

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

## **CHAPTER 41**

### Chapter 41

"Mr. Lockwood, please rest assured, the security in downtown Willowdale has always been top-notch. We haven't had any incidents of missing children in the last six months. Sebastian will be found; he couldn't have gone far!"

The butler looked up, his heart skipping a beat as he observed the increasingly stern features and icy glare in Orion's dark eyes.

Ever since Lilian had passed away, Orion's main concern had been his young nephew. Despite being swamped with corporate affairs, he made it a point to fly in from Crestwood to Willowdale every few months just to spend time with Sebastian. It was unimaginable that today, of all days, Sebastian had mysteriously vanished. This was the first time in

two decades of service with the Thompson family that he had seen Orion this furiously enraged.

With more than ten hours since Sebastian's disappearance, the golden window for searching was closing fast. If anything were to happen to Sebastian, the consequences were unthinkable.

As night deepened, the villa was ablaze with lights. Orion, after glancing at the clock countless times, finally lost the last shred of his composure.

"I'll find him myself."

Outside Villa 27 in Crystal Lakes.

Xanthea stood at the door with Sebastian in tow, utterly stunned. "A five-story villa-this is really your place?"

"Yeah, let's go inside!"

Xanthea was stunned. She had thought she was helping a lost boy she found on the beach, not realizing he was a playful young heir from a wealthy family. His home was even grander than the expensive new house her family had recently purchased!

"Alright, we'll..."

Before she could finish, several uniformed officers and a teary-eyed maid ran out from the villa, ecstatically lifting Sebastian into their arms.

"He's back, he's back!"

"Sebastian, where have you been all day? Mr. Lockwood and all of us have been worried sick!"

"Uncle's here?" Sebastian wriggled excitedly in the arms of one of the officers. "Let me go, I want to see Uncle!"

This cheeky boy had indeed triggered a full-scale alarm by sneaking out. Shaking her

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head, Xanthea said, "Since your uncle's here, I better not intrude."

"No!" Sebastian panicked at the thought of her leaving, clutching her hand tightly. "You promised to stay with me tonight!"

"That was before your uncle came back."

“But, but.” He stuttered before suddenly declaring with utmost confidence, “But my uncle is super handsome-the most handsome man in the universe!”  
Xanthea was puzzled. What did his uncle’s looks have to do with anything?  
“Mr. Lockwood, Sebastian-he’s back!”  
The butler, wiping away tears of relief, hurried to the foyer to report. Orion’s tense expression softened momentarily.  
“Uncle!”  
From afar, Sebastian’s joyful call could be heard.  
But before he could rush into his uncle’s arms, a chilling voice stopped him cold.  
“Sebastian Thompson, come here now!”  
Sebastian’s legs halted as he saw the stormy expression on the man in the hall.  
Uh-oh, Uncle was angry. Being called by his full name was usually a prelude to a spanking!  
Curious, Xanthea stepped inside, wondering just how handsome his uncle could be. The most handsome man in the universe”? Surely an exaggeration. In her two lifetimes, she’d met many, yet the only one who could possibly live up to that praise was Orion himself.

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

### **CHAPTER 42**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2716 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

#### Chapter 42

“Help me! My uncle’s gonna clobber me!”  
She had just stepped into the foyer when Sebastian lunged into her arms, looking up just in time to lock eyes with a man wielding a golf club.  
For a second, both froze.  
Xan?  
What was she doing here?  
Orion? Here of all places!  
Hold on!  
Xanthea was stunned, gazing down at Sebastian, who clung tightly to her legs, then back up at the astonished Orion. Suddenly, it clicked.  
Uncle?  
Mr. Lockwood?  
The most handsome man in the universe?  
Could Orion be Sebastian’s uncle?  
No wonder she felt a sense of familiarity the moment she first saw Sebastian. Looking closer, there was indeed a resemblance in their features, although their auras were worlds apart, which is why she hadn’t made the connection. Sebastian wasn’t kidding when he sang his praises!  
“Orion? What a coincidence.”  
Xanthea was the first to recover, flashing a smile that said fate works in mysterious ways. She pointed at the shiny golf club in his hand, “Planning to use that for what

exactly?"

Her sudden appearance caught him off guard, his face still clouded with anger that hadn't yet dissipated, mirrored by the menacing gleam of the titanium club.

"He was about to—"

Before Sebastian could finish, Orion cut him off, "It's a gift for Seb."

He lowered his gaze and gently placed the golf club back in its box.

When he looked up again, his stormy expression had cleared, replaced by a serene clarity, "Ms. Nightshade, what brings you here?"

The Thompson family's staff and butlers were dumbstruck.

They had all braced for Orion's thunderous wrath, assuming Sebastian was in for a

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beating. Yet, the mood shifted in an instant from a tempest to calm skies. Who was this girl who could sway Orion's emotions so effortlessly?

Previously, even when Sebastian had made serious mistakes, not even his parents could prevent Orion from meting out discipline. Yet here was this girl, who needed only a glance to do so!

Sebastian was also stunned; he had merely hoped the lovely lady would buy him some time, but she actually managed to make his uncle put down his weapon!

She truly was his guardian angel!

"I got lost playing outside today, and this lovely lady brought me back!"

Sebastian's grip on Xanthea's leg tightened, as if clinging to a lifeline.

A real angel then, descending upon each dark, forgotten corner to rescue those on the brink of despair.

Orion's gaze on her grew intense and searing, almost losing control as his soul seemed drawn to her. Just as he was about to lose himself, his eyes shifted slightly, resting on Sebastian's small hands clutching her leg.

Feeling that intense stare, Sebastian shivered.

That gaze was terrifying!

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It was like the fierce boss in a superhero show suggesting that if he kept holding onto the lovely lady, his fingers might just get chopped off!

Why though? She wasn't his to claim!

Xanthea noted his fierce look toward Sebastian, realizing that the poor kid might still be in for a rough time once she left.

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

### **CHAPTER 43**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2746 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

Chapter 43

Although Sebastian was a bit cheeky, his adorable looks and the delightful evening he had provided were enough for her to put in a good word for him.

"Since he's back now, please don't be too hard on him. He only ran out because he waited all day and you didn't show up. Patience and guidance are necessary."

“Alright.”

No sooner had she finished speaking than Orion agreed.

“Yay!”

Sebastian jumped up in excitement.

Who would have thought that the usually stern and imposing Uncle Orion could be so obedient!

Xanthea affectionately ruffled his hair, “All settled? Now, you need to promise to behave. and not run off anymore. I need to head back.”

The word ‘back’ seemed to freeze Orion in place, and Sebastian stopped his frolicking, clinging tightly to her legs. The Thompson family’s servants quickly came forward to plead, “Miss, we owe you a great deal for bringing the young master back. We’d be lost without your help. Please, stay for dinner!”

“We really must express our gratitude!”

Sebastian added, “Please don’t go. I don’t want you to leave!”

“It’s nothing, really, just a helping hand.” Xanthea smiled and shook her head, turning to Orion to help her out of the situation, but unexpectedly, he also chimed in, “Ms. Nightshade, please stay for dinner.”

“But I’ve already eaten.”

“How about some late-night snacks then?”

He was persistent.

Scratching her head, Xanthea replied, “That’s very kind of you, but I just had your airline. -meal at noon, and now a meal here? It doesn’t seem right.”

“This meal is to thank you, Ms. Nightshade, for bringing Sebastian back.”

“Miss, please don’t refuse. It would really bother us if you didn’t stay for at least a meal today!”

“Don’t go, please? Stay and play with me, will you?” Sebastian pleaded.

Caught between Sebastian’s pleading and the Thompson family’s hospitality, Xanthea  
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glanced at her phone, “Well, right now.”

Seeing her

Situation, Orion gently asked with a lowered gaze, “Or, perhaps you have friends waiting outside for you, Ms. Nightshade?”

“Huh?”

Xanthea paused, then realized he was referring to Matthew and Miranda, as they had planned a trip for the day.

“No, that’s not it. I prefer the natural beauty of Willowdale, while Miranda and Matthew like to visit exhibits, so we split up. But isn’t it a bit too early for a late-night snack?”

Sebastian was eager, “If it’s too early, why don’t you play with me.”

Sebastian was about to suggest playing ball but glanced at Orion and switched gears, “Could you help me with my homework?”

“Homework?”

“Yes!”

Before she could respond, she was hurried into the study by a little force of urgency.

Once inside, he quickly shut the door as if to prevent her escape.

“Please, you have to help me out!”

He looked

up at her with a pout and a face ready to cry. Xanthea couldn't help but pinch his chubby cheeks, "Let's talk properly, no cutesy stuff."

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

### **CHAPTER 44**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2810 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

#### Chapter 44

"I sneaked out to play today, and my uncle is already super mad. If he finds out I haven't finished my homework, he's definitely going to spank me. So can you help me out?"

"Homework help, huh?"

Xanthea glanced at the stack of elementary school workbooks on the desk and nodded, "You've come to the right person, kiddo. I'm a total genius!"

"That's awesome!"

They sat down at the desk, Xanthea flipping through the easy-peasy problems, "Which one should we start with

Sebastian said, "Language, I guess. I'm not great at it."

"Alright, let's start with the exercise then."

Xanthea picked up a pencil and circled the question, when suddenly, a beautiful fruit platter appeared before her, filled with cherries strawberries, bananas, and peaches-all her favorites.

She looked up to see Orion, a bit surprised, "Mr. Lockwood, you're too kind, bringing me this fruit platter yourself."

"No problem. Need me to peel anything?"

Peel?

What here needs peeling?

As she pondered, she noticed the bananas. He meant the bananas?

It was unusual; people usually offer to peel apples or pears, but bananas?

For a moment, it felt like being back on the plane, when she heard him offer to pick bones out of fish-a surreal moment. How could such a considerate man be portrayed by the media as some ruthless tycoon?

“No need, I need to help Seb with his homework first.”

Orion glanced at Sebastian, who was munching on strawberries with his feet propped up, “Are you sure about tutoring him?”

Xanthea detected the skepticism in his voice and raised an eyebrow, “Doubting my skills?” Little did he know, she had graduated from Crestwood Hall Academy as the top student at the age of 18-a feat not achieved in nearly a century.

Why would he doubt a prodigy?

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Orion stared at her, inspired by the fierce intelligence in her eyes, and said nothing. Xanthea decided to prove her mettle with action.

“Seb, let’s tackle the first question. Make a sentence using “I, “ballet, ‘grandpa, ‘a, ‘principal, ‘performed, and ‘for.”

Sebastian wiped his mouth and blurted out without thinking, “The principal and grandpa performed a ballet for me!”

Xanthea’s forehead creased, “You think you’re that influential to have the principal dance for you?”

“My grandpa performed a ballet for the principal?”

“Well, you are amazing.”

Sebastian furrowed his brows, seemingly stumped. Just as Xanthea was about to steer him toward using himself as the subject, he suddenly exclaimed, “The principal performed a ballet for my grandpa!”

Xanthea’s mouth twitched-Dare he say that again?

“Right? Xan, am I not super smart?”

Xanthea thought, “Smart, you’re a real genius!”

Xanthea felt a bit embarrassed, only to see Orion across the table, a faint smile playing at his lips, and she was unexpectedly dazzled.

Was this the first time she'd seen him smile?

She hadn't expected that a man who usually seemed so aloof could have a smile that was so disarming, almost ethereal. She dared not imagine how weak at the knees she'd be if he whispered sweet nothings with that smile.

"Xan, come on, praise me! Stop staring at Uncle Orion!"

Sebastian shook her arm, and Xanthea realized she had been gazing at Orion for quite a while. What if he thought she was some kind of flirt?

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### **CHAPTER 45**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2882 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

Chapter 45

"Are you making fun of me?"

Orion shook his head, "Not at all."

"Yes, you were!" Sebastian caught him red-handed, while Xanthea playfully pinched his cheek, "And you, have you always been this cheeky?"

"What can I say? There isn't any other way to put it!"

Xanthea teased, "Is there a chance it was 'I performed ballet for the principal'?"

Sebastian looked puzzled, "But I can't ballet."

"It's not about whether you can dance or not." Xanthea furrowed her brows, "Just write it down!."

Xanthea snapped the workbook closed, "I think your English needs a bit more work. Let's start with something simpler, how about math?"

Sebastian nodded eagerly, "Oh, I love math, always scoring top marks!"

"Good." Xanthea smiled, relieved, "Let's solve a subtraction problem. 75 minus 16, set it up column-style. If 5 minus 6 doesn't work, what should you do?"

Sebastian scratched his head, looking confused.

Xanthea started to explain, "You need to borrow 1 from the 7, and that's what we called 'subtraction with borrowing'. You must have heard of it, right?"

Before she could finish, Sebastian interrupted, puzzled, "Why borrow from 7?"

"Because 5 is less than 6."

"But what if 7 doesn't want to lend it?"

Xanthea was almost questioning her own hearing as she stared at him like he was being deliberately obtuse, "Today, it has to lend whether it likes it or not!"

Her voice carried a trace of frustration, and just then, laughter echoed from above, sounding like mockery. Just moments ago, Xanthea had been confidently challenging him, and now she faced her first major setback.

Embarrassed, she wondered if Sebastian really was Orion's nephew. They say nephews are supposed to resemble their uncles, but other than looks, what similarities did they share?

Everyone in Crestwood knew Orion was a once-in-a-century genius, and Sebastian was certainly a 'genius' in his own unique way.

Determined to prove herself, Xanthea pressed on to the next question, "You must have learned this in kindergarten, right? How long is the book in front of you

Pointing to what should be the simplest question, she looked at Sebastian with hope. He confidently answered "10 meters

Ten meters? Are you kidding me

Xanthea nearly choked with frustration

Now she understood why there were news stories about parents passing out while helping with homework. A couple more inject lens and she might be the one fainting

The Thompson family's study, with its semi-gen design allowed the household staff to observe the trio's interactions. As laughter occasionally floated through the room, the servants exchanged surprised and delighted glances

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

### **CHAPTER 46**



Posted by **AdminJ**, 2760 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

## Chapter 46

Orion was always a bit of a frosty character, keeping everyone at arm's length. Despite years of service at the Thompson household, the staff had never seen him warm up to any guest like he did today, and he even cracked a rare smile!

"Liam, look at Mr. Lockwood, Ms. Nightshade, and Sebastian together. Don't they look like a family of three?"

"Absolutely! They're just like a newlywed couple helping their son with his homework!"

"Stop kidding around! Ms. Nightshade is a guest, and she looks quite young, maybe not even of age yet," the butler reprimanded them, but he couldn't help smiling too. Mr. Lockwood treated Ms. Nightshade differently.

"Xan, you haven't said if it's true or not?"

Sebastian blinked his innocent big eyes expectantly at Xanthea, who massaged her forehead and closed her eyes in resignation. "You just said you always score first in math tests. Is it the highest score or the lowest?"

"Of course, the highest!"

"And how many students are there in your class?"

"A lot, why do you ask, Xan?"

"Are you sure it's not just you?" Xanthea couldn't take it anymore and when she opened her eyes, Orion was already smiling, his charm barely concealing her defeat.

"Orion, can you stop laughing?"

"I did warn you."

"Well, if you're so smart, why don't you try!"

"No, no," Seeing the situation, Sebastian quickly grabbed her sleeve, "Xan, your voice is nice, I want you to tutor me!"

Xanthea stood up, ruthlessly pulling away his hand, "If I tutor you any longer, I'll turn into a roaring lioness!"

She thought Orion understood Sebastian well enough not to tutor him, but as soon as she stood up, he took the still-warm chair she had just vacated.

Oh, quite confident, huh? Seems like he's done this before, got experience?

She was curious to see what tricks he had up his sleeve to handle this little monster.

"Pick up the pencil."

"Ugh."

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Sebastian reluctantly picked up the pencil and flipped open his workbook, then under Orion's direction, began to solve problems.

"What's  $1+2+3+4+\dots+100$ ?"

"5050!"

"How did you solve it?"

"By using the Gauss's formula (first term + last term) x number of terms  $\div$  2."

"Describe the picture, in English."

"Once upon a time, there was a little fox..."

In just a few minutes of tutoring, it was like a magical movie unfolding before Xanthea.

She couldn't believe her eyes. Was this the same boy she had been tutoring just ago?

moments

Not only could he form logical long sentences, but he also knew Gauss's formula!

Was the little rascal just playing with her earlier? Or did he prefer this style of tutoring? What a joke, Orion's method wasn't tutoring at all, it was more like a bossy CEO barking orders!

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After staring in shock for a while, she realized that this sly uncle-nephew duo was j fooling her!

just

One was playing dumb to tease her, and the other, fully aware of everything, just watched her struggle in silence.

“Very well then!” she exclaimed, finally catching on to their game.

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

### **CHAPTER 47**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2767 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

#### Chapter 47

Xanthea suddenly leaned forward, her hands resting on their necks as if she were a nimble fox pouncing on its prey. With a devilish grin aimed slightly towards Sebastian’s face, she said, “Wow, tutoring really works wonders, huh? You’re like a whole new kid. If I’d known you loved your uncle’s lessons this much, I wouldn’t have come in.”

Xanthea thought, “I should never have trusted this little crocodile’s tears-time to let his behind meet the harsh reality of a baseball bat”

Caught in the act, Sebastian gave a sheepish smile, his head shaking like a bobblehead.

He didn’t really want to buckle down and do homework, but if he was lazy or got it wrong, Orion would spank him!

The girl’s slender, soft hands casually rested on Orion’s neck. As she spoke, her smooth fingertips seemed to gently stroke the protruding vertebrae, sparking tingles that distracted Orion completely. Numbers and symbols blurred before his eyes, and he didn’t.

even hear Xanthea’s words.

So, when Xanthea turned to look at him, she caught him looking utterly distracted. “Mr. Lockwood, so this is your idea of hospitality, huh?”

“Yes! Uncle, how can you treat this beautiful lady like this? You make her help me with homework the moment she steps in, and she’s not even a tutor you hired!”

my

“Huh?”

Xanthea eyed Sebastian, wondering what mischief the little rascal was plotting now. He quickly showed his true colors, “She should be taking me to play! Hey, let’s go upstairs and play some pool, it’s super fun!”

So he wanted to play, huh? Nice try, kid-do your homework!

Xanthea was about to refuse when she remembered the scene she'd just been tricked into. Not getting back at them just wasn't her style!

"Sure, Orion, why not?"

She withdrew her hand, and after a moment, Orion finally cleared his throat and said, "Alright."

"Yay! I love you, beautiful lady!"

Upstairs in the game room, Sebastian rushed in and immediately grabbed a pool cue to start setting up the game.

Xanthea watched his enthusiasm, then turned her attention to the sixteen colorful balls arranged on the pool table. Her eyes gleamed with mischief. "You play pretty well, Seb. This looks fun."

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Sebastian asked, "You don't know how to play pool?"

"I know some rules, but I've hardly played. I'm not very good. Maybe," she turned to Orion, "Mr. Lockwood, could you teach me?"

"Sure."

Orion took a pool cue, gently wiped it down, and slowly demonstrated the proper stance and technique. Xanthea, however, wasn't watching his hands or techniques; instead, her gaze was fixed on him.

How could anyone have such grace, posture, and charisma? It was just unfair how effortlessly noble he looked in any pose.

"Need me to demonstrate again?"

Orion put down the cue, and Xanthea quickly shifted her gaze away from him. "No need, because I won't learn this way. Maybe," she picked up a nearby pool cue and approached him, "Could you teach me hands-on?"

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

### **CHAPTER 48**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2834 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

## Chapter 48

Xanthea drew close unintentionally, a faint, sweet scent of iris wafting into his nostrils, intoxicating like a potion, magnifying her stunning beauty before his eyes. The lingering thrill from moments ago surged anew, destabilizing his composure.

“I’ve got a tutor at home, I’ll have her come up.

He set down his pool cue and turned to head downstairs, but Xanthea, arms crossed, teased him from behind, “Oh, it seems you can’t handle it, Mr. Lockwood.”

Her words stopped him in his tracks.

In the next instant, before Xanthea could react, he grasped her hand and firmly pinned her against the pool table. “Spread your fingers, arch the joints upwards slowly, thumb pushed

close to the index finger to secure the cue properly, so it won’t slip.”

up

His voice, deep and resonant, echoed in her ears. Xanthea was still lost in his fluid, assertive moves. She tried to move but found his strength overwhelming; her body felt incredibly warm, like being near a blazing fire.

Was it really just a harmless joke that angered him this much?

“Wow!”

Sebastian covered his mouth with chubby hands, thinking how beautiful the scene looked with his uncle holding Xanthea!

It was like a comic book scene, where a muscular wolf pounces on a fluffy, adorable fox.

Feeling his gaze, Xanthea blushed, half-wishing she could cover his eyes, perhaps because their current position was somewhat indecent, even though this was typical for teaching pool.

Gathering her scattered thoughts, she followed Orion’s instructions. “Like this?”

“Yes, keep your left hand a palm and a half away from the tip of the cue, right hand maintaining the same distance.”

“Is this right? I think I’m getting the hang of it!”

As she spoke, she turned her face slightly, her smooth cheek brushing against his prominent nose. It was a tingling sensation, stirring the suppressed excitement inside him to roar back to life.

Orion's Adam's apple bobbed intensely as his voice grew hoarse, "Focus ahead."

Xanthea was trying to concentrate on the game, but the heat from his body was rising, scorching enough to burn her the next second.

"Mr. Lockwood, are you feeling hot?"

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"Focus on the game."

Orion's voice was firm, though hoarse enough to lose some of its intimidating power.

It was obviously hot, yet she wasn't allowed to mention it!

Wait, why was he getting even closer? Didn't he know he was too warm?

"Use your r right thumb and index finger to grip the cue, the other three fingers can also hold it lightly."

The closer he got, the more difficult it was to speak each word, but he couldn't resist, the person he could only dream about was right in his arms. He wanted to be closer, much closer, without considering the consequences.

As he moved in too close, losing all sense of distance, Xanthea suddenly exclaimed, "So, hitting it like this should work, right?"

Her joy caused a slight movement of her body, inadvertently causing her.....

Orion's mind exploded in a burst, as raw desire was starkly revealed. The stiffening of her body was like a splash of cold water, snapping him back to reality, causing his grip on the cue to falter.

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

### **CHAPTER 49**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2720 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

Chapter 49

With a loud “thwack,” the cue stick missed its mark, and the billiard ball stayed put, not moving an inch. The awkward moment caught the daydreaming Xanthea by surprise. She was about to point out the miss when she saw Orion set down his cue and head toward

the restroom.

“Hey!”

Xanthea wanted to call him back but caught a glimpse of his face contorting slightly, and the reddish tint at the edges of his eyes.

“What’s up with him?”

Was teaching her how to play pool that distressing?

“It’s nothing, Uncle Orion’s just got a bit of a germ thing. He just hugged you, so he’s definitely going to wash his hands!”

Sebastian scampered over with his legs, and Xanthea’s mouth twitched, “Thanks for the truth bomb, kid. Wish I hadn’t asked.”

But she sensed there was more to it. Right before that failed shot, she’d felt something intensely hot bounce off her, but before she could react, the sound came.

“Though you’re even slower at learning than me! I picked up the game faster than you!”

“Are you kidding?” Xanthea chuckled at him. “I just learned from your uncle and I’ve already got it. Just wait, I’ll show you how it’s done!”

“I got it in one go too, but Uncle Orion didn’t look as scary teaching me as he did teaching. you.”

Xanthea frowned, “He looked scary?”

“Yeah!” Sebastian nodded vigorously. “Super scary, like a fierce big bad wolf, like he wanted to gobble you up!”

Xanthea was speechless.

Seems like she really did tick him off earlier, using reverse psychology to get him to tea her.

But no worries, she’d get him even more riled up soon enough, especially after he’d made fun of her earlier in the study.

“Enough talk, let’s see who wins a couple of games!”

Sebastian said, “Alright!”

When Orion came out of the restroom, he saw Xanthea and Sebastian squished together,

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both energetically bantering and playing pool.

“Hey, I won again! How cool is that!”

Sebastian jumped up and down on a stool joyfully. Seeing Orion, he ran down to boast, “Uncle Orion, I’ve beaten her over ten times. She’s just no good!”

That little rascal!

Xanthea, with her hands on the cue stick resting under her chin, protested, “I’m only this bad because your uncle messed up his first teaching shot.”

She looked over at the man, catching his amused glance, “Right.”

What the hell?

What was he doing in the restroom just now?

He had entered with an air of barely suppressed irritability but emerged looking utterly satisfied, especially those narrow eyes shimmering faintly pink, now twinkling with amusement. Was it even legal for a man to be this enticing?

Could any woman really handle being his wife?

Swallowing hard, Xanthea quickly changed the subject to hide her flustered thoughts, “Anyway, I practiced a bit on my own and think I’m getting the hang of it. How about the three of us play a round?”

“HAHAHA!” Sebastian burst out laughing. “You can’t even beat me, and you want to play against Uncle Orion? He’s a pool wizard; you’ll lose so badly!”

Listening to his unabashed ridicule, Xanthea narrowed her eyes, “Is that so? Well then, I definitely need to see this. Great Orion, shall we?”

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

## **CHAPTER 50**

Posted by **AdminJ**, 2780 Views, Released on May 15, 2024

### Chapter 50

Orion didn't respond to her; he simply strode over to the pool table and with a smooth stroke scattered the racked balls. Skillfully, he pocketed each one, his movements fluid and precise, playing so beautifully it was almost ridiculous. This prompted Sebastian to jump around, clapping enthusiastically.

"Amazing! Uncle Orion, you're incredible!"

"Xan, are you convinced yet? Want to just give up?"

Xanthea watched him intently, a frown knitting her brows.

Ethan and Samuel were right; Orion was an enigma. Just when she thought he was a shy, blushing guy, he turned into a charming rogue after a few drinks. And just when she assumed he was a gentleman, he'd go and show off his superior pool skills, embarrassing her in front of the kid.

What kind of man was he, really?

As the last ball dropped into the pocket, Orion slowly put down his cue stick and looked at her. For a moment, Xanthea thought she saw a gleam of desire for praise in his eyes.

Could it be an illusion?

"Good enough?"

His voice snapped her out of her thoughts, confirming it was no illusion. This was his of getting back at her. Was proving himself so important to him?

way

way

"Absolutely, more than good enough! Truly, Great Orion, I've never seen anyone play pool quite like that. I'm genuinely impressed!"

She praised him sincerely, though Orion could detect a hint of exaggeration and prete in her sparkling eyes.

Sebastian chimed in, "I told you Uncle Orion is a pool wizard, and you didn't believe me

“Alright, alright. Now it’s your turn.”

Xanthea lifted Sebastian onto a bench. He grabbed a cue, and though his shots weren’t as polished as Orion’s, he did quite well, his chin tilting up proudly. “See that, Xan? You’re definitely losing!”

“It seems so, huh?”

Xanthea rubbed her chin thoughtfully, eyeing both him and Orion. “Since you’re both so confident, how about we raise the stakes? The winner gets to pick a punishment for the loser, who will have to accept their fate gracefully.”

Her eyes were calm, but a storm was brewing beneath the surface, a sign that the sly fox was about to show her tail. Orion agreed without hesitation. “Sure.”

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“Xan, are you crazy? You’re definitely going to be the one punished. Are you setting yourself up?”

“Stop talking. Do you dare take the bet?”

“Of course!” Sebastian was as excited as if he’d caught a falling pie from the sky. “I’ve already thought of how to punish you. I’ll use that feather to tickle your feet!”

Xanthea shuddered at the thought; this kid was even more ruthless than his uncle.

She walked to the pool table, turned slightly, and tossed her lightweight wooden cue into the air. It twirled several times before she caught it deftly.

As Sebastian gaped, Xanthea swiftly bent down, her hair cascading beautifully. The cue stick, like an arrow shot from the sky, struck the central ball with a loud ‘thunk, sending all sixteen balls rolling smoothly into the pockets.

The room fell silent, punctuated only by the faint sound of the balls. Sebastian’s mouth hung open wide enough to fit a quail’s egg, his wide blue eyes blinking in disbelief at the spectacle before him.

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