

# My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

## CHAPTER 461

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Chapter 461

[My mom just asked me why I was grinning like I just won the lottery, haha!]

[Oranthea is just a match made in heaven, y'all better believe it!]

[I'm totally obsessed! Right before she quit the scene, she dropped this sweet bomb on us. Xanthea, you really know how to arouse the attention.]

[Please, just get a wedding party done already. I've got my gift money ready and everything!]

[Oranthea is forever iconic!!!]

[My ship has sailed, folks! Can you understand my joy? I'm over the moon, happier than if I were getting married myself.] [Good heavens, I declare them the sweetest, most romantic couple of the century. Ori and Xan, together forever!]

Oliver and Ethan stood up, clapping with satisfaction. Isabella watched the overly perfect scene unfold, tears streaming down once

more.

The whole room burst into applause and well-wishes for the sweet couple, except for Samuel, who looked on in disbelief, as if he couldn't quite grasp the moment, and then dashed over, flailing wildly.

"Xan, a girl should play hard to get! Now he's gonna be smug as hell, thinking he's got you wrapped around his finger! Orion, how dare you kiss my sister right in front of me! Let go of her, I **say!**"

#Xanthea proposes to Orion at Celestial Cinema Awards, sharing a romantic kiss. Her brother seems to be **over** the moon# the topic went viral, drawing millions upon millions of viewers who sent blessings.

Lakeside Manor, the Nightshade family.

"Uncle Oliver."

Xanthea gave Oliver a shoulder massage with a pleading look in her eyes, “I’m sorry, okay? Can you forgive me, please?”

“Hmph!”

Oliver turned his head away, but Xanthea’s gentle fists followed, “I’ll definitely consult with you before doing anything in the future!”

“Hmph!”

Again, Oliver turned his head, and again, Xanthea’s fists followed, “I promise I won’t do it again, okay?”

“You think you can fool me again? How many times have you said these words since you were little? Was there ever a time you meant it? Every time was just to placate me.”

Xanthea pouted, knowing well her usual tactics had been always working.

Orion’s lips curled up slightly, “Indeed.”

Spotting his gloating face, Xanthea complained secretly. Not helping her but enjoying the scene as a bystander, he was starting to irk her! Catching her silent “you’re sleeping on the couch for three days” glare, Orion narrowed his eyes, “Oliver, would you do us the honor of being our officiant?”

“Really?” Oliver’s eyes lit up at the mention, his anger dissipating instantly.

Seeing this miraculous effect, Xanthea beamed, thinking to herself **how** amazing her husband was.

“Officiant? What officiant!” Samuel, hearing the **word**, immediately got all worked up again.

Christopher couldn’t help but laugh, “Samuel, Xan has already proposed to Orion in front of the whole Internet. It’s a bit late **for** regrets

**now.**”

“Indeed.” Susanna walked over with a **plate** of snacks, casting a **curious** glance at Xanthea, “But Xan, what **was** with that speech at the awards? Did **you** come up with it **on** your own, or?”

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“Mom, do **you** remember the terrible fever I had when I was four?”

“Of course, I remember. You tricked the whole family, saying you were off to a friend’s house, but you were actually waiting for a little boy. You waited for him day after day, and in the end, you never met him and even got caught in the rain.”

Susanna paused mid-sentence, suddenly realizing something, and looked at her in astonishment, “Wait, that little boy, could it be Orion? Xan, did you regain your memory?”

Xanthea nodded, “Yep!”

“That’s great! I’ve always been worried you might have lingering issues from that. And Orion, so you two were childhood sweethearts. I thought Xan was making it up. What a wonderful fate!”

“What?” Samuel, hearing this, jumped up again, “Orion, are you **the** reason Xan forgot all about me?”

“Haha!” The whole family burst into laughter. Xanthea leaned in **and** whispered to Oliver, “Also, Uncle Oliver, that little boy we saved from the fire that year was Orion.”

“Really?”

Oliver was taken aback. No wonder he always felt that **Orion’s** affection for Xan seemed both inexplicable and overwhelmingly intense as if he had been in love for many, many years.

It wasn’t an illusion. Their destiny had been intricately intertwined from the very beginning.

“I didn’t realize I played a part in this. Well, I’ll be the officiant without any doubt!”

“Of course, I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“Alright, dinner’s served. Let’s eat and talk.”

The family gathered together, chatting and laughing. Oliver took an international call. He needed to travel abroad next month and asked Orion in advance, “Orion, have you thought about when you’d like the engagement ceremony to be?”

“Next month, on the 9th.”

Everyone was stunned with his words, especially Samuel, who nearly choked on a quail egg, "That's in 9 days?!"

"Yeah." Orion added, "No engagement, straight to marriage."

"What?!"

The room was shocked again.

Xanthea was also stunned, her dewy eyes wide and shimmering, looking at him. Samuel joked, "What's the rush? Trying to sweep Xan off her feet before she changes her mind?"

Orion didn't hide it, "Yeah, I'm afraid she might have second thoughts."

Christopher and Susanna smiled as they gazed at Xanthea, who blushed; **as** if she would!

"Skipping the engagement is fine. It's all about letting friends and family know in advance, and now that the whole world knows **about** this wedding, it's not necessary"

"Isn't this top rushed?" Ethan asked, "Marriage preparations are complex. Can **you** really get everything **ready** in time?"

Orion replied. "I've got everything prepared."

He had been preparing for over **a** decade.

Xanthea was **puzzled**. When did he manage all this without telling her?

Susanna asked, Xan, what do you think??

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### **CHAPTER 463**

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"Sure." Orion's gaze lifted slightly, his **voice** deep in agreement.

"But, you'll

I still have to follow the rules, Christopher said. "Xan, you and Orion can't see each other for a week before the wedding."

“What?” Xanthea was puzzled. “Dad, why?”

“It’s

is an old tradition. Both of you, being the bride and groom, carry joy with you. To prevent any clash of happiness and ensure everything goes smoothly on your wedding day, it’s best not to see each other for a week.”

“That’s just fantastic. We must honor our traditions!”

Samuel was the first to agree, and Xanthea squinted her eyes, silently pinching him under the table.

“Ow, sis, you’re not even married yet, and **you’re** already laying hands on your brother. What will become of us later?”

“Later, On and I will deal with it”

“He wouldn’t dare!”

“Orion, don’t worry. As long as there’s no issue with the wedding venue, we’ll handle everything else.”

Orion pondered for a moment, “Alright.”

Huh? He agreed just like that?

Xanthea blinked her innocent, big **eyes**. She wouldn’t see him for a whole week, and he wasn’t going to protest? Orion put down his utensils and met her gaze, “Mr. and Mrs. Nightshade, I’d like to take Xan home tonight.” Samuel was shocked. To make such a request in front of the whole family, he was becoming bolder by the minute!

“No way!” Before he could object, Ethan chimed in, “Sam, if you don’t let Xan go now, be careful she won’t let you come **over** next time.”

Xanthea nodded. That was a given.

Samuel was speechless.

Christopher and Susanna exchanged a smile. The young couple was deeply in love, inseparable. It was hard to keep them apart for **a** week, so they decided to make an exception.

“Alright.”

“111 drop off my sis and pick her up tomorrow. Am I being helpful enough?”

Samuel felt comered. A wise man adapted to circumstances, he still wanted to visit his s  
ister’s house frequently in the future! Xanthea gritted her teeth, “Yeah, perfectly helpful!”

After dinner, Ethan and Samuel escorted Xanthea together. Along the way, the  
four of them chatted and laughed harmoniously. Upon reaching the estate’s gate, Orion  
and Xanthea got out of the car and waved at them

“Ethan, Samuel, bye!”

“Xan, I’ll come pick you up tomorrow!”

“It’s fine if you don’t.”

dreams!”

**Hmph** Xanthea happily took Orion’s **hand**. Let’s **ga**

Unexpectedly, the man who was all smiles until a moment ago.

gainst a weeping willow. Before she could react, he leaned in and **k**

Mapler

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Xanthea took a few deep breaths before she could speak  
again. She was about to scold him when she saw the dark shadows lurking across his h  
andsome face. Only his deep eyes were blazing with an intense fire, as if he wanted to  
devour her whole. It was hard to guess what he was feeling at that moment.

Was he angry? Could it be because Benjamin publicly confessed his feelings for her tod  
ay, challenging him?

“Don’t get it twisted!” She quickly waved her hands, trying to clear the air, “I had no idea  
Benjamin would show up at the award ceremony today, let alone confess his feelings. E  
ver since that day in the dressing  
room on set when you both walked into the same changing room, I haven’t had any cont  
act with him!”

After saying this, she even pulled out her phone as if to prove her innocence, "Check my phone if you don't believe me!"

Orion glanced at her phone, his expression growing even darker, "You're still thinking about him?"

"No.

"No."

not like that. I saw you seemed upset, so I just wanted to explain."

Orion pulled her close, his hands roaming over her soft waist, his lips brushing against her hair.

He was just missing her, wanting her all day. From the moment the award ceremony began, he couldn't hold back any longer.

"Not upset? Then why were you so fierce just now? You almost bit my lip off"

"Can you blame me when you're this beautiful? I'm not mad at him; I'm mad at you. Why did you propose to me?"

She was like, "???" Xanthea was baffled by his triple accusation, "What's wrong? I propose to you, and you're not happy?"

Orion buried his face in her fragrant hair, his voice hoarse with emotion, "I should have been the one to propose."

Xanthea's lips curved up gently, "I said, whoever plants a field of irises for me, I'd marry him. So, the moment you first took me to Xanthea Haven Estate, you'd already proposed. I was merely accepting."

"Alright then, Xannie, remember what you said."

"What did I say?"

"Your speech on the stage."

"That? Those were just formalities. Ah!"

Before she could finish, she felt his hands teasing her waist, forcing her to plead for mercy, "I was wrong, I remember"

"Repeat it."

“Do I have to? It’s too cheesy!”

“Are you going to say it or not?”

Orion had discovered her ticklish spot, using it to tease her into submission. She couldn’t stop laughing and had no choice but to repeat her confession that time.

Listening to those words, Orion felt a warm pleasure, “Xannie, don’t you forget. If you do, everyone will know you’re heartless. “Heartless or not, depends on how you’ll treat me.”

“Xannie, you can have whatever you want, even my heart,” **he** whispered in **her** ear, his voice warm and husky, making Xanthea blush and her heart race.

“Who wants **your** heart you’re even cheesier

“By the **way, Orion**, why the rush to get married? Don’t tell me it’s just because I beat you to the proposal and you can’t stand being second?”

“Because, Orion gently **lifted** her face, planting a deep kiss on her forehead want to spend every Christones together with you!

Xanther had thought of many reasons, but she hadn’t expected something to be so bimantic

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Her ears turned red, her heart trembled, and she softly replied, “Okay”

At the mention of holiday, Orion suddenly remembered something, something he had been longing for, craving for the longest time.

Now, he could finally have it.

“Xannie, your birthday present from last time, I haven’t received it from you yet.”

“Present?”

Xanthea paused for a moment, then remembered the sexy kitten cosplay lingerie that was a gift once promised but never delivered.

“Why bring that up now?”

Orion stared at her like a predator eyeing its next meal, his gaze narrowing slightly, a dark gleam shining through, "I want to get it now."

Heart skipping a beat, Xanthea sensed danger. Recalling the way he looked at her the other day when she wore the dress, and his aggressive kisses, she feared if she wore it now, she wouldn't be able to spend a peaceful day.

"No way

She immediately shook her head, standing her ground, "Your birthday's gone, so the gift's expired! If you still want it, wait for the next birthday!"

"You promised to wear it for me, no going back on your word."

"I'm not going back on my word." Xanthea found a loophole, her expression sly like a little fox, "Later is a broad term, it could mean next month, next year, or the year after just not now!"

"Alright then."

Orion's gaze fell, his voice filled with a hint of sadness, his bright eyes dimming gradually, looking like a little wolf abandoned by its pack, his ears drooping, stirring a feeling of compassion in Xanthea.

"I thought I would get your birthday gift when I turned twenty."

That statement hit Xanthea hard. Feeling guilty for forgetting and hurting him over the years, she wanted to make amends, and hearing such words.

Wearing a cosplay costume didn't seem like such a big deal after all.

"Fine!" She bit her lip, making up her mind.

"Really?" Orion looked up.

Xanthea saw a flare of intense desire in his eyes and

internally cursed herself for being fooled by his excellent acting skills!

This guy wasn't a fluffy little wolf at all but a cunning SlyFox! And she had fallen for it again!

"I haven't finished. There's a condition! You're just allowed to look, don't touch!"

"Okay."

He agreed instantly, surprising Xanthea. Was he actually being obedient?

“But today, at the award ceremony. I learned a way to express love from fans, Can I say it to you, Xannie?”

Xanthea asked, “What is it?”

Orion’s lips curved slightly, a mischievous and somewhat fierce light in his eyes, “You are my main squeeze”

Before she could react she was swept off her feet and carried into the mansion by the man...

“Orion, what are you doing? Put me down, people are watching!”

“You’ll find out soon.”

Once home, Xanthea, determined to keep her **word**, donned the birthday gift but learned a hard lesson about what it truly meant to go back on one’s word.

All through the night, the mansion echoed with moans like a cat’s yowls, one after another, in every corner

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Twilight descended, **and the** world fell into a hush, as the exquisite Xanthea Haven Estate basked under a pristine silver moonlight, resembling a serene and enchanting Sleeping Beauty.

Fireworks suddenly burst into the sky, painting the dark blue night with vibrant, scintillating flames. Magnificent and bright, they refused to fade, with fiery sparks landing on the delicate petals of irises swaying on the hillside. A breeze swept through, causing them to shiver uncontrollably.

The next day at noon, a sliver of radiant sunlight snuck through the curtains into the bedroom, casting its **glow** on a stunning girl lying in bed. Her long, thick eyelashes fluttered, porcelain-smooth arms sprawled out on the dark silk sheets, and she was roused from sleep by snippets of a conversation.

“Is Xan still not bp? It’s already noon.”

“Mrs. Lockwood tends to enjoy her ‘beauty sleep’, usually waking up in the afternoon.”

“In the afternoon?” Samuel was surprised.

Xan liked to sleep in, but at home, she’d usually be up by ten at the latest. She had never slept this late before!

\*Could it be?”

He squinted suspiciously, causing the servant to tense up, only to hear him saying, “Orion was up working till the wee hours, maybe he kept Xan up too?”

The servant hesitated. Mrs. Lockwood did stay up, but there was no work.

‘No, no, Mr. Nightshade, you’re overthinking it.”

“Alright, let her sleep. Show me around instead.”

“Of course!”

Samuel? Why was he here so early?

Hearing Samuel’s voice faintly, Xanthea opened her groggy eyes to see the clock showing it was already past one in the afternoon. It was late!

Rubbing her sore back, feeling as though every bone in her body was aching, she grumbled and grabbed her phone, her brows furrowed in pain.

Orion, that insatiable wolf who didn’t keep his word, she should’ve never trusted him!

Last night, as soon as she slipped into her sultry little black lace dress, he turned into a beast, his eyes glowing with a dark desire, ignoring her protests and pleas, taking her from the living room to the balcony and then to the bedroom. He nearly wore her out, claiming it was all with her consent!

When did she ever agree? Was it because of that one line he said, that so-called “main squeeze“?

The more she thought of it, the more exasperated she felt, and she yelled out, “Orion!”

“Mrs. Lockwood!”

The servant rushed in at her shout, only to shyly lower her gaze upon seeing the love bites scattered across her neck and arms.

“Do you need anything?”

“Where’s Orion?”

The young master left early in the morning. He asked me to tell you to call him when you wake up.”

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“Huh!”

He had savored her body joyfully and then left, leaving her exhausted and awake till now!

“Forget it

He should feel grateful that they couldn’t meet for the next week. If they could, she’d definitely give him a piece of her mind!

Grinding her teeth, she clenched her fists in frustration

“The brunch is ready, all prepared by Mr. Lockwood himself. Would you like to have it now?”

“Mm—hmm, whose’s my brother?”

Mr. Nightshade is taking a walk around the estate.”

“Call him back in a bit will you?”

“Of course!”

Xanthea

got up, quickly straightened herself, and barely touched her breakfast when Samuel walked in, all smiles and in high spirits.

“Not bad at all, Onon’s choice for the house is quite impressive.”

Xanthea was like, “?” Anyone would think he was the one getting married.

“Especially the name.”

“I was just about to change it to On’s Manor

“No way, we’re calling it Xanthea Haven Estate: Doesn’t the name sound wonderful?”

Samuel reached out, gently pinching her cheek, his eyes crinkling with joy, reminiscent of the same sensation.

your name under? My wedding gift?”

“If you really want to change it, at least add my name too.”

Xanthen’s lips twitched. “And what role would you be adding y

“Wedding gift?” Samuel raised an eyebrow, “That’s a brilliant idea!”

Xanthea choked on her oatmeal, “Forget it, that’s not gonna happen.”

“In what tone are you talking with your brother now? I came all the way here first the whole estate. And this is how you treat me?”

\*Are you sure you came to pick me up and not to keep an eye on me?”

Samuel laughed, “Sister knows best!”

in the morning, waited for hours, and even toured

He adoringly watched his little sister nibbling on her toast, her cheeks puffing out adorably like a little fox, his initial amusement fading. In a few days, Xan would leave home, away from his side. He would no longer be able to watch her eat across him at the table, listen to her whine, play pranks together, or mess around.

Life suddenly seemed tasteless.

“I’m done!” Xanthea put down her utensils, “Samuel, let’s go!”

She suddenly looked up, catching a glimpse of deep sadness and a sparkle in Samuel’s eyes.

He quickly looked away

\*Samuel, are you crying?”

“Nonsense! The sand got in my eyes while I was outside. Let’s head back now, Mom, Dad, and Ethan are waiting for you.”

Is there any sand?

Xanthea skeptically eyed the serene, windless landscape outside before Samuel wrapped an arm around her neck, dragging her away like she was a wayward lamb, “Hurry up, have you gotten so comfortable here you **don’t** want to go home? You’ve gone wild?”

“I haven’t

“Good, then let’s head back! I’ve specially taken a whole week off just for your wedding preparation. You’re not allowed anywhere but by my side for these seven days. Don’t get too sentimental, alright!”

“Huh?!”

Xanthea let out a scream. Under his watchful eye for a week, she wouldn’t even get to see Orion!

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### **CHAPTER 468**

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Xanthea returned home, diving straight into wedding prep with her family trying on wedding dresses, making reservations, and preparing invitations. Initially, she was buzzing with excitement, but soon, the thrill gave way to boredom, and she found herself missing Orion.

Unfortunately, her phone was under the strict control of Samuel, who didn’t let her sneak even a peek.

“Samuel, did anyone call me today?”

“Yeah.”

“Really?!” Her eyes sparkled with excitement

“But it wasn’t Orion.”

Samuel rolled his eyes for the umpteenth time, gently flicking her suddenly disappointed face, “Get back to getting those invitations done, you lovesick puppy. It’s only been a fe

w days apart, and you're already this restless. You didn't miss Samuel this much when you were filming, did you?"

Hmph! When she was **filming**, he called her like eight times a day, practically annoying her to death, and she still missed him!

"He really didn't call? You swear?"

Samuel casually raised two fingers, "I swear on my dashing, handsome face. Happy now?"

Xanthea was shocked. Samuel always prided himself on his looks, and now he was swearing on them? It must be true!

Orion hadn't called her. That SlyFox, after gratifying his own desire, he just forgot her, didn't miss her at **all**

Susanna chuckled as she saw Xanthea's face fall, gently patting her head. "Xan, we agreed no seeing each other for a week, respecting tradition. It's another way Orion is showing his love for you."

Xanthea pouted, not convinced, "He's not the superstitious type."

Samuel couldn't help but snicker. Although Orion hadn't called, he had sent countless cheesy texts. But, after Samuel replied with "This is Samuel, Orion stopped texting, much to Samuel's delight."

"It's precisely because he's not superstitious, that he's doing this for you, which makes it all the more special"

Xanthea's mood lifted as she heard her mom say that. She was right!

Holding an invitation adorned with iris flowers and childhood photos, she smiled with satisfaction, "This invitation looks so pretty"

"Orion had it delivered early this morning. He must have designed it himself."

Even the details on the invitation were meticulously designed. It seemed Orion was **really busy** with the wedding. Maybe she was being

too laid back?

Perhaps she could prepare a surprise for him? An idea quickly sparked in her mind.

Try on!”

“Mom, Dad, I need to go to the back hill for **a** bit. You guys carry

“What for? I’m coming **tool** Samuel immediately got up.

Xanthea said, “Samuel, **are** you my shadow or something?”

Christopher laughed, “Xan, let Samuel tag along. He only gets to follow you around for a few more days. Cherish it!”

“I’m getting married, not running away from home.”

“Exactly” Samuel echoed, “Even after you’re married, I can still look after you. I’ve checked out that Xanthea Haven Estate, and it’s pretty nice. I like it. I’ll be dropping by often, staying **over** long-term works for me too.”

Xanthea was caught off guard, “What?!”

“What **do** you mean, what? Not welcoming me, after all these years of looking after you?” Samuel teased, pinching her cheek, “Off to the back hill, then. What’s this new mischief you’re plotting? Spill it to me.”

“I don’t wanna tell you.”

Xanthea, dragged away by Samuel, made a face like a little beast, wishing she could bite him.

“Samuel, you’re in your twenties. Can’t you act a bit less childish, be more mature like Ethan?”

“Ethan’s mature?” Samuel arched an eyebrow, “In what way?”

“us you!”

“When he heard I was getting married, he **was** so calm, not throwing a fit like

“Hal” That was one thing Samuel couldn’t stand. “His calmness comes with reasons.”

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“Huh?” Xanthea was confused, and Samuel, green with envy, didn’t want to say a word, “You’ll find out soon enough. But first, what’re you planning to do at the back hill?”

“I was thinking.” Xanthea leaned in close, whispering her scheme into his ear

After hearing her out, Samuel thought it sounded fun

“Wearing a wedding dress for that? Isn’t it a bit risky?”

you forgotten that I’ve won competitions on slopes over three

\*Not at all. The slope is just a few feet tall, practically child’s play. Have you  
thousand feet tall?”

Samuel admired her confident spirit. “Actually, I’m just worried that you’ll be too stunning, Kan. I might not be able to stop myself from sweeping you away right there and then”

“Try it, and I’ll have Orion station like eighty bodyguards at the wedding!”

“Wow, really throwing me to the wolves, huh? Planning to have me flattened into a pancake?”

“Flattened into a pancake? Perfect for the wedding feast, ha!”

After a hectic week, the wedding invitations were all sent out, the dress was ready, and many friends and family had already arrived to stay at the Lakeside Manor in advance, the place was buzzing with joy.

With the wedding day just one sunrise away. Xanthea began to feel a flutter of nerves. The seven days of pre wedding celebrations had flown by. Maybe she should find Orion to ease her worries?

Just as she was about to ask Samuel for her phone back, Ethan called out, “Xan, Professor Fred just called. He’s flown in from abroad and is now at the Crestwood Research Institute. He wants to see you.”

“Really?”

The renowned professor had made a special trip just to see her. Xanthea couldn’t afford to keep him waiting. Let me just change my clothes!”

“Alright, I drive you there.”

Upon arriving at Crestwood Research Institute, Xanthea was greeted by Professor Fred and his team at the entrance, leaving her pleasantly surprised

“Happy marriage, Ms. Nightshade.”

Thank you,

Professor Fred. That’s very kind of you. The sun’s strong, let’s head in and talk.”

They spent the afternoon engaging in lively conversations about everything from Fred’s invitation for her to join his team, to their research projects, and her upcoming wedding, until the evening crept in

“I wonder if my team and I would have the honor of attending your wedding?”

“Of course, it would be my honor.”

At right in the evening, Xanthea finally stepped out of the meeting room.

“So, how did it go? Professor Fred seems to really like you.”

“He mainly invited me to join his team for their latest research project.”

“And your thoughts?”

“I accepted”

She had thought it over for a long time and had already made up her mind.

“Good” Ethan’s glasses hid a pair of joyous eyes, “Fred and his team’s latest research project is based here. Let me show you around.”

**“Sure!”**

As Xanthea entered the research building, wondering why her brother seemed so familiar with the place, she heard a staff member call him “Boss”.

“Ethan, why do they all call you ‘Boss’?”

“Because this is my research lab, a gift from Orion.”

“What?” Xanthea was stunned.

Orion had gifted Ethan such a grand-scale research lab. When had this happened, and how had she not known?

“The first time he came over Ethan affectionately ruffled her hair, his eyes gleaming with joy, “From now on, I can be with you every day.

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Xanthea suddenly got it, about what Samuel said there was a reason behind Ethan’s calm demeanor. But wait a minute!

The more she thought about it, the more it seemed like a trap.

Orion had gifted her brother a research lab, located so close to Xanthea Haven Estate, and it just so happened that Fred and his team were stationed there. It all seemed too well-planned to be a coincidence.

That SlyFox must have known all along she would leave the spotlight to pursue scientific research, even going as far as to invite and sign Professor Fred’s team in advance, all while pretending to be nonchalant about her choices. Such a cunning old fox.

“Xan!

As Fred and his team left the meeting room, Eloise rushed over, bubbling with excitement.

Ethan spoke, “You two catch up. I’ve got some stuff to sort out in the lab. I’ll come back later to drive you home.”

“Okay”

“Wow!”

Eloise trotted over clutching her arm in an electrifying way, practically swooning over Ethan as she gazed at his retreating figure, “Xan, your brother is way too hot. I’m dizzy and weak at the knees, about to pass out here. How do you even manage, seeing that face every day? You’re living the dream!”

“It’s alright, I guess.” Xanthea’s eyes crinkling with a smile, she boasted, “After seeing it for over a decade, I’m pretty much used to it.”

“Hey, don’t you think you’re asking for a smack talking like that? But then again, with such a handsome husband, you certainly wouldn’t even bother looking at other men. This morning I saw…”

She cut herself off mid-sentence as if realizing something, quickly covering her mouth.

“This morning?” Xanthea **raised** an eyebrow, “What did you see?”

“N—  
Nothing. Xan Hey, I heard there’s this huge amusement park nearby, wanna check it out?”

Xanthea thought her friend’s brain might have mushed from too much lab work, patting her head sympathetically, “You wanna go ghost hunting or what, in the middle of the night?”

Eloise met her pitying gaze and knocked her hand away, “Of course, I know the amusement park is closed now. But I heard there’s a back door that leads straight to a patch of christmas cactus, surrounded by fireflies.”

“Fireflies?!” Hearing about fireflies suddenly piqued Xanthea’s interest.

**She** used to love chasing after fireflies around the school’s back hill as a kid. But with environmental changes and her getting older, it had been ages since she last saw them.

“Are you sure there’ll be fireflies this season?”

“Yup, they’re specially bred to attract visitors!”

Xanthea found it even more ridiculous, “Are you kidding? Fireflies come out at night, attract what exactly. Ah!”

Before she could finish, Eloise had already dragged her away. Convincing her was too hard; brute force was evidently more straightforward.

“Stop dawdling, let’s just go see for ourselves!”

With a heart full of indulgence for her lovably naive friend, Xanthea sneaked into the amusement park through the back door with her. But upon seeing a bunch of wilted christmas cactus with barely any blooms, she scoffed.

“Where are the fireflies? Not a single one in sight, not even a shadow, I told you, it’s not the season for,”

She turned around to find the area behind her completely deserted. Where was Eloise?

“Ellie? Where did you go? Don’t hide and scare me if you don’t come out now, I’ll leave.”

Xanthea called out a few times but received no response, so she walked forward, puzzled. Maybe she went to the restroom?

Following the amusement park’s signs for a while without finding any restroom, she ended up at the base of a giant Ferris wheel. The glass cabins slowly rotated, decorated with colorful fairy lights that looked like twinkling lanterns against the night sky, utterly mesmerizing.