

# The Heiress Revived from the Ashes Novel

## The Heiress Revived Ch 51

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### Chapter 51 Their Grief Was Never for Me

Marilyn felt bad for her and brought it up to David and Alice.

And David? He just scoffed.

Finished

“She’s got a strong will. She’s not gonna die that easy. Honestly, I think she’s faking it a gain, trying to get sympathy. I know exactly what kind of person she is. Marilyn, if you’ve got time to worry about her, why don’t you go shovel the **snow** out

front?”

**Alice** just sighed. “**Laurie really** is too much. Even if she’s mad at us, she shouldn’t go t hree days without food or water. What if she messes up her health?

So yeah, Alice knew. She knew Lauren hadn’t eaten or drunk anything in days— and she didn’t do a damn thing about it

Lauren had only gone to the kitchen because she was desperate for water. Then she he ard it—every word. A cold wave crawled

up from her toes and swept over her like she’d just stepped **into** a frozen grave.

Alice sobbed harder. “Laurie, when have we ever just let you suffer? Don’t lie like that. Y ou know it’s not true.”

There it was

They couldn’t even remember the things they’d done to her. Which only proved one thin g—they’d never really seen her as at person **at** all.

Her life meant less than Willow’s dog

Not long after she got over her illness, Willow’s dog came down with something

The whole Bennett family freaked out. They rushed the dog to the emergency vet and dropped over fifteen grand trying to save it. But the dog didn’t make it

When it died, they cried like **the** world had ended. Full—on hysterics. They even held a funeral for the damn thing.

People who knew the truth would **say**, “Oh, the Bennetts lost a dog.”

But if you’d walked in on that scene, you might’ve thought someone’s parents had just passed.

And that wasn’t the end of it..

Willow turned around **and** blamed her. Said Lauren had made the dog sick. Swore up and down it caught something from

her.

The dog was eighteen, It died of old age. But instead of believing the vet, the Bennetts clung to Willow’s wild story.

To avenge the dog. David made Lauren **stand** out in the freezing cold as punishment.

Alice? She wore that same sorrowful expression she always did. Full of pity. But never lifted a finger.

She’d been underfed her whole life. Her period didn’t even start until she was seventeen, and even then it was barely there.

The day they made her stand outside in the freezing cold? That just so happened to be the first day of her cycle. The cold shocked her body so badly, it stopped altogether.

She passed out from the cold. And like always, it was Marilyn who scrambled to take care of her.

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Chapter 52 Letting Go Was Long Overdue.

**That** incident left her sick for two whole weeks.

Afterward, her periods didn’t come back for six months. And when they finally did, they were lighter than ever—and now she had to deal with brutal cramps too.

All of it was because of the Bennetts.

Looking back, she couldn't believe how naive she'd been. After all **that** heartless treatment, the version of her that just wanted to be loved still clung to hope.

It wasn't until she ended up behind bars that the illusion finally broke—and she saw the Bennetts for what they really were.

Willow was shaking, **eyes** full of fury as she yelled at Lauren, "If Dad dies, I swear I'll never forgive you!"

Lauren stopped chewing. Her fork hit the table with a sharp clank.

"Never forgive me? Who the heck do you think you **are?**" She locked eyes with Willow. "Your dad's in that state because of you.

**She** stood

LITE

and started walking toward her, slow and deliberate. "You were the one who came into my room, weren't you? You were the one who picked a fight. You swung first—I just defended myself. And then you ran off to tattle to **Madam** Alice like the victim."

Her voice kept climbing. "**You** stirred the pot. Then your precious dad **saw his baby** girl all worked up and flew **into a** rage—ended up hyperventilating himself into respiratory alkalosis. You kicked all this off. And now you're pointing fingers at me?"

She stopped right in front of Willow. The second she finished speaking, her hand snapped up.

**Smack!** The slap landed hard and clean across Willow's face. "You've got some nerve.

A deep red handprint bloomed on the opposite cheek to match the first one. Her face was now perfectly, painfully balanced.

Alice shrieked and lunged toward Lauren. "Lauren! You hit her again! What's gotten into you?"

Lauren just laughed coldly, sidestepped, and let Alice fall flat to the ground with a loud thump.

Elliot lost it. He **shoved** Lauren hard and snapped, "Lauren, that's enough!"

She stumbled back, almost hitting the floor.

He moved to catch her without thinking, but before he could reach her, Marilyn had already stepped in and caught her.

His hand froze midair, **then** dropped to his side. The concern on his face disappeared just as fast.

Lauren steadied herself just in time to hear Elliot lay into her. “No matter what went down, you don’t hit Willow. And with Dad the way he is, how long are you planning to keep this chaos going

Lauren’s smirk deepened. “Oh, so now you remember your dad’s not doing well. That’s weird— didn’t see you call 911, didn’t see you try CPR or anything. Honestly, looks like you’re just waiting for the old man to drop dead so **you** can run the company.”

“Shut your

mouth! Elliot shouted, wishing he could glue it shut. “What is wrong with you? You’ve completely lost it.”

His face was full of disappointment. For days now, he’d been walking on eggshells because of her. She hadn’t appreciated a damn thing. All she gave him was shark and bitterness.

He used to worry **she’d** suffer once she married into the Brooker family out in Balewood .

But now? That worry felt pointless. With an attitude like hers, if she got hurt, she probably had it coming.

In the middle of all the yelling, David’s whole body went stiff. His face turned a sick shade of purple, like he couldn’t breathe.

Alice, Elliot, and Willow instantly forgot all about Lauren.

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Chapter 52 Letting Go Was Long Overdue

Finished

“What do we do? **What** are we supposed to do? **Dad** looks like he’s in serious pain—he’s not gonna make it!” Willow **was a** mess, crying hard. She wasn’t faking it. David **had** always been her rock in this house. The only one who loved her with no strings attached.

Elliot D

pulled out his phone and tried to call Jeffrey. The call went through, but no one answered.

Alice was losing it, pacing around like a **maniac**, clearly out of her depth.

Lauren stood there watching, **cool and** detached, towering over David like she couldn't care less.

Honestly. I hope he just keels over right now.

But if he did? The Bennetts would one **hundred** percent blame it **on** her. They'd eat her alive.

And her 1.4 million dollars would be down the **drain**.

With that thought, Lauren **finally said**. "Marilyn, go grab a trash bag from the kitchen."

Marilyn didn't get it, but she didn't question it either. She came back a moment later with a big black garbage bag in hand.

Lauren slipped the trash bag over **David's** head.

Alice, Elliot, and Willow froze, **a** mix of shock and outrage hitting them all at once.

"Lauren, what the heck is wrong with you? Dad's already like this **and** you're trying to suffocate him with a trash bag? Are **you** even human?" Willow screamed, hand flying up to hit her, but Lauren smacked it aside without hesitation.

"If you don't know what you're talking about, then shut it Lauren's voice cracked like a whip, instantly silencing the room.

She scanned their stunned faces **and** spoke coldly. The bag is to help raise his carbon dioxide levels."

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Chapter 53 Smart Girl? Prove It, Willow

Finished

"When someone's hyperventilating, they breathe out too much CO2. That throws off their body's balance, causes the blood pH to **spike**, and boom—

respiratory alkalosis. By covering his mouth and nose with a bag, he re-breathes the CO<sub>2</sub> he just exhaled. That **slows** the loss, helps reset the pH, and gets things back to normal.”

She turned to Willow. “Didn’t you are every **science** class at Brightvale High Weren’t you in the top ten of your year? And you don’t know something this basic?”

Willow’s face turned beet red, her mouth tight, but she didn’t say a word.

A few minutes later, David finally started to come around.

He ripped the trash bag off his head and flung it to the floor. Then he staggered to his feet, looking like he **was** ready to take **a** swing at Lauren.

But Lauren’s voice cut through the air, cool and steady. “You’d be smart to calm down. Mr. David. If you trigger another episode, you might not get so lucky next time.”

You... you ungrateful little brat

Lauren shot him a deadpan look, scoffed, and turned to head upstairs.

David shouted after her, “If you’ve got that much attitude, don’t stay upstairs! Go **back** to the damn storage room where you belong!”

Lauren stopped halfway up the stairs and looked down at him. “Back then, I stayed out of that room because I didn’t want to owe you anything. Now? I’m staying because I saved your life. And as far as I’m concerned, your life is worth exactly one. room. If I wanted more, I’d take the whole house. This house would be mine—and the ones getting kicked out would be all of

you.

“You... you’re impossible!” David’s rage spiked again, and he looked like he was about to collapse.

Elliot jumped in, grabbed the trash bag off the floor, and quickly placed it back over **David’s** head.

David started breathing heavily, the bag sucking in and puffing out with each breath. He looked absolutely ridiculous.

Lauren curled her lips into a smile.

**Now** that I didn’t care anymore, I could go completely off the rails. Watching them this miserable? It felt damn good.

Back in her room, Lauren collapsed onto the soft king-size bed **and** let out along, tired sigh.

God, this bed's amazing

If she hadn't been stolen at birth, she probably would've spent every one of her twenty-something years waking up in a bed

like this.

She closed her eyes, letting the rare moment of quiet wash over her.

Ten minutes passed before someone knocked—three soft, evenly spaced taps. Just from the sound, she knew it had to be **Marilyn**. The Bennetts never knocked. They just barged in like they owned everything.

"Come in."

Sure **enough**, Marilyn walked in holding **a** steaming bowl of noodle **soup**.

"Ms. Bennett, you should eat while it's still hot."

Lauren sat up and leaned **against** the headboard, taking the bowl from her hands.

Just like always, the noodles were perfect—warm, with crisp greens, a soft-boiled egg, fresh scallions on top, and a touch of sesame oil that made it smell incredible.

You only had a few bites earlier, Marilyn said gently. "You **must** still be hungry"

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Chapter 53 Smart Girl? Prove It, Willow

Lauren's eyes filled with tears. Thank you, Marilyn."

In this house, Marilyn was the only one who'd ever treated her like a **human** being.

Finished

She looked out for her, made sure she had food, **warmth**, **care**. Every time someone laid a hand on her, Marilyn stood in the

way.

If it weren't for her, Lauren probably wouldn't **have** made it out of half the beatings alive.

"It's because of you I've managed to stay alive in this place. Her throat tightened as she said it.

Marilyn's heart broke at the sight of her **glassy** eyes. After a pause, she said quietly, "Ms. Bennett, maybe... maybe you should just sneak out tonight."

Lauren blinked, warmth rising in her chest despite everything. Her voice shook just a little. "Marilyn. I know you mean well. I do. But I can't leave."

"Why not? Don't tell me you're still holding onto this place." Marilyn's voice cracked, filled with pain and frustration. "Ms. Bennett, you have no idea how coldhearted he really is. Your shoulder just got stitched up yesterday. The anesthesia hadn't even worn off, and he still dragged you back here— just so he could marry **you** off to that Brooker family guy"

Marilyn just couldn't wrap her head around it— **how** could any parent treat their own child with that kind of cruelty?

Sure. Ms. Bennett wasn't raised under their roof but still— they shared blood. Wasn't that supposed to mean something? Even if they didn't love her, did they have to go out of their way to hurt her?

**She's** been dealt a brutal hand, Marilyn thought.

What she didn't say out loud was that **David** wasn't just cold— he was completely out of his mind.

Yesterday **at the hospital**, Lauren was out cold, not responding

**Instead** of checking on her or showing concern, he grabbed her by the arm and yanked her out of bed, throwing her straight to the ground like she was nothing

The fresh stitches on her shoulder tore open again. **Blood** soaked her gown. She had **to be** wheeled back into the OR for emergency stitches.

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Chapter 54 Fake Love Wears Thin



**Marilyn** couldn't bring herself to say any of it. The truth **was** too brutal. She was scared Lauren might not be able to take it.

"Maybe marrying into the Brooker family won't be the worst thing." Lauren said with a soft smile, trying to ease Marilyn's worry.

"Ms. Bennett, why put yourself through this? After **everything** this family's done to you, they don't deserve a thing—not your

effort, not your sacrifice."

Lauren stayed quiet.

I know **the** Bennetts aren't worth it. But Marilyn and Mia are. For them, I'd do anything.

She took a breath and said, "Danin, these noodles smell **amazing**. I better **eat** before they get soggy

Then she dug in, eating quickly and hungrily.

Marilyn watched in silence, letting out a small sigh. Her heart's still too soft. Most people would be burning with rage after being treated like that

Lauren finished every last bit—didn't even leave the broth behind,

Once Marilyn left with the dishes, the smile Lauren had forced onto her face slowly slipped away

In her heart, she made a quiet promise. Just hold on, Marilyn. Once I marry into the Brooker family and get that 1.4 million dollars. I get you and Mia out of this country. You two are the only ones I care about. And once you're free from the Bennetts, I can finally act without holding back.

From that day **on**. Lauren **basically** lived in her room.

She only came down to **eat** and did her best **to avoid** the Bennetts entirely.

Everything stayed calm. Even Willow kept her distance, which was **unusual**.

Seven days passed in silence.

That morning, after washing up, Lauren headed out of her room to grab breakfast. The moment she opened her door, she found Alice standing there with a shopping bag in hand.

Lauren's face went cold. What do you want?"

She'd kept this frosty attitude all week. Alice had made a few attempts to cozy up to her, but Lauren had shut her down every time—quietly but clearly.

Alice tried again, putting on her best motherly smile and holding out the bag like it was a gift from the heart. "Laurie, try **this** on. I picked out this dress just for you."

Lauren didn't **move**. "If you **have** something to say, just say it. No need to butter me up, Madam Alice"

Alice's smile faltered. The tension in the air thickened

"Laurie, do we really have to keep things like this between us? I'm just trying to give you **a** dress. Let me do something a mother should do. Can't you give me that much?"

Lauren gave **a** wide, mocking smile. You weren't a mom before, you're not one now, and suddenly you want to play the part? Look, if you're gonna fake some touching mother

—  
daughter moment, at least put some effort into it. Instead of handing me a dress, why not just give me money? With money, I can buy what I like—not **just accept** whatever you think I should wear. A dress like this? It's for a formal party. It's obvious you want something. So why pretend this is about being a good mom? Just be **real**. There's a party tonight, right? And Mr. Brooker's gonna be there. **That's** why you need me to show up looking presentable, right?"

She didn't hold back. Not one bit.

Alice's **eyes** welled up right **away**. Like someone hit a switch. She shook her head, voice cracking. "Laurie, that's not fair. How

Chapter 54 Fake Love Wears Thin

Finished.

"Oh So I've got it all wrong? Then I don't need the dress. Take it back—I **don't** like it. Just give me the money instead." She held out her hand.

Alice stood there stunned, completely stuck.

Lauren watched her fumble, and for once, she didn't feel an ounce of pity—just pure satisfaction.

Lauren was about to close the door when Alice suddenly pushed against it, like she'd finally worked up the nerve to speak.

Laurie, there's an auction in Hoverdale tonight. Mr. Brooker from the Brooker family will be there. I **picked** out the dress **so** you could see the man you're going to marry

Lauren raised an eyebrow. "And if I meet him and don't like what I see? Are you gonna call the whole thing off?"

Alice couldn't answer.

The marriage deal had already been decided—without Lauren's input. She never had a **say** in it. Like it or not, she was getting shipped off to the Brooker family.

So what was the point of meeting him **now**?

Alice wanted the benefits of marrying Lauren off, but not the backlash that came with looking like she sold her daughter for status. So she dressed it up like it **was** all **love** and concern.

Like heck it was.

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Trying to play the caring mother while handing her off like a bargaining chip. It was the most hypocritical move of all.

Lauren wouldn't have been nearly as disgusted if Alice had just admitted she didn't care

But no—she faked it. Over and over. Pretended to love her, gave her hope, then threw her to the wolves every single time..

She was just a pawn in the Bennetts game. **A** puppet. **A** joke.

And **that** was what pissed her off the most,

Lauren's eyes were sharp, steady. She saw through everything.

Alice's face turned red with shame, completely exposed.

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Chapter 55 I'll Buy What Actually Fits

Finished

Lauren said nothing as she reached into the bag and pulled out the dress. It was a simple red spaghetti-strap dress—basic, safe, and looked like something you'd grab last-minute from a department store clearance rack

Even when she fakes it, she doesn't bother faking it well.

"Wow, Madam Alice, how thoughtful of you." **Lauren** said, her voice dripping with sarcasm. She really leaned into the word thoughtful.

Alice heard the mockery loud and clear. She gave an awkward smile. "If you don't like it, Laurie, I'll find you something else

Lauren tossed the dress back without hesitation. "I've still got healing wounds. You really want me to wear this?"

The welts David left with his belt had stopped hurting, but the bruises were still clear as day—on her arms, her **back**, her thighs.

Her shoulder was the one on **display**

jit

the worst. The wound had closed up, but the scarring was obvious. In a dress like that, she'd be putting all of

Alice finally put it together. Her face softened with guilt. That was my mistake. I'm sorry, Laurie

"Forget the apology. **Just** give me the money. I'll go buy something myself—whatever you picked doesn't even fit me."

Her body had been through too much. Years of undernourishment during puberty had left her flat and underdeveloped, barely any **curves**, painfully thin.

The Bennetts all had model-like bodies. David was 6 foot 1. Elliot 6 foot 2. and Alice **was** 5 foot 7. With genes like **that**, Lauren should've **easily** hit **5 foot 7**.

But she barely made it to 5 foot 3.

If not for her face—a perfect blend of David's strong features and Alice's elegance—no one would believe she was their biological daughter.

**Willow.**

**And** the dress Alice handed her? Yeah, that was never for her. It was obviously bought to fit Will

Willow was tall and curvy, with the kind of body you could tell had been pampered. She was slim, sure, but not like Lauren- Lauren looked breakable. There was no way that dress was gonna fit.

Alice flushed bright red. Embarrassment burned through her. She couldn't stand to look Lauren in the eye anymore.

She quickly pulled **out a** card and shoved it into Lauren's hand.

T-there's 15,000 dollars on this. Just take it. If it's not enough, let me know."

And with that, she practically bolted.

Lauren threw on something casual, grabbed the card, and walked out of the Bennett house without looking back.

She took a cab straight to the mall- but she didn't go anywhere near the dress stores. Instead, she made a beeline for a high-end suit shop.

A suit was the smartest option. It looked formal and polished, and more importantly, it would cover all the bruises on her **body**.

After a quick chat with the sales associate, Lauren picked out a black suit and headed in to the fitting room.

She was just stepping out to check herself in the mirror when she overheard a tense voice nearby.

A well-dressed man with rimless glasses was frowning at **one** of the store employees. "There's really no way to fix it?"

The employee **gave** the suit a careful once-over, then sighed, "Sir, this is a really high-end fabric. And the hole looks like it came from a cigarette burn. Fixing it so it's completely unnoticeable would take a high-level specialist- someone who works in couture repairs. That's just not something we can do in- **house**.

Chapter 55 I'll Buy What Actually Fits

Finished

The man's face dropped. 'Great. Just great. Our CEO has a huge event tonight, and this suit was custom—made just for it. There's no way we can get it **back** to Balewood in time for repairs.'

The associate looked genuinely apologetic. I'm so sorry, sir. It's beyond what we can handle here. Maybe try another store?"

I've already checked every reputable tailor in Hoverdale."

Lauren glanced at the suit in the guy's arms.

She'd seen plenty of designer pieces during her time with the Bennetts—but this suit? It was **on a** whole different level.

The fabric alone was next—level, and the tailoring **was** flawless. This was the kind of suit that **was** made specifically for one person. You wouldn't find a second one like it anywhere.

Even if you could fix it. it'd take serious time and cost a small fortune—probably starting at five figures.

Maybe she'd been looking a little too long, because the man with the glasses noticed her

Lauren was standing there in the black suit she'd just changed into. The fit hugged her narrow waist perfectly. Her shoulders, though naturally slim, looked sharp and strong thanks to the structured cut. The black fabric made her pale skin pop, and the smooth neckline flowed up to her long neck. She had that clean, modern, take-no-crap look—polished, but not trying **too**

hard.

The guy **must've** thought she was the manager, because he came straight over, hopeful and desperate. You really can't fix it? I'll pay whatever it takes—just as long as it's done before tonight

Lauren blinked, caught off guard. He thought I worked there.

She opened her mouth to say no—but then she looked at him. He actually needed her.

And for once being needed felt... kind of good. It made saying no a little harder

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## Chapter 56 The Art of Embroidery

Almost as if guided by an unseen force, she asked, "What about embroidery?"

The man hesitated. A perfectly good suit with an embroidered patch on the chest? It didn't seem right.

But at this point, he had no other choice.

Gritting his teeth, he asked, "What kind of embroidery can you do? How good are you?"

"I can do Swish embroidery. My skills... should be passable,"

I had learned Swish embroidery in Hoverdale Prison. No matter how badly the other prisoners beat me, they never hurt my hands. That was because my embroidery was the best in the prison.

Even the guards seemed to appreciate her hands

But how good was I really? Perhaps I was simply better than the other prisoners.

The man looked at her skeptically. "Swish **embroidery**? It's one of the four great embroidery styles. Are you sure you can do

It wasn't that I doubted Lauren, but she was just too young.

As the saying goes. Ten thousand taels of gold is not worth one box of Swish embroidery"

The process was incredibly difficult, the craftsmanship intricate, and the cost high. It was often called "soft gold."

The girl in front of him was only in her early twenties. Mastering Swish embroidery was no easy feat.

Lauren didn't brag. She simply said. "I don't know if I can do it, but the hole from the cigarette burn **makes** this suit unwearable for the banquet."

The man was speechless. He couldn't argue with that. It seemed that he had no choice but to trust her.

With a resigned sigh, the man handed his suit to Lauren and silently prayed. Please let it be his work. The auction tonight is too important for the president.

Lauren carefully examined the hole left by the cigarette burn, her fingers lightly tracing the surrounding fabric. In her mind, she was already sketching out the embroidery design.

“Do you have any embroidery thread?” she asked the shopkeeper.

The shopkeeper nodded and brought her all the needles **and** thread she needed.

Lauren sat down at the table and concentrated.

Before she began, she split a single strand of thread into forty-eight finer strands..

This alone left the bespectacled man and the salesman in awe.

The man’s heart raced with excitement. Just from this one **move**, he could tell that Lauren **wasn’t** an amateur; she was a professional.

The needle in Lauren’s hand moved like a nimble fish, weaving through the black fabric.

Swish embroidery emphasized delicate needlework, even stitches, and vivid threads.

Each stitch Lauren made was precise, her **touch** just right.

The threads twisted and intertwined under her fingers, gradually forming an exquisite **peony**.

The petals were layered and lifelike, with golden threads subtly highlighting the stamen. Under the light, it shimmered faintly as if it held morning dew, bringing the entire flower to life.

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Chapter 56 The Art of Embroidery

Finished

handed it to the man.

The **man** eagerly stepped forward. When he **saw** the embroidery on the suit, his eyes widened and his mouth opened slightly. He was completely stunned **and amazed**. This... this is incredible! This isn’t just a repair; it’s an improvement!”

The shopkeepers around them also gasped in admiration, their eyes filled



with respect as they looked at Lauren

Lauren smiled faintly. I'm glad you're satisfied."

The man nodded repeatedly, so excited that he **was almost** speechless. Thank you so much! You've saved me! I... I don't know how to repay you. How much do you want?"

Lauren waved his hand. "It's nothing, just a small favor. Think of it as my way of doing good deed. I've had too much on my mind lately. This was a nice change

After **thanking** Lauren profusely, the man hurried off.

When **Lauren** stepped out of the tailor shop, she noticed that it was already dark outside. The streetlights had come on, casting a soft glow over the street

She hailed another taxi and returned to the Bennett Residence, only to find **that** the entire family had already left for the auction without her.

Lauren didn't care. If they didn't want to wait for me, then I simply wouldn't go

But just **as** she was about to turn away, a car pulled up in front of her. The window was rolled down, revealing the impatient face of the driver. "Get in. Mr. David and Madam Alice asked me to take you there."

Lauren stood still, her expression blank as she **stared** at him.

"Get out and open the door for me."

The driver felt a chill under Lauren's **unwavering** gaze but still replied, "Don't you have **hands**? Can't you open it yourself?"

Lauren narrowed her eyes. Even the driver dared to disrespect me. It was clear that the Bennett family had given him the green light

It seemed like the Bennett family still didn't understand the situation.

Right now, wasn't I the one begging them; it was the other way around.

They needed me to marry into the Brooker family for the sake of the Bennett Corporation's interests, yet they couldn't even show me basic respect. Did they really think I was that easy to manipulate

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## Chapter 57 The Auction.

Lauren

didn't want to indulge the driver. She turned around and walked straight back into the villa without a second glance.

Now it was the driver's turn to panic.

Mr. David and

Madam Alice had explicitly instructed me to make sure that Lauren made it to the auction.

He hadn't expected that just a little attitude from him would make **that** little brat dare to give him the cold shoulder and

refuse to go.

The driver quickly got out of the car and chased after her into the mansion. He dropped his former arrogance and put on a pleading smile,

"Ms. Bennett, what are you doing? Mr. David and Madam Alice are waiting for you at the auction. If **you** don't hurry, you'll

miss it!"

Lauren sat calmly on the sofa and poured herself a cup of tea. She sipped it leisurely, not even looking at the driver.

The driver was as anxious **as an** ant on a hot **pan**. He tried every sweet word he could think of, almost falling to his knees.

Only then did Lauren finally look up. "As a driver, you should know your position. Don't **s** **tick** your neck out for things that don't concern you"

"Yes, **yes**... The driver nodded repeatedly, even though he **was** seething inside.

"Ms. Bennett, it's all **my** fault. Please, let's go **quickly**."

Lauren continued to slowly sip her **tea**. It was already 8.00 p.m., and the auction **had** begun.

The driver was sweating profusely and regretted his earlier behavior.

After another half hour, Lauren finally put down her teacup. "Let's go.

The driver felt like he'd been granted amnesty. He rushed to the car and opened the back door for Lauren "Ms. Bennett, please get in

Only then did Lauren get into the car, satisfied.

Meanwhile, the auction was already half over.

The Bennett family of four sat in the VIP section.

David's face grew darker by the **minute**. "The auction has been going on for so long. Where is that ungrateful brat, **Lauren?**"

Alice was also worried. "David, do you have Laurie's **number**? Call her and ask her where she is."

"**Why** should I have her number? Don't **you?**" **David** snapped.

"If I **had** it, I would have called her by now!" Alice stamped her foot in frustration. "This child, **how** can she be so irresponsible! Didn't we tell her how important tonight's event is?"

David gritted his teeth. "**In** my opinion, that brat is doing this on purpose"

Elliot, who had been silently frowning, pulled out his cell phone. "I'll call the driver at home."

The call was quickly connected, and he barked into the phone, "Why isn't Lauren here yet?"

"Mr. Elliot, we just left the house," the driver's voice came through, sounding helpless.

Elliot's anger flared up. "**What** do you mean you just left? Didn't I tell you that the auction starts at 8 o'clock? It's already 8:30, and you're telling me you just left?"

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Chapter 57 The Auction

before the auction ends, he snapped before hanging up.

Finished

Willow, who had been silent the whole time, was completely focused on the Brooker family Bossman from Balewood.

She had only heard rumors about him that he was unstable due to certain... shortcomings, that he was ruthless and sadistic, with a penchant for torturing women.

In her imagination, the Brooker family Bossman **should** have been a menacing figure. **But** to her surprise, he was strikingly handsome.

His face was like a masterpiece, with deep contours and smooth lines that exuded nobility.

She couldn't take her eyes off him, feeling that the rumors might not be true.

At that moment, she suddenly didn't want Lauren to marry him anymore.

Lauren was just an unloved little brat. She deserved to be trampled on, not to marry into a prestigious family and have a more handsome man than her own fiancé, Kenneth.

Especially since this man was **not** only handsome but also had impeccable taste.

the suit he was wearing

Her gaze drifted down and landed on the custom-made

Forget the fabric and the tailoring. The embroidered red peony on the chest of the suit was as the finishing touch that elevated it beyond "high-end custom" to something even more extraordinary.

Could a man with such refined taste really be as terrible as the rumors suggested?

**Willow** had her doubts.

If the Bossman was really as bad as the rumors said, I would be happy to see Lauren marry him.

But if the rumors were false, wouldn't that mean that Lauren was getting an incredible deal?

No, I couldn't just sit **back** and let that happen.

With this thought, Willow picked up her phone and sent a message to the driver.

After reading it, the driver glanced at Lauren through the rearview mirror. She was leaning back in her seat, eyes closed, seemingly resting.

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## Chapter 58 The Auction Showdown.

A glimmer of something dark flashed in the driver's eyes

The auction hall was tense and buzzing with excitement.

The **plans** and detailed information for the Eastgate land were displayed on the large screen, immediately drawing everyone's attention.

The host's voice echoed through the room: "Next up, we have the highlight of today's auction, the Eastgate Land. This property boasts **a** prime location and immense potential for future development. The starting bid is 140 million dollars with a minimum increment of 1.4 million dollars per bid. Let the bidding begin!"

Everyone knew that securing this land would be like holding a golden **goose**.

Elliot was the first to raise his paddle, **his voice** calm and confident. 147 million dollars."

His gaze was determined. As the representative of the Bennett family, he was determined to win this bid. Acquiring this **land** would not only expand the Bennett Corporation's portfolio but would also enhance their standing in Hoverdale's business

circle.

Before his words could fully sink in, Kenneth raised **his** paddle. "154 million dollars."

Kenneth dressed in a dark suit with his **hair** immaculately styled was not to be outdone.

With these two opening bids, others quickly joined in, and the price skyrocketed. The atmosphere in the room was tense, like a bowstring stretched to its limit, ready to **snap** at any moment

Smaller families and businesses shook their heads in resignation, knowing they were in **over** their heads. They could only

watch **as** the **titans** of commerce battled it **out**.

Soon the price had climbed to 280 million dollars, **and** the number of bidders was dwindling.

At this point, the assistant to the Brooker family Bossman, **Josh**, who had been sent until then, slowly raised his paddle. His voice was calm and relaxed. 420 million dollars."

His expression was indifferent, but the offer was like a bomb that instantly silenced the room.

The faces of the Bennett family turned grim. They had expected the Brooker family to be formidable, but not to this extent.

While others had increased the amount by 4 million, or 14 million dollars, the Brooker family had just increased the amount by 140 million.

420 million was almost beyond the Bennett family's budget limit. But now that they were in such a deep hole, backing out would mean that all their previous efforts had been wasted.

Elliot glanced at Kenneth beside him.

Kenneth frowned slightly, his fingers tapping lightly on the armrest of his chair. After a moment of thought, he nodded at Elliot.

There was no other choice. The two families would have to join forces.

If they won the bid, they would develop the Eastgate together

With Kenneth's financial backing, Elliot regained his confidence and raised **his** paddle again. 490 million dollars."

He even shot a look at the Brooker family heir.

But the Brooker family Bossman didn't even look in his direction.

**His** assistant, Josh, remained expressionless and calmly raised the paddle again. **630** million dollars."

Another 14 million **was** added.

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Chapter 58 The Auction Showdown

"840 million." Josh said calmly.

\*910 million." Elliot continued.

"1.1 billion, Josh said.

What?!!!

Elliot and Kenneth jumped to their feet and stared at the Brooker family Bossman and his assistant in disbelief.

1.1 billion was approaching the upper limit of the land's value.

Elliot glared at the man. Felix, have you lost your mind?"

Felix Brooker, the Bossman of the Brooker family from Balewood!

**Finally**, he turned his head slightly to look at Elliot, his voice calm. Place your bid."

His expression was **unreadable**, as if to say. No matter what you bid. I'll keep raising it.

This calmness made Elliot feel uneasy.

Finished

Together, the Bennett and Gray families could only muster a maximum of ten billion. If they exceeded that, the Bennett family would face a financial crisis.

David, who was sitting nearby, looked as if he could drip water from his face, his lips pressed tightly together. He was powerless, forced to watch the situation unfold.

Kenneth wasn't much better. **While** he maintained a calm exterior, the fear in his eyes was **growing**.

The Gray family had spent a lot of money on this auction. **Failure** would be a huge blow to the group.

Elliot gritted his teeth. "1.2 billion."

Before his words were out of his mouth, Josh raised his paddle again. "1.4 billion."

The room fell into a long silence

Elliot and Kenneth exchanged glances, both seeing the same **resignation** and defeat in each other's eyes. They knew they had

Jost.

\*1.4 billion, going once! 1.4 billion going twice! 1.4 billion going third, sold." The host's gavel fell with a resounding thud. The land in the Eastgate officially belonged to the Brooker **family**..

The **Bennett** and Gray families were devastated. David was seething with anger, but he **had** to suppress it due to the setting.

Elliot slumped back in **his** chair, completely

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## Chapter 59 The Trap

As expected, the Brooker family of Balewood had lived up to their centuries-old reputation. They **had** casually thrown away. 1.4 billion without blinking an eye.

**David** and Elliot exchanged a glance, resigned to their fate.

It seemed that the only way to get involved in the Eastgate Project now was through Lauren's marriage to Felix.

Elliot took a deep breath, stood up, and straightened his suit, trying to keep his composure. He walked over to Felix and extended his **hand** with a friendly smile. "I have long heard of the Brooker family's reputation. Seeing you in person today, your strength truly lives up to the rumors."

Felix showed no special expression but shook Elliot's hand politely.

David suppressed his displeasure and forced a smile, wrinkles creasing his face. "Now that the auction is over, why don't we go **to** the banquet hall and have a chat? What do you think, Mr. Felix?"

Felix nodded as a response. As he left, he glanced at his assistant, Josh, who immediately followed the host to handle the transfer procedures for the Eastgate land.

By the time the **group** arrived at the banquet hall. Lauren had also just arrived

The driver immediately spotted Willow. He quickly walked over to her, handed her something, and whispered, "Willow, here's what you asked for."

After handing **it** over, the driver quickly left.

Willow **glanced** at Lauren, who was surveying the banquet hall.

Willow casually picked up a glass of juice, sprinkled the powder the driver had given her into it, and stirred it well. Then she

called a waiter over.



“Please give her this drink,” she said, tilting her chin toward Lauren.

The waiter nodded and carried the drink over to Lauren.

Lauren didn’t think much of it. It was normal for waiters to offer drinks at banquets.

Besides, she hadn’t eaten all evening and **was a** little hungry. So she **took the drink and** went over to the dessert area, sipping the juice while nibbling on some pastries.

Willow watched as Lauren drank the juice, her eyes filled with malice.

She swung **over** to Lauren, her hips swaying provocatively.

“Look at you, acting like you’ve never seen good food before. How embarrassing

Lauren was about to take a bite of her cake **when** she heard Willow’s grating voice.

“Willow, do I need to remind you of your **position**? Stay away from me, or I’ll smash **this cake** in your face . Then we’ll see who’s really embarrassed.”

Willow’s face twisted in anger. She **wanted** to claw at **Lauren’s** seductive, fox-like face.

But she **hadn’t** lost her mind yet.

When she remembered the drugged juice **that Lauren had** just consumed, her **mood** instantly improved.

“You little bitch, enjoy your moment while it lasts.”

Lauren sensed that something was wrong. “What do you mean? Explain yourself”

Willow mouthed silently. “The juice you just drank was spiked. Just wait for your downfall  
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Chapter 59 The Trap

Lauren’s pupils contracted.

Finished

At the same time, her body began to heat up. The sensation was sudden and intense, like **waves** crashing against her last shreds of rationality.

Her cheeks flushed unnaturally red.

Furious, Lauren lunged at Willow, but Lauren easily dodged, crossing her arms and smiling.

“You little bitch, you’ve been so smug lately, haven’t you? You think you’re going to marry the Brooker family Bossman, Felix? Let’s see if he still wants to marry you after you strip naked in front of everyone. I’ll make sure you’re humiliated in front of Hoverdale’s elite. Everyone will see what kind **of** whore you really are. Hahaha!”

Lauren could just feel the room spin around her. **The** once—glamorous banquet **hall** lights were now flickering like ghostly apparitions.

rip off her clothes.

The heat made her want to rip

She wrapped her arms tightly around herself, her nails digging into her skin, trying to use the pain to gain some clarity.

Her panicked gaze **swept** the room. The guests were deep in conversation, oblivious to her plight.

I couldn’t lose control in front of all these people. I had to leave the banquet hall immediately.

Gritting her teeth, Lauren turned and headed for the exit

But Willow wouldn’t let her go. She grabbed Lauren’s arm and shouted loudly. “Laurie. Mom and Dad are over there. Let’s go together.

As she spoke, she pulled Lauren violently.

David, Alice, and Elliot all turned around at the sound of Willow’s voice

When Alice saw Lauren, she quickly called out, “Laurie, you’re here! Come over and let me **introduce you** to Mr. Felix.”

Lauren was frantic. *If* I stayed any longer, I would lose control.

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## Chapter 60 The Desperate Escape

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Her body, already succumbing to the effects of the drug, began to shake uncontrollably. Beads of sweat covered her forehead.

Biting the tip of her tongue, Lauren summoned every ounce of strength to shake off Willow. The force was so great that Lauren stumbled and fell onto a nearby table. Glasses and cakes fell to the **floor**, creating a chaotic mess that attracted the attention of the surrounding guests.

Amidst the gasps and murmurs, Lauren limped **away**, ignoring the shouts and curses from her parents.

Felix watched the slender figure in the black suit and felt a vague sense of familiarity. But he couldn't quite place where he had seen her before.

Nevermind, she was probably no one important.

Lauren staggered out of the banquet hall.

Her legs felt like they weighed a ton, and her body swayed uncontrollably. On her way out, she knocked over several pots of decorative flowers, leaving a trail of chaos behind her. But she had no time to care.

Gasping for breath, she just wanted to find a secluded place to endure the effects of the drug. But a large figure blocked her path.

"Laurie, Are you drunk? Lucas's **voice**, tinged with surprise, reached her ears.

He frowned slightly **and** reached out to touch her burning forehead.

The moment his cool fingers touched her **skin**. Lauren's mind went blank.

The drug surged through her like a wild beast, causing her hands to cling to his broad, strong shoulders.

Her cheeks grew even hotter, and her eyes clouded with confusion. The icy gaze she usually wore was now unfocused, driven purely by instinct.

Lauren's sudden closeness made Lucas's **breath** catch. His body stiffened, instinctively wanting to retreat **but** unable to move,

The distance between them was almost **intimate**. He could clearly smell the faint scent of soap on her, a sweet scent that lingered in his nose and tugged at his heartstrings.

He could even see the fine down on her face, softly glowing in the dim light. Her delicate features, enhanced by the drug, were breathtakingly beautiful

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His **Adam's** apple bobbed involuntarily. As if guided by an invisible force, Lucas's large hand wrapped around Lauren's slender waist. The feeling was so soft, so fragile that his heart trembled.

His **voice** was hoarse with a barely perceptible tremor. "Laurie, what's wrong?"

At this moment, Lauren's cheeks were flushed like fire, her lips a seductive crimson. She was as beautiful as a rose in full bloom, exuding an irresistible charm that aroused the deepest desires in everyone **who** saw her.

Lauren had no idea how alluring she looked. The heat inside her was like a raging fire, and her instincts drove her to press closer to Lucas, seeking even a hint of coolness.

Her breathing was rapid and uneven, her warm breath brushing against Lucas's neck, igniting a fire within him that threatened to consume his rationality.

His arm tightened around her waist, pulling her tightly into his embrace.

His scent was like a key that unlocked a flood of memories.

Once, that scent had accompanied me through countless warm moments. But later, it had become a blade, stabbing my heart again and again.

The familiarity brought a shred of clarity to her **confused** mind. Lauren struggled to open her heavy eyelids, only to see "Lucas's face up close. His features, his contours, all the love and hate from the past rushed back.

Chapter 60 The Desperate Escape

#Finished

With a sudden burst of strength, Lauren pushed him away and slapped him hard across the face. "Stay away from me!"

The blatant hatred and disgust in her eyes stabbed Lucas's heart, leaving him pale and speechless.

He opened his mouth to **explain**, but his throat felt blocked, unable to utter a single word.

Lauren turned and stumbled towards the elevator, her steps unsteady but determined.

Her figure disappeared behind the closing elevator doors, leaving Lucas standing alone, his hand still resting on his burning cheek, his eyes filled with despair.

The elevator descended quickly. Lauren leaned against the wall, gasping **for** air as the effects of the drug grew stronger. Her vision continued to blur.

As the doors opened, she moved almost purely on instinct. The noise of the hotel lobby sounded distant, as if muffled by a thick barrier.

Once outside, the world seemed shrouded in a haze, filled with blurry, shifting lights

Lauren felt the floor spin beneath her. Her legs gave way, and she stumbled forward, crashing into a solid chest.

The impact sent her reeling backward, but her hands instinctively grabbed the man's collar, pulling him down with her. A pair of cold, phoenix-like eyes looked down at her in surprise.