

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Tyson lunged forward with palpable excitement. He had been obsessed with gemstone gambling for years but had never seen such a top-tier violet gemstone-it was breathtakingly beautiful, almost maddeningly so.

"Is this a violet gem with green swirls?" "Exactly!" The experts, all seeing this type of gemstone for the first time, couldn't contain their excitement. "Moreover, this violet gem with green swirls weighs 7 kilograms. Given the price of \$3 million per kilogram and its rarity, its market value is conservatively estimated at \$100 million!" "My God, \$100 million!" The banquet hall erupted into chaos once again, and everyone's eyes were filled with an incredible, envious frenzy.

"Crestwood has never seen such an expensive violet gem from a rough stone! Today, we've witnessed a miracle!" "True gems are priceless, and this proves it." "Violet has always been a color symbolizing royalty and fortune since ancient times. \$100 million is just its price tag; its rarity and prestige are beyond monetary value!" As the crowd buzzed with loud discussions, their gaze shifted unanimously back to Xanthea-now filled with respect and admiration, a stark contrast to their earlier scorn and mockery.

Who would have thought that such a young woman could unearth a rare gem from such an ordinary-looking stone? How did she do it? Ethan and Samuel were also stunned. Was Xanthea just casually making \$100 million? "Ms. Nightshade, could you please sell this gemstone to me? Nyour price-any price will do!" Running up to Xanthea, Tyson pleaded fervently. Smiling slyly, she raised an eyebrow at the man opposite her. "It's not up to me. You'll have to ask my boss." Tyson turned to look at Orion.

The violet gem was mesmerizing, which held everyone's gaze firmly, but Orion looked past it, and fixated his eyes on the radiantly smiling young woman behind it; then his look. turned deeply intense. She seemed like a divine figure, shining brighter than the rarest treasures.

"Mr. Lockwood, please, whatever the price, whatever the terms, our MJ Group will agree. Just let us have this violet gem!" 1/3 14:56 Chapter 11 Cedric was completely overwhelmed by the scene; hearing this, he quickl opened the contract. "Mr. Tyson, our only purpose in attending this gemstone gambling event today was to secure a contract with MJ Group." Tyson immediately agreed, "Yes, yes, all right! Let's sign! We can do it right now!" The appearance of the violet sacred gem had tically shifted the fortunes of the Lockwood Group. Everyone accepted the outcof the competition without question, except for Timothy, who was caught off guard by this sudden turn of events. He looked at Orion and then glared at Xanthea, his face turning pale with rage and his eyes red with fury.

"You little cheat!" With his finger trembling, he pointed at Orion, completely losing his composure. "You didn't say you had an outsider on your team before the competition!" The venue assistant explained, "But that's not against the rules, Mr. Lockwood. You've lost." "I haven't lost! There must be strickery!" Timothy was fuming, nearly grinding his teeth. "Orion, where on earth did you find this cheating woman? I demand a search!" As Timothy angrily pointed at Orion and insulted Xanthea, Orion hardly changed his expression. However, when Timothy uttered the words 'cheating woman, Xanthea saw a chilling coldness flash in his eyes. She quickly stepped in front of him.

"Mr. Lockwood, I respect you as an elder, but if you won't accept today's result, then I'll just take my \$100 million gem and leave now." "No, no, no!" Hearing her words, Tyson quickly signaled to the venue staff. "Get the troublemaker out o here now!" Several burly bodyguards in black suits and sunglasses immediately dragged the furious Timothy out of the venue. "Letgo! Letgo!" "Orion, you wait!" "Ms. Nightshade is truly clever; she defused the situation with just a few words!" "Stunningly beautiful, incredibly smart, and extraordinarily lucky-truly a prodigious young woman!"

As the crowd in the banquet hall murmured their admiration, Xanthea turned and almost bumped into a film chest. With the man's subtle scent of pine reaching her nose, she stepped back. When had Orion gotten so close? Orion looked down, his pupils reflecting her figure; yet his emotion was unreadable.

2/3 "Why did you help me?" "Because," Xanthea's eyes sparkled, "I'd like to make a deal with you." A deal? As if thinking of something, the man had his gaze deepened.

"Matt..."

Before he could finish, Xanthea m tiptoed closer to his ear and whispered so softly that only they could hear, "I'll secure the MJ Group order for you, and in return, you take off your shirt for me, okay?"

As the girl was close to him, her voice was as soft as a caress, which sent a thrilling shiver through him, especially her bold words made Orion's ears visibly turn reddened.
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My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Xanthea couldn't believe how quickly his ears could turn so red, as if he was touched by magic. She paused, noting the curious gaze of the guests surrounding them, and added, "Not here, but when it's just the two of us." As she spoke, the man's ears flushed even deeper, and the red even crept down his neck.

Xanthea was stunned. He was a grown man; what was the big deal about taking off his shirt to show her something? Was he really that shy? Wait a minute! Did he misunderstand something? She just wanted to see if he had the iris tattoo on his chest, to confirm if he was her lifesaver. He couldn't possibly think she was proposing some sort of indecent exchange, could he? Realizing the possible misunderstanding, Xanthea saw the intense gaze in his dark eyes ignite like a spark and rapidly turn into a blazing flame. The heat in his eyes, now tinged with red, seemed ready to consume completely.

Oh no! That terrifying look in his eyes.

He must think she was insulting him! Xanthea quickly waved her hands, trying to explain, "Don't get wrong, I didn't mean it like that. I heard you had unique marks, and I was just curious to see them. If it's not convenient for you to show me, even a photo would do!" Why did it feel like she was becoming more of a creeper, as if she was kind of bull demanding a hot guy's nude photos? In her urgency, she raised her voice, which attracted the attention of Cedric standing nearby.

Unique marks? Was Ms. Nightshade referring to the scars from cigarette burns inflicted by the CEO's stepmother when he was a child? How could Ms. Nightshade be so cruel! He knew it. Why had she suddenly changed her attitude towards the CEO, smiling and helping him out when she had always been cold and dismissive before? She must have concocted a new way to humiliate him! What was she planning to do with those photos? Spread them around? 1/3 14:56 Chapter 12 As Xanthea pondered whether she had made herself clear, she saw the fiery look in his eyes cool down; he had his lips pressed tightly as if he was suppressing intense emotions, and his whole body was exuding a chilling aura.

Was he not angry anymore? But why did it feel so cold around them? "No." The man's response was cold, and Xanthea almost doubted her ears.

No? She was offering a billion-dollar bet, MJ Group's order, and the sole heir position of the Lockwood Group in exchange for just a glance at his chest, and he said no? Was she insane? Was his body that precious? But if he was so valuable, why did he unhesitatingly shield her from harm, even contemplating ending his own life after her supposed death? This man was truly baffling.

"Thump thump thump" The phone rang, and after Cedric answered, he hurriedly said to Orion, "Mr. Lockwood, Chairman Lockwood called. He wants you and the vice president back at the company immediately. The shareholders' meeting has started, and he's announcing the heir!" Timothy and Orion? Heirs to the shares? No, Orion must not go! As soon as Cedric finished speaking, Xanthea grabbed Orion's wrist, "You can't go!" Cedric said, "Ms. Nightshade, this is urgent, please don't interfere with the CEO now!" Ethan and Samuel were also stunned. What was Xanthea doing today? Why did she suddenly decide to join the betting competition and bizarrely stake a billion dollars to g

to Orion, and why was she now stopping him from attending a shareholders' meeting? They remembered correctly; she wasn't that close to Orion, were they?

Ethan said, "Xan, let go of Mr.

Lockwood. The shareholders' meeting is crucial for the future of the Lockwood Group, stop this nonsense." Samuel even pulled Xanthea away, "Mr. Lockwood, sorry about this. She's being impulsive please go ahead if you have business." "I can't let him go, I have something to say to him." Even as Samuel pulled her away, Xanthea clung to Orion's wrist, and her eyes were desperately searching for a reason to keep him there.

She absolutely couldn't let him leave with Timothy in the scar, but as she was faced with the shareholders' meeting and the heir position, any dand excuse she found seemed weak He surely wouldn't listen to her! 2/3 Chapter 12 She had her fingers dig into his suit, gripping his wrist. Orion looked down at her and murmured, "Hmm." The whole room went silent for a second after his deep, magnetic monosyllable.

"I'm staying. Speak." Xanthea, being speechless, stared at him with a serious expression. He agreed just like that? She hadn't even said anything yet.

Cedric, looking stunned, almost dropped his phone.

The CEO was putting aside a diligently planned position as chairman for Ms. Nightshade's single sentence? Unbelievable!

He couldn't understand what was so special about Ms. Nightshade.

Although she cfrom a distinguished family and w breathtakingly beautiful with om m incredible luck, her nature was too harsh. With her being always cold and demeaning towards the CEO, how had she managed to captivate him so completely?

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 13

Chapter 13 "Uh." Stumbling over her words, Xanthea hurriedly pulled a small white bottle from her pocket, "This is a special formula I got a scar removal cream. Just apply it to the scar morning and night, and your skin will be good as new!" Orion eyed the small bottle she was eagerly offering, and a flicker of doubt crossed his brow.

"The scar on your neck was my fault, and I've never apologized for all these years. Today, that stone is my way of making it up to you, and you don't need to take off... uh." She cut herself off, noticing the curious glances of the guests around them.

Orion's gaze, however, was fixed on the bottle; he was unable to look away.

She remembered? She had always remembered? Glancing at the time, Xanthea unscrewed the cap, "Let apply snow, see if it's as miraculous as the herbalist claimed." The girl tiptoed; her enchanting face suddenly turned magnified in his eyes, causing him to involuntarily step back.

"No need, I'll do it myself." He instinctively reached for the bottle but ended up holding her hand instead.

Xanthea looked down at their intertwined hands, feeling puzzled.

Orion, as if jolted by electricity, released her, but Xanthea promptly pushed him back into his seat, "Oh, con, don't reject my kindness, or I'll feel guilty!" "Xan!" Ethan and Samuel exchanged surprised glances at Xanthea and Orion's intimate behavior while Cedric paced anxiously nearby.

Every second was crucial in the competition to succeed the Lockwood Group, and here was the CEO, getting ointment applied by Ms. Nightshade in the middle of a party.

The crowd at the banquet murmured among themselves; the men were envying and the women turned green with jealousy.

"Rumor had it that the Lockwood Group's prince was a loner, uninterested in women, but that seems false now, doesn't it?" "With Ms. Nightshade's breathtaking beauty, no man could resist, Mr. Lockwood included 1/2 Chapter 13 "I'm furious! I tried everything to get a word with Mr. Lockwood today, and here Ms. Nightshade manages to get hands-on!" "Even the recognized beauties of the entertainment industry have fallen before Mr. Lockwood without a second glance. What chance do you think you had? I bet Ms. Nightshade's boldness comes from that rare amethyst she flaunted." "Yeah, she's just lucky, otherwise why would Mr. Lockwood even notice her!"

As Xanthea gently spread the scar removal cream on his scar, he subtly turned his head away. His impeccable profile tensed as sharply as a knife's edge, and his skin from ear to neck blushed red as if scorched by fire; his body's heat was palpable even to her light touch. To the unaware, it would seem she was a fl herself.

Feeling his controlled breathing and reaction, Xanthea almost laughed. Was he always this shy?

Now, he was nothing like the ruthless, cold-hearted heir of them Lackwood Group rumored to kill without blinking an eye on rooftops. "Such a good boy." The more he restrained himself, the more Xanthea wanted to tease him.

She had her fingertips gently massage the skin; the touch, mixed with her teasing breath, lingered around his neck. He felt the warmth inside him suddenly surge, and his struggle to maintain composure tinged his dark pupils with a hint of red, and made his throat sore. 2/2

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 14

Chapter 14 "Ms. Nightshade, please hurry up! We're really running out of time." Cedric was making a final plea when his phone suddenly rang. Oh no, it must be the chairman calling to chew him out.

He answered, and seconds later, the phone slipped from his ear, his speech stuttering, "Sir, just now, the police called, Mr. Timothy Lockwood was in a severe car crash on Luminal Avenue, the car was wrecked, he's gone." As he spoke, the banquet hall erupted into chaos; everyone stared wide-eyed and speechless, unable to believe that the man who had just been with them was now gone.

Only Xanthea calmly screwed the cap back on the bottle, and pulled out a handkerchief to meticulously wipe her fingers. "There you go, Mr. Lockwood, keep this bottle safe, remember to apply it morning and night." As she handed the bottle to the man, she caught his gaze shifting from shock to a deep, focused intensity. Seeing that complex look. He must have realized that her earlier nagging not only hadn't hindered his succession to the helm of the Lockwood Group but had actually saved his life. Clever girl.

go." "Bro, it's getting late, let's go "Ms. Nightshade!" Xanthea turned to leave, and Orion tried to grab her, only managing to pull off the silk handkerchief half-stuffed back into her pocket.

Xanthea turned, flashing him a bright, sweet smile, "Mr. Lockwood, until next time." When the Nightshade siblings left the gemstone convention, Orion had his gaze lingering on the striking figure in the middle until she disappeared. He then looked at the handkerchief in his hand, and held it tightly as if afraid it would vanish like she had, as if by holding it, he could feel the warmth she left behind.

Cedric, still stunned, finally managed to say to Orion, "Thank goodness we didn't go back with Mr. Lockwood just now, otherwise... So, Ms. Nightshade, she actually saved

our live by coincidence?!" "What did she just say?" "Huh? Ms. Nightshade? She said 'until next time'?" Until next time.

Orion pocketed the handkerchief, with a subtle smile playing at the corners of his lips.

1/2 Chapter 14 Once they got into the car, Xanthea was immediately bombarded with questions from Ethan and Samuel on either side.

"Xan, don't you think you owe Ethan and an explanation about today?" Xanthea tried to play dumb, "What do you mean?"

"What was your real purpose at the convention today? How did you manage to find that rare jade? Why did you choose to help Orion? How long have you known him?"

"Stop!" Overwhelmed, Xanthea decided to clean. "Three years ago, I was hassled by thugs on the street, and Orion saved me. Being too scared, I ran away but I remembered him when I saw the En scar on his neck on my eighteenth birthday. So yes, you're right, I wasn't here for the convention. I was here to deliver his medicine. As for finding that rare violet jade, that was just a stroke of luck, and if it helped him, consider it a way to repay the favor. Ethan, Samuel, you guys aren't upset that I handed over such a treasure to someone else, are you?" "Of course not!" Samuel shook his head. "Since he saved you, it's only right for you to help him, but."

Ethan picked up where he left off, "It looks like there's more to your relationship than just a chance encounter, right?" Xanthea looked at Ethan's serious expression, "What else would it be?" "Although it sounds a bit far-fetched," Samuel stroked his chin thoughtfully, "does Orion have feelings for you?"

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Xanthea was unwrapping a piece of candy and popping it into her mouth when Samuel's words nearly made her choke. "Sam, what are you on about? How could that even be possible?" "Why not possible? Look at today's gathering-every debutante and starlet dressed to the nines, all trying to outshine each other; they were obviously all here for him. But he didn't so much as glance at any of them. Instead, he only had eyes for you, not to say he even ditched the important Lockwood Group board meeting just for a word from you." "That's because I helped him win big at the stone betting table. With the MJ Group contract in the bag, Lockwood shares were his no need to rush off to that meeting." Xanthea paused, then added, "And like you said, with all the stunning ladies around, why on earth would he be interested in me?" "Because you're the most stunning, Xan!" Ethan and Samuel chimed in unison.

Xanthea rolled her eyes. "The world of brotherly love is truly mad." Ethan laughed, "Xan, I'm not just being overprotective. You have no idea how captivating you looked today. If I weren't your actual brother, I'd fall for you myself." Samuel, running his fingers through her hair proudly, added, "Yeah, Xan, you were so confident and radiant, a far cry from the girl who used to orbit around Matthew. This is the charisma that our Nightshade family princess should embody!" Listening to them, Xanthea briefly spaced out. In her past life, her love for Matthew was all-consuming, to the point where she had lost herself entirely.

"Even if I am great, Orion couldn't possibly like me." "Why are you so sure?" Initially, when she saw Orion excavating her grave, kissing her corpse, and even going as far as to kill Matthew and Miranda; she wondered if his actions stemmed from affection. But upon reflection, it seemed improbable.

First, they hadn't spent enough together for any affection to be that deep. Second, considering how openly he had pursued Miranda in his previous life, he would have declared his feelings if he liked her. Thirdly, there was his reaction today when she asked him to take off his shirt.

"Sam, can I ask you, Mr. Experienced, something?" Samuel clicked his tongue, "Xan, what's with that title? My escapades were all just for 14:56 Chapter 15 networking." "If a girl you liked asked you to undress, what would you do?" Samuel smirked, "Is that even a question?" Forget it! Remembering Orion's almost stormy expression when she brought it up today, Xanthea felt certain. He couldn't possibly like her. As for why he kept helping her and even killed Matthew and Miranda, there must be other reasons.

"Let's drop it, will you? I can tell whether someone likes or not, right?" "Better if he doesn't," Ethan interjected. "Rumor has it that the Lockwood Group's family feuds were fierce. Orion, being the eldest grandson, was deeply involved. Although now a famed business prodigy, he had trouble altering his formed traits of paranoia, gloom, and cruelty. Being liked by someone with such flaws is a misfortune in itself." Xanthea disagreed; everyone, no matter their past, deserved a chance at happiness. Besides, she couldn't see how someone who blushed at mere close contact with a girl could be all that bad.

On her coming-of-age day, her uncle had a special iris mutation flown in from Seraphia. It had been in the soil for three days, and as soon as she got home, Xanthea dashed to the backyard eager to check for sprouts. Instead, she stumbled upon a sickening scene.

Behind the lush ivy trellis, Miranda and Matthew were locked in an embrace; their silhouettes nearly merged as if they were kissing.

Xanthea froze, with her fists clenched so tightly that her knuckles whitened, and her darkened with anger.

For a moment, she was transported back to the night before her death when she, with excitement, had gone to tell Matthew she had chosen her wedding dress, marry him. Instead, she had found him entangled with her stepsister on the roof. Back then, it felt like a bolt from the blue; now, it was just revolting to realize they had been together all along, and had treated her like a fool for years.

Xanthea wanted to storm over and tear their faces off, but reason held her back.

"Ah Miranda 'tripped' over a small stone and fell straight into Matthew's arms; she clutched his waist and said, eyes

"Matt, sorry about that. Didn't sleep well last night and been feeling dizzy ever since. Thank you for catching me." The pretty girl nestled in his arms, gazing up at him with vulnerable eyes, while his hand resting on her exposed waist; the ambiguous atmosphere drew them closer.

Matthew, feeling emboldened, squeezed her waist. Despite his long relationship with Xanthea; she had always kept him at arm's length, citing family traditions, promising herself to him only after marriage.

But it was too much for him to face her stunning beauty daily; in order to maintain his gentlemanly image, he had restrained himself. Miranda, less striking but more accommodating, was a different story altogether. 3/3

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Matt lowered his head, and Miranda, feeling the hint in his touch, slowly closed her eyes and leaned in closer.

Just as their lips were about to meet, Matt's mind wandered unexpectedly. Xan had not contacted him all day, which was unusual, and she hadn't checked. Where could she be? The brief pause made the atmosphere awkward. Losing the mood, Matt let go of Miranda, who quickly straightened up. "Sorry, Matt, I got a little carried away there." Her voice was soft, and her fingers nervously dug into her palm. He had seemed so lost in the moment-why did he pull away? She had worked so hard to seduce him, even made the first move, and still, she couldn't compete with Xan's place in his heart? "It's alright, it's a bit chilly out here; maybe we should head inside to the living room?" Matt suggested.

Just as Xanthea was about to capture the moment on her phone, she saw them part. How unfortunate. She frowned and moved closer, catching snippets of their conversation.

"Maybe not," Miranda said, looking down and biting her lip. "Once Xan gets back, you won't have time for me." "Why would you think that?" "I asked you out because I've been really stressed about the finals of The Masked Singer, and talking to you always helps. You said last night you'd come to the show to support me, was that true?" "Of course, I've never backed out of a promise to you." Xanthea listened attentively, though feeling disgusted about it, and ended the conversation.

The Masked Singer? That rang a bell.

When picking up Miranda had dropped out of Kingswood Academy two years ago and, through family connections, entered the entertainment industry. Despite her lack of formal training and surviving on the fringes of fame, a lucky break on The Masked Singer propelled her to stardom with her performance of "Whispers in the Dark"-a song Xanthea had helped her craft.

Photos captured at the Platinum Hotel after the finals, showing Matt and Miranda in a compromising position. The details had been so clear, and even the room number was visible in the tabloids. Matt had brushed it off with a simple excuse-'Miranda had twisted her ankle, and he was just helping her'-an explanation so flimsy that it was laughable.

1/3 Chapter 16 Now, it was clear they had planned to meet up after the show, and their affair was hidden under the guise of comfort and support.

Xanthea's thoughts turned dark with a vengeful idea.

October 6th was the day she and Matt were supposed to have gotten engaged in another life. What if on that day, she exposed Matt and Miranda's scandalous affair on the big screen at their engagement party? For Matt, who prized his image above all else, it would be a humiliation worse than death.

As for Miranda.

Only in her final moments did Xanthea realize how venomous her stepsister had been; she was always lurking, pretending to be the innocent flower while plotting to take over her life.

She decided then and there that she would never let Miranda rise above her. She would keep her firmly beneath her, always dependent on her, and always lesser.

Returning to the living room, Xanthea found Matt and Miranda already seated, chatting with Ethan and Samuel, who looked puzzled at her late arrival. "Xan, where did you disappear the moment we got here." "Just a little stomach trouble," Xanthea replied smoothly.

Miranda immediately showed concern. "Xan, are you okay? Did you eat something bad?" Xanthea smirked internally; it's not because of bad food, but a distasteful revelation. I'm fine, really." Susanna chimed in, "Xan, cover. Matt's been waiting to talk to you." "Xan," Matt approached with concern, "Where did you go today? You didn't text, and I was getting worried." "Was I?" Xanthea could barely hide her disdain. "I was out helping Samuel pick a birthday gift for his new girlfriend." Samuel was caught off guard, and Ethan, left out of the lie, exchanged confused looks.

Susanna was perplexed; Xanthea had told her that she was attending the event earlier.

gem betting

Matt, trying to change the subject, mentioned, I've got our tickets to Willowdale. We can head out anytime in the next few days."

Willowdale? The trip they had planned seemed like a distant memory now. How could she possibly go, knowing what she knew? "No need, Matt. It was just a joke, don't take it too seriously. I heard that the Martinez Group is busy with a big contract with Samuel's company. You must be swamped." 2/3 14:56 Chapter 16

Her words hung heavy in the air, a stark contrast to the light-hearted plans they had made, now overshadowed by betrayal and secrets. The unexpected refusal caused Matthew to freeze mid-motion as he was pulling out his wallet.

14:56

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Was it all just a joke? She had pleaded with him for so long, and it was all just for laughs? And no wonder the Martinez Group's bid proposal was rejected first thing in the morning. It turned out Xan never actually spoke to Samuel on his behalf.

Matthew stared at Xanthea, who was all smiles just like usual, yet somehow completely different.

Before, he could read her like an open book, but now, standing so close, he couldn't decipher her thoughts at all. "I'm tired, I think I'll head up to bed early, Matt. Drive safe, huh~" Xanthea stretched lazily and made her way upstairs.

Her change in demeanor left the family stunned.

Christopher set down his tea, thinking back to how thrilled Xan used to be when Matthew would ask her out. But today, she coldly turned him down, and from their conversation, it was clear that she hadn't interceded for the Martinez Grou Having witnessed Xan's change of attitude the night before, Samuel, catching his parents' surprised looks, smiled proudly.

Xan had grown up, no longer the little girl who constantly followed Matthew around.

Miranda frowned, puzzled by Xanthea's cold demeanor towards Matt. Were they having a falling out? "Xan!" Matthew called after her, "So what have you been up to lately? I heard you've already submitted your thesis." Xanthea paused on the stairs, then turned around with a secretive smile, "Lately I've been preparing a surprise for Matt and Miranda." Miranda and Matthew met her gaze and smiled faintly.

"Thanks, Xan." So, she was planning a surprise, no wonder she was so secretive.

On the way home, Matthew put the concert tickets back in his bag and tried to calm his troubled thoughts. It must be the stress from work, he thought. Xan has liked him since they were kids, and there's no way she'd suddenly be distant.

Suddenly, his phone chimed with a news alert 'Eighteen-year-old girl strikes a million-dollar gem at the event!' He expected it to be just another clickbait, but his finger 1/3 14.56 accidentally scrolled to a very familiar photo.

Xan? How could it be her?! Feeling shocked, he opened the article and was completely dumbfounded.

How was Xan at a gemstone gambling event, helping someone named Orion strike a gem? When did she get so close to Orion? And why would she deceive him? What was she thinking? A sense of unprecedented nervousness and caution washed over him as he clenched his phone and opened Xanthea's chat window.

Meanwhile, Xanthea had reached her room and immediately found the old Canon camera, then dialed her Uncle Oliver Lopez.

"Well, well, if it isn't my long-lost niece remembering her old uncle. Did that mutant iris seed I gave you finally sprout?" "Not yet~" Xanthea cooed, "I always miss you, Uncle. Just need a little favor today." "I knew it, you never call unless you need something. What is it, princess?" "Well, I want to compete in the finals of The Masked Singer." "The Masked Singer? Since when are you interested in that?" "Haven't you always said I have a good voice? want to give it a try." "You've got more than a good voice - but also charm, poise and intellect - you'd be a star in the entertainment world. You want to join The Masked Singer, huh? The finals are on this weekend; it's too late to enter normally but you can go as a surprise contestant in the final challenge. You'll battle against the season's top three contestants. If you win, the championship is yours! You up for it?" Absolutely.

If she could make Miranda an overnight sensation with one song, she could certainly again.

"Just wait and see, Uncle!"

After setting up her camera, Xanthea began writing her song. After appearing on The Masked Singer, she planned to sneak into the hotel to catch Matthew and Miranda in a compromising situation - killing two birds with one stone. She really was a genius! As she worked, messages from Matthew popped up like spam, which Xanthea swiped away impatiently. How had she ever fallen for such a man in her past life? Just before turning off her phone, she saw a financial headline 'Curtain Call! Timothy unexpectedly deceased, the Lockwood Group board announces Orion as the official successor of Twin Towers' third generation leader!' 2/3 Chapter 1/ They announced it so quickly? Xanthea chuckled to herself. Although the outcome was the same, the public opinion this time was vastly different.

In her past life, after he lost a gemstone bet and survived a car crash with Timothy, she had suspected him of murder: This time, however, he was celebrated as a "national treasure" and "life's winner." He must be throwing a party now, she mused, wondering if he remembered to apply his scar treatment.

That night, in a sleek and minimally decorated three-story mansion in Sunset Hills Estates, the moonlight scattered through the large bedroom windows, casting a dappled glow on the man clutching a pink handkerchief, whose robust silhouette was heaving. As the room heated up, the air filled with a potent mix of male hormones, accompanied by a series of husky, magnetic voices, making the stars outside shimmer with an extra hint of romance.

"Xan, Xan, Xan."

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 18

Chapter 18 A young girl in a flowing white dress descended like an angel; her radiant smile was blooming as she approached him. With each step closer, she whispered sultry words into his ear, while gently applying ointment to him with her slender and smooth fingers.

And then that teasing 'Good boy, each syllable laced with a poison so tempting, drew him deeper into torpor.

As the image of the girl flickered in his mind, Orion reached a crescendo; his usually deep voice turned raspy and unrecognizable.

"Xan, my Xan." She was wrong; he wasn't good, not at all. He thought about it, crazily, desperately.

Saturday, 7 PM, at the Discovery Pavilion, the finale of The Masked Singer beckoned.

As the season's most anticipated prime-time music reality show, the finale drew crowds in droves, making the pavilion packed with fans holding up glow sticks and banners. The show was broadcast live across major TV and online platforms, which captured the grand spectacle.

"Colorful lights and passionate screams have ignited the finale!" the host bellowed into the microphone, pumping up the atmosphere. Tonight, right here, we'll witness eleven contestants who've battled their way to this grand finale. Who will emerge victorious and be crowned 'the century's greatest singer? Let's find out!" "Before we start, letlay out the rules. There are 11 contestants in the finale, each of whom will perform their chosen songs. Three judges will score them, and we'll also open up online voting so that you, the audience, can have your say. Scores will be based on 70% from our judges and 30% from public votes!" "Additionally, this season of The Masked Singer introduces a challenger round. Three surprise contestants, masked and mysterious, will battle the top three finalists. The scoring remains the same, and if the challenger wins, they claim the championship!" "Everyone's familiar with the rules now, and here's a special surprise: the CEO of TOYUM Group, our main sponsor, is here tonight. He'll be watching the entire finale and will crown our champion with the title of 'the century's greatest singer!" "As the host finished, Matthew spotted a striking figure settling into a dimly lit corner with the best view. The lights made it hard to see his face, but his chilling aura was unmistakable. Orion? After a rare gemstone auction where Xan had secured a once-in-a-lifetime jade for him, and his sole competitor Timothy met with an unfortunate accident, had he now fully taken over the reins of the Lockwood Group? What a gap between the fortunes of men, Matthew mused. If Xan got any closer to a titan like Orion, could she really remain unaffected? What was he thinking? Xan wasn't that kind of girl. Shaking his head, Matthew glanced at the bouquet next to him, and started to regret his decision to candidly support Miranda. Xan hadn't even revealed her surprise to him yet.

Backstage at The Masked Singer, the contestants buzzed with excitement at the news.

"OMG! Did you guys hear who the new CEO of TOYUM Group is? Orion of the Lockwood Group!" "No way! I heard he's not only a billionaire but also insanely handsome, outshining top models!" "And he's presenting the trophy tonight. Word has it, the winner might also land a major endorsement deal with one of TOYUM's upcoming lines!"

Miranda, upon hearing Orion's name, couldn't help but rise and sneak closer to the stage, only to catch a to glimpse of that distinctively handsome in the dimly lit corner.

Just one look sent her heart racing.

At Xanthea's coming-of-age party, she had noticed him, who was the was the most dazzling presence, however, he NO Wasded by intimidating rumors and gave out a frosty aural that kept everyone at bay. Now, just days later, he had ascended from heir apparent to the actual power behind the Lockwood Group?

With her eyes gleaming, Miranda clenched her fists. Tonight, she was determined to win, to be the ve center of attention, and to prove her worth to the Nightshade family; she was aiming for heights even they couldn't reach. With that, the host announced, "Let the grand finale of The Masked Singer begin!" 2/2 14:56

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 19

Chapter 19 At eight o'clock, the grand finale kicked off with the energy of a rock concert. Eleven contestants took their turns on stage, and their performances elicited cheers from the excited crowd. Initially, Cedric was all ears, soaking in the atmosphere with enthusiasm. But after a few songs, his excitement began to wane. The performances, thought competent, started to blend into one another, lacking any standout moments that couldn't be better experienced through a polished sturecording.

It wasn't until the final contestant stepped onto the stage that Cedric's interest perked up. again-not because she was exceptionally different, but because from the moment she appeared, her glances seemed to seek out the CEO, as if hoping for a moment of eye contact.

Miranda? Why does that nsound so familiar? Wait, isn't she the adopted daughter from the Nightshade family, Ms. Nightshade's sister? "Mr. Lockwood." Cedric turned and saw Orion engrossed in the stock charts on his tablet, completely oblivious to the live show. It was impressive, almost eerie, how Mr. Lockwood could focus in such a noisy environment. But then again, attending this finale wasn't originally on Mr. Lockwood's schedule. He had been roped into it due to a previous CEO's public promises, so his lack of interest was understandable.

"Mr. Lockwood, the contestant on stage is Ms. Nightshade's sister." "Mhm." The man responded flatly, and his eyes never strayed from the screen.

"Hello everyone, I'm Miranda, contestant number 11. Tonight, I'll be performing an origina song, 'Whispers in the Dark'," The song burst into life; its clear melody and

upbeat rhythm was infused with sweet lyric transforming the mood of the venue into something light and joyful. Cedric found himself genuinely intrigued. The arrangement, lyrics, and harmonies of 'Whispers in the Dark' were distinctly superior to the previous performances, and surprisingly, it was an original piece. Ms. Nightshade's sister was indeed talented.

Xanthea arrived at the Discovery Pavilion just in time to catch 'Whispers in the Dark' live. The light, sweet tune and lyrics were like bursts of pink bubbles, delighting the senses and lightening the heart of the audience. She remembered crafting this song while deep in the throes of a new love, believing herself to be the happiest person in the world. Now, those illusions of happiness and sweetness had shattered, revealing the grim reality beneath.

"My dear, the competition is nearly over, and you just show up now?" Backstage at the 14:56 Chapel pavilion, Oliver sighed in relief upon seeing her "I thought you were going to forfeit!" Xanthea playfully stuck her tongue out. "Uncle, don't you know that the big stars always make a grand entrance?" "Already acting the diva, aren't we?" Oliver chuckled. "Con, don't dawdle. Your makeup artist and gown are ready." Xanthea gazed at the dazzling gold gown and the intricate matching jewelry laid out before her, her eyes wide with surprise. "Uncle, I'm just going up to sing a song. Isn't this a bit much?" "Not at all! This is your first public appearance, and you need to dazzle everyone!" "Plus, the biggest sponsor, TOYUM Group, is choosing a spokesperson today. Looks are just as important as talent." Being coaxed into the makeup chair, Xanthea still felt a bit bewildered. She wasn't planning on launching a career today-she just wanted to outperform Miranda.

"Xan, what do you think of this mask?"

Oliver pulled out a mask with a mysterious flourish. It was a stunning and silver fox mask, seductive captivating, with an iris flower embellished on the left eye, which added an enchanting touch.

"This was custom-made just for you. I knew you'd love it. Wear it onstage, and no one will know who you are until you finish singing." "Perfect." She took the mask, and caressed with delight the iris adorning it.

Half an hour later, Xanthea emerged from the dressing room, fully transformed.

Oliver, who had been waiting, turned to see her and was momentarily speechless. "Beautiful! Absolutely stunning!"

Normally he was never at a loss for the words, but now he was so overwhelmed that he only applauded and repeatedly murmured in awe.

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace - Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Chapter 20 "Xan, you are really the most beautiful girl in the world, even prettier than any star I've seen during my years in showbiz!" "Uncle, aren't you exaggerating a bit?" Xanthea laughed, but as she looked at her reflection in the mirror, her makeup and dress perfect for the event, she also felt a sense of ty and estrangement.

"Not at all, when you step on stage, you're going to steal the show!" "What part are they at right now?" "The judges are selecting this season's finalists for the contest. I believe the list will be announced soon." From backstage, through a narrow pathway, they could get a general view of the expo hall. Xanthea tilted her head slightly and saw Orion? What was he doing here! "Uncle, why is Orion here?" "Oh, you haven't heard? Yesterday, the Lockwood Group announced that he has officially taken over all enterprises under Twin Towers, including the TOYUM Group. So today, he's attending as the CEO, and he will also be presenting the awards to the winners." "He's now the chairman of the Lockwood Group, the top tycoon in Crestwood, Xan. If you debut project is in collaboration with him, that's really starting on the shoulders of al giant." On 'The Masked Singer' stage, the host loudly announced, "After a fierce competition, these three contestants have been chosen as this season's finalists: Hannah, Zoey, and Miranda. Let's give them a big round of applause!" Xanthea glanced at the big screen displaying the names, then back at Orion sitting in the preseat, suddenly connecting sdots.

In her past life, Miranda had rocketed to fwith her song "Whispers in the Dark," not only clinching the contest but also landing a major endorsement with TOYUM Group. Could Orion have noticed her then, gradually falling for her, leading them both down a troubled path? As someone who had been through hardships, she couldn't just stand by and watch him fall into the straps. Today's surprise entry had to succeed! The host continued, "But let's not get too excited just yet! Because next, we have three powerful mystery challengers stepping up. If they manage to overthrow our finalists, they'll take their places! Are you all ready? Let's welcthe challengers with a big round of applause!" 1/2 Chapter 20 As the mystery challengers arrived, the crowd reignited with excitement. Among the applause, two challengers, one wearing a cat mask and the other a rabbit mask, managed to eliminate fimalists Hannah and Zoey with high scores. However, Miranda still remained ahead.

Miranda stood offstage, a confident smile playing on her lips.

She sneaked a peek at the distinguished man sitting in the VIP section, knowing she was the last challenger left. The TOYUM Group endorsement was almost hers.

"Now, let's welcome third challenger with warm applause. She will perform an original song titled 'Butterfly'. This will also be the grand finale of this season's 'The Masked Singer'. Will she make a surprising victory, or will Miranda defend her crown? Let's find out!" "Xan, don't be nervous for your first stage appearance; I'll be right here watching, you got this!" Oliver placed a fox mask on Xanthea. She smiled slightly and picked up her gown, "Don't worry."

As the final act of 'The Masked Singer's third season began, everyone one watched intently. Cameras zoomed in at the stage entrance, where a golden high heel slowly stepped forward.

The girl, her dress adorned with dazzling rhinestones, caught everyone's eyes. Her elegant high heels, the shimmering hem of her gown, her flawlessly long legs, and the gentle curves of her waist dazzled like a beacon, walking amidst a radiant galaxy. Instantly, the audience let out gasps of admiration and envy.

"Oh my God, it's like a goddess has descended "God, how can this lady be so stunning? I need all her info in three minutes; I'm g her fan!"

"Holy smokes, that waist-to-hip ratio, those long legs, that perfect figure, forgive bluntness, but all I can say is wow!" "She's so beautiful, I don't even want to blink. Is it even possible for someone this beautiful to actually exist?" be