

My Beloved Has Risen from Death's Embrace Novel

CHAPTER 71

Posted by AdminJ, ? Views, Released on May 15, 2024

Chapter 71

"I have one more condition."

Xanthea asked, "What's that?"

"You're not allowed to sign with Starlight Media!"

"Starlight Media? What about this company? **What's** so special about

"That's my company!"

Isabella's face turned livid with imitation. Even though she didn't really care about her, with all the gossip online about her, how could Xanthea not even know which company she belonged **to?**

"Xanthea, don't think I can't see you trying to cozy up to our CEO! Forget about signing with Starlight Media and riding on the CEO's coattails to fame!"

What was she on about?

Xanthea was still trying to grasp what she was accusing her of when Isabella stormed off, bag slung over her shoulder.

Driven by curiosity, Xanthea googled "Starlight Media" and a flood of information came up, ending with, "Starlight Media, a subsidiary of the Lockwood Group, represents artists like Isabella, Shirley, and others, with the group's CEO – Orion Lockwood."

Seeing Orion's name made Xanthea's eyebrows twitch. She then mockingly gestured a thumbs-up towards Isabella's retreating figure, "What's that about? Which part of me exactly sees me like I'm after your CEO?"

Isabella vaguely heard her mockery but chose not to respond.

She really hadn't seen any signs of Xanthea aiming for the CEO, but Orion's peculiar attention towards her gave Isabella an ominous feeling. If one day Xanthea became the CEO's wife.

She wouldn't need half a year, overnight, the title of "Nation's Top Tycoon's Wife" could make her a global sensation. And becoming the boss's wife would mean Isabella could

never surpass her. So, she was adamant about not letting Xanthea sign with Starlight Media Proximity could lead to opportunity.

Oliver had just boarded his plane when his phone rang with a call from Xanthea.

*Xan, I was just about to call you. Director Hawthorne was telling me how much he enjoyed working with you on the music video. He praised your acting and looks!

He said you're a natural talent, quick on the uptake, a real gem for acting, and that your stunning appearance is exactly what's rare in the showbiz today. It's a pity you're not interested in this path."

"Uncle Oliver, I've decided I want to start my career."

"What?"

As soon as Xanthea finished speaking, Oliver almost doubled his ears, "Xan, did you just say you want to start your career? Really? Did I hear wrong, or are you joking? Weren't you disinterested in the showbiz? What made you change your mind?"

Covering her forehead, Xanthea smiled helplessly. She hadn't anticipated things would turn this way.

"It's because, well, I actually enjoyed the **music** video shoot today and after hearing some advice from Director Hawthorne, I thought! might as well give **it** a try"

"That's fantastic!"

Oliver was beyond thrilled. His Oli hea Media, which had waited for many years, finally had its star!

He had founded Oli hea Media, a play on his and Xanthea's names, hoping that one day Xan would join the company. Now, his dream was coming **true**!

"Xan, rest assured, once you join the company, you'll be our top star. I'll do everything I can to propel you to the pinnacle of the

showbiz!"

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“Thank you, Uncle Oliver, I’ll head over to the company tomorrow to start

“Tomorrow?” Oliver exclaimed, somewhat surprised, “Isn’t that a bit rushed? I was thinking of picking a perfect day for a signing ceremony, make a big announcement online about your official debut!”

Xanthea replied, “No need for such a big fuss. Rather than an overwhelming personal marketing campaign, I believe good work is the best introduction to the audience.”

“Alright, we’ll do it your way! But it’s unfortunate that I just boarded a flight to Mystoria for a business trip and will be away for a week. I won’t be able to manage the signing process personally. I’ve already sent your details over to Ryan and instructed him to take care of everything. Whatever resources you’re interested in or events you want to participate in later, just let him know. I’ll make sure you get them!”

“There’s actually something now!”

“Oh? knew you weren’t just suddenly deciding to debut without having something in mind. What caught your eye?”

Xanthea said, “The film and television rights for a **novel**, Realm of Illusions. I wanna play the lead role – Phoenix!”

Realm of illusions?

Oliver thought Xanthea’s decision to debut was influenced by some major IP or a famous director. Instead, she mentioned a novel he had never even heard of.

He quickly searched it up; it was a low-budget urban romance recently concluded on a small niche website, written by a newcomer. Due to financial needs, the author had sold the rights at a low price, but no film company had been interested in adapting it, and it ended up in a novel auction.

“Xan, you sure you want your debut project to be this? It seems to have little to no fame, far behind those popular online IPs!”

“Uncle Oliver, that’s where your vision lays.”

Xanthea curled her lips up; as someone who had another choice to live **again**, her biggest advantage was her foresight!

In the past two years, following the explosive success of the web series adaptation of A World Apart, there had been a frenzy for novel IP adaptations in the film industry.

Many investors threw huge sums of money to acquire the rights to popular novels. However, due to over–

marketing and high audience expectations, many of these adaptations flopped. Even the “top ten eagerly awaited novel adaptations currently discussed online were predicted to have dismal viewership.

But there was one series, Xanthea remembered clearly, that had emerged like a dark horse last summer, reviving the frosty film industry with ratings breaking 5, becoming a sensation both domestically and internationally. This series was adapted from the then–obscure **novel** Realm of Illusions.

Realm of Illusions featured a strong urban female lead, Phoenix, who, different from those with meek and innocent image, was an international mercenary with multiple identities and responsibilities. Mysterious and powerful, beautiful yet formidable, she dominated everywhere she went.

Its fresh plot and appealing strong female lead resonated with contemporary audiences, making the series an instant hit across a dozen of countries, breaking the highest viewership records in domestic drama for the past 20 years and winning numerous awards both at home and abroad. Even her colleagues of the institute, usually preoccupied with their experiments, eagerly discussed the plot during lunch with her.

If she could play Phoenix, she was confident she could challenge Isabella for the top spot in the entertainment industry!

“I bet it’s a dark horse that’ll shine brightly later. Do you believe in me, Uncle Oliver?”

“Of course, if you’re that confident, I support you!”

Oliver

turned on his laptop, “Except, the rights to the novel aren’t with the author anymore. They’ve been moved to an auction. I just **had** someone check; this Wednesday, at the Nexus Museum, there’ll be the annual grand online literature rights auction. Realm of Illusions is on the auction list. I’ve already asked Ryan to handle the necessary procedures for participation, so you can go with him then.”

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Chapter **73**

“Awesome, thanks, Uncle Oliver!”

“The highlight of the auction this time is the annual top ten most anticipated novel IPs. A lot of film production companies will be there vying for them. It’s gonna be pretty intense. You sure you don’t wanna think it over?”

“No.”

Hopefully, everyone else would be too busy fighting over those top ten IPs, and no one would bother competing with her for Realm of Illusions!

When Xanthea got home, she found her family already seated around the long dining table, and there were Matthew and Miranda.

They were back from their trip already? They came back two whole days early. It seemed they really wanted to avoid any fuss.

Seeing her, Matthew immediately ran over.

“Xan, you’re back? Mrs. Nightshade told me you left early this morning. Where did you go? By the way, how’s your thesis revision going? Did you pass? Also, did you like the photos from the exhibit I sent you?”

He bombarded her with questions right off the bat, giving Xanthea no chance to answer, and she wasn’t planning to.

“Matt, I’m kind of hungry after a long day, let’s talk over dinner, okay?”

“Of course, my bad!”

Matthew eagerly pulled out her chair and laid a napkin on her lap, then took a pink gift box from his pocket and placed it in front of her, “Xan, I brought this souvenir especially for you from Willowdale. Hope you like it.”

Xanthea glanced at it briefly without opening it, I love it, anything from you, Matt”

“Aren’t you gonna open it?”

The unusual interaction between the two didn’t go unnoticed by the Nightshade family.

Usually, Xan was the one doting on Matthew, going out of her way to please him. Lately, it seemed the roles had reversed, with Matthew becoming increasingly attentive. Meanwhile, Xan’s responses were lukewarm and perfunctory as if she didn’t really care.

Ethan and Samuel observed Xanthea’s expression closely. After not seeing Matthew for a few days, there wasn’t even a hint of longing or surprise in her eyes. Even receiving a gift from Matthew didn’t seem to spark her interest in opening it.

Knowing Xan for years, they concluded she must have lost interest. Could it be that Xan no longer liked Matthew?

Though hard to believe, considering how fervently Xan had chased after Matthew for years, if she was indeed over him, they had to persuade her to break up soon. Hesitating could complicate things, especially with the engagement party looming.

Under his hopeful gaze, Xanthea finally opened the gift box, revealing a pink butterfly hair clip.

As expected, she barely smiled.

Ever since she had rescued a butterfly in the garden as a child and told him about her fondness for them, every gift from him had been butterfly-themed: butterfly dresses, butterfly jewelry, and butterfly specimens, etc.

In the past life, she would have been blinded by his affection, and felt overwhelmingly **to** **uched**, thinking he cherished her words. Now, it seemed like a convenient gesture, hardly effortful, especially considering that even Orion, whom she barely knew, remembered her favorite iris flowers and brought them when visiting graves.

“Wait, why is she thinking about Orion?” She thought to herself, “Is it because they had bumped into each other more often recently?” He did seem to know her quite well though, aware of her love for irises and sparkly diamonds, and her dislike for onions in meals. “So, what do you think? Xan, do you like it?” Noticing her distracted look and mistaking it for approval, Matthew couldn’t help but smile, “I spent quite a sum and **had** it custom-made by a local designer. A lot of thought went into it.”

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“Yeah, it’s beautiful.”

Her thoughts shattered, Xanthea snapped the lid shut. Was it just a coincidence? They barely met in their previous lives. How could he know her so well?

“By the way. Dad, Mom, Ethan, Samuel and Miny, I have something to announce.”

Christopher asked. “What is it?”

“I’ve decided to enter the showbiz”

Thath”

As she spoke the room fell into shocked silence, especially Miranda, who dropped her fork with a clatter.

She slowly lifted her head, disbelief etched on her face.

What was she up to now? Hadn't she always talked about pursuing a career in scientific research? Why the sudden switch to the showbiz? If she entered the showbiz, what would happen to her?

For years, she'd been leveraging her connections with the Nightshade family and Oliver to pull some strings at Oli-hea Media. If Xanthea made her debut

Oliver who treated her like his own daughter, would surely put the company's best teams and resources at Xanthea's disposal, leaving nothing for her. Even if there were "leftovers", they'd only be the scraps that Xanthea didn't want!

Ethan looked at her sterily, "Xan, haven't you always wanted to be a chemist? The Scientific Research Institute of Crestwood Hall Academy has already sent you an invitation. Why switch to the showbiz all of a sudden?"

Susanna chimed in, "Yeah, Xan, has Oliver been filling your head with ideas again? Don't listen to him. You've got to stick to your goals and not be fad."

"Ethan Mom, I haven't given up on my dreams. I just don't want to enter the institute as a specially invited student. At the end of the year they're recruiting for a top-notch research team and it's gonna be a tough selection process. I plan to apply then. In the meantime,

wanna try my hand at the showbiz for six months."

wholeheartedly support this!" Samuel grinned, serving her a slice of steak.

"Why buy yourself in a research institute? You'd disappear for months on end, and I'd miss you like crazy! But if you're in the showbiz, not only can I see you at home, but I can also catch you on the news and TV. Remember your stint on The Masked Singer"? It was a hit! Loads of my colleagues are your fans. They even asked my secretary for your autograph!"

"see" Christopher looked at her, noticing the serious expression in her eyes, "You've always been decisive. Since you've thought this through, I won't say much. With your uncle and Oli hea Media on your side, I'm not worried."

“But” Miranda picked up her utensils, looking worriedly at Xanthea, “You said the research team would have strict evaluations. Won’t taking a six–month break jeopardize your studies?”

“Huh?” Xanthea blinked, “Well, even when I’m not ‘on break, I’m not exactly studying, am I?”

Laughter erupted around the room, even as Miranda, who had failed the threshold to Kingswood Academy three times, clenched her utensils, her face turning a shade paler.

Was she mocking her? Not only had she stolen her championship on “The Masked Singer”, but now she was also after her resources in the showbiz. It was too much!

She must not let her enter the industry. She just couldn’t!

“Xan,” before Matthew could speak, Xanthea cut him off, “Matt, you don’t have objections, right? Because you said you’d support whatever I love”

Matthew was instantly silenced by her words, swallowing back his concerns.

Truth be told, he didn’t want Xan to enter the industry. She was outstanding, and gorgeous. Once she stood before the cameras, her brilliance would be magnified, attracting all sorts of unwanted attention.

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If in the past, he could guarantee that Xan wouldn’t be swayed, but lately, her fickle behavior had him on edge, scared and nervous.

Why had he felt annoyed when Xon clung to him desperately in the past, even considering to cheat? if he could turn back time, he swore he wouldn’t make the same mistake. Perhaps his casual dismissiveness had hurt her. From now on, he resolved to cherish and protect her, to make up for his past indifference a thousandfold.

Xanthea looked at him, his words faltering, and remembered things he had said to her in the past life.

“Xan, I don’t like it when girls show their faces in public. Look at your sister, hanging out at bars and clubs all the time, what kind of

impression does that give? Once we're married, you'll just stay at home and be my perfect housewife, okay?"

Typical. Once a jerk, always a jerk, playing the double standards game better than anyone.

"Sure, as long as it's what you like, I'm all for it!"

He paused for a moment, and then nodded, which somewhat surprised Xanthea.

"Dad, I might be late to Aunt's wedding anniversary the day after tomorrow. Uncle asked me to attend a cultural copyright auction. I need to pick out a script for an upcoming performance."

"I'll come too!"

"I'll come too!"

After she finished, a couple of voices chimed in together.

Xanthea's gaze swept over Matthew, her mother, and Samuel, finally settling on Ethan, "Ethan, you have the best taste; can you come with me?"

"Xan, don't you want me to stay with you?"

Matthew grabbed her arm, and she felt **the** strength of his grip, frowning as she tried to pull away but then saw the earnest look on his face. "You're swamped with work."

That stuff's not important. I **can** cancel it!"

His gaze held a plea she hadn't seen before, eerily reminiscent of her past life. Was it because she had been rejecting him too often lately that he'd started to notice something was off?

"Alright, if you aren't too busy, come with me then"

"Sis, can I come too?"

Miranda bit her lip, looking at her nervously, Xanthea saw her putting on a damsel-in-distress act and narrowed her eyes.

What was up with these two? In her past life, they went out of their way to avoid her while cheating, but this life they clung to her like needy puppies.

In the bustling business district of Crestwood CBD, at the Twin Towers penthouse, Cedric walked into the CEO's office with a document

in hand

“Boss, the head just sent an invitation for you to attend a web literature copyright auction at the Nexus Museum this Wednesday. This event will feature bids on the rights to ten popular online novels, which have significant influence in the showbiz. Numerous companies and their representatives will be attending”

“Decline it.” Orion didn’t even look up, continuing to sign documents at his desk, “Have someone from Starlight Media attend on my behalf.”

Cedric wasn’t surprised by this typical response,

Although Starlight Media was a subsidiary of the Lockwood Group, the CEO didn’t pay much personal attention to the entertainment sector, leaving it to professionals. But this time.

“I just checked the guest list for the auction, and Ms. Nightshade from Oli hea Media is gonna be there.”

At that, the pen in the man’s hand stopped abruptly, a drop of ink blooming on the white paper.

“Ms. Nightshade?”

“Yes, it seems she’s signed with Oli hea Media.”

Cedric nodded, meeting his boss’s unfathomable gaze, hesitantly asking, “So, do we still decline the invitation?”

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It was a bustling Wednesday at the Nexus Museum, a galaxy of talented people as renowned directors, investors, and entertainment moguls arrived with their celebrities in tow for the auction. The riverside was packed with hundreds of luxury cars.

Guided by Ryan, Xanthea entered the auction hall and took a seat in the third row alongside Matthew and Miranda.

“Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to the annual online literary rights auction hosted by the Cultural Bureau. The auction will officially start at eleven o’clock. Before we begin, please feel free to browse through the catalogues provided.”

Xanthea attentively flipped through the auction booklet. As she did, a butterfly hair clip loosely fixed by her ear quietly slipped from her long hair to the floor.

“Xan.” Matthew picked it up, gently lifting a curl of her hair, “Your clip fell. Let me put it back for you.”

“Thanks.”

Xanthea tugged her lips softly, turning her face slightly when suddenly a commotion arose from the entrance of the pavilion.

“Mr. Lockwood is here!”

“**What?** Mr. Lockwood graced us with his presence today? I wonder which script caught his eye?”

“It’s got to be one of the top ten IPs. Everyone in the film industry knows they are hot commodities. There are countless extraordinary actors and actresses, and with Starlight Media owning half of them and their roster of big stars, they wouldn’t miss out on such a resource!”

“Looks like the competition will be fierce today.”

As Xanthea looked up, she saw a group of staff escorting a figure of regal and elegant demeanor.

Orion? What was he doing here? Following him were Isabella, Shirley, and other key artists from Starlight Media.

Was he also here to bid for IPs for his artists?

As Orion stepped into the auction hall, his gaze immediately cut through the crowd to a striking young woman sitting by the aisle. Her eyes sparkled, dimples lightly showing, as she playfully smiled at the man beside her twirling her **hair**.

Her dazzling smile was like a piercing light, shooting straight into the depths of his eyes, forming an icy grip in the darkest corners. As Cedric, who followed Orion, stepped into the hall, he felt as if he had walked from a sunny day into an ice cave.

Following Orion’s **gaze**, he too caught the moment.

Had he known Ms. Nightshade would be here with Matthew to bid, he would have kept it to himself. Now, he really had messed things

1. up.

As Isabella entered the hall, she waved cheerfully at the flashing cameras and photographers, effortlessly posing. Turning her head. casually, she spotted Xanthea in the third row

What was she doing here? Was she also bidding on the top ten IPs? Seemed she got the memo quickly and was ready to act

Unfortunately, she wasn't going to let Xanthea have her way!

Today, those top IPs were a must-win for Starlight Media. Whatever Xanthea set her eyes on, she was prepared to compete fiercely. As Orion passed by the aisle, Xanthea stood up excitedly to greet him, but he seemed not to notice her, his expression cold, even his broad-shouldered suit radiating a frosty air of "stay away from me", making her outstretched hand freeze mid-air.

There she was, in her bright lilac dress, and yet so easily overlooked?

As she awkwardly began to retract her hand, a perfectly manicured hand suddenly reached out and grabbed hers. Isabella held on tightly, her smile cold, "Xanthea, so you say you weren't trying to charm our chairman? Caught you

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Xanthea remained silent.

"Here for the top ten IPs today? You might as well prepare to leave empty handed. See our chairman over there? No one can compete with Starlight Media, not with the Lockwood Group backing them!

"We won't know the result unless I give it a try."

Isabella let out a loud, mocking laugh, quickly covering her mouth to avoid being caught on camera, "Go ahead then; watch yourself crash and bum!"

She dropped her hand and glanced at Matthew and Miranda standing next to her

"Didn't expect you're so careless, letting everyone know.uhmm!"

Before Isabella could finish, Xanthea clamped a hand over her mouth, her narrowed eyes issuing a clear warning.

“Let go!”

Isabella stepped back, shooting Xanthea an annoyed glare before strutting off to join the other Starlight Media artists in the front row VIP seats

This Xanthea, a pampered princess who wouldn't deign to dirty her hands, had skin even softer than her frequently pampered face. How could she survive the cutthroat entertainment industry against someone like her? She'd be begging for mercy soon enough!

She almost dropped a clanger.

Xanthea exhaled in relief as Matthew looked on in surprise at Isabella's retreating figure, “Isabella? The girl from next door in high school who always tried to copy you?”

“You remember?”

“Of course! Everyone loved you back then, except for her. Always turning against you, trying to imitate you, but it just came off as awkward. Xan, you're one of a kind!”

Xanthea couldn't help but cringe a little at his cheesy compliment.

Miranda chimed in, “But she's a different person now, **top** of the industry, backed by Starlight Media and tens of millions of loyal fans. Even you, Sis, it's tough to surpass her now.”

Xanthea smiled faintly, “Yeah, you've done well for yourself. After all these years, you're still trailing behind her. How can I possibly compare?”

Miranda's face changed subtly as she noticed Xanthea's biting sarcasm, a new sharpness to her tone that hadn't been there before.

“Ladies and gentlemen, it **is** now 11 AM, and I declare this year's online literary rights auction officially begins!

First up, we have the first item, Echoes of Eternity from the top fiction site—last year's highest-selling novel and one of the ten most coveted IPs for adaptation. Bidding starts at 500 thousand, with increments of no less than 10 thousand. Let the bidding begin!”

510 thousand!”

“600 thousand!”

“700 thousand!”

750 thousand

As the bidding war for Echoes of Eternity intensified, Matthew picked up his bidding paddle, “Xan, you interested in this one?”

Xanthea shook her head, which surprised Matthew a bit, “This novel’s one of the most valuable IPs for adaptation.”

“The protagonist isn’t quite right for me.”

“Alright, just let me know if there’s anything else you like. I’ll snag it for you as a debut gift”

Thanks, Matt.”

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As prices soared, many companies withdrew from the bidding, leaving only a handful of powerful media giants in the fray. Among them, Starlight Media was the most aggressive, frequently raising their bid paddles.

Xanthea glanced over and locked eyes with Isabella

From the moment “Echoes of Eternity” was put up for auction, Isabella had been watching her like a hawk, always on guard. Yet, surprisingly, Xanthea hadn’t raised her paddle once, but had managed to throw a disdainful look her way

Isabella wondered if Xanthea’s real target was the much talked about “Comer with Love”. As a newcomer, modern dramas were indeed more popular than historical ones, and the female lead’s chic appearance seemed a better fit for her.

Isabella edged closer to the CEO who was bidding

“I’ve suddenly lost interest in this script. Let’s focus on Comer with Love’ instead”

“Alright your call”

As Starlight Media's top star and a leading figure in the showbiz, Isabella's words carried weight.

Manny put down his paddle, and "Echoes of Eternity" went to Orange Media for a whopping 1.1 million. The next manuscript, a popular

men's fiction

Xanthea flipped through the auction catalog. "Realm of Illusions" would feature at the end of the auction at a special **price**. The main event was bidding on the top ten IPs. Bored, she closed the catalog, her **gaze** inadvertently falling on Orion, who sat in the VIP row, exuding an air of detached elegance.

He seemed in a foul mood today. His profile was stern, his mood visibly dark, a stark contrast to the lively and noisy ambiance around him. It reminded her of that night in Willowdale.

His sudden anger had been baffling, unpredictable, and moody. She wondered who could possibly get close to such a person.

"Xan, Xan"

Lost in thought, Xanthea was jolted back to reality by Matthew calling her a few times.

"What's up?"

"This's the last of the top ten IPs. Aren't you going to bid?"

"The last one already?"

She looked up again, catching Isabella's sneaky gaze. This time, instead of guarded wariness, there was blatant mockery, as if laughing at her ignorance for not bidding on any of the top IPs, suggesting she was here to pick up "leftovers".

Miranda, seeing that she hadn't made a move and hearing that the top IPs were almost gone, looked expectant and somewhat scornful. The top IPs would dominate the film and television market for the next couple of years, and Xanthea hadn't secured any.

She really didn't understand the entertainment industry, yet stubbornly wanted to be involved. Thinking academic excellence could translate to industry success was naive. If she ended up wasting Oriana Media's resources without gaining any fame, the heiress would become a joke.

"No rush. Let's wait and see."

“But

Matthew looked at her in puzzlement. Even he, an outsider, could see the popularity of the top IPs. Why was Xanthea so indifferent? Wasn't she known for her keen eye?

“Next, we present the last item of this auction, from the special discount section, Realm of Illusions. The starting bid is 20 thousand, with a minimum increment of 1 thousand. Please begin bidding!”

It was a plot from an obscure **online** site by an unknown author, with an exaggerated and **unique** style that had no prior market precedent. The evaluators from various film and television companies shook their heads, and after the auctioneer's call, a few seconds passed with no one raising their paddle.

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Xanthea thought prices in the discount aisle would be low, but she hadn't expected them to be this low. Imagining the potential fame it could garner later, it seemed like a hidden gem in the rough.

“Matt I want this one.

“What?”

Matthew paused for a moment, and Miranda was equally stunned. This? A novel by a completely unknown author, and she wanted to bid on it? Had she lost her mind?

“Xan, you don't need to save money for me

“Raise the paddle”

“Alright.” Although Matthew didn't understand her reasoning, he lifted the paddle, “50 thousand

“50 thousand from bidder number 0121

Quality varied greatly in the discount section, and items often went unsold. Matthew's bid, doubling the starting price, clearly surprised the auctioneer, who promptly grabbed his gavel.

Matthew thought 50 thousand would clinch it and started to **stand** to finalize the deal, but suddenly, a deep, magnetic **voice** filled the

room

“51 thousand”

When bidder number 001 slowly raised his paddle from the first row of VIP seats, every one turned their surprised gazes towards the elegant figure.

This was Mr. Lockwood’s first bid of the day, and it was for a **deeply** discounted novel? Unbelievable!

Xanthea was also taken aback. Why would Orion bid on this novel?

Could it be that he too saw the huge potential and bright future of the work? No wonder he was the youngest head of the Lockwood Group, a once-in-a-century business titan. His keen insight and foresight were truly unmatched

If she hadn’t known about the future success of “Realm of Illusions“, she wouldn’t **have** bothered either. Luckily, his bid was only slightly higher, so he probably wasn’t too committed.

“Rase”

Xanthea nudged Matthew, whose body had stiffened. Matthew, holding the paddle awkwardly, slowly sat back down.

A mere online novel, and Orion Lockwood himself was bidding **on** it!

What he wanted probably wasn’t the novel’s rights but to make a point in front of Xan. That look on the plane wasn’t just his imagination after all.

*100 thousand!”

The auctioneer announced, “Now, 100 thousand from bidder 012!”

*101 thousand.”

Again, just like before, Orion added just a hundred more to Matthew’s bid.

Xanthea frowned; this wasn’t going as smoothly as she had hoped. But doubling the bid again should deter him since to every one else, it seemed like an unworthy investment.

She signaled Matthew, who lifted the paddle again, “200 thousand

Orion bid, “201 thousand.”

After three rounds of bidding, the room was abuzz with chatter and restlessness,

“A 20 grand novel skyrocketing to 2001 it’s simply unbelievable!”

“Mr. Lockwood didn’t react to the top ten top bids earlier, but now he’s personally bidding on this one. What’s so special about it?”

“If it were anyone else, maybe not, but Mr. Lockwood... **could** it be we’re missing something?”

“It’s strange that Oli hea Media’s representative is so determined to get this novel, Competing with Mr. Lockwood for it seems like a wild goose chase, doesn’t it?”

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When Matthew raised his bidding paddle, Isabella couldn’t help but mock Xanthea’s choice of scripts, likening it to her equally terrible taste in men. She hadn’t expected the CEO himself to join the **bidding**, driving the price up tenfold. Why, though?

The script wasn’t worth it, to say the least, it was the only item Xanthen wanted in the entire auction. Was Orion really competing with her?

That day at the Elevation Building, she saw Orion treat Xanthea with special attention and thought there might be something more between them. It seemed she was mistaken.

The only one who knew the truth, Cedric, watched the man looking grim beside him and scratched his chin. From the moment they entered the hall, he’d been keeping an eye on Ms. Nightshade. She’d been showing interest in merely this one item; sadly, it looked like she wouldn’t get her hands on it.

Was he still raising the bid?

Xanthea was stunned. Before she could gather her thoughts, she saw Matthew angrily raise his paddle, “500 thousand!”

This Orion, determined to compete till the end. For Xan, he couldn’t back down!

“501 thousand.”

Xanthea couldn't believe her ears when she heard Orion's calm voice again. It was already 500 thousand dollars, and he was still raising. Miranda watched the drama unfold with wide eyes, feeling a secret thrill after shock.

Initially on the plane, Mr. Lockwood was so polite to Xanthea, she wondered if the temptress had seduced him.

Now, it seemed Mr. Lockwood was just giving face to the heiress of the Nightshade family. That's right, how could such a celebrated figure be interested in a naive girl?

*600 thousand!"

*601 thousand."

"800 thousand

"801 thousand."

As the price soared higher and more absurd, the gallery buzzed with excitement.

"My Godr

"Such a surprise, I never thought the fiercest bidding wouldn't be for one of the top ten IPs, but for an obscure script!"

*Oli hea Media is unlucky, finally setting their sights on a script only to have a big shot snatch it away. Their representative looks about ready to sweat!"

"Well, the auction is all about the highest bidder. But Oli hea Media should give up anyway, what Mr. Lockwood wants, Mr. Lockwood gets!

Soon, the bid reached a million dollars.

Xanthea incredulously watched the man in the VIP section, his expression unreadable, he raised the bid by **just** 1 thousand dollars each time, mysteriously inscrutable

Initially, she thought he saw potential in "Realm of Illusions" but didn't think it was worth much, hence the small increments. Now it seemed every bid was a deliberate attempt to outdo her.

*1.5 million."

Matthew stuttered, his hand gripping the paddle sweaty.

A million was

is his limit, the Martinez Group couldn't spare more liquidity! But Orion kept raising, forcing him into submission.

Miranda chimed in, "Sis, Chairman Lockwood really dotes on Isabella, raising the price of a 20 thousand dollar script b for her. I'm so jealous,"

by 50 times just

Xanthea's gaze flicked over Isabella, who was covering her mouth, giggling uncontrollably. She paused, and then grabbed the paddle from Matthew's hand, "Bidder number 012 withdraws"

Her clear voice echoed in the gallery, followed by the auctioneer's final hammer, "Let's congratulate Mr. Lockwood on winning the last

item of the auction!":

"Xan?" Matthew looked at her, surprised and guilty. "I could have continued."

Xanthea replied, "No need, I wasn't that fond of the script anyway. Let's go."

The Lockwood Group, with its immense wealth, was unmatched. If Orion wanted something, no one could compete.

Chapter 80

Isabella always targeted her snatching away anything she wanted. If Orion truly bid for "Realm of illusions" for her, then they were destined to win today. Continuing to bid would only waste time,

"Next, please welcome the representative from the Lockwood Group – Mr. Orion Lockwood to the stage to sign the contract."

As Orion approached the stage, he watched the young woman depart gracefully. His deep eyes seemed to consume something bit by

bit