

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 171

Posted by AdminHR, ? Views, Released on May 16, 2024

Chapter 171

It wasn't a hallucination.

It was really her.

He slowly closed the door, as his knuckles accidentally brushed against the button, the smart screen lit up with the message: "Received the master instruction. Child lock is on."
"

Seeing him approaching, Xanthea immediately pulled out a **chair**, acting like a devoted personal assistant, with a welcoming gesture. Orion looked down to see a bowl of creamy soup with a golden layer of all shimmering on top.

Had she taken the day off just to make soup?

"Try it, I promise it's delicious!

Xanthes fluttered her bright, sparkling eyes at him, she noticed that he still had his **face** mask on with no intention of removing it. Feeling puzzled, she asked, "Why are you wearing a mask inside the **house**?"

I've been coughing a bit lately, and I don't want to risk getting you sick

Coughing?

Wasn't it a fever?

Had he delayed treatment too long, causing a series of complications?

"Really?"

Xanthea pretended not to know but couldn't hide her concern as she reached out to touch his forehead, "Just a cough? You look a bit off. Do you have a fever **too**?"

Her soft hand unexpectedly touched his forehead, causing his pupils to dilate. He was just about to stand up when she pressed down on his shoulder

"Stay put, let me check properly."

She moved her palm from his forehead to his temples, removing the bothersome white mask. She paused at his cheeks, then traced the strong lines of his jawline down to his neck. Feeling the sudden, intense throbbing of his Adam's apple under her fingers, she released her grip as if shocked by electricity.

Something wasn't right.

It was definitely hot, no mistake about the fever, but why did it seem **to** get hotter **and** more intense the more she touched?

Could someone's temperature fluctuate so drastically in such **a** short time? He wasn't developing some serious condition, was he?

"You're burning up!"

Xanthea stared at him in shock. His lips were tightly sealed, his facial features tensed, and a faint sweat appeared on his brow. His skin from the corners of his eyes down to his neck flushed red, and his dark eyes seemed to blaze with an inner fire.

She didn't realize how her words could be so easily misunderstood, and her actions were so tantalizing.

"Wait here, I'll grab something!"

Worried, Xanthea ran towards the door, then suddenly turned back with a tone that was half warning, half pleading. "And hey, don't lock me out again!"

A slight smile curled on Orion's lips. Just as Xanthea was about to step out **and** gripped the doorknob, she wasn't locked out, but once again, the door closed on her, keeping her inside.

Staring at **the smart** screen which showed the same child lock warning as before, Xanthea had her eyes widened, "Not the child lock again? I didn't close the door this time, Orion, is your door broken?"

"Ms. Nightshade, what did you want to go get?"

"A thermometer, to check your temperature"

"There's one in the storeroom."

"Really?" Xanthea glanced towards the storeroom at the back of the flat and hurried inside. "You could have told me earlier!"

Watching her disappear, Orion slowly raised a hand to his forehead.

Was it really that hot?

He had **only** just started to notice his own **body** temperature. T

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CHAPTER 172

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Chapter 172

Xanthea dashed into the storage room, rifling through each shelf in search of a thermometer. As she reached the bottom shelf, she caught a glimpse of a safe, adorned with a delicate blue iris flower, dried to perfection.

She couldn't help but touch it, and immediately, the digital display lit up with a prompt—Please enter her birthday; it startled her enough to quickly withdraw her hand,

Please enter her birthday? Her? A woman?

It struck her as childish that Orion, the illustrious Crestwood tycoon, would use a woman's **birthday** as the safe's password. Wasn't he afraid of thieves? Or perhaps this woman **was** exceptionally important to him?

He didn't have a girlfriend. Could it be his mother's birthday? Or maybe it was the birthday of some muse he dreamed about?

Pondering this, she opened another compartment marked with a cross. Inside, there was not only a thermometer but also a first aid kit, filled with unopened medications for colds, fevers, burns, and more.

Orion, despite having all sorts of medicine at home, stubbornly refused to take any, deliberately neglecting his health. If she were a family member, she would definitely scold him!

"Orion, I found it."

Carrying the medicine kit, Xanthea came out to see Orion thoughtfully sipping the soup she had made

She smiled as she approached, resting her arms on the dining table, and playfully watching him with her sparkling eyes, “How is it? This is my first time making soup. Does it taste okay?”

“Mmm, it’s delicious.”

Orion’s clear, appreciative tone didn’t try to hide his praise, “Ms. Nightshade, you excel at everything you do.”

If anyone else had said that, she might have taken it as flattery, but coming from him, it felt incredibly sincere, making her heart swell with joy.

“Really? Getting a compliment from a ‘six–star’ chef like you isn’t easy.”

Catching the tease in her words, Orion had his lips **curved** slightly, “Ms. Nightshade, you flatter me.”

sales call

“Oh come on, drop the formalities. We’ve known each other **for** years. Just call me by my nickname. My friends and my families call me Xan, if you don’t mind,” Xanthea looked at him, arching her brow playfully, “You could call me ‘Xan’ **too?**”

At that, he froze.

As their eyes met, his gaze locked onto her twinkling eyes as if sucked into a profound vortex, almost as if her reflection was clearly mirrored in his pupils.

E F

The air filled with a subtle yet intense tension, vibrating and sparking as if the atmosphere itself heated up.

Noticing his unusual expression, Xanthea felt inwardly panicked.

She had accidentally blurted out the nickname he used for her in a past life. Except for that time at Glory Building when he saved her from drowning, he had never called her Xan. Now, by suggesting it herself, he must be puzzled, perhaps even overthinking.

“Right!”

She suddenly straightened, cleverly changing the subject, “I found the thermometer. Let’s check your temperature.”

Considering that he had just drunk the **soup**, it might not be accurate to measure his oral temperature. So, she opted for his armpit instead.

She pulled out the thermometer **and, as** she was about to tuck it under his arm, he swiftly grasped her wrist, the excessive warmth of his palm sent a chill through her

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 173

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Chapter 173

"I'll handle it myself."

Orion glanced down as a fleeting shadow passed under his eyes as he took the thermometer from her hand and placed it under his left

Xanthea had been puzzled by his intense reaction just moments ago, but now, seeing his actions and expression, she suddenly understood

He didn't want her to see the iris tattoo on his right chest, or the gnarly, terrifying burn scars beneath it.

But she was just trying to check his temperature, not strip him bare. His guardedness made it seem like he thought she was some kind of hooligan!

"Then take it out in 10 minutes and **read** it."

"Sure, thanks, Xan"

When he casually called her Xan, it sent a shiver through Xanthea's body as if an electric current had passed through her.

His voice was already deep and magnetic, like tuning a cello to a D note, and now slightly hoarse from the fever, **it** added an irresistibly rich, sexy timbre. Hearing her nickname in such a tone was dizzyingly intimate, which fluttered her heart

If he ever became a late-night radio host, that voice could revive the dead. But why did he use Xan, just like her family did?

"No **need** to thank me!" Xanthea pulled out a box of fever-reducing pills from the medicine kit. "Because you're going to hate me soon. If you've got a fever, you'll need to take these pills. If you refuse, I'll just have to force them down!"

She pinched a few pills, her brow furrowed menacingly as she threatened him. She expected him to resist vehemently, but instead, he smiled slightly and softly agreed. "Okay."

Xanthea was full of confusion.

She stared at him in shock. Just like that? Cedric had said that no matter who tried, Orion would never take his medicine. Was he tricking her?

"Really?"

"Really."

Orion looked at the girl who had rushed in to check his temperature, fetch medicine, and even took time off from her film set to cook **soup** for him for hours. With his Adam's apple bobbing, he couldn't help asking, "Xan, you're not mad **at** me anymore?"

Another shiver passed through Xanthea, and a wave of guilt surged within her. "I stopped being mad at you a long time ago, and about the Realm of Illusions copyrights, my uncle already told me everything. You transferred them to me for free. Orion, why didn't you tell me?"

She gazed at him with burning eyes, full of confusion.

She wanted him to tell her that he had eliminated her from the set because he was concerned about her safety. That he had given Realm of Illusions' to Oli hea Media because he recognized her talent, not because he was trying to sell it for a high price. It would have cleared all her misunderstandings about him.

Orion had his lashes lowered, and a soft shadow cast by the crystal chandelier was reflected in his eyes, as if he was lost in a deep, old

memory.

"Get lost! I hate you, I hate you, I hate you the most! I don't need your help, leave me alone, no matter what you do, I'll never like you. I want Matt, I only want Matt"

"It's not necessary."

After a long pause, he spoke gravely.

"How can it not be necessary? It's very necessary! If you had told me everything, I wouldn't **have** misunderstood you, and I wouldn't have done those excessive things"

She bit her lip in self-reproach, while Orion raised an eyebrow in confusion,

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 174

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Chapter 174

"Yes, I did break your medicine bottle"

"That **was** a gift from you."

"And I even yelled at you, calling you a hypocrite, a pretender"

Orion chuckled lightly. "So it's you who was chastising me? I thought it was just child's play."

"Child's play?"

Xanthea was startled by his peculiar interpretation, "So, you've always seen me as a child?"

Like Sebastian, who always grinned and bounded around, thought he's tougher than he is, but actually was not intimidating at all?

She had thought she held the upper hand in every encounter, but it turned out he was just indulging her like a child.

Orion stared **at** her, bemused, "Yeah"

A baby, not much different from a child.

"But she pointed somewhat sheepishly at his chest, "I even bit you.

That bite was filled with spite.

It's healed now."

"Healed or not, it still hurt!"

"What should we do about it?" Orion's gaze casually swept across her chest, "How about you let me take a bite?"

Following his gaze, Xanthea quickly crossed her arms defensively. Jerk!

His laughter filled the air, **and** only then did Xanthea realize she had been played. Despite being sick, he **still** had the mood to joke around, which meant he wasn't very ill.

"Orion, remember, you still owe me a favor?"

"I remember."

"I want to ask for it today, and you must agree!"

She looked at him earnestly, "I want you to forget everything that happened before, and forgive me for all the **bad** things I said and did, okay?"

"I never blamed you"

Orion's eyes, filled with tenderness, melted like the ice in spring, which warmed Xanthea's heart so much that her nose felt tingling

In the past, she'd taken for granted everyone's kindness around her, as though she deserved it from birth, until she saw the true faces of Matthew and Miranda. **She** realized that apart from family, 'everyone else's love' came with strings attached.

Matthew wanted to use her to gain power and status, and Miranda wanted to replace her as the sole daughter of the Nightshade family. Only he had always silently supported her unconditionally.

"Orion, why are you being so good to me?"

She couldn't help asking. Orion put down his spoon and **avoided** her gaze. "Because you had helped me once."

Lies!

Xanthea pouted, feeling dissatisfied.

And about the past life? She hadn't attended any gemstone conventions nor had any interactions with him, yet he still

"I don't believe it. There must be another reason!"

Xanthea **pushed away** the soup, eyeing him with suspicion.

"You're so good to me, you must be secretly harboring some unspeakable emotions, right?"

yet he still helped her.

When she mentioned ‘unspeakable emotions, Orion’s gaze froze, and his expression stiffened along with the strong and rhythmic beating of his heart, as if the entire world had gone silent for a **second**, two seconds, three seconds.

Until she spoke again, her voice charged with excitement, “See, your nervous expression has given you away! Do I look like your late sister or perhaps a cousin? Because of the brutal family feuds, you lost them forever, but you can’t control the longing in your heart. **So**, when you saw me, who looks a lot like your sisters, you placed all your emotions on me, trying to **find** some comfort?”

My Beloved Has Risen from Death’s Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 175

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Chapter 175

“Am I right? You know, the kind of feuds among top-tier families like yours always appear on TV dramas, and I’ve learned how to **deduce** from them!” Xanthea said with a self-satisfied smirk, only to notice a look on his face that screamed bemusement mixed with a desire to ignore her

Uh–oh, did she get it wrong?

That couldn’t be right. The news had reported multiple times about the early days of infighting and constant battles within the Lockwood Group. It was like something straight out of those historical drama series, always involving sacrificing children. And that scar on his chest must be linked to those struggles, right?

Plus, her theory also fit with how, in a past life she had no connection with him, and he always lurked in the shadows to help her, even avenging her.

Adding to that, she had just asked him to call her **Xan**, and he hadn’t done that, sticking with Xanthea instead. Clearly, Xan and **Xanthea** were two different people in his mind!

As Xanthea’s expressions grew more animated, clearly lost in her vivid imaginations, Orion shattered her fantasy with a simple statement, “The Lockwood family only ever had me as a child.”

Xanthea was lost for words. She froze, raising an eyebrow awkwardly, “Oh? Did I save your life then?”

You remember that?”

Orion smiled, feeling somewhat relieved, and Xanthea scoffed.

“I think you’re making bigger jokes than I am. You must be fine then. Let’s see what your temperature really is.”

As she **said** this, she swiftly moved her hand towards his chest, but he caught it effortlessly.

“It’s annoying; you’re sick, and yet you’re still so quick?”

“Enough to handle you.”

Pfft! She hadn’t even tried her hardest!

“Wait a second.”

Xanthea gripped his hand, noticing the dense array of prick marks, which were more severe than the ones she got from those thorny roses from obsessed fans.

“Are these injuries from when you worked on the hedge at Marlowe Manor for me?”

“It’s nothing.”

Orion casually withdrew his hand, “Just got pricked by the cactus on my desk.”

Cactus on his desk?

He really knew how to lie. Why **didn’t** he just tell her it was from making breakfast for her?

Getting the truth about his past life’s revenge from him seemed as hard as climbing to heaven.

“Get the thermometer.”

Orion fetched the thermometer; his expression was faltering as he saw the reading. Xanthea snatched it; her face turned pale when she saw the glaring 104°F.

“You have such a high fever?!”

She turned to him incredulously. Even he was sick so much, he still joked around with her as if nothing was wrong. Was he out of his mind?

*Take your

'reducer now, and then go to bed!'

Orion looked at the table where the water and medicine were already set, his gaze slightly dimming.

Was she leaving?

Seeing his hesitant look, Xanthea thought he was backtracking, so she angrily grabbed the water and medicine, shoving them towards him, commanding, "Take it now! You promised me, no backing out!"

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 176

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Chapter 176

"**And** after you eat it, you'd better stay at home and rest, not going anywhere, especially on any **long** trips."

Xanthea emphasized the words "long trips to gauge **his** reaction. "Got it? I'll be keeping an eye on you these days, so don't even think about skipping town!"

Orion's eyes, which had just dimmed, suddenly sparkled again at her **words**. "You'll be coming over these days?"

"Yes, your illness is because of me, uh, no, that's not right. I misunderstood you before, and I feel guilty about it, so I want to make **it up** to you if that's okay?"

"That's fine, I'll wait for you."

A ripple of a smile crossed Orion's lips as he took his medicine with water.

Xanthea was stunned to see him so readily give up his international trip. She had thought him, a CEO known for his decisive and unyielding nature, would never entertain her unreasonable request. Yet, here he was, agreeing so easily

Such a good boy-

Watching him obediently take his medicine, Xanthea had her eyes narrowed slightly with affection. She was tempted to stroke his hair and see if it was as soft and gentle **as** his demeanor now suggested.

"This medication might make you sleepy, you should head to your room and get some sleep early."

"Okay"

Orion stood up, about to fetch the remote to unlock the parental controls for her, when he saw her heading straight for the bedroom, grasping the doorknob.

"What are you waiting for? Come on in-

She stood at the door, warmly inviting him into the bedroom.

"You."

"I'm going to keep you company while you sleep."

"What?"

Orion's eyes nearly snapped **shut**, with a flicker of intense emotion visible in his pupils.

"What's the matter, oh no!"

Realizing how her words might have been misconstrued, Xanthea flushed red on her face,

"I mean 111 stay with you, so you can fall asleep looking at me. Not that kind of company—what were you thinking?!"

What had he done to give her the impression that just seeing her would make him want to sleep? Seeing her, he only wanted to...

"Come on in"

How could he still be mocking her, was her tomboy image so deeply ingrained in his mind?

In the minimalist-decorated bedroom, Xanthea pulled the curtains closed, then turned to look at the man lying on the bed, and quietly pulled a blanket over him.

As the thin cashmere blanket slowly covered his tall, well-proportioned figure, her tomboy instincts were somewhat stirred. She licked her lips and murmured appreciatively, "Nice physique-

"Do you like it, Xan?"

A deep, husky voice startled her, and she looked up to find him still awake!

Not only was he awake, but his eyes, with the deep and enticing shade of obsidian in the dim light, were also fixed on her

“Why aren’t you asleep yet?”

“I can’t sleep.”

“If you can’t sleep, just close your eyes and you’ll fall asleep soon!”

“Alright”

Orion **slowly** closed his eyes, but even with his fiery gaze hidden, the **thunderous beat** of his heart echoed through his chest.

His Xan was in his room.

Like every silent, endless night, those were just fleeting illusions, but now, she was real, standing in front of his bed, moving, **talking**. her soft breathing entwined around his ears, making him want to **stay** awake every second, even **as** his body temperature seemed **to**

rise.

My Beloved Has Risen from Death’s Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 177

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Chapter 177

“Shh, don’t talk. Talking will keep you from sleeping.”

After she finished speaking, Xanthea felt like she was echoing her mother, who used to soothe her to **sleep** with fairy tales and lullabies whenever **she** was ill or restless.

“Orion, how about I sing **you** a song?”

“Butterfly”

“No, something different, one you’ve never heard!” Xanthea **said** as she sat on the futon, recalling the lyrics from a distant memory.

The clear, pure melody of the girl’s voice stilled as she sang, and the man lying on the bed involuntarily clenched his fists so tight the sheets twisted,

She still remembered that song.

As Xanthea sang, her thoughts drifted far back in time.

that

She

remembered “Chasing Dreams,” the first song she ever wrote, crafted for the ‘Elementary School Song Contest. But just before she was to perform, her music teacher worried her original song might not win approval from the judges, and switched it for a popular children’s song of the time.

Back then, she was already a little star in her school, with many fans who cheered for her under the stage, and she didn’t disappoint, taking home the first prize.

After her performance, a crowd of fans excitedly surrounded her for **photos**. Amid the hustle, a little boy was pushed down, and his hand was trampled several times.

She rushed to help him up, only to see he was covered up with a mask, sunglasses, and a cap, which made his face completely hidden. As she asked if he was okay, he turned and ran

It was strange, considering he was a fan. Why would he be afraid to talk to her?

Later, she learned from classmates that his left cheek had been disfigured in a fire, leaving a hideous scar, as the scar was still healing. He made it always wrapped up, rendering him look like a “freak”. But she just thought he seemed terribly unfortunate.

One rainy day, when her ride

looking like a forsaken pup was delayed and all other students had been picked up, she saw him again, alone at the end of a hallway

looking like a forsaken puppy with his pant legs soaked through.

She approached cautiously and was spotted:

He tried to flee, but she called out loudly, “Don’t run! I won’t come over, and I won’t pull your hat like the others!”

“Til just stand here. We can talk and keep each other company. How does that sound?”

He didn’t respond or seemed eager to chat, but remembering he was a fan, she offered, “How about I sing you a song?”

“You’re

e not saving

saying no, so I'll take that as a

as a yes!"

Back then, she sang "Chasing Dreams, and he was her first listener. Orion was the second.

The strong sedative effects of the medication, combined with the girl's gentle, melodious voice, gradually lulled the man into a deep sleep.

Listening to his steady, prolonged breaths and observing his serene, handsome sleeping face, Xanthea slowly ceased her singing.

Having worked continuously despite being sick for several days, he must be exhausted.

She muttered, rest well, and hopefully, you'll feel refreshed when you awaken!

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 178

Posted by **AdminHR**, ? Views, Released on May 16, 2024

Chapter 178

On the bustling set of "Realm of Illusions" at the Glory Building, the director's voice cut through the air, signaling the end of the scene.

"Cut! That's a wrap for Group A. Actors, take five!"

"Phoenix, come over here a sec."

After shooting a challenging scene, Kevin waved Xanthea over. Shaking off her harness, she jogged toward him, "What's up, Kevin? Any issues with the scene?"

"Not at all, it was fantastic!"

Kévin's eyes shone with admiration. "For a first-timer, you're doing incredibly well, especially with these back-to-back action scenes. Holding up okay?"

"I'm good, really. Just excited to be here," Xanthea reassured him.

"Great, go grab some lunch. Oh, and by the way," Kevin glanced at his camera, then a thought struck him, "did Mr. Lockwood **get** in touch with you yesterday?"

“Mr. Lockwood?” Xanthea appeared confused.

“Yeah, he was here looking for **you** yesterday afternoon. Even took some footage of you. Looks like he sees potential in you. Really give it your best, Phoenix. Having the backing of someone like the CEO of Starlight Media could rocket your career!”

It dawned on Xanthea that Orion’s mysterious absence yesterday was because he had come looking for her. Despite being unwell, he made the effort. She felt a pang of guilt remembering her simple soup apology the day before; it seemed rather inadequate now.

She was so lost in her thoughts that she nearly tripped over some camera gear, but a pair of steady hands caught her.

“Watch your step!”

Looking up, she saw Benjamin stepping out from the set, “Benjamin? Thanks.”

“What’s on your mind? You seem distracted:

“Just some personal stuff”

“Did you sort out yesterday’s issue?”

“Sort of,” Xanthea nodded, then hesitated. “Not completely. Might take a few **more days**.”

“Would I be too forward if I invited you out for dinner tonight?” Benjamin asked with a light tone.

“Of course, you can. And no jokes this time, Xanthea chuckled awkwardly, while scratching her head. “I promise, no bailing on **you** today!”

“Let’s go then, Benjamin opened the car door for her, while lightly **guarding** her head with his **hand as** she got in.

Behind them, April swiftly captured the moment on her camera, her eyes gleaming with mischief. This was the scoop she had been waiting for. The story of their budding romance could make headlines!

Later at the Coconut Island Restaurant, the waiter began serving an array of dishes. The table was filled with dishes like stewed beef brisket with tomato, crab, and coconut milk, which reminded Xanthea of the dinner Orion prepared back in Willowdale, including his special cooling tonic.

“Do you have any cooling tonic?” Xanthea asked the waiter.

“Yes, Miss!”

“Could you bring a serving? Benjamin, would you like some

My Beloved Has Risen from Death’s Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 179

Posted by **AdminHR**, 1542 Views, Released on May 16, 2024

Chapter 179

“Since you’re so into it, I might as well **give** it a try,” Benjamin said, with a voice tinged with relief that he had chosen the right restaurant. “I heard from Mr. Lopez that you’re a fan of Southern fare, so I picked the most renowned Southern cuisine restaurant in Crestwood, They say their signature dish is top-notch, even more authentic than in the South itself. **Want** to give it a try?”

With high hopes, Xanthea tasted every dish on the table, but none of them matched the flavors in her memory. In fact, they weren’t even close to Orion’s cooking skills.

She worried whether her taste **buds** had been spoiled by Orion,

“How is it?”

“It’s okay, but it’s not outstanding. I **have** a friend whose cooking beats this place hands down!”

“Really? I didn’t know you had such a talented friend. The chef’s here are certified culinary experts, Benjamin exclaimed, looking surprised.

“When can I

love to try his cooking too?”

I meet him? I’d love to try his

“Introduce you to him?” Xanthea chuckled at the thought,

If she dared to introduce her friend to Orion, and let him cook for them, Orion might kill her with his **glare** alone.

“Maybe someday, he’s usually pretty busy.”

Absolutely no chance. She couldn't afford the chairman of the Lockwood Group cooking a meal for them.

"By the way, I've been thinking of buying a gift for a friend but I'm not sure what to get. Any suggestions?"

"Of course, what's it for?"

"An apology"

"What kind of friend is this?"

"Hmm." Xanthea pondered for a moment, "A guy, tall, rich, and handsome, incredibly good-looking, seems like he lacks nothing"

Benjamin paused, while having his grip on his utensils tightened slightly.

Orion?

"Is **this** friend important to you?:"

"Very important" Xanthea nodded without hesitation.

"I see." Benjamin slowly put down his fork. "Since he's an important friend who seems to have everything, there's no need for overly extravagant gifts. Maybe choose some small, everyday decorative items based on his likes."

Likes?

A lightbulb went off in Xanthea's head. Got it!

"Thanks a lot!"

"No problem."

Watching her smile, **Benjamin** barely maintained the cheerfulness of his own expression.

The atmosphere at the table slowly turned quieter; one was savoring the meal, while the other found no taste in the food.

Toward the end of the meal, Benjamin couldn't help but ask, "Xan, are you dating anyone lately?"

Xanthea, with a meatball stuffed in her cheek, shook her head, "No, why do you ask?"

“Just wondering.”

Benjamin’s expression instantly brightened, and even the food seemed to taste better to him. “Just thinking about the upcoming romantic scenes we have **to** shoot.”

Sunset Hills Estates, 3001

As the midnight was approaching, the man in the vast, dark bedroom slowly woke up, shaking off a slight dizziness and the remnants of a fever. The passionate smiles and glances of the girl from the night before seemed like an illusion until he saw a note.

Remember to have breakfast and take your medication after you wake up! I left breakfast in the thermal box at the door, **and** I’ve prepared your **pills** too. Be sure to take them! Also, remember not to go **far**, I’ll be back tonight to check on you! (smiley face)

The bright noon sun streamed through the gaps in the curtains, which cast a faint golden hue around the man’s defined features, making the slight smile in his eyes even more captivating.

My Beloved Has Risen from Death’s Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 180

Posted by **AdminHR**, 1527 Views, Released on May 16, 2024

Chapter 180

The penthouse suite of the Lockwood Group headquarters was buzzing with the usual business frenzy, but today, an air of concern hung heavy. It was almost noon, and the CEO had yet to show up at the office. Everyone was on edge, wondering if Ms. Nightshade had managed to coax him into taking better care of his health.

Cedric, the executive assistant, checked his watch for what felt like the hundredth time that morning. Just as he was about to call Xanthea to check in, a chime signaled the arrival of the elevator.

He turned, and his eyes lit up with excitement when he saw the figure stepping out. The CEO, Orion, looked revitalized, his presence was as commanding as ever. “Sit you made it! Feeling any better?”

“**Mhm.**”

It had been ages since Cedric had seen Orion look so vibrant and energetic. Ms. Nightshade truly was a miracle worker!

co, about today’s flight to Veridian?”

“Postponed.”

Relief washed over Cedric as he mentally cheered, ‘Ms. Nightshade for the win!’

“Just to be safe, sir maybe you should check your temperature?”

He handed over the thermometer with delicate care, a tool Orion typically ignored. Today, however, he took it without hesitation

Ten minutes later, Cedric glanced at the thermometer, which read a perfect 98.6°F. He nearly shouted with joy. “The fever’s gone!”

After days of high fever, it had miraculously broken overnight Cedric had always known that Orion, with his robust constitution, shouldn’t have been ill for so long without a physical cause. Clearly, it was all in his head!

“Sir, you’re all better!”

touch of sadness.

Proudly, he presented the thermometer to Orion, who stared at the numbers; his eyes were

clouding over with a b

Was he upset because he thought Ms. Nightshade wouldn’t come around **now** that he was no longer sick?

Cedric followed Orion’s gaze towards the private bathroom, looking puzzled. After a moment of silence, he realized what might be going through his boss’s mind. Orion couldn’t possibly be thinking about taking a **cold** shower to bring the fever back, could he?

“That’s not necessary, sir. If you want people to think you’re still sick, we could just adjust the thermometer reading. There are ways to do that without actually having to be ill,”

Orion looked at him, and Cedric quickly pulled up something on his phone and handed it over

Celestial Jewels Emporium

“Welcome!”

As soon as Xanthea entered, she was surrounded by eager salespeople. The senior manager quickly came over and dismissed the crowd, so he could assist her personally,

“What can I help you with today, miss?”

Im looking **for** some men’s accessories”

“Perfect timing. Our Celestial Jewels Emporium just received a new collection of high–end men’s accessories designed by renowned jewelers; every piece was unique and finely crafted, I’m sure you’ll find something to your liking.”

The manager gestured, and an array of men’s luxury accessories was displayed before Xanthea—necklaces, rings, earrings, brooches, tie clips, cufflinks.

Necklaces and earrings were too flamboyant for Orion’s reserved elegance.

Rings carried a special meaning—definitely a pass.

While the brooches were quite unique, they could only be paired with specific outfits; it was impractical for someone like Orion, who never wore the same outfit twice