

# **My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel**

## **CHAPTER 151**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 1759 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

### Chapter 151

What on earth happened last night? Why couldn't she remember a thing? Why?

As Xanthea was about to cry from anxiety, a sudden knock came at the door.

"Who is it?!" She cautiously hugged a nearby vase and asked.

Could it be the rapist at this hour?

"Ms. Nightshade, it's me! Breakfast's ready, and the boss sent me to wake you up and bring you some fresh clothes."

Cedric's voice came from outside, and Xanthea breathed a sigh of relief. She opened the door and quickly yanked him inside.

"Whoa!" Cedric was startled, staring at her anxious face in surprise, "Ms. Nightshade, what's going on?"

Xanthea looked at him seriously, "Cedric, I need to ask you some questions, and you must answer me truthfully, every single word!"

"Alright, alright," Cedric nodded.

"What happened after I got drunk last night?"

"You don't remember anything?"

Even though he knew the answer, Cedric still pretended to be surprised.

"Uh-huh, I always blackout when I drink; it's not the first time."

"I see." Cedric's eyes darted around, "Well, I don't know everything, Ms. Nightshade. What exactly do you want to know?"

"I...um..."

Xanthea was too embarrassed to voice her suspicions directly; fiddling with her pajamas, she asked, "Who changed my clothes?"

"Wilma, a housemaid from the Marlowe family."

A housemaid?

“Really?”

“Yes, I saw her carrying that fairy–  
like dress out of the room myself. You can ask her if you don’t believe  
me.”

Xanthea continued, “And these weird marks on  
my neck? They weren’t there yesterday!”

“Those marks, well...”

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Cedric looked a bit discomforted, which made her even more anxious, “Just tell me! Did  
someone...”

“You got into a scuffle with Ms. Marlowe while drunk,” Cedric interrupted her, and Xanth  
ea was stunned on spot.

What? Marks from fighting with Queenie?

So that was it! Her first reaction wasn’t anger at being hit, but sheer relief that nothing w  
orse had

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happened.

“And my phone, did she smash it too?”

“Yes, exactly!”

“Thank goodness, I was so scared.”

She held her forehead and exhaled deeply, her high–  
strung nerves finally calming down.

Cedric also secretly let out a sigh of relief. After years in the working world, he hadn’t le  
arned much, but he’d mastered the art of telling white lies, although this was the first tim  
e he covered for his boss like this. “It’s okay. I’m done asking.” Xanthea started, but the

n she sensed something different, her nerves tensing again, “You’re not lying to me, are you?”

“Of course not!” Cedric looked earnest, “Why would I lie to you, Ms. Nightshade? What would I gain from

that?”

Obviously, he might get a promotion, a raise, or even a year–end bonus for being the boss’ most trusted assistant!

He added that thought silently to himself.

Xanthea asked, “Then why is there a musky scent in this room?”

“Musky?”

Although she was being subtle, Cedric, being a sharp man, immediately understood. Ms. Nightshade was referring to the scent of a man’s semen.

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“How could that be? I don’t smell anything. The air is clearly filled with the scent of irises. Ms. Nightshade, could your sense of smell be off?”

“Impossible” Xanthea denied flatly, “I’ve had a keen sense of smell since I was young, capable of distinguishing even the most complex and subtle scents. Do you think I just guessed that jade last time?” At her insistence, Cedric panicked immediately.

The boss had spent the night in Ms. Nightshade’s room and only left at dawn. If the air truly had a musky, scent as Ms. Nightshade claimed, could the boss have really done something to her?

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### **CHAPTER 152**

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Was it possible?

Ms. Nightshade was so wasted last night; she must be feeling terrible. The boss loved her dearly; he wouldn’t really make a move even if he wanted it that much.

And with the boss' formidable capabilities, how **could** Ms. Nightshade possibly get out of bed after it, let alone be acting energetically like she was now!

As for the **musky** scent, it was not like a man had to really get inside, well, it wouldn't be wrong to say he released it without touching Ms. Nightshade, but strictly speaking, nothing really happened,

Thinking this, Cedric felt like he had found solid evidence and defended Orion righteously, "Ms. Nightshade, you drank so much strong liquor last night; it might have affected your sense of smell."

"Is that so?"

Xanthea scratched her head, half-doubting, trying to recall if she had ever lost her sense of smell after getting drunk.

Cedric nodded, glanced out the window guiltily, and accidentally spotted a dense cluster of blooming heather, an idea suddenly forming. "I've got it!"

Xanthea jumped, "Got what?"

"I know why you smelled that scent! Look! There's a cluster of heather right outside the window."

"Heather?" Xanthea looked out at the dense, oval-shaped cluster of tiny white flowers, "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Ms. Nightshade, did you know? Heather is the city flower of Everglade, also known as 'scented flower'. Its fragrance and a man's se..."

He was cut off mid-sentence as Xanthea's face turned sour, she snatched the gift box from his hands and shut him out the door with a slam.

The cold sound of the door closing and her disdainful words hit him at once.

"Frivolous! Just like your boss!"

He wanted to say, "Ms. Nightshade, that's not fair. The boss' way more frivolous than I am!! Everything had a reasonable explanation. Xanthea, feeling reassured, opened the gift box to find a neatly folded set of new clothes, she thought there would be merely one piece of clothing, but turned out it was from a bra to underwear, all very considerate!

She put on the white, heavily detailed floral dress and appreciated herself by twirling in front of the mirror; she looked ethereal and enticing

g. Not only was the dress beautiful, but it also fit her perfectly, even the lace choker perfectly covering those marks on her neck. She wondered who had such great taste.

Just then, Cedric's words echoed in her mind. "The boss asked me to wake you up and bring these clothes for you."

Could Orion have picked them out for her? She suddenly considered measurements, especially her bra size?

her chest. How did he know her

The exact size couldn't be a coincidence! It must be the Marlowe family's servants who prepared it, and he

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just took the credit, right? But how would the Marlowe family's servants know her size?

In the open-plan kitchen downstairs.

Leonard strolled into the kitchen, yawning lazily, only to stop short at the sight of a man's tall figure focused on cooking and the beautifully arranged, fancy breakfast on the kitchen island.

"Wow! Orion, I didn't know you could cook. And it looks so good; how come you've never shown this skill before? Making a special effort in the kitchen today must be for Xanthea, huh? Man, the CEO of the

Lockwood Group, controlling the fate of hundreds of thousands employees, and here you are, cooking for a girl. Who would believe it?"

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### **CHAPTER 153**

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Chapter **153**

"Can't believe you've got sea urchin!"

Leonard stared in astonishment at the tray, neatly adorned with freshly made sea urchin dish. Just as he reached to pick one up, the man stopped him, "Don't touch."

Leonard knew the sea urchin was likely prepared for Xanthea, but couldn't he try just one? That seemed a bit stingy!

Sea urchin dish was a delicacy from the Everglades, rare and prized for their tender flesh, commanding a steep market price. What made them unique was their smooth, round body covered in spines that embed deeply, requiring careful skills to complete this special dish.

A glance at the tray revealed about twenty to thirty pieces, each requiring significant time and effort to prepare. The kitchen island was littered with various other breakfast items, making Leonard wonder what ungodly hour the cook had started at to prepare all this.

"Orion." Leonard looked at him, expressing admiration, "You really love her, huh? I can't even imagine how happy she'd be as your wife."

His words caused Orion, who was turning off the stove, to pause abruptly, drifting into a brief reverie, while the pancakes on the griddle started to burn.

"Hey, hey! They're burning! Just when I was praising you!"

Leonard pointed at the griddle, catching a fleeting look of distraction in Orion's eyes, and couldn't help but tease.

Although he wasn't sure how Orion and Xan's relationship would evolve, the fact that Xan was engaged with a wedding planned for the end of the year was undeniable. Wasn't he just stirring the pot by saying

this?

"Hey, things that haven't happened yet still have room to maneuver! Unlike me, destined to be a dashing bachelor this lifetime. If I were reborn as a woman next life, bro, I'd totally chase after you!"

He tried to lighten the mood with a joke, but was met with a cold glance from the man. Just as Leonard was about to receive a "scram" from Orion, he wisely made his exit, "Alright, you keep at it. I'm gonna go hang with Xan!"

Exiting the kitchen, Leonard was about to head upstairs when he heard a commotion at the entrance.

"Sir, sir!"

"Please stop, you are now trespassing. If you proceed further, we will call the police!"

"Go ahead! My fiancée is here, can't reach her by phone, can't see her impersonator, the police coming would actually help me find her! See where you've hidden her!"

“Ms. Nightshade is indeed here, but without any proof of your acquaintance with her, we cannot let you in!” Leonard turned around, watching from a distance as the butler, a servant, and a man in a suit who was clearly agitated, were arguing. He shouted, “Louis, what’s going on?”

“Mr. Marlowe!”

Louis hurried over to report, “This Mr. Martinez at the door claims to be a friend of Ms. Nightshade’s, but

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can’t specify when she arrived here or who she came with. I asked him to call her but the calls weren’t going through, so I stopped him.

Then, angered by being stopped, he tried to force his way in, even fabricating close ties with Ms. Nightshade. Considering her celebrity status, I suspect he might be an obsessed fan, hence I thought to expel him from the estate!”

Mr. Martinez? As Leonard heard this, his brows furrowed slightly.

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### **CHAPTER 154**

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Matthew stormed away from the clinging servant, his gaze lifting to the man standing regally at the staircase in the lobby.

The heir to the Marlowe fortune, the young master of the Marlowe family, Leonard? Matthew had seen him more than once in financial news segments and at high-society gatherings.

“Mr. Marlowe, good to see you!”

Adjusting his cufflinks, Matthew raised his voice, “I’m Matthew, CEO of Forest Fashion, and Xanthea’s fiancé. I apologize for intruding today. It wasn’t my intention to disturb. I’m just trying to find Xan.

She hasn’t been in touch since she got drunk last night. She didn’t answer the phone, and no one’s been able to reach her. Knowing she’s alone in the city worries me. I wonder if Mr. Marlowe could let me see her?”

co this

Matthew? So this was Xan's fiancé!

Leonard narrowed his eyes slightly, his gaze inadvertently wandering to the kitchen before signaling to Louis with a glance.

The butler, understanding his cue, waved at a group of servants to escort Matthew out.

"What're you doing? Let go of me now!"

Seeing the servants swarm towards him again, Matthew grew panicked.

He had introduced himself. If others didn't know of his relationship with Xan, that was understandable, but the engagement between the Nightshade family and the Martinez family was well known in Crestwood. How could Leonard, a prominent figure in Havenbrook, not be aware?

His being pulled away now, was it a sign of guilt? Could it be something had really happened to Xan within the Marlowe Manor?

Leonard descended the stairs with a look of impatience.

"Mr. Martinez, my family are still sleeping. Please keep your voice down. Whatever it is, we can discuss it outside."

"Why? Why discuss it outside? Just let me see Xan, and there's no need for all this talk. Or have you done something to her? Where is she now?"

Upstairs, Xanthea was blissfully admiring a well-nurtured black iris on her bedside table when she suddenly heard the commotion outside. Among the voices, one faintly familiar sound reached her ears; "Matthew?"

She opened the door, and at the sight of Matthew surrounded by a group of servants at the lobby entrance, surprise flickered across her face.

It really was him? Why was he here?

"Xan? Xan!"

While struggling, Matthew suddenly looked up and saw Xanthea. His eyes lit up, and he forcefully pushed through the servants to run upstairs.

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“Xan, it’s really you! Are you alright? Are you hurt? Has mistreated you?”

anyone

As he reached her, he gripped her shoulders tightly, causing Xanthea to wince slightly. Confused, she said, “I’m fine, Matt, but how did you end up here?”

“Last night I called you, but it seemed like you were drunk. The call ended abruptly, and no matter how many times I tried, no one answered until the very last call.”

As he spoke, he recalled the eerie silence and ambiguous moans from the phone call the previous night. His hands tightened, his eyes scrutinizing her as if searching for any suspicious sign.

But there was nothing.

Xan looked well, along with her body, and since his arrival at the Marlowe Manor, there had been no sign of Orion.

Could it be that he had misunderstood the situation last night?

There was no one speaking over the phone, the only voice being just drunken slur, but what about the explosion?

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### **CHAPTER 155**

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#### **Chapter 155**

“Your phone blew up or something! I was so worried about you; I had people track your phone’s IP all night. It ended up showing you were at the Marlowe Manor in Everglade!

I drove seven hours straight to get here, and on the way, I’ve imagined all the terrible things that might’ve happened to you. Seeing you safe **and** sound now, I’m just so relieved, Xan. From now on, please let me know where you’re going, okay? Don’t make me worry again.”

Matthew’s voice cracked with emotion, and he reached out to hug her, but Xanthea stopped him with a hand, “Uh, Matt, there are people around.”

“Oh,

Fight, I got a bit carried away! So, Xan, let's head back to Crestwood. Your folks are waiting for you at home; they're worried sick!"

"What? You told my parents?"

"Yeah, I was freaking out last night; I called everyone I could think of."

Xanthea rolled her eyes secretly. Great, now everyone must know about her embarrassing ordeal of being kidnapped by Orion.

In the lobby, Orion emerged from the open kitchen, his eyes unblinkingly fixed on Matthew's hands as they gripped Xanthea's shoulders, **his** gaze deep and inscrutable.

Leonard, noticing him, shot an annoyed glance at the servants who had failed to stop Matthew, and then turned to Xanthea with a smile.

"Xan, why don't you stay for breakfast? Today's dishes are plenty, and they're cooked by Orion himself. I've been his friend for years and never had the pleasure of trying his homemade dishes. You're in for a treat!"

At the mention of Orion's name, Matthew swiftly turned around, his face paling at the sight.

Orion! It really was him! He was actually here!

As Oliver had said, Xan really did come with him,

No matter what had happened between them, after his heated accusations against Orion over the phone last night and his impulsive intrusion into the Marlowe Manor today, Xan definitely shouldn't stay for breakfast!

"Xan, I picked up some food on the way here, all your favorites. Let's head back before they get cold in the

car."

Just as Xanthea was about to speak, Leonard interjected, "Xan, you wouldn't deny me this small courtesy, would you? Even if you won't do it for me, do it for the Sylvan Fox. Your vomit spilled all over it last night when you were drunk, and on the way back, the silk got snagged. That dress is a total write-off now."

"What?!" Xanthea was shocked, "The Sylvan Fox's ruined?"

That was one of Matilda's creations, part of the Forest Twelve Spirits Collection. Losing one piece didn't just mean the loss of millions of dollars; it diminished the value of the entire collection.

"Yeah."

Leonard saw the guilt in her eyes and sighed, "That was a rare piece designed by Matilda, a real treasure.. Such a pity. Now, there's no replacing it in the entire globe!"

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Matthew sensed an ulterior motive in his persistence, feeling consternated. He was obviously trying to guilt-trip Xan into staying, clearly harboring other purposes!

He was Orion's best buddy; the way he acted suggested something sinister about Orion's intentions!

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### **CHAPTER 156**

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"Sorry."

Xanthea felt a deep pang of guilt upon hearing his words, "I know I can't get you an identical one, but I can compensate you triple the original price, or if you like another designer's work, I could arrange a custom order."

Leonard laughed, "Xan, do you think I care about the money, or do you think it was really about the dress? I was just looking for an excuse to become friends with you. Stay for breakfast and consider it your way of making it up to me, okay?"

Cedric chimed in, encouraging her, "Ms. Nightshade, please stay. There's quite a distance from the freeway, and with the morning rush hour, it's gonna be packed. Why not have breakfast before you leave?"

"Xan!"

While they were talking, Matthew sent out a message, and soon, his phone rang, "It's your mom calling."

“Mom?”

Xanthea took the phone, but before she could speak, she was met with a torrent of rebuke.

“Xan, you’re just too headstrong, running off without telling anyone and your phone off the whole time. Your dad and I couldn’t sleep; we were worried sick all night!

Thankfully, Matthew told us where you were. He’s driven all night to pick you up from Everglade. What were you doing there alone?”

“Alone?”

She raised her eyebrows slightly, her gaze inadvertently sweeping over Orion downstairs, “Didn’t Uncle Oliver tell you why I was in Everglade?”

“He was out socializing last night, just as drunk as you. You two are just like kids, irresponsible as ever! Honestly, I regret leaving you in his care.”

Xanthea went silent, not expecting to be scolded along with her uncle.

“Mom, my phone was broken; otherwise I would have called,”

“Don’t think you can sweet-talk your way out of this. Come home now. Hearing you spend a night alone in a strange city, drunk, your dad’s furious. You need to come home and explain it to him yourself.”

“Okay, I understand.”

Xanthea hung up the phone, feeling dejected. She was about to decline the breakfast invitation when she noticed the eager eyes below; they genuinely seemed to hope she would join them.

Her visit to the Marlowe family was unexpected, but everyone at the estate had been so warm and welcoming, eating her like an honored guest and taking care of her, even in her drunken state:

It seemed rude to refuse their kind invitation now.

“Ms. Marlowe?” At the doorway, a servant’s voice called out.

Xanthea looked up to see Queenie, in her pajamas and slippers, hair disheveled, charging towards her like a madwoman.

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What was she up to? Not coming to pick a fight, surely? Xanthea frowned slightly, her expression guarded.

Lifting the hem of her night skirt, Queenie ran to the second floor. She stopped abruptly in front of her and then slowly raised her head.

Xanthea was startled by the sight of her swollen eyes, dark circles, pale face, and scabbed lips, a groggy state as if ghosts had sucked dry all her energy – not a trace of the doll-like Lolita from the day before.

What had she gone through in just one night? Did she do that to her?

Cedric had mentioned this morning that the marks on her neck were from fighting with Queenie. Xanthea had thought she'd been too drunk to defend herself properly, but seeing Queenie now, she was just relieved the latter hadn't called the police then!

## **My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel**

### **CHAPTER 157**

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It seemed she had really gone all out, no wonder Queenie was storming over with fire in her eyes, clearly out for revenge.

She swallowed, about to speak, when suddenly Queenie lowered her head, her voice quivering with tears, stuttering, "I'm sorry, Ms. Nightshade. I was rude and presumptuous yesterday, not knowing who you really were and making all those nasty remarks. I hope you can forgive my foolishness and not hold it against me."

??? Xanthea was utterly baffled by this sudden apology.

Had she heard right? This die-hard

Orion fan, after being told that Xanthea was Orion's goddess and having been physically subdued by her after a night of heavy drinking, was now apologizing?

Had she been knocked silly or had she been knocked into submission?

"Xan, Queenie's such a proud person and she's never lowered her head to anyone before. She came all the way here today just to apologize to you. Aren't you gonna forgive her and sit down for a meal together?" Catching the hint in her cousin's words, Queenie choked up and added, "Ms. Nightshade, if you could find it in your heart to forgive me, please stay for a meal."

Xanthea: "O-Okay."

"Xan!" Matthew looked at her anxiously.

He couldn't believe that Orion, just to keep Xan for a meal, had gone to such lengths, even getting the entire Marlowe family involved!

Under this circumstance, he couldn't begin to imagine what it would cost him to pursue Xan in the future. Could he even compete against him? Would she really remain unwavering in such a relentless pursuit?

After all, she was already reconsidering.

"Matt, it's a six or seven hour drive home anyway; we're not in a rush this moment. Since the Marlowe family has extended such a warm invitation, why not stay for breakfast?"

Leonard crossed his arms, a triumphant smile on his face, "Mr. Martinez, if you don't mind, why not stay and join us?"

Matthew clenched his fists secretly, his face grim.

He had said those things to Orion and Leonard, and staying now would just be embarrassing himself further. Who knew how they would tease him at the breakfast table.

"Xan, I tracked your IP and rushed to Everglade overnight not just because I was worried about your safety, but because you said so many strange things on the phone last night. I was afraid something was wrong between us; I was restless all night."

After he finished, Xanthea's expression suddenly changed.

Strange things? Something wrong? What on earth had she told him last night that made him so suspicious?!

Samuel had mentioned that every time she got drunk, she would

spill her secrets, answering any question

and revealing even the pranks she played as a child. If she didn't want her secrets discovered, she should

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never drink!

In her new life, her biggest secret was gathering evidence to ruin both Matthew and Miranda on the day of the engagement.

She hadn't spilled that too, had she?

"Matt." Xanthea frowned, tentatively looking at him, "What did I say last night that has you so worried

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### **CHAPTER 158**

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\*Nothing much, it was off and on so I didn't catch it all. Just bits and pieces, so I wanted to hear your side of the story."

As Matthew spoke, he swept a glance downstairs; with a pleading look, he asked, "Is that okay, Xan?"

"Alright."

Xanthea's eyes flickered as she searched her mind for the right words. No matter what, she had to smooth over last night's conversation perfectly – no suspicions from his side, no flaws in her plan for revenge!

"Really?" Matthew's face lit up with excitement, "That's great; let's go!"

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"Ms. Marlowe, I appreciate your apology, but I have an urgent matter today and can't stay for lunch, sorry."

As Xanthea and Matthew descended the stairs, they brushed past Orion.

"Xanthea!" Leonard called out to her, puzzled by her sudden change of heart, "You're not staying? This breakfast is..."

"Sorry, Leo, I'll pay you for the dress, and about the matter I'll give you a proper apology."

"Ms. Nightshade."

I'll treat you to dinner next time, I promise. I owe

Cedric stepped forward, and Xanthea nodded at him, "Goodbye!"

“Ms. Nightshade.”

How could she just leave like that? Cedric watched the man beside him, who couldn't take his eyes off her departing figure. His gaze was darkened, his face pale without a trace of color.

Last night, the boss had stayed by Ms. Nightshade's bedside, caring for her through the night without a wink of sleep. At dawn, he ordered someone to prepare a hangover cure and clothes, and had personally cooked an elaborate breakfast, even going as far as to procure the seafood sea urchin from Everglade, spending two hours meticulously cooking this special dish, his hands even injured in the process.

Cedric looked down at the slowly forming droplet of blood on his fingertip. Yet, Ms. Nightshade not only didn't stay for breakfast but also didn't even glance at him as she walked away with Matthew.

She had said goodbye to everyone else, so why couldn't she even speak a word to the boss? Even a simple farewell would have been something.

Ms. Nightshade clearly didn't care about him at all. Perhaps he was now in more pain than being physically stabbed.

“Xan, I got you breakfast – crab cakes, sticky rice, and a cappuccino, all your favorites.”

Matthew opened the coffee lid and handed her the breakfast, “Have some coffee first; it'll help with the hangover.”

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“No need, I'm not hungry.”

Xanthea set down the food, eager to ask him, “What did I actually say to you last night? That made you come looking for me in the middle of the night?”

“It wasn't much, really. I just sensed something was off on your end and rushed over. At first, when you

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picked up my call, you seemed happy, said you missed me, but then suddenly, your mood crashed. You were loudly asking why, why doing this to you?”

Xanthea's heart skipped a beat, “And then?”



“I thought someone was trying to hurt you, so I asked worriedly what was wrong, if someone was,” He didn’t finish his thought about Orion, “trying to do something to you, but then you hung up.”

That was it?

“That’s all?”

“That’s all,” Matthew nodded.

Xanthea exhaled deeply, relieved. She’d been so uneasy she’d said something damning. Turned out, it was just a false alarm.

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### **CHAPTER 159**

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#### Chapter 159

“You guessed right, someone did try to hurt me, and it was that girl who just apologized to me. Yesterday, I had some unpleasant misunderstanding with her at the Marlowe Manor, and after a few drinks last night, things escalated into a fight. She was the one questioning me, and she also smashed my phone.

But for some reason, she suddenly came over to apologize today, which is totally out of character for her. Perhaps she got a lecture from her family elders.”

“Oh, I see!” Matthew’s face lit up with understanding at her words.

That explained everything. He had been overthinking, but, “Xan, why did you come to Everglade with Orion?”

“Because” Xanthea pulled out a black iris from her bag, “of this!”

“An iris?”

“Yeah, I heard that the Everglade mountains have these rare black irises, and I’ve been wanting to check them out. Just so happened that Orion was heading to the Marlowe’s, so I hitched a ride.”

“Just to see the flowers?”

“What else did you think, Matt?”

“Nothing, it’s just...”

He parked the car by the roadside, looking at her intently.

“Xan, from now on, if there’s anywhere you want to go or anything you like, just tell me. I’ll take you there, no matter how busy I am. Could you maybe not get too close to other men? I’m not doubting you, but I get

W, and jealous too. You’re so beautiful and amazing; I’m afraid someone better might come along

and steal you away from me.”

Xanthea saw the pleading and humility in his eyes, a stark contrast to the indifference and impatience of his past self.

Since “The Masked Singer” event, she had sensed something was off.

He had betrayed her before, openly bonking Miranda in the backyard. But after the show aired, he changed drastically, showering her with attention, suggesting trips, giving little gifts and treats.

And now, he had rushed over from Crestwood to Everglade overnight just because something she said. Especially this morning, she heard him argue with Leonard; given his tendency to flatter those in power, how would he have the guts?

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it because her act was lousy enough to have her resentment revealed, one she couldn’t hide no matter how hard she tried, and he saw it through, fearing he was losing his grip on her, which was why he started pursuing her determinedly, or...had he fallen for her?

Ha.

A mocking smile flickered in Xanthea’s eyes. Fine then, she could repay him for all the suffering she endured in her past life!

“Matt, you’re overthinking it. No matter how many wonderful people might like me, you’re the only one in my heart.

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She spoke emotionlessly, the words so fake she almost gagged, but Matthew looked utterly delighted, his eyes, which were fixed on her, brimming with joy, "Me too, Xan. You're the only one for me."

Xanthea smirked. It turned out that when someone was in love, they really couldn't see the disgust hidden in their partner's eyes, just as she had been foolish in her past life.

Three days later.

On the set of Realm of Illusions of the Glory Building.

"Movie King's here! Movie King's here!"

A buzz of excitement spread. April, who played Vivian, was checking the script, and then immediately stood up, her gaze drifting eagerly towards the crowd.

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"Benjamin, you made it."

Kevin rose from behind the camera, "Everything's set up for the shoot. Just waiting for everyone to get here and we'll be rolling. I'm thrilled to be working with you on this one!"

"Director Smith, you're too kind." Benjamin smiled, "To be able to work with you, such an illustrious director in the industry, I feel honored. By the way, where's Xan? She's got the big opening scene today."

"She just called; said she'll be here in ten minutes. She should be here soon."

"Great, I'll wait for her in the lounge."

As Benjamin made his way to the temporary actors' lounge, April approached him, extending her hand. shyly, "Hello, Benjamin, I'm April from Starlight Media. I'm playing Vivian in this movie, and I've been a huge fan of yours for years!"

"Hello."

Benjamin gave her a slight nod but didn't take her hand, leaving April to awkwardly retract her own. She pressed on, "I have a scene with you later, my first time acting with my idol. I'm a bit nervous. Could we possibly run lines together?"

“Don’t be nervous. Just treat it with calm.”

Benjamin’s eyes scanned the lounge for a place to sit. April quickly pulled out a chair, next to her, but he headed straight for another spot, where a nameplate read “Xanthea”.

True to his reputation, he kept his distance from fellow cast members, particularly actresses. His professionalism was probably why he’d managed a scandal-free career over the decades.

Still, April wasn’t easily dissuaded. Catching up to him, she ventured cautiously, “Benjamin, I’m playing Vivian this time, and we’ll have many scenes together, and I know you expect a lot from your co-stars. I’m worried I haven’t grasped the script thoroughly and might not meet your standards. Could I buy you lunch and get some pointers?”

She used the script as a pretext, yet Benjamin still declined, “If the director cast you, he believes you’re the right fit. If you’re unsure about something, the scriptwriter might be the better person to ask.”

Rejected thrice, April stood awkwardly, unsure whether to stay or go.

Assistant Jason, used to seeing actresses trying to make an impression, was about to intervene when Xanthea arrived.

\*Ben!”

“Xan!” Benjamin’s face lit up as he saw her; he stood, pulling out a chair, “You’re here: Come, have a seat.”

“Thanks. Am late again?”

“Not at all, just got here too.”

Xanthea had barely sat down when she noticed April standing off to the side. She got up to greet her, “Hi, I’m Xanthea from Oli-hea Media.”

Hi I’m April, playing Vivian.

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Chapter 160

April was still reeling from the cold shoulder when she was taken aback by Benjamin’s evident warmth towards Xanthea. Was it because she was the lead actress?

“Xan, you’ve got a big scene today- the mall shootout. It’s Phoenix’s first appearance and it’s a doozy with all the action. Are you ready?”

“Yeah.” Xanthea nodded, “I’ve done a lot of research and even took some lessons. Should be good.”

“Actual filming is different from rehearsal and watching films, especially fight scenes. It’s easy to get hurt. if you’re not careful.” He opened the script on the table, laying it out in front of her, “Let’s go over some safety points before we start shooting.”