

Marrying A Secret Zillionaire Happy Ever After

#Chapter 61 - Read Marrying A Secret Zillionaire Happy Ever After Chapter 61

Chapter 61 Collin Came

Back

Collin gripped the velvet box tightly as he rushed back to Vista Villa at top speed.

Hearing the distant hum of an approaching car, the butler frowned, puzzled. It wasn't until he spotted Collin wheeling himself inside that he spoke up in surprise. "Mr. Riley, I thought you mentioned you might not be coming home tonight."

Collin's gaze flicked toward him, his expression unreadable.

If it weren't for the butler's message, he wouldn't have come rushing back like this.

"Where's Linsey?" he asked, his fingers unconsciously tightening around the box.

The butler let out a small chuckle. "Mr. Riley, it's the middle of the night. She's been asleep for hours."

Collin hesitated. Only now did he realize it was nearly two hours past midnight.

A quiet laugh escaped him. Of course. Normal people would be asleep by now. There was no reason to wake Linsey at this

hour.

"Alright. Let her know to come to the study when she wakes up," he said.

With that, he wheeled himself toward the study, already shifting his focus to urgent company matters.

The butler watched him go, scratching his head, still unsure what had prompted Collin's sudden return.

Linsey slept soundly until the morning light filtered through her curtains. After washing up, she made her way to the

dining room, only to find Collin nowhere in sight. Assuming he hadn't come home last night after all, she thought nothing of it-until the butler approached her.

"Mrs. Riley, Mr. Riley asked that you go to the study after breakfast."

Linsey blinked in surprise. "Collin came back? This morning?"

She had woken up early. How had she not heard anything?

The butler smiled. "He returned late last night and went straight to the study. He hasn't come out since."

Linsey frowned, irritation flickering across her face.

He had come home so late, yet instead of resting, he had locked himself in the study to work.

Did he have no regard for his health at all?

The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. The lavish breakfast before her suddenly lost all appeal-she had no appetite, no patience. She just wanted to find Collin and confront him directly.

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Chapter 61 Collin Came Back

Outside the study, she inhaled deeply, mentally running through everything she wanted to say. Then, raising her hand, she knocked firmly on the door.

"Who is it?" Collin's deep voice carried from inside.

She pressed her lips together and replied softly, "It's me."

And just like that, her irritation wavered.

She had intended to sound firm, but the moment she spoke to him, her voice had softened without her meaning to.

Ever since learning about the hardships he had endured within his family, she had felt an instinctive urge to be gentler

with him—as if, somehow, she could make up for all the coldness and cruelty he had faced.

But she knew her efforts were limited. The only thing she could do was try her best to show him that there was still

warmth in the world.

"Come in," Collin said.

For a split second, she thought she heard something different in his tone-less distant, almost gentle.

She pushed the door open and found him seated at his desk.

The moment their eyes met, his expression softened, and he reached for the

velvet box that had been sitting there all night,

ready to hand it to her as she stepped forward.

But Linsey, too focused on her frustration, didn't notice.

Fixing her gaze on him, she asked, "Collin, have you always been like this- completely indifferent to your own health?"

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Chapter 62 Who Would Care About Me Anyway

Collin raised an eyebrow, caught slightly off guard. It was, as far as he could remember, the first time he had ever seen Linsey truly angry. For a split second, he was at a loss for words.

Linsey's voice broke through his haze of surprise, her tone laced with frustration and concern. "I know the debt is weighing on you, and you push yourself to the limit every day. But you can't keep this up-working late, skipping meals-it's taking a toll on you. You were up all night working in the study before, and last night was no different. If you don't slow down, your body won't be able to handle it much longer."

As her words sank in, Collin's realization dawned slowly.

He gently placed the velvet box he was holding on the table and averted his gaze, his voice steady yet distant. "I'm fine, Linsey. I know my limits."

Her anxiety spiked at his nonchalant dismissal.

"Collin, you think you're fine, but what about those who care about you? Can't you see the toll it's taking on them?"

He paused, a flicker of self-mockery shadowing his features. "Who would care about me anyway?"

Linsey blurted out, her tone firm, "I would!"

The room fell silent, charged with the weight of her words.

Collin turned to face her, his expression unreadable, eyes wide with a turbulent mix of shock and a dawning realization of something deeper, perhaps something unspoken until now.

The next second, her senses snapped back into focus, her cheeks blooming a vivid shade of red with sudden shyness.

What the hell was she thinking, saying that out loud? That was downright mortifying!

Yet, deep down, she knew she meant every word.

She wouldn't have ventured all this way just to urge Collin to look after himself if she didn't care about him.

As the silence stretched, becoming almost palpable between them, she hesitated, her voice a mix of urgency and embarrassment. "I... I didn't mean it like that. Just hear me out, please..."

Watching her fumble with her words, Collin felt an unfamiliar warmth blossoming in his chest, a gentle thawing he hadn't experienced before.

Prior to this, concern for him was a rarity.

Sure, the household staff at Vista Villa expressed worry, but it was always a cautious, distant kind, muted by their apprehension of his icy exterior and imposing status. They never really pushed past their boundaries.

But Linsey was different.

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Chapter 62 Who Would Care About Me Anyway

Despite his so-called disability and debt, she didn't think little of him. Fearless and forthright, she was there, genuinely looking out for his well-being.

A lump formed in his throat, catching him off-guard. It took every ounce of his will

to maintain a steady facade as he responded in a subdued tone, "I see. I promise to take better care of myself."

Only he understood the depth of the emotions veiled beneath that seemingly composed statement, his voice nearly faltering at the end.

Seeing the unwavering resolve in Collin's eyes, Linsey sensed that once he made a promise, he would stand by it without

falter. A wave of relief washed over her, and a smile began to dawn on her face.

"You've been at this all night, haven't you? You must be starving," she said, her tone light and caring. "What can I get you

to eat? I'll whip something up right away."

"Wait." Collin's voice was firm, halting her in her tracks. He still clutched the necklace in his hand-the very piece that had

occupied his thoughts even during the whirlwind of his work. "Come here," he murmured softly.

Linsey cast a quick glance at his wheelchair, assuming he needed assistance with something minor. She approached

without hesitation, positioning herself beside him. "What do you need?"

In an unexpected move, he reached out and clasped her wrist firmly.

A jolt of surprise shot through Linsey, her pupils widening. The contact felt as if a hot ember had touched her skin, causing

her to recoil subtly.

Collin's hand was both large and warm, his hold steadfast, commanding her full attention to his presence.

Her heart thumped erratically in her chest, a mixture of alarm and anticipation swirling within her.

"I have something for you," he stated, his gaze lifting to meet hers.

Caught off guard, Linsey blinked, striving to compose herself. "What is it?"

With deliberate slowness, he placed the velvet box into her hand.

Despite his usual composure during high-stakes business deals, Collin found himself inexplicably nervous. Holding

millions in his grasp had never made his heart race like this.

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Chapter 63 How Could You Just Throw It Away

Seeing the box in her hands, Linsey shot Collin a startled look. "A gift?"

After lecturing him, she was the one receiving a present? It felt almost unreal.

A warmth spread through her chest, and she hesitated before asking, "Can I open it now?"

Collin's gaze remained locked on her face as he watched for even the subtlest shift in her expression.

"Yes, you can," he replied.

With a mixture of excitement and curiosity, Linsey lifted the lid. The moment her eyes fell on the dazzling gemstone

necklace inside, she froze. The sheer brilliance of it was overwhelming.

A sharp gasp escaped her lips, and before she could think, she instinctively pushed the box toward him. "This... This is too

much. I can't take it."

What was Collin thinking? They still had a hundred-million-dollar debt hanging over their heads, and here he was, giving her a necklace? And one that looked outrageously expensive.

It didn't add up. Wasn't he supposed to be completely broke? Sure, they lived in a luxurious villa, and there were high-end cars parked in the garage, but she had never once linked those things to Collin's actual finances.

To her, the villa and those cars were nothing more than a few handouts from the Riley family-perks they had tossed his

way to wash their hands of him.

From the moment she learned about his debt, she had believed, without a doubt, that he was struggling financially.

So now, faced with this extravagant gift, she was completely thrown off balance.

Collin's anticipation shattered at her reaction, and his expression darkened. "You're my wife. Buying you something nice-

is that really so unacceptable?"

Linsey looked torn, frustration tightening her grip on the box. "Collin, we're drowning in debt, and you're spending money

on a gemstone necklace?"

She exhaled sharply. "Besides, even if I keep it, when would I ever wear something like this? Am I supposed to show up at

work with a giant gemstone around my neck? It's way too flashy."

Her voice softened, but the concern in her eyes remained. "If I take it, it'll just sit in

a drawer collecting dust. Why don't

you return it? You should be saving money to pay off the debt."

For a moment, Collin was at a loss for words. He hadn't expected Linsey to still be so fixated on his so-called debt, especially now.

He didn't know whether to be touched by her concern or let out a bitter laugh.

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Chapter 63 How Could You Just Throw It Away

But since he was the one who had spun this lie, he had no choice but to keep it believable.

"I have a way to handle the debt. You don't need to worry about it," he reassured her.

Linsey let out a quiet sigh and spoke gently. "Collin, don't be like this. I know you mean well, and I appreciate it. Once the debt is paid off, you can buy me something like this. I'd be happy to accept it then."

Her expression grew resolute. "But right now, I just can't. I have to think about us- and our future."

A dull ache settled in Collin's head. For the first time in years, he truly understood what it meant to shoot himself in the

foot.

His voice tensed. "You really don't want it?"

"That's right! I mean it. I really don't want it! Just take it back to wherever you bought it." Linsey folded her arms. "You

should still be able to return it."

Collin didn't answer. A few seconds passed in silence before, without a word, he tossed the box into the nearby trash can,

his face unreadable.

"Hey! What are you doing?" Linsey gasped, her eyes widening in disbelief.

He met her stunned gaze, his voice calm but unwavering. "If you don't want this necklace, then it's nothing but trash. I'm

not returning it."

A jolt of panic shot through her. She quickly retrieved the box from the bin, relieved to see it had only landed on discarded

documents and wasn't ruined.

"Collin, you-" She stopped herself before blurting out the words circling her mind. He was being ridiculous.

She swallowed back her frustration and tried again. "This necklace is expensive! How could you just throw it away?"

Collin's expression didn't waver. "If it's something you don't like, then it's worthless. No different from garbage."

Linsey clenched her jaw, resisting the urge to flick his forehead just to see if he was thinking straight.

She inhaled deeply, forcing herself to stay calm.

She couldn't scold him-he had put in the effort to pick out a gift for her, and she had rejected it outright.

If their roles were reversed, she would probably feel hurt, too.

After a moment of contemplation, she finally relented. "Collin, since this necklace is a gift from you... shouldn't you help me put it on?"

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Chapter 64 Let Me Help You With That

Collin gazed at the warmth in Linsey's tender smile, and an unexpected stir tugged at his heartstrings.

For reasons beyond his grasp, a flicker of unease danced through him at that moment.

Nothing ever seemed to faze him; he remained indifferent to everything and everyone.

Life had always been peaceful and predictable for him, stretching back to the earliest days.

Yet, Linsey's presence was like a burst of sunlight, illuminating his gray, monochrome existence.

"Sure, let me help you with that," he responded, his voice softening-a rare deviation from his usual frosty tone. He fought to quell the unfamiliar flutter within him as he spoke.

Linsey's smile widened, and she gracefully handed him the necklace box before turning and lowering herself in front of him. Collin had been looking up at her from his seated position in the wheelchair since she entered the room.

Now, at eye level, he could see the delicate swirl of hair at her crown and the way her lustrous locks cascaded gracefully

down her back.

His breath caught in a silent gasp. His eyes traced the line of her spine, veiled by her flowing hair, before he reluctantly set the box down on the desk with a soft click.

Unseen by Linsey, the slight sound caused her eyelashes to flutter, a subtle testament to the quiet tension between them.

The next thing she knew, the dazzling gemstone necklace was right before her.

The radiant jewel rested elegantly against her collarbone, its brilliance enchanting as it caught the light.

Collin's large, skilled hands cradled the ends of the necklace, his movements precise as he secured it behind her neck.

Even with her hair acting as a soft barrier, Linsey could feel the comforting warmth of his palms against her skin.

As the clasp clicked securely into place, the weight of the necklace settled gently, almost caressingly, around her neck.

Instinctively, she tilted her head forward slightly, a faint itch tickling her skin- uncertain if it was the sudden adornment at her neck or Collin's close proximity causing the sensation.

With the necklace in place, Linsey thought that was the end of it and prepared to stand.

But before she could move, she felt her hair being gathered up with a gentle, deliberate touch.

Collin leaned in closer, his presence cool and commanding, enveloping her in an unspoken promise of care.

Her heart fluttered, skipping a beat. It wasn't until he meticulously lifted her hair from beneath the necklace and draped it

over her shoulders that she was jolted back to reality. Flustered, Linsey quickly reached up to adjust her hair, her

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Chapter 64 Let Me Help You With That

movements betraying her inner turmoil.

"Thank you," she murmured, her breath hitching slightly as she attempted to get up.

Yet, in that very moment, her legs betrayed her, growing numb and buckling beneath her weight. She teetered precariously

on the edge of a fall.

He was quick to react, his reflexes sharp. Stretching out his arms, he caught her just in time, pulling her close into the

safety of his embrace.

Linsey's eyes widened in shock, a soft gasp escaping her lips as she found herself suddenly pressed against him, her knee awkwardly hitting the wheelchair. Thankfully, Collin's wheelchair was exceptionally designed, its seat cushioned and forgiving. Had it been otherwise, her knee would have surely suffered a bruise.

But such concerns vanished as quickly as they came, her attention entirely consumed by the man who held her.

Up close, Linsey could see the subtle blush staining the skin behind Collin's ears,

a stark contrast to his usual composure. His hold on her was both firm and

protective, a surprising gentleness in his strength.

She found herself caught in his gaze, clear and penetrating, as a wave of warmth rushed over her. Despite the turmoil within, Collin managed to maintain a semblance of calm.

His heartbeat thundered in his ears, loud enough to muffle his thoughts.

With effort, he tore his gaze away from hers, it drifting to the necklace that now lay against her breasts.

It adorned her perfectly, as if it were crafted solely for her.

The necklace, opulent and meant for the grandest of occasions, seemed to find its

true home against Linsey's modest attire.

It complemented her radiant face and the unguarded purity in her gaze,

enhancing her natural charm in a way that seemed almost destined.

Indeed, no one else could carry the essence of that necklace quite like Linsey.

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Chapter 65 I Want To Kiss

You

"It's beautiful. And it's perfect for you," Collin murmured.

His voice was steady, devoid of any dramatic inflection, yet laced with an unmistakable sincerity.

A flush crept up Linsey's neck, spreading to her cheeks.

Collin thought the necklace suited her.

Did that mean, in his eyes, she was even more dazzling than the gemstone itself?

The thought sent a jolt through her, making her body tense, her posture subtly stiffening.

Collin lifted his gaze to her once more, his eyes dark and unreadable.

The moment he noticed the faint flush coloring her cheeks and the corners of her eyes, his throat tightened.

A smoldering intensity flickered in his gaze, something deep and unshakable.

Without warning, he let go of her arm, his fingers shifting to gently cup her chin, his grip firm but careful. His gaze dropped, locking onto her slightly parted, soft lips.

A nervous breath hitched in Linsey's throat. She reflexively grasped the fabric of his shirt, gripping it tightly.

His dark, unguarded stare sent her pulse racing, stealing the air from her lungs. But after yesterday-after she had nearly misread the situation in the car-she forced herself to stay levelheaded, unwilling to let her imagination run wild.

"Is... something wrong? Is my hair messed up again?" she asked, summoning her courage.

His lips parted slightly, his voice dipping into a husky rasp. "No. It's not that. I just think you're so beautiful," he murmured, his words slow, deliberate. "And suddenly... I want to kiss you."

His breath skimmed her skin, so light it was barely there.

Linsey's eyes widened, her breath stalling. Had she misheard him?

But the moment her gaze locked onto his intense, unwavering eyes, she knew he wasn't joking.

Her throat tightened, and she swallowed hard, her pulse hammering in her ears. This was happening-so fast, so suddenly.

Yet, strangely, not a trace of hesitation or rejection stirred within her.

A quiet, almost thrilling anticipation unfurled in the back of her mind.

After all, they were married. Wasn't this natural? Why should she push him away?

Her fingers trembled slightly as she slowly closed her eyes, offering silent consent.

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Chapter 65 I Want To Kiss You

Collin's already unsteady breath grew even more uneven at the sight.

His grip on her chin tightened just a fraction, his thumb brushing against her soft skin. The faint, unintentional stroke

sent the lightest shiver through her-an unfamiliar, feather-light sensation that tingled down her spine.

His dark eyes deepened with something unreadable, something heavy.

Leaning in, he closed the distance between them, their breaths colliding-warm, uneven, charged with an undeniable heat.

Their lips were a mere breath away-when a sudden, sharp knock shattered the moment.

Linsey had been holding her breath, already on edge.

The abrupt sound jolted her, her heart lurching violently. Like a startled rabbit, she sprang to her feet-too fast, too

careless.

Her lips accidentally collided with Collin's chin in the process.

A sharp sting shot through her, and she let out a soft cry, instinctively pressing her fingers to her mouth.

Her eyes stung as she covered her lips, putting instant distance between them. She looked up at him, grievance clouding her gaze, her expression pitiful.

Collin's face darkened in an instant.

Who had the audacity to interrupt at such a critical moment?

As he noticed how Linsey had instinctively backed away, his irritation spiked even further. His voice dropped into a cold, clipped tone. "Who is it?"

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Chapter 66 Mrs. Riley, What Brings You Here

Outside the door, there was a tense pause before the cautious tone of Collin's subordinate pierced the silence. "Mr. Riley,

there's a pressing matter I need to discuss with you."

The subordinate couldn't shake the feeling, his thoughts racing. Was Mr. Riley out of sorts because of the long hours? Why

did his voice seem so strained?

On the other side of the door, Linsey's cheeks burned with embarrassment.

The study was Collin's sanctuary, a place where he immersed himself in his work, and she had just interrupted him.

The realization that she had possibly hindered his tasks made her stomach twist with regret.

"Well... you should get back to your work. I'll... go prepare something for you to eat. You can enjoy it whenever you're free,"

she stammered, her words faltering under the weight of her unease.

Before Collin could respond, Linsey spun on her heel and dashed away, her heart pounding.

The subordinate, still waiting outside, jumped as the door suddenly swung open. He stood frozen, momentarily caught off guard, not expecting that his boss would open the door for him.

But his surprise deepened when he saw who it was.

"Mrs. Riley, what brings you here?" he blurted out, his voice laced with bewilderment.

As far back as he could remember, Collin's study was a fortress of solitude, strictly off-limits to outsiders. Even the servants, tasked with tidying the room, were required to schedule their duties well in advance.

Oddly enough, Linsey, despite being Collin's wife for mere days, was free to move in and out of the study without

restriction.

Attempting to maintain decorum, Linsey found herself at a loss for words.

Her eyes, darting anxiously, shimmered with the vestiges of recently withheld tears, revealing her inner turmoil.

After a palpable pause, she nervously bit her lip and told the subordinate that Collin was inside before retreating hastily.

The bewildered subordinate stepped into the study, his gaze immediately colliding with Collin's stern, contemplative visage

looming from behind an imposing desk.

Unbeknownst to him, his intrusion had ruined the moment. The image of Linsey's

reddened eyes haunted him briefly,

sparking a cascade of speculation.

Could there be tension between the couple?

Collin's temperament was notoriously erratic, and though they were married, Linsey was barely a stranger to his deeper

intricacies.

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Chapter 66 Mrs. Riley, What Brings You Here

To the subordinate, it seemed plausible that Collin, in a moment of harshness, had wounded her spirit. His limited interactions with Linsey painted her as a soul of kindness and warmth-a sharp contrast to Collin's occasional coldness.

The more he pondered, the more his empathy for Linsey deepened, stirring a blend of concern and curiosity.

No matter the reason, when Collin's mood turned dark, it was always his subordinates who bore the brunt of it.

The subordinate exhaled a quiet, resigned sigh, his thoughts churning with concern over the report he was about to deliver.

"What is it? Out with it," Collin demanded, his voice tinged with evident irritation.

The subordinate, pausing momentarily to muster his courage, extended an ornate invitation with both hands. "Mr. Riley,

please have a look at this."

Collin snatched the invitation, unfolding it swiftly. As he scanned its contents, a cold, sardonic smile crept across his

features.

"Huntley's grand birthday gala?" he sneered, his eyes shimmering with scorn.

Huntley Riley, his half-brother, shared the same father with him, born to Fernanda Riley-Collin's ambitious stepmother.

Over the years, Fernanda had maneuvered with relentless cunning, orchestrating plots to secure Huntley's position as the

favored heir.

Her efforts often involved undermining Collin at every turn.

This invitation, bearing the Riley family crest, signified a grand celebration in honor of Huntley, the golden child.

This tradition, deeply rooted in the family's dynamics, underscored the blatant favoritism that Huntley enjoyed.

Interestingly, this was the first year that the Riley family had extended Collin an official invitation, perhaps fearing his

absence might embarrass them at such a high-profile event.

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Chapter 67 You Don't Look

Too Well

Collin's subordinate maintained a respectful stance as he said, "The person delivering the invitation also mentioned that your family expects you to attend your brother's birthday party with your wife. They specifically said... your father and Fernanda are looking forward to meeting your new bride."

"Is that so?" Collin let out a cold chuckle, his expression unreadable.

He wasn't naïve enough to believe that the Riley family had suddenly developed an interest in his marriage out of genuine

concern.

"They must have caught wind of Haven running off and my abrupt wedding. Now, they're just seizing the opportunity to have a good laugh at my expense." With a flick of his wrist, he tossed the invitation onto his desk, his tone laced with indifference. "Since they're so eager to meet my wife, then let them. Make the arrangements."

"Understood," the subordinate said, turning to leave.

But after a brief hesitation, he recalled the way Linsey had looked earlier-her red-rimmed eyes, the trace of distress on her face. He hesitated only for a second before speaking up. "It's not my place to interfere in your personal matters, but..... there's something I feel I should mention."

Collin lifted his gaze slightly, his expression sharp and unreadable. "Since when did you start hesitating to speak? If you have something to say, just say it."

The subordinate straightened and replied at once, "When I came in earlier, I noticed Mrs. Riley seemed upset. Her eyes were red-like she'd been crying. You just got married. If there's any misunderstanding between you two, it's best to clear it up quickly before it turns into something worse."

Collin's eyes narrowed. So, his subordinate had the nerve to bring up what had just happened?

If this guy hadn't barged in and interrupted them earlier, what misunderstanding could there possibly be?

"I see. You can go now," Collin said, his tone carrying a hint of thinly veiled irritation.

The subordinate had served under Collin for years and had long learned to pick up on the subtle meanings behind his every word and movement. His pulse quickened slightly, and without another word, he swiftly exited the room.

Once the study fell silent again, Collin finally had a chance to gather his thoughts.

His mind drifted back to the moment when Linsey had accidentally bumped into his chin and cried out in pain.

It hadn't hurt him in the slightest, but thinking about her delicate skin, he couldn't help but wonder if she was still hurting.

He guessed that even if she was, she probably wouldn't admit it.

After a brief pause, he pushed aside his work, turned his wheelchair, and decided to check on her himself.

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Chapter 67 You Don't Look Too Well

Meanwhile, Linsey was still feeling awkward about what had happened earlier.

She had imagined her first kiss countless times before-romantic, dreamlike, something straight out of a fairy tale.

Never in a million years did she expect it to end up like this-awkward, incomplete, and completely ridiculous.

Her first kiss was over before it had even begun!

As she stepped into the living room, the butler immediately noticed something

was off. "Mrs. Riley, is everything all right?

You don't look too well."

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Linsey froze for a second before snapping out of her thoughts. She instinctively touched her face and quickly replied, "I'm

fine."

The butler misread her reaction, assuming she was frustrated over failing to convince Collin to take better care of his

health.

He gave her a warm, understanding smile and reassured her, "Mrs. Riley, don't take it to heart. Mr. Riley has always been stubborn when it comes to his health. We've all tried to persuade him to take better care of himself, but none of us have ever succeeded. It's nothing personal-he's just like that."

Linsey, momentarily forgetting her embarrassment, refocused her thoughts.

She had to make food for Collin. That was what mattered right now.

All that other stuff-the flustered emotions, the chaos, the lingering awkwardness-

she lightly shook her head, pushing

them aside, and made her way to the kitchen.

Just as she did, Collin emerged from the study.

His gaze flicked to the butler as he asked, "Who were you just talking about? Who's the one that always ignores advice?"

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Chapter 68 Why Are You So

Nervous

When she heard Collin's voice, Linsey spun around, startled. "Collin, why are you out here?"

Even in his wheelchair, his presence commanded attention as he approached her.

A faint trace of amusement flickered in Collin's eyes at her reaction.

He raised an eyebrow and spoke in an unhurried tone. "You told me to take better care of my health. I figured you had a point, so I decided to come out for breakfast. Why? Do you have a problem with that?"

Linsey felt the heat rise to her cheeks again as memories of what had happened in the study rushed back.

Noticing her hesitation, the butler smiled and spoke up first. He looked at Collin apologetically and said, "Mr. Riley, I misspoke earlier. I hope you won't hold it against me."

Collin wasn't particularly concerned about the butler's words. What unsettled him was the thought of Linsey hearing too much about his past. He had no intention of letting that happen, so he cut the conversation short.

"It's fine," he said coolly.

The moment Linsey met Collin's gaze, her mind flashed back to what had happened earlier in the study. She pressed her lips together and quickly said, "I'll go make something for you to eat."

Since he had actually listened to her advice and come out for breakfast, she felt obligated to keep her word and cook for

him.

But as soon as she turned to leave, Collin caught her wrist firmly.

"Let the staff handle breakfast," he said.

She froze for a second before replying, "But I promised to make it for you. It won't take long."

Before she could say anything more, he pulled her forward with unexpected force, and the next thing she knew, she was sitting on his lap.

His presence overwhelmed her senses, his warmth and strength pulling her in. Startled, she instinctively tried to stand.

But Collin's grip on her waist tightened, keeping her locked in place.

The realization that the butler was still in the room made a fresh wave of embarrassment crash over her. She pressed her palms against Collin's chest, pushing lightly in an attempt to free herself.

Sitting on his lap in broad daylight-what would people think?

Not that it would be any more acceptable at night.

Her face burned hotter at the thought. Were they even close enough for this?

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Chapter 68 Why Are You So Nervous

Being in a man's lap like this was completely unfamiliar territory.

Her body tensed, unsure of how to react.

"Sit still," Collin commanded, his voice calm but firm, making it clear he wasn't letting go. He could feel her hesitation, her

resistance, but he had no intention of relenting.

She bit her lip, lowering her gaze, debating whether she should say something.

Collin's hand pressed lightly against her back as he leaned in closer. His deep, velvety voice brushed against her ear. "Be

good."

Her heart pounded so hard she was sure he could hear it. His words sent a fresh wave of heat through her, leaving her even

more flustered.

The butler, watching their obvious closeness, felt a quiet satisfaction. With a knowing smile, he quickly came up with an

excuse to leave. "Oh dear, the breakfast on the table has gone cold. I'll have them warm it up."

Without waiting for a response, he turned and walked away briskly, giving them the privacy he assumed they wanted.

Seeing how affectionate they were, he figured it wouldn't be long before they started preparing for a baby.

With the butler gone, the room fell silent, leaving only Linsey and Collin.

The absence of others meant they wouldn't be disturbed anytime soon.

Collin held Linsey close, acutely aware of how soft she was in his arms. She felt

so delicate that he worried for a moment

-if he held her any tighter, would she break?

His gaze drifted downward, landing on her lips, slightly swollen from where she had bitten them.

"You hit my chin earlier. Does it still hurt?" he murmured.

Her eyes flickered away, and she answered in a barely audible voice, "I'm fine..."

Collin caught her reaction, her obvious shyness, and found it oddly intriguing.

She had been in a relationship for five years with her ex-surely she had shared moments more intimate than this?

"Why are you so nervous?" His gaze locked onto hers, his tone slow and deliberate.
"Don't tell me you've never kissed

another man before."

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Chapter 69 Do You Believe

Me Now

Linsey's already uneasy expression froze, her body stiffening even more.

The memory of their closeness in the study resurfaced instantly, and a fresh wave of embarrassment swept through her.

She hesitated, then blurted out, stubbornly, "W-what? Of course I've kissed others before."

Collin studied her flushed, delicate face, his sharp gaze catching the way she faltered. A knowing smirk tugged at his lips.

She was lying, and not very well.

After a brief pause, his voice took on a meaningful lilt. "I've never been in a relationship before. That was my first time kissing a woman, and now my first kiss is gone-just like that. What a tragedy." His sigh was deliberate, his tone almost teasing. "So tell me, how do you plan to make it up to me?"

Linsey's eyes widened, her lips parting slightly as she scrambled for words. She knew Collin had never been with anyone before-never dated, never kissed.

But they hadn't even kissed due to his subordinate's interruption.

And what did he mean by making it up to him? If they had kissed, then it would be her first kiss, too!

So why did he make it sound like his first kiss was more precious than hers?

Her thoughts spiraled, but before she could untangle them, Collin suddenly leaned in, his lips brushing against the shell of her ear. His voice dropped to a near whisper.

"That wasn't much of a kiss, just the lightest touch. It hardly counts. So tell me..." His breath fanned against her skin.

"Should we try again?"

Her pulse spiked, and she instinctively glanced around. "But... what if someone sees us? You should let me up."

A faint, knowing smile played at the corners of Collin's lips as he murmured, "Relax. The butler already saw you sitting on

my lap. He'll make sure the staff stays away."

Then his gaze dropped to her parted lips, his expression darkening slightly, though his tone carried the weight of feigned disappointment. "Or..." His voice was softer now, almost challenging. "Do you find me repulsive? Is that why you don't

want to get close to me?"

She spoke up quickly, her voice filled with urgency. "That's not true! I don't find you repulsive at all. Don't think that way."

Collin slowly lifted his head, his usually unreadable eyes now betraying a flicker of uncertainty.

As their gazes met, a strange ache settled in her chest.

She could tell-he was feeling insecure again.

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Chapter 69 Do You Believe Me Now

A quiet sigh seemed to escape him as he loosened his hold on her and turned away. "You should go. I was too abrupt."

Panic surged through her.

She didn't find him repulsive-far from it. She didn't even mind being this close to him. If anything... she might even like

1. it.

She was just nervous.

Collin had no experience with dating; he didn't realize that her hesitation wasn't rejection-it was just shyness.

"I told you already. I don't find you repulsive," she insisted, her voice firm.

But his expression remained unchanged, his doubt lingering.

She hesitated for a brief moment. Then, deciding that words weren't enough, she grabbed his collar and kissed him.

The second their lips met, a jolt of surprise shot through her.

It was nothing like she had imagined. Her fingers clutched the fabric of his shirt while her free arm curled around his neck.

Without thinking, she bit his lip lightly-only to realize just how soft and sweet his lips were, like jelly. But what made her

heart pound even harder was the heat radiating from them.

Her breath hitched. She instinctively licked the spot where she had bitten, but now that she had done it, she wasn't sure

what to do next.

A nervous gulp slid down her throat as she pressed her lips together.

That tiny movement shifted something in him. His eyes, already dark, grew even heavier, as if something had awakened in

them.

She pulled away just slightly, her voice barely above a whisper. "I don't find you repulsive. Do you believe me now?"

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Chapter 70 This Isn't Enough For Me

Collin paused, his gaze locking with Linsey's for a lingering moment before he gently cradled the back of her head, his fingers threading through her hair. With a low, intense whisper, he murmured, "This isn't enough for me."

Without waiting for her response, he dipped his head and captured her lips once more in a kiss that was both deeper and more desperate than before.

In contrast to Linsey's relative inexperience, Collin moved with an ease and confidence that belied a natural finesse. The raw passion of his kiss obliterated her senses, leaving her dazed and adrift in a sea of fervor.

It was as if every thought she had was whipped into a frenzied storm by his insistent desire, sending electric shivers racing down her spine and tingling through her entire being.

The scent of him enveloped her, intoxicating and rich, heightening the already intense sensations overwhelming her.

His breaths, ragged and low, seemed to echo in the warm air between them, mingling with her own quickened breaths in a sultry dance.

A wave of tingling electricity coursed through Linsey, igniting her nerves and leaving a trail of numbness in its wake.

Their heartbeats thundered loudly, discordantly, yet strangely harmonious, as if each pulse wove their hearts closer

together.

As Collin's kiss deepened, his hands tightened around her waist, drawing her even closer into his embrace.

Linsey's body grew limp, surrendering to the intensity of the moment.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she peered up at his focused expression, her breath caught in her throat from the sheer intensity of his passion. For a fleeting second, she thought he might never stop...

A soft, almost kittenish whimper broke from her lips, piercing the haze of passion. Collin's senses snapped back into focus. He felt her subtle resistance as Linsey lightly pounded against his chest, a silent plea for release. He hesitated, then reluctantly, he loosened his embrace, allowing her to breathe freely again.

The oppressive humidity enveloped her, fogging her vision until the world seemed wrapped in a steamy haze.

The thrill of the moment coursed through her, unexpectedly exhilarating, leaving her breathless and a little bewildered.

Blinking away the daze, she slowly regained her senses and found herself staring into Collin's eyes.

There, reflected in the deep pools of his gaze, she caught a glimpse of her own face-flushed, vibrant, alive.

Collin's Adam's apple bobbed visibly as he swallowed hard, his struggle to maintain composure palpable.

Drawing in a deep, steadying breath, he spoke in a hoarse whisper, his voice tinged with restraint. "I'm a bit hungry. Could

you check on the kitchen?"

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Chapter 70 This Isn't Enough For Me

Her heart skipped a beat at his intense look, reminiscent of a wolf starved for days.

It stirred a flutter of panic within her, sparking her instincts into sudden action. She nodded briskly, pushed herself up using his shoulders for leverage, and hurried toward the kitchen.

As she moved, a giddy thought danced through her mind. She actually kissed Collin!

Meanwhile, Collin remained seated, his gaze lingering on the space Linsey had just vacated.

The heat of their previous close encounter hung in the air, a tantalizing reminder of their proximity. He savored the

residual warmth on his lips, fingers clenched into fists at his sides.

He knew he had to be patient, to let the moment breathe. This wasn't something he could afford to rush.

After making a quiet escape, Linsey didn't immediately head to the kitchen. Instead, she veered off course, slipping into the bathroom with a sense of urgency.

With a quick flick, she locked the door behind her and rushed to the mirror perched above the sink.

Her reflection was startling-her face blazed a bright crimson that crept up to her ears and dipped down her neck, while her eyes brimmed with unshed tears, giving her the appearance of a freshly boiled shrimp.

She gaped at her own image, taken aback by the intensity of her flushed complexion, something she had never witnessed

to such an extent before.

Taking a steadying breath, Linsey leaned forward and splashed her face with cold water, each handful more desperate than the last, seeking relief from the scalding heat that seemed to emanate from her very pores.

She spent several long minutes in front of the mirror, gradually regaining her composure as the coolness seeped deeper, easing the fiery flush.

Once she felt somewhat collected, she exited the bathroom and finally made her way to the kitchen. There, she busied herself reheating the breakfast alongside the servants and even added a few extra dishes to enrich the morning spread.

"You can take the breakfast over," Linsey instructed after a moment of contemplation. Her voice was calm, belying the

turmoil inside.

One of the servants blinked, taken aback by her directive. "Mrs. Riley, aren't you coming with us?"

She fabricated a quick response, the lie smooth and practiced. "I've already eaten, and I have some matters to attend to. Please, go ahead without me."

The memory of Collin's intense gaze lingered in her mind, a vivid image she wasn't ready to confront again. Her heart still skipped at the thought.

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