up to her. If she didn't

want to, what could he really do about it?

Having agreed, Linsey instinctively tried to stand up, but to her surprise, Collin still wouldn't release her. Instead, he held

her even closer, making her slightly uncomfortable.

Linsey frowned, shifting in his lap to relieve the pressure.

Suddenly, she felt her leg brush against something...

Chapter 239 This Is Just Petty, Collin!

Collin's face grew stern, and he grunted lowly, fixing Linsey with an intense stare. "Was that intentional, Linsey?" he asked.

She felt embarrassed upon realizing her accidental touch, her cheeks turning red.

She looked away, her voice filled with defiance. "Collin, it seems you're the one twisting the story!"

Her conviction strengthened, Linsey faced him squarely, asserting, "You were the one who wouldn't release me initially, that's why this happened-"

She paused, searching for the right words, biting her lip out of frustration before demanding, "Release me this instant!"

She sat soaked, her swimsuit clinging to her frame.

By this point, Collin's clothes were thoroughly drenched as well.

With a cold chuckle, Collin retorted, "You were playing games in the pool, making me think you were in trouble. We haven't settled that yet, and now you ask to be freed? Not a chance."

Linsey, taken aback, responded, "What do you mean? Didn't we resolve this? You told me I only had to comply with one request from you, and we'd be even. It seems you're still unsure what you want from me!"

"That's a different matter," Collin replied firmly. "You agreed to my request because you intentionally splashed water on me. Playing in the pool is a different issue altogether."

Linsey stared at him, shocked by his persistent pettiness and attention to detail. "This is just petty, Collin!" she exclaimed.

Unmoved, Collin raised an eyebrow. "Just realizing how petty I can be? You've stirred this up, and now luck isn't on your side. Too bad. Even if you regret it now, it's too late. I'm not releasing you."

Linsey attempted to pull away again but to no avail.

Despite his physical limitations, Collin's strength was formidable.

Feeling exhausted and desperate, Linsey finally questioned, "Alright, if this is a separate issue, what are you planning as

retaliation? Are you going to hit me or something?"

"Just kiss me," Collin replied, his eyes lowering to her lips as a smile formed.

Linsey was taken aback by the simplicity of his request.

Instantly, her mind was overwhelmed with vivid images that she couldn't articulate.

She and Collin had already been intimate.

Could a mere kiss be all he desired now?

Despite everything, Linsey couldn't shake off the feeling of an underlying threat.

"Is that all?" she questioned, her tone laden with skepticism. "I'm concerned you'll continue to escalate your demands

without end."

Collin snorted lightly. "Fine, then I guess I'm not letting you go."

"You!" Linsey stared at him, bewildered by his boldness.

Worse still, she found that he was still erect.

Linsey's body tensed, and she remained completely still, fearing the situation might escalate further.

Taking a deep breath to calm herself, Linsey placed her hands gently on Collin's face and leaned forward to kiss him.

She touched her lips to his softly, hesitant to intensify the kiss.

Chapter 240 You're Just Letting Me Go

As her lips met Collin's, Linsey nervously closed her eyes, her long lashes

fluttering gently.

His breath warmed against her, sparking a sudden panic within her that urged her to pull away.

Yet, Collin seemed to anticipate her movement. With a quick motion, he placed his hand firmly on the small of her back,

preventing any retreat.

Surprise widened Linsey's eyes, but before she could respond, Collin drew her into a deep kiss.

A soft sound escaped Linsey as she held her breath unconsciously.

She quickly became breathless from the intensity of their embrace.

Noticing her discomfort, Collin relaxed his hold slightly, his rough fingertips tenderly brushing away a droplet of moisture

from the corner of her lips.

"This isn't your first kiss. How do you still not know how to breathe properly?"

His light-hearted tease deepened Linsey's blush.

She shot him a look of embarrassed defiance, though it carried no real threat. Unbeknownst to her, her flushed cheeks and bright, glistening eyes only added to her allure in Collin's eyes.

Her lips, soft and pink, shone enticingly, awakening desires within Collin.

He swallowed hard, his Adam's apple bobbing visibly as he admired her, his gaze intensifying with desire.

Linsey's heart raced, her breathing hastened as she bashfully averted her eyes.

Just when she thought Collin might lean in for another kiss, he pressed his lips together, stepped back, and advised, "Go change into something dry. You'll catch a cold."

Linsey stared at him in disbelief, her eyes wide.

She observed his calm, composed demeanor and momentarily wondered if she had misheard him.

"What did you just say? You're just letting me go?" The shock almost made her bite her tongue.

She examined his serene expression, questioning whether the passion of their recent kiss had been a figment of her

imagination.

Collin chuckled, amused by her astonishment. "What else would I do?"

He watched her reaction with curiosity and added, "If you don't want to be close to me, I won't force you."

What? When had she ever indicated she didn't want to be near him?

Pointing to herself in confusion, Linsey protested. "I don't want to?"

Her shyness was just that, simple and innocent!

Linsey was exasperated. She labeled Collin as clueless and unromantic in her mind.

Then it dawned on her-Collin was probably just trying to respect her feelings. Feeling somewhat reassured, Linsey gathered her courage and challenged, "Who said I didn't want to?"

However, as soon as her gaze met Collin's, her newfound confidence wavered.

Collin raised an eyebrow, gently pinching her chin. "Is that so?" he teased.

He paused for a moment before letting out a sigh. "I don't want to make things difficult for you. The last time... it was

because you were drunk, and I shouldn't have taken that step."

Collin helped Linsey to her feet, then began to turn his wheelchair to leave.

In a panic, Linsey grasped his arm. "That's not true! Even if I hadn't been drinking,

I would've wanted this!"

Collin turned back, shaking his head. "You don't need to say things just to make me feel better."

She was telling the truth.

Frustrated and unable to find the words to convince him, Linsey acted impulsively. She threw herself at him, capturing his

lips in a passionate kiss. Without a second thought, she began to peel off his soaked clothes.