

The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

The Heiress Revived 331

Chapter 331 A Face from the Past

After being discharged, Marilyn had stayed with the Brooker family ever since.

Her health had declined. She couldn't do much anymore. The truth was, the Brooker family **had** taken her in—given her a quiet life to grow old in peace.

Elliot's **face** twisted with disbelief. "Marilyn, don't lie to me. Lauren always treated **you** like her own mother. If you're here, there's no way she isn't."

"She's still mad at me, isn't she? That's fine. I can wait. I wait here until she's willing to see me."

Marilyn looked at the man in front of her—haggard, wild-eyed, broken.

The once—
proud eldest son of the Bennett family, who used to make Lauren's life a living hell, now looked like a stray dog—desperate and pathetic.

Now he realized he was wrong?

Now he wanted to make amends?

Wasn't it ten years too late?

Lauren had been gone for a decade.

If even one member of the Bennett family had treated her with basic human decency, maybe she would still be alive today.

Marilyn's eyes welled with tears at the thought, but she quickly forced the emotion back down, burying it deep.

She inhaled sharply, composed herself, and turned her face cold.

Without another **word**, she turned away.

Elliot gripped the iron bars of the gate, his knuckles going white. "Marilyn, don't go—**please**. Just let me see her. I know I was horrible, I know I was the worst. I didn't deserve her. I don't deserve forgiveness."

“But these ten years—
I’ve regretted it every single day. I think about her constantly. If I could see her one more time, I’d do anything. I **swear**,”

His voice broke. Tears ran freely down his face, his body trembling like a man finally crushed under the weight of his own guilt.

Marilyn’s heart ached. She could still remember every injustice Lauren had suffered in that house—
every bruise, every word, every silent cry. It was like a knife twisting in her chest.

“Some wounds never heal,” she said coldly. “Some mistakes can’t be undone.”

“There’s no such thing **as** a second chance. And she wouldn’t have wanted your apology anyway.”

With that, she slammed the door shut.

Elliot screamed, banging his fists against the gate. “**You** don’t get to decide! You can’t keep me from my

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Chapter 331 A Face from the Past

“Open this gate! I’m her brother! We’re family! That never going to change!”

But no matter how loud he yelled, no one answered.

He dropped to his knees with a thud, **his** forehead resing on the cold ground. “Marilyn... I know this apology doesn’t change anything. But it’s all I have left”

“Please for Lauren’s sake.. just give me a chance. Let me say what I need to say.”

“If she won’t forgive me, that’s fine. But let me see her just once. Please, Lauren... please.”

The silence was deafening.

No one came.

He stayed there, kneeling in the rain, unmoving—
like if Lauren wouldn’t come out, he’d stay there forever.

The sky opened up above him. Rain poured down, hard and fast, drenching him in seconds.

Water streamed down his hair, his face, soaking his clothes until they clung to his body like a second skin.

Still, no one came.

Until a car rolled to a stop in front of the estate.

A girl stepped out, holding a black umbrella over her head. She paused in front of Elliot.

He lifted his head slowly.

And when he saw her face—Lauren's face—his lips parted in disbelief.

"Lauren you came out to see me. You're here."

He grabbed the girl's arms, clutching her tightly, his eyes filled with remorse and desperation.

But the girl frowned and tilted her head. "Sir... do you know my mom?"

Mom!

The word hit him like ice water.

Elliot blinked, finally seeing the truth.

This wasn't Lauren

She looked so much like her—enough to stop his heart—but she was younger. Too young. Just a girl.

And now that he was looking closer, the differences became clear.

Lauren had grown up **with nothing**—no warmth, no love. She was always hunched in on herself, brittle and quiet, her eyes filled with unease. Her hair had been thin and dry, her skin pale and malnourished, her body practically bones.

21:52 Wed, Apr 16 G-

Chapter 331 A Face from the Past

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But the girl standing in front of him now had thick, glossy **black** hair. Her skin was smooth, radiant—like fine porcelain. Her cheeks were healthy and full, her eyes bright. She radiated confidence, grace. This girl had grown up loved. This girl had grown up safe

458

Chapter 332 You're Not My Family

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Elliot's eyes were red, his voice shaking. "You said... Lauren was your mom?"

"Yep, the girl answered casually. "Who are you, mister?"

Elliot's tears finally broke free. He pulled **Nancy** into his arms, choking out. "I'm your mom's brother. You should call me Uncle"

Nancy had been polite, even a little distant. But the moment she heard the **word** uncle, her entire expression **changed**.

Her pretty little face turned stormy, like a sudden downpour.

She shoved Elliot with both hands.

He wasn't expecting it and fell backward into a puddle, splashing water everywhere.

When he looked up, he found Nancy staring at him—cold and sharp.

His heart twisted painfully. He scrambled back to his feet and reached for her, trying to touch her face. Maybe... if he could just treat this girl gently, maybe it could make up for what he never gave Lauren.

Lauren had always longed for affection—for family.

She used to dream of her parents and her brother treating her kindly. Just a single word of praise. A pat on the head. Even a fraction of the love they gave Willow would've meant the world to her.

But she never got any of it.

Not even once.

Now, Elliot reached **toward** Nancy's cheek—only for her to step back.

His hand hung **in** midair,

His pupils contracted. He stared at her in disbelief.

She looked nothing like Lauren in that moment. She wasn't longing for love. She wasn't vulnerable.

Nancy had grown up with everything Lauren hadn't.

She had a father who adored her, a grandmother who spoiled her, and people like Marilyn and Anna who treated her like their own.

She'd never known what it was like to beg for love.

"Unless you have something important to say," Nancy said coolly, "please leave my house."

She started to walk past him.

Elliot quickly stepped in front of her. "At least tell **me** your name."

Nancy stared at him without expression. "Don't force a connection. I don't have an uncle."

Chapter 332 You're Not My Family

The words landed like a punch to his gut.

Finished

"Someone must've told you something awful about me Elliot said quickly. "But don't listen to them. I know this is our first time meeting, but I swear—my feelings are real. We're family. We share blood."

Nancy let out a sharp laugh.

She may have been young, but she wasn't **naive**.

"**You** didn't even love your own sister. And now you're standing here, talking about love for me? Do I look stupid to you?"

“No, no—
it’s not like that! There were... misunderstandings. Bad people turned me against her. But if I could just talk to her—if I could explain—
everything could be fixed. Please, help me. Tell her to come out. I have so much to say to her.”

Nancy sneered. “You’re ridiculous.”

She turned and walked toward the gate.

Elliot tried to follow her, but the driver blocked him. He could only watch as Nancy disappeared behind the doors.

Kneeling in the pouring rain, Elliot’s hands dropped uselessly to his sides.

His voice
was hoarse, broken. “Lauren... I know I don’t deserve forgiveness. But I’ve suffered for ten years. I’ve lived in my own personal hell. Please—
just give me one chance. Let me atone for what I did.

Inside, on the second floor, Nancy stood behind the large window, staring down at the man kneeling

outside.

Her eyes were rimmed with red.

Tell her, you say? Tell who?

My mom’s been gone for ten years.

Even though she’d grown up surrounded by love, Nancy still longed for the mother she never got to meet.

No one ever hid Lauren’s story from her.

Marilyn had told her—
her mother had been a genius. Top of her class every year. Scholarship after scholarship. Valedictorian. She’d gotten into Northcrest University with the highest score in the province.

Anna told her how **kind** her mother had been. How skilled she was at embroidery. Nancy had even seen the embroidery herself—
after ten years, her mother’s studio was still there.

But she’d never had **a** chance **to** see her mother in person.

The people who should've protected her mother **had** destroyed her instead.

And now this **man**—this so-called uncle—
had the audacity to show his face and claim to care.

Nancy's fists clenched at her sides.

21:52 Wed, Apr 16 G.

Chapter 332 You're Not My Family

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Dad always says, "Kindness invites cruelty. I can't protect you forever. Nancy. You have to become strong enough to protect yourself. Only when you're strong will no one **dare** hurt you."

And now this man thought he could wash away everything he done... by kneeling?

Disgusting

she watched him cry in the rain, wracked with guilt.

He was trying to move her. To play **on** Lauren's old feelings.

She always cared so much about him, Nancy thought. *If* she were still here, she probably would've come outside.

458

Chapter 333 The Last Place You'd Expect

No matter how long Elliot knelt in the **rain**. No matter How pitiful he looked. Lauren never came.

The sky darkened, and the heavy rain finally began to slow into

Just then, a sleek black Rolls-Royce pulled up to the estate gates.

a light drizzle..

Felix stepped out, dressed in a crisp black suit. At nearly forty, he looked even more commanding than he had a decade ago. Sharp-featured, calm, and cold—head the kind of presence that made people instinctively avoid meeting his eyes.

The moment Elliot saw him, he **scrambled** up from the ground.

But after kneeling for so long, his legs buckled beneath **him**. He staggered forward, barely catching himself before he fell again.

Breathless **and disheveled**, he looked up and blurted, “Felix, where are you hiding Lauren? You told her not to see me, didn’t you?”

“I’m warning you, I’m Lauren’s brother. She’s always cared about me. If she finds out you kept us apart, she’ll be furious.”

Felix looked down at him, face unreadable.

“You want **to** see Lauren?”

“Yes!” Elliot’s voice cracked. “I have to see her.”

“Tomorrow.”

That was all Felix said before walking straight into the house, not sparing him another glance.

Elliot opened his mouth, ready to say **more**—but then looked down at himself. Drenched, dirty, utterly humiliated.

I can’t see her like this

If I’m going to *face* Lauren again, it has to be with dignity.

He told himself this was fine. Tomorrow was better. He needed time to clean up, to look presentable.

Yes, he’d made mistakes—horrible ones..

But that was

years **ago**.

Surely time had softened the pain. He’d served his sentence. He’d paid for what he’d done.

And Lauren Lauren was kind. If anyone would forgive him, it would be her.

Holding onto that fragile hope, Elliot left the Brooker estate.

21952 Wed, Apr 16 #

Chapter 333 The **Last** Place You'd Expect

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His mind kept replaying every moment, every cruel thing he'd **said**, every opportunity he'd thrown away.

I'll do better tomorrow. I'll make her see how much I regret it. I'll make her forgive me.

She's softhearted. She'll understand. After all, I went to prison I've suffered too.

At sunrise, Elliot was up and dressed. He put on a freshly pressed suit, knotted his tie just right, even spritzed on a bit of cologne.

He stared at himself in the mirror and took a deep breath.

This time, I won't mess it up

When he returned to the Brooker estate, the guards immediately blocked his path.

He frowned. "Move."

The guard didn't budge. "Wait here."

His tone was flat. Dismissive.

Elliot's face tensed in irritation, but he forced **himself** to hold back. He couldn't afford to lose his chance.

He stood at the gate, waiting.

Minutes dragged into hours. His nerves wore thinner with each tick of the clock—but he didn't leave.

At last, Felix emerged from the house with Nancy beside him.

She wore a soft pink dress and **had** her hair pulled into a neat ponytail. She looked poised, innocent, and

Sweet.

Felix, still in his black suit, carried the same steely chill in his gaze.

Elliot rushed up. "Where are you going? Didn't you say I could see Lauren today?"

Felix glanced at him. His voice was quiet but **final**. “Get in the car.”

That was a

Elliot’s heart lifted. Without hesitation, he opened the door and got in.

Only then did he notice—the back **seat** was full of flowers.

He stared, confused, but said nothing. Maybe Lauren loves flowers. Maybe she asked for these.

Maybe we’re going to a restaurant—a quiet place to talk

Yes, that made sense. A meal would make the conversation easier.

So he said nothing, just watched the city blur by through the car window.

But the further **they drove**, the heavier his chest felt..

11-04 Wed, Apr 16

Chapter 333 The Last Place You’d Expect

They were headed out—far out.

Into the hills.

Into silence.

His fingers tightened around the door handle.

“Felix,” he said quietly, “where exactly are we going?”

Felix said nothing.

Elliot’s pulse quickened. A creeping dread began **to** take hold.

He sat stiff in the seat, staring straight ahead, willing himself to stay calm.

But when the car finally slowed and turned into a quiet stone path—his heart sank.

Ahead of them, carved into the landscape, was **a** cemetery.

And in that moment, everything stopped.

Chapter 334 The Grave of the Guilty

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Elliot clenched his fists, voice hoarse and furious. “Felix don’t play games with me. I came here to see Lauren- why the hell would you bring me to a cemetery?”

The car rolled to a stop. Felix stepped out with a bouquet of fresh flowers. Nancy followed him in silence.

They didn’t even look at Elliot

They simply walked ahead..

Elliot stumbled after them, his mind in chaos, refusing to accept **what** was becoming more and more obvious.

“No... no, this can’t be... I’m just overthinking it. Lauren can’t be... nothing could’ve happened to her..” he muttered, voice trembling, laced with despair.

His legs felt like they were made of lead. Every step was agony. Still, he forced himself to follow.

This isn’t real. It can’t be

The graveyard was deathly still. Only their footsteps echoed over the stone path.

Felix and Nancy finally stopped at a small tombstone. Together, they knelt **and** gently placed the flowers

before it.

“Hi, Mommy,” Nancy whispered. “Dad and I came to visit you.”

Elliot’s pace slowed. He approached cautiously.

And then he saw it.

Carved clearly into the white stone. Beloved Wife – Lauren

Everything inside him shattered.

“No—!” His scream pierced the quiet. “No, no, this can’t be real! You’re lying! She was fine when I went to prison! There’s no way she’s dead!”

His tears came violently, unstoppable, and his whole body trembled.

Felix looked at him, calm and cold. "Today is the tenth anniversary of her death

Ten years? Lauren had been gone for ten years?

That meant... she died right after he was **sent** to prison?

"No. No, I don't believe you, Elliot shouted, voice cracking. "You're doing this to punish me, to make me suffer! You're lying. Felix!"

"If you say Lauren's dead one more time, I **swear** I'll-

"You shut up!" Nancy snapped, stepping forward. Her small face was twisted in fury. "You don't get to **talk** about my dad like that! You and your entire family are the reason my mom is dead. I hate you!"

21:52 Wed, Apr 16 G.

Chapter 334 The Grave of the Guilty

Elliot's mind went blank.

She's really gone? Lauren... she died? But then / *left*, she was still alive... how could this happen?

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Felix's gaze was like ice. Lauren was deaf. Lame. Missing a kidney. During the transplant, they drugged her with ovulation stimulants and forcibly extracted over a dozen eggs. **Even** with the best care, her body was **already** failing

"And Sharon and George still weren't done."

"They kidnapped her. Poured boiling water over her. Beat her until-

"Stop!" Elliot clutched his ears, shaking violently. "Don't please don't... I didn't know. I swear, I didn't **know** it got that bad. I thought....

He couldn't finish. His voice collapsed into silence. Only guilt remained.

"You thought," Felix said, voice bitter with contempt. "And all your thoughts—your excuses—

are **what** pushed her over the edge. She died without ever hearing an apology. She died without ever feeling **loved** by her family.”

Elliot dropped to the ground. He clawed at his scalp, pulling **his** hair like he wanted to tear himself apart.

“Lauren- I’m sorry... I’m so sorry...”

“And now you’re sorry?” Felix snapped. “What good is that? Her life was destroyed by your hands.”

With a violent cough, Elliot spat out blood.

He tried to rise, but his limbs wouldn’t respond. He collapsed again, body limp and useless.

He looked up at the gravestone through teary, swollen eyes. Lauren’s photo stared back—soft, kind, smiling.

Like **a** blade through his chest.

It hurt so much he couldn’t breathe.

Another mouthful of blood burst from his lips, spraying onto the base of the tombstone.

Felix frowned in disgust, visibly displeased.

Nancy didn’t **hesitate**. She shoved Elliot aside with **force**. “Don’t touch her. You’re dirtying her.”

She pulled a handkerchief from her pocket and gently wiped the blood from the marble.

Though she was just a child, the way she looked at the tombstone was full of reverence—like she was guarding something sacred.

Her tiny hands moved carefully, lovingly, treating that space like the most precious thing in the world. Elliot looked up at her, eyes **bloodshot** and hollow.

He turned to Felix, voice shaking. “You... **you** told her everything, didn’t you?”

2152 Wed, Apr 16

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Chapter 334 The Grave of the Guilty.

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Felix looked down at hini, eyes cold and unrepentant. I did.”

Fury flared in Elliot’s face. “She’s just a kid! How could you tell her all that? How could you dump that kind of pain on her shoulders?”

458

Chapter 335 Too Little, Too Late

Felix let out a cold laugh. “How I raise my daughter is none of your business.”

Finished

-My daughter,” he said, voice sharp as steel, “can be kind—but she’ll never be naive. We give her all the love in the world, but she’ll never be a flower grown **in** glass case.”

“Lauren was destroyed by her own kindness. That’s why **she** let people like you trample her. But my daughter—when she meets people like you, she won’t tolerate it. She’ll fight back.”

Nancy finished wiping the tombstone. Then she turned slowly to face Elliot.

She was just a child, but the look on her face sent chills down his spine. In that moment, she looked exactly like Lauren—but the aura she carried, the cold defiance in her eyes, was all Felix.

Her voice was calm, icy. “I’m very grateful for the way my dad raised me. I **can** be gentler **than** the kindest person. And I can be crueler than the **worst**.”

“When it comes to people like you, kindness is wasted.

Elliot stood frozen, unable to believe those words had come from a child.

His whole body began to tremble. “I... I know I was wrong.”

Nancy scoffed. There was nothing childish about her demeanor—only a poise and pain far beyond her

years.

“You’re too late. What I needed was a mom. Not some uncle who shows up after everything’s **over**.”

“If you really feel sorry for what you did to my mom, then leave. And never come back.”

Elliot felt like the soul had been ripped out of **him**.

Each word she spoke **was** a thunderclap.

He reached out, wanting to touch the cold stone—one last time—but before his **hand** could make contact, Nancy smacked it away.

“Don’t touch my mom.”

Elliot choked on his breath. “Can’t I at least stay? Guard her grave? I want to make it right, even just a little.”

Nancy frowned, then turned her face away with a disgusted snort. “She doesn’t need you. You’d only taint her path to the afterlife. Leave. And don’t ever come back.”

Elliot’s strength gave out. He collapsed onto the wet ground.

“No... I won’t leave. I want to stay here with Lauren. I want to atone

Nancy turned to her father. “Dad, can we have him removed? He’s too loud. He’ll disturb Mom.”

Felix gave a faint, humorless smile. “You’re right. Lauren always liked peace and quiet.”

Then he called out, “Get him out of here.”

21–p4 Wed, Apr 16

Chapter 335 Too Little, Too Late

At once, a group of men in black suits and dark sunglasses appeared.

They didn’t ask questions.

They simply grabbed Elliot and started dragging him away.

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“No—
don’t! I’m not leaving! Don’t make me go!” Elliot thrashed, his eyes locked on the graves
tone. “Lauren! Let me stay—let me stay!”

But no matter how he fought, they pulled him farther and farther from the grave.

His desperate cries echoed across the cemetery, long after he was gone.

Felix checked the time, then turned to Nancy. “Alright, sweetheart. Let’s go.”

“Okay,” she said softly, then looked **back** at the gravestone. “Mom, Dad and I will come
visit **again** soon.”

Elliot wandered the streets like a man without a soul.

His mind was a mess. He couldn’t think. Couldn’t breathe.

All he could see was Lauren’s face on that tombstone—
forever frozen in black and white.

“It can’t be true... I don’t believe it... Lauren’s still alive. They’re lying to me...

He staggered forward with no destination, no direction.

Everything around him blurred.

Then, out of nowhere, he saw **her**.

A girl in a white dress.

Her face so much like Lauren’s.

—

His pupils dilated. His heart stopped.

“Lauren? Lauren-

He ran toward her like a madman.

But before he could reach her, she climbed into the back seat of a sleek black Bentley.

The car sped off, leaving Elliot behind.

He chased it, his voice breaking into sobs.

“Lauren, please! Don’t go! Just look at me **one** more time! I was wrong—
I’ll never hurt you again. I’ll protect you, love you, **give** you everything. Please don’t leave—please...

The car didn’t **stop**.

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21-53 Wed, Apr 16 G G

Chapter 335 Too Little, Too Late

People on the sidewalk began to stare, frowning, whispering, pitying—
thinking he **was** crazy.

But Elliot didn’t notice. He didn’t care.

He only **saw** the Bentley **growing** smaller and smaller the distance.

Then, suddenly, he stumbled

His knees gave out. He fell **hard** to the pavement.

His hands **scraped** against the rough concrete. Pain shot through his
leg. But he barely felt it.

Finished

He stretched his arms toward the disappearing car like he could still reach it—
like he **could** grab hold of what **was** already gone,

He stayed there for a long, long time.

The world kept moving. People **came** and went. Cars passed. But Elliot didn’t move.

Eventually, he pushed himself off the ground.

When he finally got home, the sky **was** already dark.

He limped toward the door—only to stop in his tracks,

A familiar black Bentley was parked out front.

458

Chapter 336 The House of Guilt

A man in a **black** suit leaned **against** the Bentley.

When he saw Elliot, he said plainly, “You’re finally back”

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It had been ten years. Time had changed them both. But Elliot recognized him instantly—Kenneth.

Given what Kenneth **had** done to Lauren, he should’ve been punished too. But Felix had stopped at bankrupting the Gray family. He hadn’t pushed further for Elaine’s sake.

Kenneth’s expression hadn’t changed much. His features were still sharp, but his eyes were weighed down with constant sorrow.

Elliot’s

‘s tone was **cold**. “What do **you** want?”

Kenneth pointed at the Bennett estate behind them. “I **want** to buy your house.”

The Gray family may have fallen, but Kenneth had business savvy. Over the past ten years, he’d rebuilt the family fortune—no longer at its peak, but still worth millions.

He’d been wanting to buy this house for years. But with Elliot in prison, the property had been frozen. All Kenneth could do was wait.

Lauren had lived here for three years. Kenneth wanted to live in the place she had—search for traces of her, try to feel **closer** to her.

Elliot let out a sharp laugh. “**You** think I’d sell Lauren’s home to you?”

A flicker of pain passed through Kenneth’s eyes. “Elliot, I think about her every day. I want to start over in the place where she lived. I want to be near her.”

Elliot didn’t even hesitate. “Not for sale.”

He pushed past Kenneth and headed toward the door.

Kenneth grabbed his arm. “Name a price.”

Elliot jerked away. “I don’t want your money. I won’t sell. Go.”

He wants to be close to her? As if I don't.

Lauren was gone. This house—
this was all that was left. Selling it would be like letting go of the last thread tying him to her.

Especially that tiny, dusty storage room where Lauren had lived for three years. Once, it was the room he disdained the most. Now, he wanted nothing more **than** to move into it himself.

Maybe *if* I suffer the way she did, I'll finally feel like I've paid for what I did.

Kenneth stepped in front of him again. "You've been in prison. You've got a **record**. You'll **never** get hired. again. How are you going to survive?"

I can help. I'll pay you. You'll live comfortably for the rest of your life. I just want the house."

21:53 Wed, Apr 16

Chapter 336 The House of Guilt

But no matter what Kenneth said, Elliot wouldn't budge

"Get lost."

He shoved Kenneth hard.

"I'd rather die in this house **than** sell it to you."

Kenneth stumbled, nearly falling

Just then, the back door of the Bentley opened, and a girl in a white dress stepped out.

She marched over, raised her hand, and slapped Elliot across the face.

"You don't get to touch Kenneth!"

She stood tall, chin raised, eyes blazing with anger.

Elliot's rage surged- but the second his eyes landed on her face, it vanished.

His pupils constricted. All the breath left his lungs.

“Lauren? Lauren—you’re alive! I knew it. I knew nothing could’ve happened to you!”

He grabbed her in a hug, laughing and crying all at once—completely unhinged.

The girl struggled. “Let go of me! What’s wrong with you? Who even are you? Kenneth, help!”

Kenneth snapped back to attention. He yanked Elliot off her and threw a punch.

“Get it together.”

Elliot stumbled back, dazed, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth.

He slowly turned his head, his face blank—but his eyes seethed with

He lunged.

His fist slammed into Kenneth’s jaw.

Kenneth wiped the blood from his lip, eyes flashing. He punched back.

Then it all unraveled.

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They exchanged blows, one after another, fists flying—
no words, no logic. Just pain **and** blame **and** years of guilt.

The girl stood frozen, screaming. “**Stop!** Please, stop fighting!”

But neither man heard her.

Their fists spoke louder.

And then-

21:53 Wed, Apr 16

Chapter 336 The House of Guilt

The sharp click of high heels echoed across the pavement.

A woman in a long red dress stood a few feet away, **watching** them **with**

arms crossed.

Finished

Her lips curled into a mocking smile.

Her voice was thick with scorn.

“All this for a fake? Really? You two tearing each other **apart over** a girl who isn’t even her....If either of you had cared even half this much **back** then, maybe **Laure** wouldn’t have died so young”

Chapter 337 The Woman Who Stayed Behind

#Finished

“Now that she’s dead, you regret it. You want to make amends. How touching, Elaine said, voice dripping with disdain.

After Lauren’s death, her brother **had** spent years searching for women who looked like her.

In the past decade, he’d **found** more **than** ten.

Some had the **same** silhouette. Some had her profile. Some shared parts of her personality.

And each **one** became his emotional crutch.

This latest one—her figure, her features—was the closest yet. With **a** little **makeup** and the right outfit, she could almost pass for Lauren.

Elaine knew exactly what her brother was doing.

He wanted a substitute, Someone to **live in** Lauren’s old room. To sit on her couch. To breathe in her

space,

So he could pretend she was still here.

The very thought made Elaine sick.

They didn’t cherish her when she was alive.

Now they were losing their minds trying to keep her memory alive through imitation?

Disgusting.

They deserved every ounce of their grief. They earned t

And if Lauren was watching from above, there was no way she'd feel moved. She'd laugh—bitterly, coldly.

Elaine stood and watched a moment longer. But the scene - two grown men fighting **over** a copy of a woman they'd helped destroy—**was** too pathetic.

She turned and walked away.

Lauren... if there's a next life, please—
be happy. Don't ever come back to a family like the Bennetts

It was the only sincere wish Elaine **had** left for her.

At the front gate of the estate, the **two** men finally stopped fighting.

Both had bruises and swelling across their faces.

But Elliot didn't seem to care. His eyes were locked on the girl in the white dress, his beaten face twisted into something like joy

"Lauren? You're back? You've forgiven me, haven't you?"

21:53 Wed, Apr 16 G. LOG.

Chapter 337 The Woman Who Stayed Behind

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The girl glared at him, "**What** the hell are you talking about? I'm **not Lauren**. You've got the wrong person."

She was defiant, spoiled.

No surprise there—
ever since she'd hooked up with Kenneth, she had everything she wanted. From a bar hostess to the arm of a millionaire in one leap.

For more than two years, Kenneth had doted on her.

But what she **hated**—what she couldn't understand—was that he never took things further. Never slept with her. Never truly looked at her the way she **wanted him** to.

He wouldn't even let her speak freely or leave the house alone.

Now, **finally** brought out in public, she'd walked right into **this mess** with a lunatic—**and** she was more **than** happy to take it out on someone.

But she never expected what would happen next.

That one phrase “What the hell Lauren—ignited something feral in Elliot

He slapped her hard across the face.

“Don't you dare insult my sister!”

Kenneth's eyes turned blood-red. He rushed over and damped a hand over her mouth.

“I told you not to speak! Do you know how wrong you sound? Do you **know how** much you don't sound like her: She was nothing like you.

The girl's mouth **was** covered. Her nose too. She couldn't breathe. She fought him, nails digging into his

arms.

But Kenneth didn't **ease** up. His grip only tightened.

Her eyes rolled back from the lack of air.

Finally, Elliot snapped out of it and pulled Kenneth off “Let go! You're choking her!”

Kenneth released her and caught her limp body in his arms, whispering, “Lauren, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to. Please forgive me.

Elliot just stared at her face, stunned.

She looks so much like her. Especially in profile...

“Kenneth, Elliot said quietly, “you want to move into my house with her, don't you?”

Kenneth didn't deny it. “Yes. So **how** much do you want? Name your price.”

Elliot's eyes lit up. "The house isn't **for** sale. But if you and she want to move in. I won't stop you."

And so it began.

The three of them moved into the Rennett **house** together

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Chapter 337 The Woman Who Stayed Behind

"You're **not** allowed to talk. Your voice ruins the illusion."

"Don't laugh. Lauren never laughed like that."

Sit still. The light on you makes you look just like her

Who told you to go in the storage room? Get out. Don't touch anything that belonged to Lauren"

Bit by bit, they reshaped her—molded her—into Lauren's image.

In their minds, she was Lauren

In that house, Lauren never left.

She was always there.

"**Alice**, push—push harder. We can see the baby's head

The woman on the delivery bed bore down with all her strength, following the doctor's guidance.

And with a loud, healthy cry, the child was born.

"She's here! Congratulations, Alice—it's a girl!"

Alice was soaked in sweat, her hair plastered to her pale face. She was too weak to move.

But that didn't stop her

her.

"Bring her to **me**," she gasped. "Let me see her—please"

The nurses worked quickly. They cleaned the baby and wrapped her in a soft blanket, then placed her gently in Alice's arms.

458

Chapter 338 Born Again to Burn It All Down

Finished

The woman looked down at the baby in her arms—pink-faced, soft, impossibly small. Her **eyes** filled with joy as **she** smiled. “Is this my daughter? Wonderful. From now on, you’ll be the heiress of the Bennett family.”

Bennett family!

Heiress?

Lauren's consciousness reawakened right in that moment, just in time to hear those words.

Her eyes fluttered open.

The first thing she saw was Alice's face—closer than ever, smiling, glowing with pride.

Though she looked exhausted, Alice was still stunning youthful, vibrant. No more than twenty-something. Younger than Lauren remembered her.

Didn't I die?

Why am I seeing *Alice*

Why does she look so young...?

Lauren's mind buzzed, a **low**, sharp **hum** in her skull.

Everything about this felt surreal—absurd even. And yet, it was all too real.

The sterile scent **of** disinfectant filled the air. Nurses moved around quickly in her hazy field of vision. Machines beeped in steady rhythm.

It was real.

All of it.

She had been reborn.

And not just reborn—but into the moment of her own birth

Her thoughts blanked.

She just **stared** at Alice.

On the hospital bed, Alice pushed herself up weakly and leaned close, placing a gentle kiss on Lauren's cheek

Lauren's pupils dilated.

Alice just kissed met

In her **past** life, during **those** hellish three years in the Bennett **family**, she **never** once dreamed of such tenderness. She never even dared **hope** Alice might hold her—let alone kiss her with affection.

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21:53 Wed, Apr 16 G.

Chapter 338 Born Again to Bums It All Down

She'd once been wanted.

Alice had loved her.

On the day she was born, her mother had kissed her with full-hearted joy

This baby—carried for ten long **months—had been cherished.**

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Finished

But after her disappearance, that love **had** slowly eroded. Time had worn it **away** until not even a trace remained.

So I was loved.... once.

Lost in thought. Lauren didn't even realize the **nurses** had carried her from the delivery room and out into the hallway alongside Alice.

That's when she saw him—David.

The scum of the earth.

He stood beside Alice, putting on the **performance** of loving husband—checking on her, **fussing** over her, speaking in gentle tones.

But Lauren knew better.

This was the man who had abandoned his daughter without a second thought—and would one day try to rip a kidney from her body.

Even if all of that belonged to her previous life, even if she'd already **taken** her revenge—just seeing him. again made her blood boil

I hate you. I will always hate you..

But now, she was just a baby.

Powerless.

Alice was too tired to stay awake. Once she was settled back **into the** room, she quickly drifted off.

Before she **closed** her eyes, she reminded David to look after the baby.

David nodded sweetly, wearing the perfect mask of a doting father.

The second Alice fell asleep, **his** smile dropped like a guillotine.

“Babe?” he whispered. “Babe?”

Alice didn't stir.

He sneered and turned his eyes toward Lauren.

She stared up at him silently, eyes wide, unblinking—locking onto his cold gaze without fear.

Here it comes. He's going to throw me away just like before, she thought.

21-53 Wed, Apr 16 OG.

Chapter 336 Born Again to Burn It All Down

But what came next startled her

David reached **down**—not to **pick** her up, but to wrap his fingers around her neck.

that? No—he's not abandoning me. He's going to strangle

Her tiny newborn throat instantly constricted under His grip. Air vanished.

This is it. I just got another shot at life, and I'm going to die in the first hour!

Then suddenly, his hand let go.

Instead of killing her, David scooped her up into his arms.

Lauren exhaled shakily.

So he's not trying to murder me—just get rid of me. Same script, different *life*.

As expected. David carried her away—
and just like in her past life, he abandoned her outside the orphanage.

Lauren didn't cry. She just stared at him the entire way, coldly, silently, memorizing every move.

He looked down at her one last time, smirking.

*Filthy little thing. Live or die—it's up to you."

Then he turned and walked off, not bothering to look back.

Only once he disappeared into the night did Lauren start to cry.

It was late autumn.

The air was bitter.

If she stayed quiet, she might actually freeze to death by morning.

So she cried. Loud and sharp, her newborn lungs sending her wail echoing far into the night.

Before long, the orphanage doors creaked open.

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Finished

A staff member stepped out and gasped when they saw the

the infant on the ground. They rushed over, scooped her up, and carried her inside.

And just like that-

Lauren was back where it had all begun. Back in the orphanage.

458

Chapter 339 The Path of a Prodigy

She had no idea what she was like as a baby in her previous life.

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But this time, though she had the body of a child, she carried the soul of **an** adult.

Compared to the other children in the orphanage, she was quiet, obedient, and startlingly well-behaved.

Other than

when she was hungry, wet, or needed a change, she never cried. Never fussed. She was the calmest, easiest baby in the entire orphanage.

Naturally, the caregivers adored her.

“She’s such a good baby. I’ve never seen one like her. All she does is eat and sleep—doesn’t cause any trouble at all.”

“She’s sweet, sure... maybe a little too quiet though.”

“Right? She looks perfectly healthy. So why would anyone abandon a baby like this?”

“You think she might be... slow? I mean, no one in their right mind would give up a baby this pretty and healthy otherwise.”

They gathered around her crib, whispering, watching

One of them squinted. “She doesn’t cry, doesn’t **laugh**. Just lies there with her eyes open, staring at nothing. What if she’s intellectually disabled?”

“Yeah, maybe. She **does** act a little off.”

“Well, slow or not, at least she’s not a problem child. Less work for us, right?”

Lauren closed her eyes, exasperated.

Morons.

A year passed.

The “**slow** child” shocked everyone.

Not only was she speaking clearly and walking steadily by age two—she could read. Every single character the caregivers showed her, she knew. Instantly.

The entire orphanage was floored.

“Thought she was slow—turns out she’s **a** genius!”

“I’ve worked here for twenty years and I’ve never seen child this bright.”

“I taught her the alphabet **and** she remembered every letter on the first try. She already knows over two thousand words!”

21-53 Wed, Apr 16 G.

Chapter 339 The Path of a Prodigy

Lauren sat **on** a tiny stool, quietly flipping through a book.

She heard every word..

And she didn’t care.

She wasn’t trying to hide her brilliance. She wanted them to see it. She wanted the world to **know**.

She was going to leave this orphanage long before she turned fifteen.

In her past life, she had dreamed of becoming a schoolteacher—shaping young minds.

But this time?

No.

Finished

Kenneth had been right: it would be a waste not to go into research. With her gifts, she could do far more..

Only by showing exceptional, once-in-a-generation talent could she draw the attention of those at the top.

And only by rising above the Bennett family’s reach could she protect herself.

No matter where she ran, they'd find her.

Unless she became untouchable.

If she got into a national-level research institute—
became a person of value to the country—
then even the Bennetts would have to think twice before laying a hand on her.

A cold smile tugged at Lauren's lips.

This time, no one will hurt me. Not again,

And if she didn't return to the Bennett family, Manman would never spiral out of control.
That girl deserved saving too.

Lauren made up her mind—and began studying harder than ever.

For someone like her, kindergarten and elementary school material were child's play.

By age two, she'd finished every elementary subject.

The orphanage director, teachers, **and** staff watched her in stunned silence—
like they'd struck gold.

But the real shock was yet to come.

Within a year, she'd completed three years of middle school curriculum. At three years old.

By four, she'd mastered high school.

At five, she started entering physics competitions—and won every single one.

Her abilities **didn't just** amaze the orphanage.

21:53 Wed, Apr 16 G.

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Chapter 339 The Path of a Prodigy

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The country had always been hungry for elite talent, and Lauren—
so young, yet so brilliant—couldn't stay off the **radar** for long-

These competitions were a funnel, a filter, a way to find people like her.

She was always the youngest contestant. Always the most outstanding.

And she was noticed,

In her previous life, Lauren took the college entrance **exam** at eighteen and was accepted into Northcrest University.

This time, at age five, she took it again.

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But now she was applying to the National University of Defense Technology.

While waiting for her admission letter, she still lived in the orphanage

It **had** been five years since she was born.

Five years of relentless work. No breaks. No shortcuts.

Even though she had been a straight—
A student in her previous life, she never slacked off in this **one**.

Now that the entrance exam was finally behind her—she could breathe..

Just a liule.

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Chapter 340 This Time, I Hit First

Lauren wandered through the orphanage courtyard, bored out of her mind.

Maybe it was because she was too
mature for her age, but the other kids kept their distance from her. Not that she minded.
She wasn't trying to get close to anyone anyway.

Not after Lucas.

In her last life, she'd been hurt deeply by **that ungrateful** little traitor.

This time around, she had zero intention of becoming friends with him. In fact, she'd barely seen him more than a handful of times. Every spare moment she had was devoted to studying.

She was just thinking about Lucas when a basketball came flying out of nowhere and hit her square on the head.

The impact knocked her off her feet. Her head buzzed. Stars danced in front of her eyes .

“You! Go get my ball”

A bratty voice rang **out across** the courtyard.

Lauren gritted her teeth and looked up,

Sure enough—it was Lucas.

Eight or nine years old, smug and arrogant, standing with his arms crossed like a little prince.

What a joke. Of all people, it had to *be* you.

In her previous life, by this point, she and Lucas had **already** been close. But this time, she’d made sure to avoid him completely. And now, fate had thrown them together any way.

“I’m talking to you! Are you deaf? Go get my ball!”

Lucas’s face twisted into an impatient scowl.

Lauren stared at him coldly.

How the hell did I ever like you in my past life?

Without the rose-colored filter, you’re just an obnoxious little punk.

She stood up, grabbed the basketball, and walked toward him.

Lucas lifted his chin, smirking. “See? I told you. She’s just some boring little nerd who only knows how to study. What’s book smarts worth if she still listens to everything I say? Look how obedient she is.”

Lauren walked right up to him.

Then she slammed the basketball into his face.

Hard

21-53 Wed, Apr 16 G

Chapter 340 This Time, I Hit First

“Ahhh—Lucas shrieked clutching **his** nose and collapsing to the ground.

Blood gushed between his fingers, splattering across the pavement.

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Finished

Lauren stood over him, face blank, utterly unbothered

She kicked him.

Then kicked him again.

Right **in** the **gut**.

She'd wanted to do this for years.

In her past life, she'd been too weak—
deaf, crippled, missing a kidney. She couldn't fight back, no matter how badly **she** wanted to

But this life was different,

This time, her body was strong and healthy. The orphanage director liked her, treated her well. She was fed better than the other kids, dressed better, cared for more.

She looked soft—fair skin, round cheeks, chubby little arms and legs—
but she had real strength.

Lucas never stood a chance.

He curled up on the ground, wailing, his nose still bleeding, his stomach aching.

Lauren just watched.

Expressionless.

Right then, the director walked over—accompanied by three people.

A man and woman, well—
dressed and elegant. The man wore **a** sleek black suit, refined and handsome. The woman wore a traditional cheongsam, graceful and composed. A ten-year—

old boy followed behind them, clearly their son, already a miniature heartbreaker with both parents' best features.

The director was mid-laugh, chatting politely—until she saw Lucas on the ground. Her face dropped instantly.

“What happened? What’s going on?”

Lauren looked up at the couple, and her eyes froze.

She knew them.

It took a second, but the memory clicked.

They’d been here in her previous life, around this time

They **were** here to adopt a daughter—to be a little sister and companion for their son.

She’d remembered them so vividly because they’d wanted to adopt her.

21:53 Wed, Apr 16 G.

Chapter 340 This Time, I Hit First

But back then, she didn’t want **to** leave Lucas behind.

She had turned them down. For him.

God, I should’ve slapped myself.

If she’d accepted the adoption, everything that came later might never have happened.

Lauren stared at them, stunned.

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Finished

Meanwhile. Lucas **had** scrambled to his feet, still sniffing and bloody. He pointed at her, playing the victim.

“She hit me! She threw the ball at my face and kicked me!”

Lauren turned to the director.

The woman's face darkened. "Nonsense. Lauren is always well-behaved. She's smart, thoughtful—she" would never hurt someone for no reason. And even if she did hit you, I'm sure you did something to **deserve it.**"