

# The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

## The Heiress Revived Ch 161

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### Chapter 161 Table for One Punch

David flinched as

Elliot, with a sudden fury, slammed his fist onto the nearby table. The **loud** crash sent objects leaping into the air, clattering back down in disarray.

“Let’s not forget, it was you who testified against Lauren in court, David retorted defiantly, despite instinctively shrinking back. “And now, you’re pinning all the blame on me and your mom!”

Elliot stiffened as if **struck** by a sledgehammer. How could I forge!!

Those memories haunted him like a nightmare, causing him endless torment..

“It’s karma, you breaking your leg is just karmal” Elliot bit out each word through clenched teeth

Since Lauren had left, Elliot’s health had only deteriorated. He knew this was probably his own punishment

David couldn’t stand Elliot mentioning Lauren constantly.

“She’s nothing but a cheap tramp, and yet you defend her? Ridiculous,” he scoffed, boiling with anger. “Get out!”

Elliot stood motionless by the bed like a statue, his gaze cold **and** steady on David. With a broken leg, David was powerless to do more than seethe in frustration, his face turning beet red and veins bulging as pain throbbed through his **body**, **nearly** causing him to faint,

Seeing David in such agony strangely satisfied Elliot.

Amid the heated argument, Alice, enduring her own pain, interjected, “Elliot, please stop fighting with your dad over Lauren. We were wrong about her—she’s ungrateful, and leaving was her way of mocking our concern. I regret ever insisting on having both a son and a daughter; she turned out to be nothing but a curse!”

Wiping away tears, Alice composed herself and continued, “Elliot, Ms. Willow is supposed to come back from Balewood to celebrate Kate’s birthday today. Call her and tell her

not to come. If Lauren sees her, with her vindictive nature, she'll definitely take it out on Ms. Willow."

"Right, call Ms. Willow, tell her not to come," David echoed, his worry deepening as he recalled Willow's frail condition. following her surgery last year.

Elliot remembered seeing Willow's pitiful state at the police station, a sour ache in his heart.

Lauren's cruelty knew no bounds, he thought. He wanted to reveal Willow's ordeal but refrained to avoid worrying his mother, keeping these, heavy thoughts to himself.

After a moment of silence, he **said**, "I understand. You both stay and recover; I need to leave."

Alice seemed about to say more but stopped herself, seeing Elliot's reluctance to discuss further, and sighed in resignation.

Elliot walked out **of** the hospital room, each step **heavy as** if carrying a great burden. His silhouette stretched long under the corridor lights, casting a forlorn shadow,

He hadn't left the hospital building when he ran into Jeffrey.

"Elliot, it's late. You're not staying with your parents? Where are you headed?" Jeffrey asked, pausing his stride.

"I'm going to find Lauren, Elliot replied, his voice tired.

Realizing Felix's deep care for Lauren, Elliot knew convincing him to release Willow was impossible; pleading with Lauren was the only **way**.

At the mention of Lauren, Jeffrey's eyes lit up. "Where is she? I'll come with you."

"Why would you want to come?" Elliot eyed him suspiciously,

Jeffrey had crucial questions for Lauren. Recently, he discovered that Lauren had undergone a kidney compatibility test in her first **year** back with the Bennetts—at only fifteen

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Chapter 161 Table for One Punch

Haunted by these questions, Jeffrey was desperate for answers.

Finished

He could **have** asked the Bennetts, but considering what they had done to Lauren, he instinctively wanted to keep them in

the dark

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Chapter 162 Unexpected Encounters

Finished

Jeffrey felt like he had stumbled onto a monumental secret. When Elliot asked him about it, he feigned nonchalance, "It's not about what I'm going to do: I'm coming with you. Remember how we had to track down Lauren when she ran off last time? I'm pretty good at this kind of **thing**," he said, patting his chest confidently.

Elliot, taking his word for it, replied. "I'm not out to capture her, I'm going to plead with her. Somehow, she's gotten in with

Felix."

"Plead with her?" Jeffrey was puzzled. "Since when are you in a position to be begging Lauren!"

"It's all because she got Ms. Willow arrested by the police, claiming Ms. Willow stole embroidery worth 2.8 million. It's absurd, 2.8 million is nothing to the Bennetts," Elliot ranted, growing more agitated by the minute.

Jeffrey, growing impatient with Elliot's venting, quickly cut him off, "Alright, let's just go find her before it gets any later, She might already be asleep."

It was a quiet, deep night. Soft lights from the Brooker's Villa shone through the windows, illuminating the **path** in the courtyard.

Felix stood quietly outside Lauren's room, holding a steaming cup of milk. He knocked gently on the door—once, twice, three times but there was no response. Is she asleep?

He pushed the door slightly, and it swung open

Through the crack, he **saw** Lauren in a white nightgown, standing by the floor-to-ceiling window.

"Ms. Bennet?" he called softly, but Lauren didn't react.

Is she so lost in thought that she didn't hear me? Felix wondered.

He stepped into the room, placed the milk on the table, and tried again, "It's late. Drink your warm milk and get some rest

Still his words vanished into silence, with only the rustling of leaves outside breaking the quiet.

"Ms. Bennett?" he called **again**, but was met with continued silence,

Growing more puzzled. Felix gently tapped Lauren's shoulder.

Startled by the unexpected touch, Lauren trembled and spun around. Her sudden movement threw her off balance, and her injured leg gave way, causing her to fall backward.

Felix quickly reached out, wrapping his arms around her slender **waist** and steadying her against him.

Lauren looked up in a panic, her long fingers instinctively resting on Felix's broad chest. Her eyes still held a trace of her earlier alarm

Just then, a black Bentley slowly pulled up outside the Brooker's Villa. The **car** door opened, and Jeffrey and Elliot stepped

out.

As they looked up, they saw through the second-floor window Felix holding Lauren closely, their bodies entwined in an **embrace** that, from their angle, appeared almost like a passionate kiss.

Elliot's eyes widened in **shock**, a surge of rage boiling within him. "Lauren, have you no shame? Who allowed you to live with him?" he bellowed, pointing towards the second floor.

The scene in the bedroom window stunned Jeffrey; the ambiguous silhouettes struck him like a hammer, shattering his perceptions.

However, he **quickly** regained his composure, furrowing his brow **and** gently tugging at Elliot's sleeve, "**Calm** down, it might not be what it looks like. There could be a misunderstanding"

But Elliot was beyond reason, his eyes red and fiery as he glared at the couple upstairs. His chest heaved with anger as he yelled, "A **misunderstanding**? Open your eyes! They're wrapped up in each other's arms, even... How could there be any misunderstanding?"

## Chapter 162 Unexpected Encounters

He looked up at Lauren and roared, “Are you that desperate? Can’t you live without a man?”

Finished

His **voice**, filled with biting anger, carried far in the quiet night, Lauren, missing a kidney **and** physically frail, couldn’t handle the physical demands of a relationship

Thinking of this, a wave of uncontrollable anger surged through him. He felt Lauren was deliberately tormenting them all with her reckless behavior.

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## Chapter 163 Whispers in the Dark

Finished

As Elliot glared at the silhouette melded in the floor-to-ceiling window, veins throbbed on his forehead. “Lauren, I’m warning

The Bennetts can’t you, if you keep messing around with Felix, and you end up dead in bed, I won’t even claim your body.” afford that kind of disgrace!”

Upstairs, the bedroom bathed in a warm yellow light, casting a cozy glow throughout the room.

Felix’s palms securely supported Lauren’s lower back, his touch gentle yet firm. Lauren’s body pressed tightly against Felix’s chest, leaving no space between them.

Through her thin nightgown, Lauren could distinctly feel the heat radiating from his body, causing her heartbeat to involuntarily quicken.

The unique scent of cedar mixed with a hint of tobacco lingered on Felix’s breath, **making** her head swim and a blush to spread rapidly across her cheeks.

“Thank you,” Lauren whispered, her voice barely audible, tinged with shyness and turmoil.

She instinctively tried to push Felix away, but her hands felt as if they were under a spell, weak **and** ineffective against his

solid frame.

Felix squinted, studying Lauren closely, his gaze as if piercing through to her innermost thoughts.

Lauren's eyelashes fluttered slightly, her warm breath lightly grazing Felix's throat.

She didn't react to Elliot's thunderous insults from below, as if she couldn't hear them **at** all. Slowly, Lauren lifted her head, her eyes locking with Felix's deep, abyssal gaze.

For a moment, she felt as **though** she was being sucked into a deep vortex. Her heart raced, **and** her face turned **as** red as a beet

She suppressed the turmoil inside her and looked up at Felix's beautifully sculpted lips, "Mr. Brooker, can you let go of me now?"

Felix, noticing her gaze fixed on his lips, his expression darkened.

Instead of releasing her, he pulled her even closer, enveloping the petite Lauren in his arms, her face nearly buried in his chest, with only her wide, astonished eyes showing

His chin rested on her shoulder, his handsome face close to her ear, he whispered, "Lauren, didn't you hear Elliot's voice?"

His voice was low and magnetic, filled with deep **inquiry**.

After a long silence, Lauren in his arms didn't respond, the quiet around them only broken by their beating hearts.

In that moment, Felix **realized** Lauren couldn't hear; she must be reading lips to communicate.

A flash of shock and anger crossed his eyes. He had seen her records—before her incarceration, there had been nothing wrong with her ears.

**Thinking** of how often she was slapped in prison, Felix's breathing quickened.

He hugged Lauren tightly, as if to absorb all her **pain**, his feelings of compassion and protectiveness growing stronger.

Feeling Felix's tight **embrace**, ripples of emotion washed over **Lauren**.

Her mind raced uncontrollably. Was Mr. Brooker's annual behavior today because he had feelings for her?

The thought brought a sweet flutter to her heart.

But reality quickly doused the spark of her fantasy. Her frail, battered body was no match for someone as distinguished as Felix.

The blush that had just risen on her face quickly faded, replaced by endless desolation and sorrow.

#### Chapter 163 Whispers in the Dark

Felix looked down at Elliot, his gaze turning icy, almost freezing everything it touched, with a hint of provocation.

Meeting such a gaze, Elliot's heart nearly burst with anger.

His finger trembled as he pointed at Felix and roared. "Felix, I'm warning you, don't you dare touch my sister again."

Finished

Elliot's fury ignited a mischievous defiance in Felix. His lips curled into a devilish smile, glaringly bright under the light.

Suddenly, he turned his head, his lips gently brushing against Lauren's neck.

Time seemed to stop in that instant.

Lauren felt a jolt of electricity shoot through her body, her heart nearly leaping out of her chest.

Her hands clenched tightly, her breathing quick and erratic.

Outside the Brooker's Villa, Elliot saw everything **crystal** clear

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#### Chapter 164 A Night of Tumult

Elliot's eyes bulged with fury, and he stomped toward the villa's grand entrance, pounding on the door with all his might.

“Open up, open the door now! Felix, you scumbag, don’t you dare kiss my sister. Get your filthy hands off her! Lauren, you’re playing dead for me? Felix is no good: you won’t be happy with him.

The villa’s living room door slowly opened, and Anna and Marilyn emerged. Hope sparked in Elliot’s eyes when he saw Marilyn.

“**Marilyn**, let me in quickly. That scumbag Felix is getting handsy with Laurie, even dared to kiss her. I’ll kill him!”

Anna and Marilyn exchanged a glance, a barely concealable delight spreading across their faces. Without a word, they turned.

and shut the door.

They hurried to Kate, eager to relay the news

Kate’s face lit up with joy. “**Good**, very **good**.”

She had thought Felix was clueless about romance, but here he was, actively pursuing a girl.

“Their relationship is progressing so fast; it caught me off guard. They’ve already kissed? That’s wonderful.”

Seeing the door shut, Elliot, unable to vent his frustration, continued to hurl insults at Lauren and Felix upstairs, forgetting why he had come to see Lauren in the first place.

Jeffrey quietly observed Lauren’s slender back, a strange feeling brewing inside him

Elliot’s insults were vile and loud, yet Lauren seemed completely unresponsive, **as** if she couldn’t hear a thing.

And Felix with that provocative demeanor, was truly irritating

Felix’s gaze remained unblinkingly on the pair outside.

His lips slowly moved up Lauren’s neck, his breath warm as it brushed against her skin, making her cheeks burn as if they might bleed.

Lauren struggled slightly but Felix held her even tighter.

“Mr. Brooker... Lauren called out softly, her voice trembling.



To Felix, her voice was like **a** soft hand gently scratching at his heartstrings, making his eyes darken even more.

He slightly loosened his hold **on** Lauren but kept his arms gently around her shoulders, looking down into her **eyes** with a soft and low **voice**. "You should go to sleep."

Lauren nodded and **was** about to pull the curtains closed when Felix suddenly scooped her up. She stiffened in surprise but soon relaxed, allowing Felix to gently place her on the bed.

Through it all, Elliot's hysterical ranting continued unabated, but Felix ignored it completely.

He handed Lauren the warm milk, and under his gaze, she drank it all.

Felix gave her a soft smile, then walked back to the window.

He stared **coldly** at Elliot outside.

Seeing Felix, Elliot's shouting abruptly stopped.

Their eyes met across the distance. Felix's gaze icy and challenging.

Elliot's face turned a shade of deep blue as he clenched his teeth and said, "Felix, Lauren's not well. You're not allowed to touch her"

His voice trembled slightly, **as** if he truly worried about Lauren's health

1143 AM

Chapter 164 A Night of Tumult

Finished

Felix scoffed dismissively, his eyes flashing with contempt. He abruptly pulled the curtains shut, cutting off Elliot's view completely

Elliot's pupils dilated in rage, staring at the tightly closed curtains, nearly apoplectic.

Felix turned slowly, his gaze tenderly falling on Lauren. The bedside lamp cast an amber glow on his well-defined jawline, his Adam's apple moving slightly as he whispered. "Sleep now."

Lauren, nestled in the goose—  
down comforter, trembled slightly, a translucent blush spreading across her cheeks under the warm light.

Her fingers whitened as they clutched the comforter's edge, her gaze lingering on the retreating figure of the man.

"Mr. Brooker." Lauren suddenly called out to him.

Felix paused and turned, the shadows at the entryway slicing **across** half his face, his loosely tied collar revealing a glimpse of his collarbone, which gleamed with a cold jade luster in the dark.

What is it!"

The air, heavy with a subtle fragrance, suddenly stilled. Lauren looked at him, finding the man before her both elegant and

captivating.

After a moment

his hesitation, she asked, "Why are you so good to me?"

The question had been  
circling in her mind for a long time, and she couldn't hold it back any longer.

Felix was briefly taken aback, then a slight smile curved his lips,

He walked back to the bedside and sat down beside  
her, the mattress dipping under his weight, causing Lauren to catch her breath.

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Chapter 165 Proposal? What Proposal?

His lips parted slightly as he murmured, "Because I want to marry you."

Felix's voice was deep, resonating **close** to her ear.

Lauren's pupils dilated, her gaze fixating on his lips, which shimmered rose-colored in the warm light. She swallowed the bitterness in her throat, not quite grasping what he had said.

Yet, she managed a soft smile, hiding any hint of confusion.

Felix didn't miss the fleeting stiffness on her face.

**Watching** her trembling eyelashes cast butterfly shadows below her eyes, he chuckled softly. "Would you?"

She understood this question—whether she was willing—but she had no idea what he had **asked** just before that,

Looks like I need to get better at reading lips. Fortunately, Felix hadn't noticed her hearing loss

She had already troubled Felix **and** her grandmother too much; she really didn't want to add her deafness to their worries

Even though she didn't know what he had exactly said, she trusted Mr. Brooker's character—he would never harm her.

"I do, she immediately responded with a smile

Outside the window, thunder cracked suddenly, lightning briefly illuminating the turmoil in his eyes,

How can I trust so easily? She thought, her innocence almost lamb-like. He had said he wanted to marry her. Whether she understood or not, she had agreed

That meant the proposal was successful.

This realization delighted Felix

He turned off the light, and the room plunged into a cozy darkness.

He descended the stairs with steady steps. As soon as he entered the living room, three pairs of eager eyes turned to him.

Kate grinned broadly, Felix, where's Laurie!"

's gone to sleep.

Are you two **doing** in the room?"

"And what were you

With a calm demeanor, Felix replied, "Nothing much. I just proposed to her, and she accepted"

“Proposed?”

Kate’s eyes widened to their limits, her mouth gaping in surprise. The news had come so unexpectedly that she immediately react.

“How did you propose?”

“I asked her if she wanted to marry me, and she said yes.”

Kate **was** speechless.

couldn’t

Anna and Marilyn, overhearing this, were equally stunned. That was the proposal! No flowers, no ring, nothing! Just Felir’s words,

Marilyn felt a warmth in her eyes, knowing how much Lauren had been hurt before. She was so desperate for affection.

That’s why she didn’t hesitate to accept such a simple proposal from a respectable family like the Brookers.

But in her heart, Marilyn was happy for her; at last, she had found her own happiness.

1141/

Chapter 165 Proposal? What Proposal?

Kate, however, didn’t see it that way

#Finished

Laune was the daughter-in-law she had chosen, and such a significant occasion as a proposal shouldn’t be so understated.

She glared at the oblivious Felix, thinking to herself that only because Laurie was easygoing did she accept so readily. **Any** other woman might not have been so quick to agree.

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Felix crossed his **legs** and sat elegantly on the sofa, his voice deep and magnetic, “It’s getting late, **you** all should head to bed.”

“Hmm. **you** too.

Kate, Anna, and Marilyn didn't probe further and retired to their rooms, leaving Felix alone in the living room, the occasional shouts of Elliot and the rumble of thunder echoing from outside.

Outside the villa, Elliot's voice was hoarse, but he showed no signs of **stopping**.

Jeffrey, frowning, suggested, "Stop shouting, it's useless. Let's go back."

But Elliot ignored him, his eyes fixed on Lauren's room.

Lauren hadn't really fallen asleep, her thoughts were delicate and sensitive, and she quickly sensed something **off about** Felix's demeanor earlier.

outside.

She rose from her bed and walked to the window, parting the curtains just enough to see Elliot and Jeffrey o

Elliot was jumping **up** and down like a madman, his face contorted with rage and madness.

Lauren watched him with a cold detachment, her gaze as frosty as the chill of the night.

She knew there was only one reason for Elliot's visit—it had to be about Willow. His furious demeanor likely stemmed from concerns about Willow suffering in **jail**.

A cold mocking smile curled Lauren's lips, **as** chilling and desolate as a winter moon

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## Chapter 166 Storm of Regrets

A sudden storm rolled in, the courtyard's wrought iron streetlights blurring into hazy orbs of light in the deluge, while Elliot's twisted face flickered ominously under the flashes of lightning

The moment Felix stepped into the curtain of rain, water streamed down his tight **black** shirt, tracing the muscles on his back

like **a river**.

Upon seeing Felix, Elliot's rage ignited as if facing an enemy, bellowing. "You have the nerve **to** show up? Hand Laurie over to

me!”

Like a bull gone mad, he charged headlong towards Felix, swinging a fierce punch. Felix's arm moved to block, pulling at his soaked shirt to **reveal** the tensed veins of his forearm.

Lauren's heart leaped into her throat as she gripped the curtain's edge **tightly**.

**With a** swift spinning kick, Felix sent Elliot flying, crashing heavily to the ground.

He looked **down coldly at** Elliot, “You don't deserve to be Lauren's brother.”

He

Gritting his teeth Elliot climbed up from the mud, his face **twisted** in a snarl. I don't deserve it? And you do? You know Laurie's sick and still you romance her recklessly, showing **you** truly don't care about her health, just like the rumors said. heartless.”

Rain traced Felix's stern features, his normally impassive face now looking even more heroic against the backdrop of the storm.

His icy gaze pierced Elliot, “**Now**, Lauren is deaf, crippled, and has been operated on for her kidney. Who really lacks humanity here, huh?”

With that, Felix turned and entered the villa, leaving Elliot collapsed on the ground. Elliot watched him disappear, disbelief and fear filling his eyes.

“Stop, what did you just say? What about being deaf?” Elliot's voice trembled, fear evident in his eyes.

No, it can't be true. He thought desperately.

But Felix's icy stare and merciless words struck him like a hammer to the heart. Laurie's ears were also damaged? No wonder he didn't react no matter how much I ranted.

She couldn't hear at all. Overwhelmed with grief, tears mixed with the rain streaming down his face.

Struggling to stand, Jeffrey tried to support him, but Elliot pushed him away.

Elliot, pale as death, looked up to the second floor, his lips quivering as he cried out, “Laurie, I'm so sorry, I didn't think it would come to this, I'm sorry”

His legs gave way, and he fell to his knees in the mud, the sound swallowed by a clap of thunder.

The fierce wind carried large raindrops that pelted him painfully, a mere shadow of the torment within him.

As the rain washed over his **face**, it was hard to tell whether it was the rain or his tears of regret.

His screams were torn apart by the hurricane,  
the taste of rust mixed with rain flooding his lungs,

Recalling the hurt he had inflicted on Lauren, each memory a barb in his mind, his pain was **unbearable**.

“How could I be such a scumbag to her... Laurie-

His profound remorse moved even Jeffrey, who stood by, his brows furrowed in pity.

Yet, he felt Elliot deserved it.

Had he only known what would happen, he could not have compared his pain to Lauren's suffering.

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Chapter 166 Storm of Regrets

#Finished

He couldn't even imagine what she endured in those five years in prison to end up deaf, crippled, and without a kidney

The unseen torments of those long nights were unimaginable,

Seeing Elliot's miserable state, Jeffrey finally said, “Elliot, Lauren can't hear us, let's go back.”

But Elliot, seemingly out of his mind, continued to kneel, repeatedly bowing toward Lauren's room upstairs.

His forehead thudded against the ground, quickly swelling **and** bleeding, mixing **with** the rain.

Alarmed by his actions, Jeffrey tried to intervene, “Elliot, what are you doing?”

Elliot shoved him away, yelling, “She can’t hear, but she can see!”

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The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

Finished

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Chapter 167 Catch Her If You Can

The torrential rain couldn’t hide Elliot’s overwhelming tears.

“It’s my fault Laurie’s ruined; I need to atone. I’ll bow until she forgives me.”

His face was a portrait of grief as he continued to knock his forehead to the ground with a repetitive, dull sound.

Jeffrey stood to the side, watching him appear almost deranged, unsure of what to do.

Lauren saw everything from the window, unimpressed and feeling it was all for show.

This wasn’t Elliot’s first apology, but each time after he confessed, he would shame her again for Willow.

She had grown tired of **his** performances a long time ago.

The only person Lauren cared **about** was Felix. It was because of her that Mr. Brooker had to fight with that lunatic Elliot.

Hastily. Lauren turned and, dragging her heavy legs, hurried out of the room.

Ignoring everything, she rushed downstairs, desperate to ensure Felix wasn’t hurt.

Just then, Felix walked in from outside.

His black shirt clung tightly to him, perfectly outlining his muscular torso.

His wet hair dripped continuously, and even fully drenched, he still exuded an innate elegance, his drenched appearance radiating an intense charisma.



“Mr. Brooker-

Upon seeing him, Lauren quickened her pace, but her foot missed a step, and a sudden weightlessness overwhelmed her.

Felix’s heart clenched at the sight. In that instant, everything around blurred into the background, with only Lauren’s falling figure sharply in focus.

He moved like an arrow released from its bow, breaking through the air to reach her. Rain slid off his hair tips, tracing his stern cheeks, and gathering into droplets at his chin, splashing away with his movements.

**Just as** Lauren was about to have a close encounter with the ground; Felix got there.

His long arm extended powerfully, forming an unbreakable barrier, firmly catching Lauren around the waist

It felt as though gentle yet strong hands were holding her, steadying her securely on Felix’s lap

His other hand instinctively protected her back, enclosing her tightly in his arms.

Time seemed to stop in that moment; outside, the storm raged on, and rain poured, but inside, only their breathing filled the

**air.**

Felix, breathing heavily, looked into Lauren’s eyes with deep concern and fear, **as** if to confirm she was alright.

And Lauren, staring at the handsome face so close to hers, felt his strong heartbeat and the warmth from his body, her hands instinctively tightening around **Felix’s arms**, never wanting to let go

Felix caught the worry in her eyes.

That concern, like a gentle hand, softly plucked at his heartstrings, darkening the look in his eyes.

don

His gaze, hot **as a** branding iron, fixed on Lauren, and the hand circling her **arms** tightened involuntarily, driven by emotion.

Lauren suddenly felt a twinge of pain from his grip, letting out a **soft** whimper.

That whimper, like a heavy hammer, woke Felix **from** his tumult of emotions.

## Chapter 167 Catch Her If You Can

He took a deep breath, calming the waves inside.

Finished

Then, slowly, he took Lauren's hand and, under her surprised gaze, removed his **signet** ring, the simple yet exquisite ring shimmering coldly on his slender fingertip.

Felix slid the ring onto Lauren's middle finger, his movements slow and reverent, as if performing a sacred ritual

The ring glided over Lauren's knuckle, settling firmly on her finger.

Lauren's heart clenched as if grasped by an invisible hand, beating wildly.

She looked up sharply, her eyes full of confusion and shock.

"Mr. Brooker. Her voice trembled slightly, startled by his sudden gesture, yet also suppressing the complex emotions rising from deep within.

Felix gazed at her, his voice deep and firm, "With this, you're mine now, and I will always protect you."

His voice echoed in the quiet **living** room, carrying a comforting strength.

Outside, Elliot was still painfully bowing in repentance in the storm.

But

at this moment, Lauren was too swept up by sudden happiness to **think** about anything else.

Tears welled up in her eyes, her heart filled with a mix of emotions—moved, surprised, and mostly, looking forward to the future. From the first time she saw him, she had noticed that ring on **his** hand.

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## Chapter 168 Peeking Through the Steam

Felix **had always** worn that ring, never taking it off **for a** single **day**, clearly cherishing it deeply. But f

**But** now, he had taken it off and placed it on her finger himself.

Lauren wanted to ask Felix what it meant. Was it what I hoped?

But she hesitated, fearing she might be **reading** too much into it, or worse, **that** it was true but she couldn't selfishly **claim** him. Lauren's eyes flickered between joy and sorrow as her emotions battled within her.

**The** next second, she felt herself being lifted effortlessly.

Felix carried her up the stairs with ease.

**Lauren** sank into the goose down pillows, the bedside lamp casting reflections on the ring on her finger. Her fingertips unconsciously traced the band still warm with Felix's touch.

She curled her fingers near her heart, the satin nightgown creating graceful folds at her waist, her lips curved in a smile like a rose dipped in honey, quietly blooming in the night **mist**.

Meanwhile, in another bedroom.

The bathroom's frosted glass was clouded with swirling steam.

Amid the rising mist, Felix's back muscles moved rhythmically as he wiped himself down, his skin glistening under the warm light like scattered **diamonds** on rugged terrain..

Minutes slipped quietly by until the glass door clicked open, releasing a wave of moist cedar scent mixed with warm air.

Clad only in a loosely tied towel **around** his waist, droplets fell from his hair, tracing down his defined abs and disappearing into the towel's edge.

His entire presence radiated a raw and enticing allure, adding a touch of spontaneity and rebellion to his usually stern expression.

Felix casually picked up a towel, drying his hair with movements that combined elegance and ease, each gesture exuding an irresistible charm

After drying off, he tossed the towel onto a nearby chair, walked barefoot over the plush carpet, his aura lingering long after the steam had faded.

Approaching the window, he carelessly drew back the heavy curtains and lounged on the rocking chair's downy cushion, his legs crossed with the relaxed grace of an unsheathed sword. The chair gently rocked with his movements, creaking softly.

Half-lidded, he watched the rain cast shifting shadows on his skin.

His

is gaze pierced through the rain, falling on the kneeling Elliot. By now, Elliot was thoroughly soaked, his clothes clinging to him as if he had just stepped out of a shower.

Felix watched him, his eyebrows slightly raised, a faint smirk playing on his lips, his eyes twinkling with amusement as if enjoying a well-staged farce. To him, Elliot's self-punishment, a desperate attempt to force Lauren's forgiveness, was foolish and laughable.

He reached **for** a cigarette pack from the **table** beside the rocking chair, his long fingers deftly lighting one

inhaling deeply, the smoke curled down his throat and slowly exhaled, forming a sheer veil that blurred his mocking expression. He smoked leisurely, enjoying Elliot's performance, exuding a lazy yet sinister aura.

It seemed as though he was the master of this world, amusing himself with mortals when bored.

Only when alone did he truly reveal his inner emotions.

The cigarette soon finished, **and** as he **crushed** the butt, sparks scattered beneath his fingertips.

**11:44 AM**

Chapter 168 Peeking Through the Steam

Suddenly, he paused, his drooping eyelids slowly lifting, revealing eyes both deep and slightly icy.

He muttered softly, "Elliot is still too idle; I need to find something for him to do"

With that, he picked up his phone and tapped the screen, dialing Josh's number.

But the phone rang unanswered, the monotone buzz echoing in the quiet room.

"Hmm?" Felix's brow furrowed slightly.

Finished

He called again, still no answer. On the third try, the call automatically disconnected. Felix glanced at the time—10 PM.

**At** this hour, Josh definitely wouldn't be asleep. If he wasn't sleeping, he must not have heard the ring

Thinking this. Felix wasn't in a hurry. He set the phone down and continued sitting in the rocking chair, watching the outside world ablaze with lightning and drenched in rain.

Send Gifts

, ? Views, Released

## Chapter 169 The Umbrella Gesture

On Riviera Boulevard, a **black** Maybach sliced through the rain curtain, eventually stopping at the entrance of Hoverdale Tech University

Inside the car, the scent of sandalwood tangled with the jasmine from a young girl's hair. Josh glanced at the girl beside him. Her fingers twisted in anxiety. Tears had formed crystals on her eyelashes, revealing the delicate outlines of her collarbones through her wine-stained white T-shirt.

She looked up, her voice soft, "Thank you for bringing me back."

Her tone **was** light but sincere.

Josh, with a hint of curiosity, raised an eyebrow and teased, "You really are a student, huh?"

The girl pursed her lips, her fingers curling slightly, looking a bit uneasy.

Seeing her silent, Josh raised his eyebrows again, "As a student, you should really avoid bars. If I hadn't come along, you could have been bullied today."

She nodded quietly, a soft "Mhm" escaping her lips.

She didn't want to **work** at the bar, but it paid well. After her mom got fired from the Benetts, she just wanted to ease her mother's burden

Mia nodded, her voice barely a whisper, "T—I should go now"

As she reached for the door handle,

"Hold on Josh's voice suddenly interrupted.

Mia paused and looked at him, puzzled. The next second, Josh picked up an umbrella and handed it to her.

The umbrella gleamed with a metallic luster under the car's interior lights, looking particularly exquisite

**Mia** hesitated for a moment, then smiled gratefully and took the umbrella, Thank **you.**"

Just as she was about to get out, something occurred to her, "Sir, how can I return the umbrella to you?"

"No need to return it

Seeing the "Maybach Jogo on the handle, Mia firmly shook her head, "Such an expensive umbrella. I must return it to you."

Her mom had worked for the Bennetts for years; she recognized luxury car logos and knew that the accessories from such cars weren't cheap.

Josh's eyes twinkled with amusement, "Fine, I'll come to pick it up tomorrow morning."

Mia didn't catch his intrigued expression, earnestly replying, "Okay, I'll wait for you at the school gate tomorrow morning"

She opened the car door, stepped out, and turned **back**, "Sir, be careful **on the road.**"

With that, she opened the umbrella and walked into the campus.

Josh watched **Mia** disappear into the school grounds before slowly driving away. He was still smiling slightly from their conversation, the girl's earnest and stubborn nature adding a bit of fun to his otherwise mundane night.

The car glided smoothly through the rainy night, the raindrops continuously blurring the windows.

**Josh** held the steering wheel with one hand, the other casually checking his phone. When he saw three **missed** calls from Felix, his lips twitched.

He sighed softly, muttering to himself, "Must have been the loud music at the bar, didn't hear it."

He pressed redial and switched to speakerphone, waiting for the call to be answered.

1/2

Chapter 169 The Umbrella Gesture

At the Brooker's Villa, Felix answered, "Your nightlife seems quite rich"

Josh laughed. "Can't hide anything from Mr. Brooker"

Felix chuckled, not prying into his activities.

Finished

Direct and to the point, he said, "Elliot's been too idle lately. Let's bankrupt Bennett Corporation; give him something to play

with

Josh rolled his eyes silently at the idea of bankrupting a company as a form of play. He knew a call from Felix in the middle of the night was never good news.

Despite his high salary of 140,000 dollars, he **had** no sympathy for the Bennetts after being involved in many such plots.

"What's the deadline?"

Felix glanced outside **at** Elliot, still kneeling **and** looking unsteady, a smile not reaching his eyes, "Before dawn."

Josh felt a throbbing in his temples upon hearing those words.

Bringing down Bennett Corporation overnight was no small task. given its substantial internal vulnerabilities.

He sighed inwardly, foreseeing **a** sleepless night ahead. Talking was easy for those at the top, but it meant running around for

him.

Despite his handsome salary, he was still a hard-working employee.

After hanging up, he pressed down on the accelerator. The black sedan, like a cheetah, swiftly cut through the **rainy** night **toward** his company.

As the car raced, the rain screen was momentarily torn by the speeding vehicle, then swiftly closed again

His mind worked furiously, like a finely tuned machine, scouring through Bennett Corporation's various divisions, searching for **that** lethal blow that would push the company into the abyss of bankruptcy within just a few hours.

, ? Views, Released

## Chapter 170 The Fall of Bennett Corporation

At the Brooker's Villa, the rain continued to pour relentlessly,

Elliot had been begging for mercy in the rain for over two hours. His face **was** as pale as paper, completely drained of color. Finally, he couldn't hold on any longer, his body **went** limp, and he collapsed onto the ground, splashing water everywhere.

Jeffrey stood by, witnessing it all. He sighed helplessly, bent down, and struggled to drag Elliot into the car. Then, he quickly got into the driver's seat, started the car, and sped toward the hospital.

All the way, the windshield wipers frantically moved back and forth, trying to clear the incessant rainfall, but the visibility remained blurry.

Jeffrey's eyebrows were furrowed tightly, **occasionally** glancing at the unconscious Elliot in the back seat through the rearview

mirror.

Jeffrey couldn't understand why Elliot was doing this to himself.

The harm he had done to Lauren **had** already become an irreparable scar.

Jeffrey pondered. What is the point of such masochistic repentance now! If he doesn't care about Lauren, why does he **keep** her so close refusing to let her cry or escape, and degrading himself in the rain to beg for her forgiveness! But if he does **care** for Lauren, why does he repeatedly insult and physically hurt her for the sake of Willow, ruthlessly shaming and injuring her, and destroying the hopeful life she could have had, leaving her disabled?

Elliot's actions were too contradictory and difficult to comprehend

If only he had offered Lauren the care and protection she deserved when she returned to the Bennetts, how could they have reached such a point of sibling rivalry and broken family ties?

He couldn't even bear to think about what Lauren, with her excellent grades, could have achieved after graduation. She should have been shining in a broader world, living an incredibly successful life.

But life offered no hypotheticals, and the harsh reality was **that** Lauren's life had been thoroughly destroyed.

Now, Elliot's **pitiful** state, though sad, was far from sympathetic..



As the night deepened, darkness enveloped the city.

Michael sat anxiously in the Bennett Corporation office,

He repeatedly dialed Elliot's number, but all he got was the monotonous tone of an unanswered call,

At that moment, Elliot lay in a hospital bed, his body burning with fever and unconscious. The IV dripped steadily, unable to awaken his dormant consciousness.

With no choice left, Michael **dialed** the chairman's number, only to be met with a cold disconnection tone.

The company was facing an unprecedented bankruptcy crisis, yet he couldn't reach either the chairman or Felix, pacing incessantly in **his** office.

The long night finally passed, and the morning sun broke through the clouds, casting light upon the fresh, rain-cleared air.

Elliot slowly woke up. As soon as he opened his eyes, his phone rang **abruptly**.

"Hello" His voice was raspy and weak, as if scraping from the depths of his throat.

"Mr. Elliot, why did you just pick up? I've been calling you all night! You need to come to the office right away, Bennett Corporation has gone bankrupt!" Michael's anxious voice came through the phone, filled with panic and helplessness.

"What?" Elliot shot up from the bed, eyes wide and face filled with shock and disbelief.

"Explain yourself, what do you mean Bennett Corporation is bankrupt? The company was fine yesterday, how could it possibly go **bankrupt** overnight?"

1/2

Chapter 170 The Fall of Bennett Corporation

in just one ought

Finished

But Bennett Corporation had long been riddled with critical flaws, including severe financial issues and rampant tax **evasion**.

Beneath its seemingly **glamorous** exterior lay a fragile shell, so weak that Josh didn't need to exert much effort or even take **a** whole night to bring it crashing down.

**Without** changing out of his hospital gown, Elliot rushed to the **company** in desperation .

But as soon as he arrived at the company entrance, before he could even step out, he was stopped by several police officers.

Elliot bellowed, "What are you doing?"

"Bennett Corporation is suspected of tax evasion, and as its legal representative, you need to cooperate with our

investigation.

These words struck Elliot like a bolt from the blue, leaving him stunned and blank.

He was not shocked by the tax evasion itself, but by the police's mention of him being the legal representative"

How is that possible? When did I become the legal representative?