

The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

The Heiress Revived

The Heiress Revived Ch 41

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Chapter 41 The Final Straw

Finished

The thermos hit the ground with a heavy thud. spilling its scalding contents on Marilyn. She let out a piercing scream as the boiling soup seared her skin, leaving bright red burns on her face **and** arms

Lauren's **eyes** immediately filled with rage. She grabbed an apple from the bedside table and threw it at Lucas with **all** her might.

"Lucas, get out of here! I never want to see you again!"

"Get out? Who do you think you are to tell me to leave? Don't forget, I'm the one who protected you all these years. When you were bullied, I stood up for you. When you wanted fruit. I got it for you. I've done **so** much for you. What did you ever do for me? Back at the orphanage, when you were being beaten **and** insulted, why didn't you tell me to leave?" Lucas replied. and stepped closer to Lauren.

Lauren was shaking with anger. She grabbed a fruit knife from the basket and waved it wildly at Lucas, forcing him to retreat.

His eyes were fixed on the knife in her hand "Lauren, have you lost your mind? Are you really going to stab me?"

Yes, I have lost my mind! And it's all because of you!" Lauren's hand shook violently as the blade sliced through the air, her eyes bloodshot.

My time in the orphanage was the brightest part of my childhood

That's why even after Lucas had sent me to prison. I couldn't bring myself **to** hate him completely. After all, he had once protected me with all his heart.

These five years in prison could *be* seen as a repayment for the fifteen years he had looked after me.

There was already a rift between us, and broken mirrors couldn't be mended. All I wanted was to **stay** away from him, to preserve whatever dignity we had left.

But Lucas wouldn't let go. He kept pushing demanding that I let go **of** the past and forgive him

"What is it going to take for you to leave me alone!" Lauren screamed hysterically, slashing the knife in the air with increasing fury.

"When we were in the orphanage. I trusted you completely. I thought you were my only anchor in this world. You promised **that** no one would ever bully me again, that you'd become a lawyer and send anyone who hurt me to **jail**. But what did you do? Did you keep any of those promises? I didn't even blame you for breaking your word or for sending me to prison to take the blame for **Willow**. Why can't you just let me go! I have suffered for five years in that dark, hellish prison. Isn't that enough to repay you for those fifteen years of protection? Fine. I'll pay you back. I'll pay it all back."

Lauren's eyes were determined as she slowly turned the blade towards herself and plunged it into her shoulder without

hesitation

The sharp blade sliced through her skin and blood gushed out like a spring. The deep crimson flowed down her arm, staining the sheet like a blooming flower of the underworld.

But her face showed no emotion, as if she couldn't feel the pain.

She had suffered far worse injuries in prison. She was used to enduring all kinds of pain.

Her eyebrows didn't even **twitch** as she stared at Lucas, and her lips trembled as she uttered three words: "Is that enough?"

Lucas was frozen in shock, his face pale as he watched the blood gushing from Lauren's shoulder. The bright red **was** blinding and made his eyes hurt.

"**Not** enough!" Lauren's voice was eerily calm, **as** if she were discussing something that had nothing to do with her.

With that, she tightened her grip on the knife and pulled it out.

As the blade came free, more blood spurted out, some of it landing on her face. Mixed with what might have been sweat or

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Without hesitation, she plunged the knife into her shoulder again, her **eyes** filled with madness and exhaustion. "Is that enough?"

"You... you are insane, completely insane.... Lucas's voice was hoarse and dry. The Lauren in front of him felt like a stranger who frightened him.

Lauren did not answer. She let her actions speak for themselves.

She pulled out the knife and stabbed herself again, over and over again, without hesitation or pause.

Ten stabs in total!

Each time the blade sank into her flesh, her body trembled slightly, but the determination in her eyes never wavered.

In a matter of moments, her shoulder was a mangled mess, drenched in blood. The whole **room** reeked of iron.

Marilyn, ignoring her own burns, rushed over in fear. "Ms. Bennett, please stop! She wrapped her arms around Lauren and glared hatefully at Lucas. "Get out of here! Do you want to kill her?!"

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Chapter 42 The Gilded Cage

Compared to Marilyn's emotional outburst. Lauren's look at Lucas was icy and detached.

"Five years in prison and the ten stabs I just received—does that make up for the fifteen years you took care of me in the orphanage?"

Lucas was completely devastated by Lauren's ruthlessness,

No, this wasn't how it was supposed to be. This wasn't how it was

supposed to **end**.

I had only come here to check on her and take care of her. How had it turned out like

She was the girl I had protected and cherished for over a decade.

like this?

When he remained silent, Lauren threw the fruit knife at his feet. "If Mr. Lucas isn't satisfied yet, pick up the knife. I'll let you stab me as many times as you want until you're satisfied."

Lucas's lips trembled violently. His eyes were fixed on the bloody wound on Lauren's shoulder, the crimson blood like **a** sharp sword piercing his heart.

His throat felt blocked, as if something **was** stuck there. He wanted to speak, but no **words** came out.

Deep, excruciating pain engulfed him.

He had imagined reuniting with Lauren countless times. He had thought that despite the hardships, they would eventually find their way back to each other and continue to support each other.

But now, everything had spun out of control

He was terrified, terrified of facing this version of Lauren, filled with hatred, terrified of the endless coldness in her eyes.

He no longer had the courage to stand there and face her.

With great difficulty, he turned around, his steps unsteady and frantic, as if he were fleeing for his life.

As Lucas walked **away**, Lauren seemed to deflate, her tense body suddenly losing its strength. She slowly collapsed backwards.

"Ms. Bennett!" Marilyn cried out in panic, her voice filled with desperation "Doctor, Doctor! Help!"

When Lauren woke up, she was no longer in the hospital.

She **looked** around, taking in the pink, princess-themed decor of the room. For a moment, she couldn't figure out **where** she

She **sat** up abruptly, the movement tugging at the wound on her shoulder. She couldn't suppress **a** small moan.

After enduring the sharp pain, she looked down at her shoulder. The wound had been treated, wrapped in white bandages with a faint trace of blood seeping through.

Lauren got out of bed and went straight to the door. When she opened it, she realized that she was back **in** the Bennett Residence. The room she was in had once been Elliot's bedroom, although it had apparently been redecorated into a princess-style room at some point.

Lauren frowned slightly and looked down at the first floor.

The sofa in the living room was occupied by several people, which were David, Alice, Elliot, and **Willow**, the perfect family of **four**. But there was also a handsome, dignified man sitting with them, which is Kenneth.

Willow was the first to notice Lauren standing on the second floor. She exclaimed with fake happiness, Lauren, you're finally waking up!"

Lauren's expression turned cold

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Finished

Wake up! I was obviously unconscious. I didn't even know how I had been discharged from the hospital and brought back to the Bennett Residence.

However, in Willow's words, my unconscious state had been reduced to mere oversleeping

Lauren stared at Willow coldly, a **wave** of disgust rising within her.

Willow shrank back as if frightened her eyes instantly filled with tears. "Lauren, did I say something wrong?"

Alice immediately wrapped an arm around Willow and patted her **back** soothingly. When she looked up at Lauren, although she said nothing, her expression was full of reproach, as if she accused Lauren of bullying Willow.

However, David was far less gentle than his wife. Without hesitation, he began to scold Lauren. "How dare you stare at your sister like that? You're **in** your twenties, and all you do is eat and sleep. When we brought you home yesterday, you were asleep. You stayed asleep the whole time. Now it's almost noon, and you just woke up. What else can you

do besides eating and sleeping? How did I end up with such a useless daughter? David's tirade was unrelenting, completely ignoring the fact that outsiders were present.

All I did was eat and sleep?

How ridiculous.

He couldn't even tell that his own daughter was injured and unconscious, yet he had the **audacity** to humiliate me.

Since Lauren had long seen through the true nature of this family, she was no longer affected by their insults.

She looked at David's red, angry face, her eyes devoid of any emotion

"Are you finished, Mr. David?" Lauren's voice was calm, her expression unreadable.

David was taken by surprise by her sudden retort. For a moment, he was speechless and could **only** stare **at** her with anger.

Lauren **smiled**, a silent, cold laugh, and turned to go back to her room

But then David shouted at her, "Stop right there! Come down here. We need to discuss something" His voice had an air of authority and habitual command

Lauren didn't want to spend another second near this hypocritical family. The disgust rising from the depths of her heart made her want to flee **this house of hypocrisy** as far and **as fast** as she could.

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Chapter 43 The Marriage Proposal

of the 1.4 million **dollars** and finally compromised.

Despite her reluctance, Lauren though

She slowly descended the stairs and walked over to the sofa, sitting down with a cold gaze that swept over everyone present.

David picked up his teacup and blew gently on the tea **leaves** floating on the surface before taking a sip. "You're not getting any younger. Staying home all the time isn't the answer. Your mother and I **have** talked about it. The Brooker family from Balewood is one of the top elite families in the Caplistan. Marrying into their family would be a life of luxury

. Even though your character leaves much to be desired, you are still our flesh and blood. As your parents, we naturally want the best for you. Your dowry won't be lacking either."

As soon as these words were spoken, Kenneth's grip on the teacup tightened.

So this was what David had meant when he said that he had a way to work with the Brooker family of Balewood

But this was not **what** I wanted to see.

JA A growing sense of unease stirred within him. He lifted his teacup and drained it in one gulp, barely able to suppress the

inexplicable emotions rising **within him**.

Alice's face was filled with a forced smile. She leaned forward, took Lauren's hand, and patted it gently. Laurie, your father and I are reluctant to let you go, but a daughter has to get married eventually. While you're still young, you can choose a good match. If you wait too long, you'll only be left with the dregs. The Brooker family of Balewood is a prestigious family, even more prestigious **than** ours."

Lauren subtly withdrew her hand, lowered her eyes, and remained silent.

A prestigious family!

If they really were so prestigious, why would they settle for me!

They simply wanted to use me as a **pawn** to ensure the Bennett family's status among the elite

They wouldn't allow me to refuse, and I had no reason to refuse.

While Lauren remained silent, Elliot reacted vehemently. "Dad. Mom, you're going to marry Laurie off to that Caplistan Bossman? Why didn't you discuss it with me first? No, I don't agree

David's face darkened.

Alice quickly intervened, "Elliot, don't talk nonsense."

"I am not talking nonsense. The Brooker family heir isn't easy to deal with, and he...

"Enough!" David roared, cutting him off mid-sentence, his eyes filled with warning.

Elliot clenched his fists. "Laurie doesn't even know him. She won't agree."

The focus shifted to Lauren, and all eyes in the room turned to her.

Lauren raised her **eyes**, met Elliot's eyes, and said without hesitation, "I agree.

Her voice was clear and determined, echoing through the quiet living room.

David, Alice, **and** Willow's faces lit up with joy.

Elliot's expression became grim.

However, Kenneth was staring intently at Lauren's face, his grip on the teacup tightening until a sound of "cracked!" came out.

The sheer **force** of his grip shattered the teacup.

Shards of glass cut into his palm, and blood dripped onto the pristine white carpet, turning into a bright crimson stain.

Chapter 43 The Marriage Proposal

But Kenneth seemed oblivious to the pain. His sharp gaze remained fixed on Lauren.

Lauren's eyes briefly glanced at his bleeding hand, but her expression was unmoved.

Her indifference instantly transported Kenneth back to five years ago.

Finished

It was the last competition of their senior year of high school. That day, he had a fever of 39 degrees Celsius, but he had insisted on competing just to see her.

When she heard about his high fever, her **eyes** were red with worry. She supported him and scolded. "Are you stupid? How can you compete with such a high fever?"

Seeing her concern for him had warmed his heart and made him feel **that** his efforts had been worth it. But she had only grown angrier. "**You're** burning up, and you're still smiling?"

Lauren, who had never missed a single competition, had skipped this one just for him.

The frail girl **had** practically carried him to the nearest hospital.

He had been lying on the hospital bed receiving **an** IV while she stayed by his side. They had been so close then. Now they were like strangers

The girl who had cried over his fever now looked at his Merding hand without a trace of emotion.

Did she really not care!

Marilyn quickly brought the first aid kit and started to bandage his hand. Willow looked on the verge of tears, her voice trembling. "Kenn, **how could** you be so careless? Just hold on a little longer, and it'll be bandaged soon."

But Kenneth did not seem to notice her words. His gaze remained fixed on Lauren, unable to look away.

As he stared at Lauren's impassive face, an indescribable emotion surged within him.

Lauren sat on her knees with her hands folded like a cold statue. The softness that had once made her worry about **his** illness had long since turned to dust during their five years in prison. All that remained was her fear of him

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Chapter 44 The Confrontation

After the wound was bandaged, everyone finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Elliot glared at Lauren. "Are you so eager to leave this family! Or do you think that marrying into the Brooker family will make **you a** wealthy lady living a life of luxury? Lauren, how can you be so materialistic?"

Here we go again

Jumping to the

the worst conclusions about me without thinking.

But it didn't matter anymore. I had long since stopped caring about how he saw me.

As long as he was happy.

Lauren didn't deny it. "Yes, I want to marry into wealth and live the high life.

Her tone was calm, without a hint of emotion, as if she were discussing the most mundane thing.

Elliot's face twisted, momentarily at a loss for words.

He took a deep breath and tried to calm down. The Caplistan Bossman had a notorious reputation. Given Lauren's current health, marrying into that family would only hasten their demise.

"You may marry i

into that family, but you won't live long enough to enjoy it I don't agree."

Lauren laughed, her smile mocking. "**Your** parents agree, and I agree. What right do you have to disagree?"

"Because I'm your brother!"

"I've never acknowledged that."

Elliot trembled with anger at Lauren's indifferent attitude. He stepped forward, his finger almost poking her nose. Lauren, don't think that marrying into the Brooker family is a good thing. Do you even know what kind of person the Bossman is? He's notorious for his womanizing, going from one woman to the next. What kind of life do **you** think you'll have married to

him

Lauren tilted her head back slightly, avoiding his accusing finger, her gaze unwavering. "So what? It's still better than staying in this family where I'm treated like a thorn in your side."

Her voice was cold, echoing through the spacious living room, each word like shards of ice.

David frowned and slammed his teacup down on the table with a loud clatter. "Elliot, that's enough! This is a **family** decision. You have no **say** in it."

Alice quickly stood up, grabbed Elliot's arm, and whispered. "Elliot don't make trouble. Your sister marrying into this family is a blessing for them, and it will benefit our family as well. As she spoke, **she** gave him a meaningful look, urging him to

calm down.

Elliot shook off his mother's **hand**, his chest shaking. He stared at Lauren with a penetrating gaze, as if he wanted **to** see through her.

But Lauren ignored him.

Furious, Elliot stormed off.

David and Alice exchanged a glance and **also** got up to **leave**.

Willow understood immediately. Her parents would probably try to convince her brother. She needed to see what was happening **as** well.

“Kenn, stay here for a while. I’ll check on my parents and brother.” With that, she also went upstairs.

The living room was now empty except for Lauren and Kenneth

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Chapter 44 The Confrontation

with him
made her feel suffocated, bringing back the most painful memories of her imprisonment.

Finished

She stood up abruptly, her haste causing her to slam her **shin** into the coffee table. The pain was sharp, but she ignored it. desperate to escape,

She hurried away, not towards Elliot’s bedroom but straight to the storage room

Just as she was about to close the door behind her, a strong hand pushed it open. Kenneth stepped in, closed the door, and pinned her against it.

They were so close **that** she could smell the faint mixture of cologne and tobacco on him. So close that she could see her own terrified reflection in his cold, piercing eyes.

Her **panic and** resistance were not lost on Kenneth.

Her reaction infuriated him, but as he felt her frail body tremble under his hands, his anger had nowhere to go.

He stared intently at the small, pitiful woman in his **grasp**.

Her body trembled under his touch, her slender hands pressing against his chest with all their might, trying to keep **him** at bay.

Her stubbornness inexplicably made him both ache and long for her. But the thought of her
resolutely agreeing to marry into the Brooker family in the living room fueled his jealousy like wildfire

Kenneth glared at Lauren as if he wanted to devour her. He couldn't help but sneer, "So eager to get married? Each word was spat out through clenched teeth, dripping with bitterness and resentment.

Lauren pushed against him with all her strength, but the man was like a wall, immovable. Frustrated and anxious, her face turned red. This is none of your business!

Kenneth's eyes darkened and his teeth clenched. "None of my business? Lauren, don't think that I don't know what you're up to. What? You hurt my sister, and now you think **you** can just walk away? Did you ask my permission?"

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Chapter 45 The Weight of Sacrifice

The thought of Lauren marrying another man ignited a jealousy so fierce that it felt like a raging fire that threatened to consume him.

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"Lauren, don't be foolish. The Brooker family is no place for you, and the Bossman is no one you can handle. Kenneth's voice softened, but the urgency in his eyes only grew stronger.

Lauren was afraid of him, but at that moment, she just stared at him calmly. After a long pause, she finally said. "I can't handle him? But I can handle you?"

Kenneth's heart clenched at her words, as if she had hit his most vulnerable spot.

For a moment, he almost believed that there was a hint of something deeper in her words. But when he met her indifferent gaze, he realized that it was nothing more than sarcasm.

Still, for **that** brief moment, he **had** allowed himself to **hope**, and his heart had raced.

Realizing that she **had** never had **any** special feelings for him, his eyes filled with complex emotions turned a deep, angry red.

His expression frightened Lauren, and she couldn't help but push against him again.

The man **stood** still, his **presence** oppressive and threatening "Do you really think I would let you marry someone else?"

His words carried an ambiguous weight **that made** Lauren's **heart** skip a beat.

She met his obsessive gaze but quickly lowered her eyes, uncomfortable. "Who I marry is none of your business

Kenneth's brow furrowed, and he suddenly let out a cold laugh. The sound echoed in the cramped storeroom, carrying **an** eerie, suffocating tension.

"None of my business? You say that so easily. As long as **my** sister is unconscious, your life belongs to the **Gray** family. Do you still think it's none of my business?

As he spoke, his grip on her shoulders tightened, as if he wanted to imprint years of obsession into **that** single moment.

The pain in her injured shoulder was excruciating, but Lauren gritted her teeth and refused to cry out. Her hands trembled. slightly.

The freshly bandaged wound on Kenneth's palm began to bleed again from the force of his grip.

But he seemed to ignore the pain, as if he were punishing himself as well as Lauren. He continued to tighten his grip, the blood staining Lauren's clothes. It was impossible to tell whose blood it was, his or hers.

Kenneth hated himself for this.

I had once cared deeply for her and had even planned to confess his feelings after we entered the same university.

At that time, my heart was full of hope for the future.

But all these dreams had been shattered by Lauren

Five years had passed, and I thought I had moved on.

However, when I **heard** that she was going to marry someone else, my jealousy was uncontrollable. It felt like countless insects were gnawing

heart.

How could I still care about her? She had hurt Elaine. She was convict. She didn't deserve me.

As Kenneth stared at Lauren, the storm of **emotions** in his eyes **gradually** calmed down, replaced by a cold indifference.

His icy gaze was like a winter cellar, devoid of **any** warmth. Finally, he let her go.

Lauren trembled and cowered in the corner. Only when Kenneth left the room did her delicate eyelids flutter.

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Chapter 45 The Weight of Sacrifice

Finished

Meanwhile, in the other room, Elliot stood in front of his parents, his face filled with anxiety. “Dad, Mom, **you** know that the Brooker family Bossman has a terrible reputation. Why are you forcing Laurie **into** this marriage? She’s still your daughter. Even if you don’t like her, you can’t just throw her to the wolves.”

David slammed his hand down on the table **in** anger. “Nonsense! How can I throw her to the wolves? Marrying into the Brooker family is an honor for someone of her **status**.”

Elliot looked at his father in disbelief, his lips trembling. “Dad, Laurie’s health was ruined during those **five** years in prison. You’re sending her to marry a violent man. Do you want to shorten her life!”

The thought of Lauren’s frail, broken body facing the uncertainties of the Brooker family filled Elliot with anger and worry.

David’s face turned **livid**, his eyes wide with rage. His voice rose. “If she won’t marry him, do you want Willow to marry him instead?”

Elliot stiffened, and his gaze shifted to Willow. He met her sad eyes and felt a pang of guilt.

But sacrificing Lauren was something I couldn’t accept either. “But..”

“No buts!” David cut him off, his tone slightly softer. The auction **will** be held in a few days. The Brooker family is determined to win the Eastgate project. Even if the Bennett and Gray families join forces, we may not be able to compete. If the Brooker family secures the Eastgate land, our position in Hoverdale’s business world will gradually be eroded.”

David frowned, his face filled with worry as he continued. “The government **has** already issued documents prioritizing the Eastgate project. Once it’s developed, the commercial center of Hoverdale will gradually shift there.”

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Chapter 46 Marriage Alliance.

If Eastgate fell into the hands of the Brooker family, then the economic lifeline of Hoverdale would be entirely controlled by them.

Bennett Corporation and Gray Corporation were no match for Brooker Corporation. The only option left was to take a step **back** and choose to collaborate with them, making marriage **alliances** the best possible solution.

Elliot clenched his fists. Guilt toward Lauren weighed **heavily** on his heart. Beside him, Alice sobbed softly. "Elliot, we don't want this either, but the family business has so many employees to support. We truly have no other choice. Do you think your father and I feel **any** better about this? These past **few** days. I haven't been able to sleep just thinking about what Lauren will have to endure. I'm her mother. My **love** for her is no less than yours as her brother. The reputation of that man from the Brooker family may be terrible, but his family background is powerful. Besides, rumors aren't always trustworthy. Perhaps he isn't as ruthless as people say" She wiped her tears **away** as she spoke.

Elliot remained silent. He understood his parents' concerns. In the face of family interests, personal happiness seemed utterly insignificant

David, Alice, and Elliot all fell into silence, and for a moment, the atmosphere in the study turned heavy.

Just then, Willow spoke up through her tears. "Dad, Mom, I'm willing to marry the Brooker family's son in her place."

The moment those words left her lips, all three turned to look at her.

Her eyes were filled with unshed tears. Though she was clearly devastated, she forced a smile onto her face. "As long as I can contribute to Bennett Corporation's growth, I'm willing to do anything. I was never your biological daughter to begin with. Ever since Lauren returned to this family. I **should** have left. But back then, I was too young. I loved you, Dad and Mom and I loved Elliot, so I couldn't bear to go. But now that I've grown up, I can finally do something for Bennett Corporation. I'm willing to enter a marriage alliance for the sake of the family"

As she finished speaking, she could no longer hold back her tears. Her voice grew hoarse as she **said**, "Dad, Mom, once I'm married off, will you still acknowledge **me**?"

Alice burst into tears as well, **and** pulled Willow into her arms. "Silly girl, **what** nonsense are you talking about? You will always be my daughter. How could I possibly bear to let **you** marry someone with such an unpredictable personality? We won't go through with this."

Seeing this heartfelt mother–daughter moment, even David was moved. He let out a heavy sigh and turned to Elliot. “Laurent is so thoughtful and precious. We’ve cherished her for over 20 years! Can you really bear to let her be used for a marriage alliance?”

Willow turned to him, “Dad, I don’t mind. As long as I can help our family. I **do** anything.” She sniffled, her nose reddened. but once again, she forced a smile

The more she acted this way, the harder it was for Elliot to bear. He shut his eyes tightly. “Lauren... is more resilient than you.”

His meaning was obvious. Just because Lauren had been enduring hardships all her life, did that mean she deserved to be used as a pawn in a marriage alliance and suffer for the rest of her days? If she **heard** this, even though she had long since stopped expecting anything from this family, the thought of being treated like a chess piece would still fill her with anger and

resentment

Alice wiped away her tears and gently stroked Willow’s hair. “Don’t be sad. You’re engaged to Kenneth; there’s no way we can send you into a marriage alliance with the Brooker family. Just focus on being Kenneth’s **fiancée**. Once the Eastgate project stabilizes, your father and I **will** go to the Gray family to discuss your wedding”

Willow’s face flushed red at her mother’s words. She felt both shy and expectant.

Watching the scene between mother and daughter, David finally smiled. “Kenneth is still outside. You two should go keep him company while Elliot and I discuss some matters.”

Then. Alice and Willow left the room.

Elliot watched their departing figures, and as the thought of Lauren being forced **into** marriage crept into his mind, a sense of unease came over him. He wanted to **say something**, but in the end, he said nothing.

Once they were gone, the study **was** ringed into silence

Chapter 46 Marriage Alliance.

Finished

David let out a sigh and slumped **back** into his **chair**, rubbing his temples in exhaustion “Elliot. I know you feel bad for Lauren, but we have no other choice. Bennett Corporation’s fate depends on this. We are all powerless”

"I know

Willow looked toward the sofa, but neither Kenneth nor Lauren **was** there.

Just as she was wondering where **they** had gone, Kenneth emerged from the far end of the first-floor hallway.

Willow froze. Why would Kenneth have gone there? A sudden thought **struck** her, and shock flickered in her eyes.

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Chapter 47 Storage Room

At the end of the hallway was the storage room; Lauren's room. Could it be....

A suspicion crept into Willow's mind, and a surge of hatred welled up **inside** her. Lauren, you slut. You actually dare to seduce Kenneth right under my nose? Looks like I haven't taught you a good enough lesson yet.

Even as these thoughts filled her mind. Willow's face remained bright with a smile. "Kenneth, where did you go?"

Kenneth's response was dismissive. "Just taking a **walk**. It's getting late. I should head out. His expression was **as** composed as

ever.

Willow looked reluctant, "Stay and have lunch before you go.

"No need." Without that, Kenneth turned and left. Willow's gaze followed **his** figure until he disappeared completely from sight. **Then**, she turned toward the **tightly** shut door at the end of the hallway, her eyes narrowing as jealousy filled her heart.

She turned and beamed **at** Alice. "Mom, it's almost time for lunch. I'll go upstairs and call Lauren"

Alice nodded in approval as she watched Willow happily **dash** upstairs, her eyes filled with motherly affection

But Willow's real intention wasn't to call Lauren down for lunch; it was to check if Lauren was in Elliot's bedroom. And sure enough, when she pushed open the door, Lauren was nowhere to be found.

Looking at the lavish, princess-themed decor, Willow gritted her teeth. Ever since Lauren was hospitalized, Elliot had immediately hired people to renovate the room.

She had underestimated Lauren. In just a few short days after returning home, she had already stolen his attention.

A cruel glint flashed in Willow's eyes. If Lauren wasn't in the bedroom, then she had to be in the storage room. The mere thought of Lauren and Kenneth being in that **tiny space** together lit a fire of hatred so intense it nearly consumed her sanity.

Elliot's love belonged to her. Kenneth also belonged to her. **Lauren**, you shameless thing. How dare you lay claim to what isn't yours? You deserve to die.

Her hatred for Lauren deepened, and in that instant, she had already come up with a plan. She hurried downstairs.

Alice **asked** after noticing she **was alone**, Willow, where's Lauren?"

Willow looked disappointed. "She wasn't in Elliot's bedroom. She must have gone back to her own room."

Alice's expression stiffened. She already knew Lauren was staying in the storage room. The moment Elliot had taken her there. Alice's heart had ached so much it felt like it might stop beating.

She couldn't fathom how Lauren had endured three whole years in that dark **and damp** space without a window. So when Elliot decided to renovate his own bedroom into a princess-themed room as a surprise **for** Lauren, Alice wholeheartedly supported it, hoping it would ease the tension between them.

But from the moment Lauren woke up until now, there had been no gratitude or emotion.

Fine, she could accept that. But now Lauren had gone back to the storage room, as if purposely rubbing salt into her wounds. Alice looked both heartbroken and frustrated. She was upset that Lauren's actions were so cold and resentful.

Just as she was about to get up and go to the storage room herself, Willow stopped her. "Mom, let me go instead. Lauren and I are the same age so it'll be easier for me to talk to her."

Alice sank **back** into the couch. Willow was right. Lauren was just a junior. **Was** she, as the elder, supposed to humble herself and go begging?

Absolutely outrageous. With that thought, Alice gestured for Willow to call Lauren.

The moment Willow turned away, her face turned into something sinister.

She walked up to the storage room door, and without bothering to knock, she pushed it open.

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Chapter 47 Storage Room

Lauren's eyes snapped open, her gaze cold as she said. "Get out."

Finished

Willow let out a laugh, as if she had just heard the funniest joke in the world. "You're telling me to get out! Do you even have the right to say that?"

She crossed her arms over her chest, looking down at Lauren with nothing but contempt. "Don't think you can act all high and mighty just because you're Mom and Dad's biological daughter, Open your eyes and see for yourself! Who do they truly care about? So **what** if you're the real heirless? You're still just an unloved nobody

Tilting her chin up arrogantly, she sneered. Let me warn you! Kenneth is my **man**. Someone like you has no business eyeing

him

Lauren remained calm. She slowly sat up and stood face-to-face with **Willow** Your **man**! Then why can't you even keep an eye on him? If you could, would Kenneth have chased me all the way to the storage room and refused to let me marry the guy from the Brooker family?"

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Chapter 48 Truth

Her lips inched closer to Willow's as she teased. "Do you want to **know** what Kenneth said to me?"

Willow gritted her teeth. “**What** did Kenneth say to you?”

“He said the Brooker family’s son isn’t someone I can mess with, but... he would allow

It was like a dagger to Willow’s heart. Her expression twisted into something evil. She raised her hand to slap Lauren. “You shameless bitch!”

Lauren moved effortlessly, dodging the attack before landing a slap of her own right across Willow’s face. Lauren didn’t hold **back at** all

She had done hard labor her entire life; her strength wasn’t something a pampered princess like Willow could match.

The slap split Willow’s lip. Blood immediately trickled down, sliding off her chin and staining the white dress she had so carefully chosen. **Willow’s** mind went blank. Her eyes widened in disbelief **as** she stared at Lauren.

When she finally processed what had happened, a wave of hatred drowned her senses. She wanted to kill Lauren right then

and there.

“You bitch! You actually dared to hit me! I’ll make you pay for this” She shrieked before running out of the storage room, screaming.

Alice was leisurely sipping her tea in the living room when Willow’s piercing cries made her jolt upright. The next second, she saw Willow rushing toward her, clutching her face. “Mom, help me!”

The way she cried was as if she had suffered the greatest injustice in the world. Alice’s heart ached. She quickly stepped forward, catching Willow **before** she could collapse, her hands **shaking** as **she** examined her daughter’s injuries

When Willow removed her hand from her face, the bright red handprint was obvious

“Willow, what happened?” Alice’s voice trembled with rage, her eyes already burning with fury. In her mind, there was no doubt that Lauren was responsible.

Willow sobbed pitifully as she said, “Mom, it was Lauren. I went to call her for lunch out of kindness, but she hit me without saying a word. What did I do wrong? Why does she keep targeting **me**? Boohoo..”

Alice trembled with anger. “Lauren! Get out here!”

Lauren wasn't surprised. The moment she slapped Willow, she knew this was **coming**. But she didn't regret it. She stepped out at an unhurried pace, meeting Alice's wrath head-on.

"Ashlyn, how could you hit Willow? She's your sister!" Alice's **words** were **harsh**. She didn't ask why Lauren hit Willow only how could she do it. It was clear she didn't care about the reason. She only cared that Willow got hit. She **was** already blaming Lauren without hearing her out.

Lauren smiled, but the smile never reached her eyes. "Madam Alice, aren't you going to ask me why I hit her?"

Alice's breath hitched. For a moment, she was at a **loss** for words. But when she saw Willow crying in her arms, she steeled herself.

"It doesn't matter why. You shouldn't have hit her! Look at **what you** did to her face! Stop being so stubborn. Apologize to your sister right now."

So that's how it was. Alice didn't care about right or wrong. Lauren should've known better than to ask. Alice was willing to let her own daughter take the fall just to protect Willow.

But Lauren refused to back down. She refused to accept it..

"What if I told you she hit me first and I was only defending myself?"

That's impossible. Willow has always been a sweet, well-behaved girl. She would never hit you for no reason! You've only been back a few days, and **you've already** turned the house upside down. I think you're doing this on pur-

1/2

Chapter 48 Truth

Finished

Alice's words came one after another to scold Lauren without hesitation. But as Lauren stared at her with eyes that grew colder **and** colder, Alice's voice faltered.

"What's wrong" Why aren't you finishing your sentence?" Lauren's fists clenched. "Is it because you don't have the guts to say it? Or is it because you know you're wrong?"

When Alice stayed silent, Lauren sneered. "Fine, if you **won't** say it, I will.

The daughter you speak of, the one you treasure so much... Well, five years ago, she pushed her so—

called best friend down the stairs and turned her into a comatose person. On the very day I came home, framed me for ruining the dress she was supposed to wear at her birthday party, making me a public disgrace in front of all the guests in Hoverdale. She did it again. later, setting me up to **make** it seem like I pushed her down the stairs, just so David would beat me with a belt. She made sure I **had** no choice but to cut off my own finger to repay you for giving birth to me. And even when I was in the hospital, she still wouldn't stop. She ran straight to Lucas and told him everything"

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Chapter 49 Stubborn

"What's wrong? Are **you** that eager to see me get sued by Lucas?"

Lauren's sharp accusations made Alice's chest tighten with pain, her tears falling instantly.

"Lauren....

"Madam Alice!" Lauren snapped angrily. "Do you really not know what Willow has done, or are **you** just pretending? Do you truly not know the injustices I've suffered, or do you take pleasure in watching me endure torment?"

"N-No, that's not true Alice was already sobbing uncontrollably.

But those tears didn't soften Lauren's heart in the slightest; they only deepened her disgust.

Your actions say otherwise. What else is there to argue? You treat me like a fool, stringing me along, watching me stupidly long for your motherly love. That must give you such a sense of accomplishment. huh? You must even laugh **about** it in your sleep!

"No, I didn't! Lauren, listen to me. Mommy loves you just as much as I love Willow!"

"Haha, **hahahaha**" Lauren suddenly burst into laughter, so hard that tears nearly came out. She laughed until her stomach hurt, until the pain in her injured shoulder flared up again, but the **pain only** made her more clear-headed.

"You say you love me, yet **you're** the one who drove me insane. I was once the top student at Hoverdale's top high school, the provincial champion of the college entrance exam, and a scholar at Northcrest University. And now? Five years later, what am I **lunatic**. A cripple. A lifelong ex-convict **who** will never be able to hold her head up again. **And** who pushed me into this

abyss? Wasn't it you! You protected Willow because you loved her. And because you loved me, you chose to push me **straight** into hell. What gives you the right to say that your love for us is the same?"

Alice was devastated by Lauren's words, shaking her head desperately as she said, "No, that's not true."

Willow gazed at Lauren with teary eyes. "Lauren, I know you hate me. It's fine if you want to bully me, but why do you have to bully me too?"

Alice clutched Willow in her arms, crying, "Willow, stop talking. It's all **my** fault."

And just like that, the mother and daughter held each other and wept. Lauren watched them coldly, her face devoid **of** emotion. At that moment, **David** and Elliot happened **to** walk out of the study and saw the scene.

Without waiting for an explanation, David immediately roared at Lauren in anger. "You ungrateful girl! You've barely been home, and you're already stirring up trouble again. Do you even have a heart? Your mother and sister have been worrying themselves sick over **you while** you were in the hospital! Can't you feel anything?"

Lauren lifted her gaze and cast **a** cold glance at David. There wasn't a trace of respect in her eyes—only endless mockery.

She smirked slightly, and though she said nothing, her half-smiling expression was scarier than any words. David was so enraged by her stubbornness that his face turned **livid**. He stomped down the stairs and raised his hand, about to **strike**

Lauren.

Elliot immediately stopped **him**. "Dad, **don't** be rash! Let's talk this through!"

David glared at Lauren with anger. "Elliot, let go of me! I'm going to teach this disrespectful brat a lesson today!"

Elliot held David back with all his strength, preventing him from getting even an **inch** closer to Lauren. Lauren met David's gaze coldly. She was utterly fed up with this **so-called** father of hers. This old bastard really had a short memory. He was scared to his core the last time she pulled a knife on him, almost wetting his pants. **And** now, after just a few days, he dared to lay a hand on her **again**?

She could feel **David's** hostility toward her, it was different from Alice's or even Elliot's. His **hatred ran** deep. He was her biological father, yet every time he looked at her, it **was**

s as if he were looking at his worst enemy. Under Lauren's stare, David roared, "Apologize to your mother and Willow right now!"

"Apologize? And why should I?" Lauren asked back.

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Chapter 49 Stubborn

Finished

"I hit Willow because she deserved it. And as for Madam Alice, she's crying because she's done too many shameful things. What the hell does that have to do with me?" Lauren asked, her words firm and unwavering.

David was trembling with anger and tried to lunge at Lauren again, but Elliot held him back tightly. He turned to Lauren, pleading. "Lauren, can't you just say less for once?"

Lauren folded her **arms and** sneered. "Your dad is about to hit me, and I'm not even allowed to talk back?"

"Lauren. Elliot frowned, his expression disapproving. "No matter what, he's still your father."

Lauren let out a **cold** scoff. "My father died a long time ago. I'm an orphan

David's anger exploded. His eyes nearly popped out of their sockets, and the veins on his neck bulged. His face turned red with anger, his jaw clenched so tightly it looked like he might shatter his own teeth.

Pointing a trembling finger at Lauren, he shouted, "You wretched omen! Ever since **you** came back, this house **has** known no peace! You're nothing but a harbinger of disaster!

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Chapter 50 A Knife In Hand.

Finished

Lauren sneered. "I can't possibly deserve the title of a bringer of bad luck. If anyone does, it's you. Mr. David. If you **hadn't** been sleeping like a dead log back then, completely neglect

ing your newborn daughter, would I **have** been **stolen** away and turned into an orphan? If you hadn't been the one to suggest adopting Willow, would I **have** been repeatedly schemed against- by this fake heiress after returning to the Bennett family? The one who threw **this** family into chaos, the one who caused today's mess is obviously you. And yet you shove all the blame onto me, a **woman**. You're not just a bringer of bad luck; you're a spineless coward who refuses to take responsibility"

Lauren let loose, venting years of pent-up resentment and grievances **all** at once. Each word was like a dagger, stabbing David straight in the heart. As the chairman of Bennett Corporation. David had always been held in high regard

Even though he was already in his fifties, he had kept himself in excellent shape—tall and well-maintained, completely devoid of the signs of drinking and indulgence. He **was** the symbol of a distinguished older man, far from the image of a random

geezer.

And yet, this very man was now being utterly torn apart by his own daughter's words. His chest was filled with anger, breath quickened, and his face turned an alarming shade of red. "You.. you."

his

He opened his mouth, but something seemed to be stuck in his throat. For a long moment, he couldn't utter a single coherent

Sentence.

Lauren scoffed, "What? If I were you, I'd have died of shame the moment I lost my child. But **look** at you! Living just fine, **still** acting all high **and** mighty, and now you think you have the right to hit me! What, just because you're old, you think you're **always** right?"

She was done playing along with this family. If they wouldn't let her live in peace, she'd make sure none of them did either.

Alice gasped in shock, covering her mouth with both hands. Panic and distress were written all over her face as she shouted, "Lauren, how can you say such things to your father? You've gone too far!"

Willow had stopped crying peeking out from behind Alice and muttering softly, Lauren, **how** can you curse Dad like that? That's too bad of you."

Hearing this. Lauren burst into laughter as if she had just heard the most ridiculous joke. I went too far? T'in unfilial? Ask yourselves this, do you even deserve my respect! After everything **you've** done to me, have you ever treated me like family! The **way** you treat me is the way I treat you. Okay?"

David exploded. His eyes were bloodshot, veins bulging as he shook with rage like a bull **I ready** to charge. He violently pulled himself free from Elliot's grip, raising his fist to strike Lauren. This time, neither Elliot nor Alice intervened. They simply **stood** by, as if they had tacitly agreed to let David teach her a lesson.

Just as his fist **was** about to land. Marilyn suddenly rushed forward, shielding Lauren with her own body. "Sir, you can't! Ms. Bennett **is** still injured!"

David roared, "Get out of my way! Today, I'll bear this disrespectful brat to death?"

With that, he swung his fist straight at Marilyn's face. Marilyn shut her eyes, bracing herself for the impact. But it never came.

After a long moment, when nothing happened, she slowly **opened** her eyes only to see that Lauren had pulled out a gleaming utility knife at some point, its sharp tip aimed directly at David

Lauren's gaze was as **cold** as ice, her grip on the knife steady. If David dared make a move, she wouldn't hesitate **to** drive the blade into his fist.

The room instantly fell silent. Everyone sucked in a sharp breath. David's anger hadn't faded, but now, mixed with his fury, was a look of pure shock. For the second time, Lauren had pulled a knife on him.

How could she

Lauren stared him down. "Go ahead, try me. You want to hit me? Let's see whose hand moves faster! Yours or my knife?"

She had found this knife in the storage room earlier and casually slipped it into her pocket for self-defense. She hadn't expected to use it so soon.

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Chapter 50 A Knife In Hand

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him down, his rapid breathing only made things worse. His dizziness intensified, his heartbeat pounded wildly, and soon, his limbs went numb. With a loud thud, he collapsed to the ground.

Alice, Elliot, and Willow were scared.

“David, what’s wrong? Don’t scare me?” Alice rushed to his side, trembling hands shaking him desperately

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The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

Chapter 51 Their Grief Was Never for Me

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Finished

Tears streamed down Willow’s face for real this time. She whipped around and glared at Lauren, hatred blazing in her eyes. “This is all your fault. You did this to Dad”

Lauren didn’t bat an eye. There was even a little smile in her eyes as she watched the chaos unfold like it was none of her business.

Marilyn looked panicked. “Ms. Bennett, what’s happening to him?”

Lauren answered like she was talking about the weather. “He’s hyperventilating. That made his body dump too much carbon dioxide, which messed with his blood chemistry. The carbonic acid dropped, the pH shot up, and now his system’s out of balance.”

Marilyn blinked. “What does **that** even mean?”

“It’s called respiratory alkalosis”

Marilyn had always known Lauren was sharp, but this was next-level. She stepped closer, nervous. “Ms. Bennett, **what** should we do?

What do you

mean.

.what should we do? If he can be treated, then treat him. If not, he **can** just die.”

Elliot’s face darkened at her words. “Lauren!”

Lauren didn’t even glance at him. She walked into the dining room, sat down like it was just another night, grabbed a fork. and started **eating**

Her total lack of concern for David’s life hit Alice and Elliot like a punch to the gut.

Alice’s voice cracked through her sobs. “Laurie, what is wrong with you? Your dad’s lying there like that and you’re seriously sitting there eating?”

Lauren grabbed a piece of slow–**cooked** barbecue short rib and took **a** bite.

Damn, that’s good.

It was almost laughable—twenty–three years old, and this was the first time she’d ever tasted short ribs that were actually tender and full of flavor.

At **the** orphanage, meals like this didn’t exist.

When she got to the Bennett household, she was stuck with cold leftovers like she didn’t belong

The wildest part? She didn’t get real, hot meals until she ended up in prison. And even then, Kenneth made sure her life in there was miserable in his own twisted way. But **still**, it was better than the orphanage—or living with the Bennetts.

She **didn’t** answer until she’d finished chewing and swallowed every bite..

Then, cool as ever, she said, “Didn’t you and your heartless family shatter mine a long time ago? And now that I’m giving you a taste of your own medicine, suddenly it’s a problem?”

She still remembered it like it was yesterday.

Senior year, right around New Year’s. She was burning up with a fever for three days straight.

Couldn’t get out of bed, couldn’t even lift her head. She was stuck in the utility room the whole time, and not one person in the Bennett family came to check on her.

No water. No food. Nothing. **Like** she didn’t exist..

Three days later, Marilyn came back from her holiday break and found her barely breathing. If she'd come back even one day later, Lauren probably wouldn't have made it.

And honestly, would anyone in the Bennett house have even noticed?

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