

# The Heiress Revived from the Ashes Novel

## The Heiress Revived Ch 61

, 11985 Views, Released

### Chapter 61 An Unexpected Scene

“Mr. Elliot, I’ve finalized the handover for the Eastgate **and**...”

Finished

Josh approached his boss’ car with a stack of documents and a cheerful grin, only to freeze mid-sentence at the sight before him, his famously cold and unyielding boss pressing a young woman against the hood of the car in a stunningly intimate moment.

The words caught in his throat, and he **stood** there, rooted to the spot, utterly dumbfounded.

Felix gazed down at the dazed Lauren in his arms, recognizing her as the girl who had asked him for a cigarette in the hospital stairwell just days earlier.

Felix thought, back then, she’d been a fragile figure, her eyeshadowed with loneliness, smoking on the steps like a lost, abandoned creature, pathetic and pitiful. Now, she was a different person entirely. *Her* cheeks glowed a ripe peach-red, her eyes squeezed shut, long lashes fluttering uncontrollably. Sweat-soaked strands of hair clung messily to her smooth forehead. Her parted lips, flushed and rosy, released hot, uneven breaths accompanied by faint, distressed moans she couldn’t suppress.

Lauren’s small hands moved as if possessed, fumbling across Felix’s chest until, with a sharp rip, she tore open his collar.

In an instant, his firm, sculpted chest was bared to the cool night air, its pale, jade-like skin shimmering with an almost hypnotic allure.

Josh’s eyes bulged, his mouth dropping into a perfect ‘O’ as his jaw practically hitting the pavement.

Boss, *the* eternal bachelor, always so icy and immune to women, yet here he is, getting wild in secret, he thought,

stunned.

He recalled that Kate fretted endlessly over his boss' unmarried status, her eighty-year-old hair whitening with worry. This scene? It's a golden "surprise" for her.

With a sly grin, Josh whipped out his phone, snapped a quick photo of the steamy encounter, and sent it off to Kate with lightning-fast fingers.

Imagining her delight, he couldn't help but smirk.

But his daydreams were cut short as Felix delivered a swift, precise chop to the girl's slender neck.

One moment, Lauren was squirming restlessly in his arms. The next, she went limp, collapsing against him, still as a doll.

Josh's excitement crashed into confusion, his face locking into a bewildered **grimace**, Wait, what!

Josh thought to himself, Isn't this where the domineering CEO sweeps the damsel into his arms, flings open the car door, sets her gently on the leather seat, and then leans *in* for well, you know, in the roomy backseat?

Years of devouring CEO romance novels had taught him that's how it should play out.

Why wasn't his boss sticking to the script?

Blinking in disbelief, he met Felix's frosty glare, "Had your fill of staring?"

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Chapter 61 An Unexpected **Scene**

gaze landed on Lauren's face, **and** he blurted, "Huh? Is it her?"

"You know her?" Felix arched an eyebrow.

"Yeah, she's the one who embroidered **that** peony on your suit."

Finished

"So it's her." Felix murmured, his eyes lingering on Lauren's defenseless, sleeping face, a flicker of curiosity stirring within him.

The Eastgate project was vital to his expansion in Hoverdale, and the suit he wore had been custom-made for high-stakes events like the auction.

He hadn't anticipated someone sabotaging it with a deliberate burn mark, likely the work of a rival Hoverdale family.

Repairing a bespoke suit like that was no small feat; he'd had little hope it could be salvaged.

Yet the Swish-style peony embroidered over the damage had astonished him.

More than that, the stitching felt oddly familiar, reminiscent of the "Pine and Crane" piece he'd bought for 4.2 million dollars at an auction to mark his grandmother's birthday.

His grandmother adored Swish embroidery, especially that "Pine and Crane" work. He'd tried to track down more pieces by the same artist, only to learn there were just two in existence, "Pine and Crane" and an unfinished masterpiece, "National Beauty and Heavenly Fragrance," its craftsmanship even more exquisite.

For reasons unknown, the embroiderer had abandoned it a month shy of completion.

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Chapter 62 A Glimmer of Purpose

Finished

He'd always assumed the embroiderer must have died unexpectedly, why else would someone abandon such a work of art?

"Mr. Elliot?"

Felix snapped out of his thoughts, glancing at the person

on his suit, then at Lauren cradled in his arms.

If her embroidery skills were truly exceptional, perhaps she could finish 'National Beauty **and** Heavenly Fragrance.' It would be the perfect birthday surprise for his grandmother.

Noticing Lauren's unnatural state, likely drugged, he hosted her into the car and ordered crisply, "To the hospital"

When Lauren awoke, she was in a hospital bed.

The unbearable heat that had consumed her was gone, her mind sharp and clear.

Memories of Willow's venomous smirk and sinister actions at the banquet flooded back, igniting a fierce hatred within her.

She climbed out of bed **and** left the hospital without a second thought.

Josh, having completed the admission paperwork and picked up some essentials, returned to find her bed empty.

Half an hour later, Lauren arrived back at the Bennett family home by taxi.

She'd barely stepped through the door when her father, David's furious tirade crashed over her like a storm. "You ungrateful wretch, how dare you show your face here!"

Before he finished, a teacup hurtled toward her. Lauren's eyes narrowed, and she dodged sideways.

The cup shattered against the floor with a loud crash.

"You dare dodge?" David bellowed. "I'll beat some sense into you, you ill-mannered brat!"

Willow, playing the concerned sister, interjected, "Dad, please calm down. I'm sure Sister didn't mean it."

"Mean it?" he roared. "She shoved you **at** the banquet, got you filthy, and humiliated you in front of everyone. She did it on purpose, she can't stand seeing you thrive and wants to drag the Bennett family down with her! David's eyes bulged with rage. "Lauren, get on your knees!"

Lauren stood unflinching, her gaze piercing, her voice ice-cold. "Why should I kneel? It was Willow who drugged me at the banquet to ruin me. You don't question her, you blame me instead?"

Tears welled up in Willow's eyes as she choked out, "Sister, I can forgive you for pushing me and embarrassing me, but you can't slander me like this."

Her father exploded, "You dare talk back? Willow's always sweet and sensible, she'd never stoop so low! Apologize to her now, or I'll teach you some manners!"

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## Chapter 62 A Glimmer of Purpose

Finished

Alice hesitated but sided with her husband. "Laurie, just apologize. Don't tear the family apart.

Elliot frowned. "Laurie, you went too far today. Say sorry to Willow."

Lauren stared at these familiar yet alien faces, her hatred boiling over like a volcano.

Every ounce of patience she'd clung to snapped.

Years of pent-up grievances and fury burst forth like a dam breaking.

Her eyes turned bloodshot, a wild glint of madness flashing within them.

"You all take her side, pushing me to the edge! Fine, perfect!" She was a caged animal finally unleashed.

She

thought, *If* they wouldn't give me justice, I'd claim it *myself*.

She lunged forward, seized the ashtray from the coffee table, pinned Willow down, and brought it crashing down.

"Ahh!" Willow's terrified scream pierced the air.

Fueled by rage, Lauren struck again and again, targeting Willow's head.

"Die, all of you!"

David, distraught, roared, "Stop it!"

He charged at Lauren, his **hand raised** to strike.

Marilyn instinctively threw herself between them. "Sir you can't hit her! If you hurt Ms. Bennett, she won't be able to marry Mr. Felix!"

"Get out of my way! I'll kill this troublemaker today!" He grabbed a potted plant from the table and aimed it at Lauren's head.

It was clear he harbored no fatherly love, each blow was meant to end her.

Marilyn stood firm, shielding Lauren.

Lauren kept hammering the ashtray down on Willow, leaving her bloodied and dazed..

Elliot rushed over, grabbing at Lauren. “How long are you going to keep **this** up?”

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Chapter 63 A Family Fractured

Lauren flung the ashtray, striking Elliot square in the forehead.

Blood poured down his face as he groaned, clutching his head and stumbling back.

Willow lay sprawled on the floor, blood streaming, clushing her head and wailing.

But Lauren didn't stop, her eyes blazed with unhinged fury.

Finished

She pummeled Willow's face with wild slaps, each smack ringing out sharply. Willow's cheeks swelled, blood trickling from her mouth.

Alice sobbed, “Laurie, stop! Please, stop!”

Lauren was beyond hearing, lost in her rage.

She'd endured for years, mastering tolerance, yet it had earned her nothing but indifference from this family.

She was done, today, it would end..

Death, to Willow first, then Jack!

Her hands trembled, not from fear, but from fury at its peak,

She pulled a utility knife from her pocket, raised it high, and aimed for Willow's throat

“No!” Alice screamed, her voice cracking.

In a frantic move, she grabbed the blood-stained ashtray and smashed it against Lauren's head with all her might.

With a dull thud, the knife clattered to the floor. Laure turned slowly, locking eyes with Alice, who dropped the ashtray in terror.

“Laurie, Mom didn’t mean to... You wouldn’t stop and listen, I had no choice...”

Lauren’s vision blurred, and she crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

Marilyn panicked, but the family swarmed around Willow instead.

Elliot scooped up Willow and carried her upstairs, Alice trailing behind.

No one spared Lauren a glance.

Marilyn’s heart ached. “Mr. David, Ms. Bennett is bleeding badly, please save her....”

David cut her off. “Marilyn, we don’t need a nosy servant like you. You’re fired. Get out, now.” His tone was frigid, devoid of warmth.

Tears brimmed in Marilyn’s eyes, but she pressed on. “Mr. David, I don’t understand. She’s your daughter, why treat her so cruelly? She grew up apart from you, finally came home, shouldn’t she be cherished? Don’t **you** have a heart...”

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Chapter 63 A Family Fractured

“Shut up! My family’s business isn’t yours to meddle in Out!” he thundered.

Marilyn stood her ground. “I’ll leave, but I’m bandaging Ms. Bennett’s wound first.”

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Finished

Madam Alice had struck hard, the ashtray’s sharp edge had carved a deep, triangular gash in Lauren’s head, blood soaking the carpet.

As Marilyn reached for the first aid kit, David **had** her dragged out and tossed from the villa.

He glared at Lauren, lying unconscious **in** a pool of blood, with nothing but irritation.

He kicked her contemptuously, blood smearing his shoe. “Such a curse, always stirring up trouble,” **he** muttered, scowling.

Lauren lay abandoned on the cold floor, left to her fate

Outside, rain began to fall, light at first, then torrential, drenching Marilyn's thin clothes.

She gripped the villa's iron gate, tears mingling with rain, shouting hoarsely, "Mr. David, Madam Alice, please! She's your own flesh and blood! Have mercy! Her head's bleeding, she'll die without help!"

Her cries faded into the storm, unanswered.

Each raindrop hammered her broken heart. "Ms. Bennett, why must you suffer so...."

After an eternity, Lauren stirred, head pounding, vision swimming.

The dim, empty living room greeted her, the family gone, only a stark bloodstain marking the chaos that had unfolded.

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The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

Chapter 64 A Vow of Vengeance

Finished

Her fingers clenched into fists, eyes blazing with hatred, "What you owe me, I'll take back a thousandfold..."

She dragged herself out of the Bennett family villa.

Outside, she spotted Marilyn, soaked and shivering. Tears spilled down Lauren's cheeks.

"Marilyn, I'm sorry, it's my fault."

Marilyn rushed to her, trembling hands steadying her. Ms. Bennett, you're awake! Get on my back, I'll take you to the hospital."

Lauren tried to protest, but Marilyn had already crouched down.



Her heart softened, and she climbed on silently.

Rain poured relentlessly as Marilyn trudged through the mud, her aging back bowing under Lauren's weight. Each step was a battle, but she gritted her teeth clutching Lauren tightly.

Rain streamed from Marilyn's hair, dripping **onto** Lauren's **hands**, cold, yet warming her soul.

The stark contrast between her family's cruelty and Marilyn's devotion made this kindness all the more precious.

Marilyn staggered to the roadside, waving desperately at passing cars. Stop! Please stop!"

Rain filled her mouth, choking her, but she pressed on

Cars sped by, splashing them with icy water, amplifying their misery.

Marilyn stumbled, nearly collapsing, but steadied herself, hoisting Lauren higher. "Hang on, Ms. Bennett

Lauren's consciousness waned, her feverish forehead pressed against Marilyn's chilled neck, soft groans escaping her lips.

The world blurred as cold seeped into her bones.

Just as Marilyn's hope faltered, a black Phantom pulled **up**.

The window lowered, revealing a man's cool, piercing eyes. His gaze swept over them, settling on Lauren's ashen face.

Marilyn pleaded, "Sir, please save my Ms. Bennett! She's hurt, she's dying!"

Blood from Lauren's head mingled with rain, streaking the ground red.

Felix frowned. How did she end up like this so fast?

Wordlessly, he opened the door, motioning them inside.

The car sped to the hospital, Felix silent the entire way

At the hospital, Lauren was rushed to the emergency room.

## Chapter 64 A Vow of Vengeance

The corridor's harsh lights illuminated Marilyn's anxious, weary face.

Finished

A doctor soon approached, his expression grim. 'Severe head trauma, excessive blood loss, and infection from the rain, she's critical. Who's her family? We need consent for surgery.'

Marilyn faltered. "Can a nanny **sign**?"

"No, only family. Contact them, **quickly**," the doctor insisted..

Marilyn fumbled for her phone, dialing David, blocked **Alice**, connected. "Madam Alice, Ms. **Bennett is**,

"**Marilyn**, know your place," **Alice** snapped. "Lauren's our daughter, we discipline her as we see fit. You're **fired**. **Don't** call again." The line went dead.

Desperate, Marilyn tried Elliot.

Fresh from bandaging his own wound, he answered irritably, "What?"

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## Chapter 65 A Stranger's Mercy

Marilyn sobbed, "Mr. Elliot, Ms. Bennett is dying, please come..."

Recalling his and Willow's injuries, Elliot's temper flared.

Haven't been good enough to her? What more does she want Threatening *Dad* with a knife, bashing Willow with an ashtray, she's out of control. If I don't stop her, she'll go too far

Coldly, he replied, "Her life or **death** means nothing to me," and hung up, resolute.

Marilyn stood helpless in the corridor.

She turned to Felix, pleading. "Sir, please help my Ms. Bennett."

With over a decade in the Bennett household, she could tell this man held power. A single word from **him** could save them. She looked at him like **a** lifeline.

The doctor pressed, “She’s critical, any delay could kill her. Where’s the family? Sign now!”

Felix’s brow creased slightly. Glancing at the peony on his chest and thinking of “**National** Beauty and Heavenly Fragrance,” he told the doctor, “I’ll sign.”

The doctor sized him up, tall, poised, radiating innate authority. In the sterile corridor, he shone like a beacon.

“Your relation to the patient?”

Felix hesitated, they were near-strangers.

To hasten things, Marilyn blurted, “He’s her fiancé

She shot him a desperate, hopeful look.

He met her gaze briefly, then signed the consent form with a fluid stroke.

Once the doctor entered the operating room, Marilyn thanked Felix profusely, tears in her eyes. “Sir. thank heaven for you! Without you, Ms. Bennett **was** done for!”

Felix remained stoic, sitting on a bench with crossed legs.

The surgery stretched on, dawn breaking, yet the operating room doors stayed shut.

His phone rang, slicing through the tense silence.

He opened his eyes, unfazed by the sleepless night, still exuding elegance, and answered, “Grandma.”

Kate’s voice bubbled with joy. “You rascal, when did you snag a granddaughter-in-law without telling me?”

Granddaughter-in-law? He was baffled.

Assuming she was nudging him toward **marriage** again, he said, “Grandma, anything else?”

“Can’t I **just** call my grandson?” she asked.

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## Chapter 65 A Stranger's Mercy

"No, he replied.

Finished

"Fine, fine. Don't scare her off with that frosty attitude. Tell me where you are, I'll come see her myself. I need to meet her to rest easy," she said.

"Grandma, if there's nothing else, I'm hanging up." Unwilling to dive into this now, he ended the call.

At the Brooker family estate in Balewood, the white-haired Kate sighed at the dead line.

"That boy's icy streak, who'd he get it **from**? Rumors call him a playboy, but I wish he were, at least it'd prove he's got some charm.

She thought to herself, nearing thirty, no girlfriend, no dates, I even wondered *if he* liked men. I've worried myself sick over his marriage. Now there's hope. I've got to keep tabs or his coldness will chase her off."

Anna, listening to her ramble, smiled. "Madam Kate, how'd you hear Mr. Felix's got a girlfriend?"

Kate opened Josh's chat, beaming. "Josh sent this last night, I saw it this morning. Anna, come take a look at

her.

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## Chapter 66 A Grandmother's Hopes

Anna leaned in.

Finished

The photo captured Lauren pinned against the Phantom hood by Felix, the dim streetlight casting an intimate glow over them.

Kate had been over the moon, already picturing great–grandchildren.

“Anna, what do you think?”

Lauren’s profile showed a high nose, full forehead, and red lips, strikingly beautiful.

But Anna felt a twinge of recognition she couldn’t place from just a side view.

“She’s lovely, just too skinny.”

Kate studied the image. Lauren’s hands gripped Felix’s collar, her arms so thin her bones stood out, definitely undernourished.

“Too thin, indeed. Anna, pack my bags. I’m off to Hoverdale to fatten up my granddaughter–in–law

Madam Kate, Anna cautioned, “the forecast says Hoverdale’s got heavy rain coming. It’s not safe to travel. and showing up drenched wouldn’t do for meeting her

Kate nodded. “Fair point. I’ll wait out the rain, I can’t let her think I don’t take her seriously.”

This rare chance at a **granddaughter**–in–law couldn’t be squandered.

“Oh, Anna, check our stock of donkey–hide gelatin, cordyceps, deer antler, buy more if we’re low. She’s frail, she needs nourishment. Once the rain clears, we’ll head out with the supplements. Her health’s in your hands, your medicinal cooking’s the best. Get her strong this year, **and** maybe next year, a chubby great–grandson! Oh, finally something to look forward to!” Kate said.

Kate clapped gleefully, her smile ear–to–ear.

Anna shared her joy and thought to herself, Mr. Elliot was **flawless**, just too reserved.

Rumors had painted him as a womanizer or impotent, prompting Madam Kate to book *urologists*, thankfully, Josh had stepped in.

He’d said, “In CEO novels, the president’s the ultimate loof prince, girls love it. He’s fine, Madam Kate.”

She’d shot **back**, “Aloof prince? He’ll end up a monk! Normal men have kids by **thirty**. If he’s not defective, why avoid women? Josh, tell me straight, does he like men?”

**Josh** had bolted, shuddering.

Anna glanced at the beaming Madam Kate, thinking. A family treasure. Now, with proof of a girlfriend, she could

relax.

In Hoverdale, at the Bennett family home, Alice finally remembered Lauren.

Recalling her daughter's bloodied, unconscious form, guilt gnawed at her.

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**21:43** Thu, Mar 27

Chapter 66 A Grandmother's Hopes

Laurie's so stubborn. Willow's **so** sweet, why can't she like her?"

"She must still resent Willow for taking her place as the Bennett heiress. Such a tough child,"

Sighing, she descended the stairs.

Finished

The blood—  
stained carpet was gone, the living room pristine, as if last night's **chaos** never happened.

She knocked on the storage room door hesitantly. No answer.

"Laurie, you awake?" Silence.

She pushed it open, unlocked, empty.

Panic rising, she raced upstairs to the princess room prepared for Lauren.

It was untouched, the bed pristine.

Regret flooded her, regret for her actions, her **loss** of control, her failure to check on Lauren's injuries.

Images of Lauren's pale, bloodied face haunted her.

She summoned a servant. "Where's Laurie?"

The servant shook her head. “Madam Alice, we didn’t see Ms. Bennett Lauren this morning.”

Alice sagged against the wall, drained.

Elliot emerged, seeing her distress. “Mom, what’s wrong? Are you sick?”

Tears welled up. “Laurie’s gone.”

Even Elliot tensed. “How? She was here yesterday.”

Alice crumpled, sobbing. “It’s my fault, I drove her away. If something happens to her, I can’t live...”

Elliot recalled Marilyn’s call. He dialed her, blocked.

“Mom, call Marilyn.”

She tried, blocked too.

“Let’s check the cameras,” he suggested.

In the surveillance room, their faces turned from confusion to horror.

The footage showed Lauren, blood-soaked, leaving the villa, with sixty-year-old Marilyn carrying her through the rain.

Alice gasped, tears streaming. “Laurie, my Laurie....

Elliot stared, the scene slicing into his heart.

“Marilyn must’ve taken her to the hospital. Let’s go.”

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Chapter 66 A Grandmother’s Hopes

He drove fast, wipers battling the downpour.

Alice sat beside him, eyes vacant, hands clenched, praying silently for Lauren’s safety.

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Finished

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## Chapter 67 Blood Means Nothing

She panicked, grabbing a maid and asking urgently, “Where’s Lauren?”

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The maid shook her head. “Ma’am, when we woke up this morning, Miss Lauren was already gone.”

Alice went limp, like all the strength had been drained from her body. She collapsed against the wall, completely unhinged.

Elliot came out of the bedroom and froze when he saw her like that.

“Mom, what’s wrong? Are you feeling sick?” he asked, rushing over.

Alice looked up at him with red-rimmed eyes, her **voice** trembling. “Lauren’s gone.”

Even Elliot started to panic. “What do you mean, gone She was just here yesterday.”

Alice slid to the floor, sobbing uncontrollably. “It’s my fault... I drove her away. If anything happens **to** her, I’ll never forgive myself....

Elliot suddenly remembered the phone call Marilyn made last night. He quickly pulled out his phone to call her—but he was already blocked.

His face darkened. “Mom, you try calling Marilyn.”

Alice’s hands trembled as she dialed, but the result was the same—blocked.

“Let’s check the security cameras,” Elliot **said**, steadying himself.

They rushed to the monitoring room, and as the footage played, confusion on their faces turned to horror.

On the screen, Lauren’s blood-soaked **figure** could be seen dragging herself out of the villa. Then, Marilyn

already sixty years old—carried her through the storm, step by step, into the pouring rain.



Alice gasped, slapping a hand over her mouth as tears streamed down her face. “Lauren... my poor Lauren....”

Elliot stared at the screen, his eyes dark with pain. **That** image cut into him like a blade.

“Marilyn must’ve taken her to the hospital. Let’s go—now!”

He drove like a man possessed, the wipers thrashing back and forth against a storm they could barely push through.

In the passenger seat, Alice stared blankly out the window, her hands clasped so tightly her nails dug into her palms. She kept whispering under her breath, begging for Lauren to be okay.

In the hospital, Lauren slowly came to. Her head was pounding, but it was nothing compared to the pain in her chest.

She stared blankly at the **stark** white ceiling as memories from the night before flooded her brain—Alice’s

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Chapter 67 Blood Means Nothing

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#Finished

The tears came before she could stop them—first one, then two, then an endless stream soaking her pillow.

She was Alice’s biological daughter, carried in her womb for ten months. And yet, in front of Willow—the adopted daughter—her life had meant nothing.

She should’ve been used to the Bennetts’ cold cruelty by now.

But somehow it still hurt this much.

Lauren sucked in a deep breath and forced the pain and tears back down.

There’s no point in crying.

These people weren’t worth it.

She had just wiped her face dry when the door opened

She thought it was Marilyn—  
but when she turned her head, she locked eyes with Alice, whose eyes were red from crying.

“Lauren, you scared me to death,” Alice sobbed. “Why would you leave in the middle of the night like that? It **was** raining so hard, it **was** freezing—do you have any idea how worried I was? If anything had happened to you, I’d—how could I live with myself?”

She rushed forward, trying to hug her, but Lauren shoved her away before she could even touch her.

Lauren’s eyes were cold, full of disgust and mockery.

Alice’s performance made her sick.

Just last night, she’d bashed her over the head with a glass ashtray without a shred of mercy. Now she was playing the loving mother? Like hell.

Letting *her* bleed out on the floor—  
and now she shows up with crocodile tears and open arms? Disgusting.

Alice’s heart cracked at the rejection. “Lauren, I know I messed up this time. Please, just forgive me—just once, okay?”

Lauren didn’t move.

Elliot jumped in quickly. “Lauren, Mom was out of line yesterday, but she’s been a wreck ever since. She was up all night, combing the whole city looking for you. She’s terrified of losing you.”

“We’re family. Blood **is** blood. You break a bone, and it still stays connected by tendons. Look at her right now—she’s not faking this. She really thought she lost you.”

Lauren didn’t believe a word of it.

Searching the whole city, huh?

They didn’t even have dark circles under their eyes. They looked completely rested. If anything, they must’ve gotten a full night’s sleep and only just realized she was gone this morning.

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The Heiress **Revived** from the Ashes

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Chapter 68 A Bond Beyond Blood

Finished

Lauren thought to herself, searching all night? They looked refreshed, no trace of exhaustion. *If* I hadn't woken, *if Marilyn* hadn't carried me out, *if I* hadn't *reached* the hospital I'd be dead. My survival was my own grit, not *their* care.

She ignored them, her face a mask.

Her detachment rattled Elliot.

He'd rather she raged **than** stayed silent, at least anger showed she cared.

Frustrated, he snapped, "What do you want? Tell us how to make you happy. Since you got **out** of prison,

how with you, and you're still not

sat any scenes have you caused? We pamper you, love you, put up

satisfied, stirring up trouble again and **again**.

Why'd Mom hit you? Because you pushed Willow at the banquet, shamed the Bennett family. Then at home, you attacked her instead of apologizing. You messed up first, can't Mom discipline you? You're her daughter, parents have that right."

Lauren listened to his rant, a mocking smirk tugging **at** her lips, her eyes still frigid.

Arguing was pointless. Experience had taught her that in this "family," truth didn't matter, only Willow did.

So, she said nothing.

But Marilyn, who'd overheard it **all**, couldn't hold back

She stormed in, pushing past Alice and Elliot, and slammed a thermos on the bedside table.

Her chest heaved with fury and grief.

She thought to herself, last night, without that kind stranger, Ms. Bennett would've died from her wounds and infection. Now, barely awake, unfed, unrested, and *they* came to berate her? Was this human? I'd held my tongue, but my conscience wouldn't let me watch Ms. Bennett suffer this injustice silently. No decent person could.

"Mr. Elliot, have a heart. What kind of life has Ms. Bennett lived? In prison, bullied and scarred, did any of you visit?"

When Mr. David whipped her, who stopped him?

Madam Alice forced her to cut off her finger to repay her birth, can **you** fathom her pain?" Marilyn's **voice** quivered with emotion.

say you pamper, love, and tolerate her, where's the proof?"

Alice paled, speechless.

Elliot stared, stunned, at Lauren's impassive face.

"Every time Ms. Bennett is wronged, you blame her without facts. Have you ever cared what she's endured? Beating and scolding, is **that** your love? Pushing her to the brink, is that your love?" Marilyn's eyes reddened.

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21:43 Thu, Mar 27

Chapter 68 A Bond Beyond Blood

thought, for years, *only Marilyn* had *truly* cared for me. *The* Bennett family wasn't worth to be mad about *it*.

She patted Marilyn's hand, signaling her to calm down

Finished

Alice rallied, choking out. "Marilyn, how can you say that? We... we did it for Laurie's good. She's too wild, always causing trouble..."

"For her good?" Marilyn laughed bitterly. "Madam Alice look at her now, bias is blinding. Ask yourself, have you ever treated her like your daughter?"

you

call this her good? Your

Marilyn continued, "If you don't love her, fine, love takes time. She didn't grow up with you, so no bond makes sense. But to not love her and still hurt her, how can you be so cruel to your own child?"

Alice glanced at Lauren, who gazed at Marilyn with pure trust, as if Marilyn were her real mother, while she, the **birth** mother, was filthy in her daughter's eyes.

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Chapter **69** A Plan Unspoken

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# Finished

Alice thought to herself, Lauren's longing for *the* Bennett family had vanished, her hope for a home *stripped away*. Memories flashed, Lauren's tentative attempts to connect, brushed off by the Now, those moments pierced my *heart*.

At this moment, she even forgot to cry.

She knew, Lauren truly didn't care about them anymore.

No fights, no fuss, they meant nothing to her.

Panic gripped Alice. She grabbed Lauren's thin hand. Turic. I'm still your mother, no matter what."

Lauren shoved her away. "Legally, I'm not tied to the Bennett family."

The words hit like a sledgehammer. Alice's eyes widened, staggering back.

Elliot bristled. "Lauren, what's the point of saying useless things?"

"Useless? Mr. Elliot, don't you know your household registry never listed me?"

"No way." Elliot stunned.

"Ask your mother if it's true." Lauren said.

Elliot spun to Alice. "Mom, she's lying, right?"

Elliot thought, Lauren had been *back* eight years, living with us for *three*, her name should've been added long ago.

He expected a firm denial, but Alice faltered, visibly shaken.

His heart tightened. "Is there really no..."

Alice covered her face, sobbing. "Laurie, I'm so sorry..."

"Heh!" Lauren sneered. "No wonder the servants look down on me, calling Willow 'Ms. Willow Bennett' and me 'Ms. Lauren. They're right, Mr. David and Madam Alice never meant to claim me. I'm just a guest living under the same roof. I'm not a Bennett. Can both of you leave now?"

Alice's head snapped **up**, her eyes resolute, sorrow replaced by steel. "Like it or not, I carried you for ten months. Your blood ties to the Bennett family can't be cut. As a Bennett, you owe this family your contribution. Don't forget your promise to your father and me. Break it, ignore the Bennett legacy, and you'll never get what you want. Her tone was unyielding, each word a hammer blow.

Lauren wasn't shocked, she'd seen it coming. When love failed, they'd dangle the 1.4 million dollars **over**

her head.

Even if she resisted, they'd use Marilyn and Mia to force her.

Marrying the Brooker family's Bossman wasn't optional

Her heart was shattered, their threats no longer stung or surprised her.

She knew this visit wasn't concern, it was to lock her into the Brooker family's Bossman marriage for the

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21:43 Thu, Mar 27 W.

Chapter 69 A Plan Unspoken

Finished? Then go." Her voice was flat, emotionless.

She turned away, refusing to face their loathsome presence.

Alice's heart twisted.

She wished Lauren still craved her love, even just a tear

But there was nothing.

Finished

The more it hurt, the harsher her parting shot. "You look fine. Discharge soon. Your father and I will set up a meeting with Mr. Felix." She turned and fled the room

Elliot gave Lauren a long look, as if to speak, but sighed and followed.

The room fell silent, Lauren's shaky breaths the only sound.

Her hands gripped the blanket, clenching and unclenching, her heart aching.

She willed herself not to cry, they weren't worth it.

Her tension eased as Marilyn's gentle "Ms. Bennett, hungry?" broke the silence. Marilyn opened the thermos, and the rich scent of chicken soup filled the air.

Sipping it, Lauren murmured, 'I envy Mia for having a mom like you.

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Chapter 70 A Past Unrecognized

Marilyn's eyes reddened with pity and sorrow, but she forced the tears back.

Finished

She sat by Lauren's bed. "Ms. Bennett, let's leave the Bennett family. They've never cared for you. Cut them off completely, and we'll go somewhere they can find us, live quietly, peacefully."

Lauren yearned for that, to break free of this suffocating hene."

But the thought **vanished** as quickly as it **came**.

If I left the Bennett family wouldn't let Marilyn off and Mid schooling would suffer.

She would leave, but only after marrying the Brooker family's Bossman and securing the 14 million dollars. Then she'd take Marilyn and Mia with her.

She couldn't tell Marilyn this, so she stayed quiet.

Her eyes were hollow, her eating mechanical, tasting nothing.

Marilyn pressed, "Ms. Bennett, I see you're done with the Bennett family. You wanted out the day **you** left prison, why hesitate now? Are they threatening you?"

Lauren bit her lip, avoiding Marilyn's worried gaze. "No"

Her voice was faint, fragile as a whisper in the wind.

Marilyn wanted to push, but seeing Lauren's reluctance, she sighed, her eyes brimming with helplessness and **love**.

The next morning, sunlight filtered through the window, warming Lauren's bed.

After a night's rest, her head felt lighter, her mind clearer.

She eased out of bed, craving **fresh** air.

But as she stepped into the corridor, a familiar, lilting voice stopped her.

Looking up, she saw Willow and Lucas walking side by side, chatting and laughing.

Willow wore a white dress, her makeup subtle, a bandage on her forehead, every inch the delicate, pure flower that begged for protection.

Spotting Lauren, her smile stiffened, panic flickering in her eyes. She trembled, whispering, "Sister."

Lucas, startled to see Lauren, looked guilty and pained.

Lauren's face remained calm and thought, these two, *one* fake, one fickle, were *made for* each other.

She paused briefly, then kept walking, **as** if they weren't there.

Willow bit her lip, feigning fear yet pressing forward. Hey, feeling better? **Luca** and I came to see you. Where are you headed?"



21:44 Thu, Mar 27

## Chapter 70 A Past Unrecognized

Stepping closer, Lauren raised her hand and slapped Willow hard before she could react.

The blow sent Willow stumbling, her makeup smearing a red handprint **flaring** on her cheek.

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Lucas caught her, then shoved Lauren, livid. "Lauren, you're too much! Willow came to check on you, and you hit her for no reason. What's your problem?"

His shout echoed, drawing eyes in the corridor.

Lauren nearly fell, fury surging.

She charged forward and slapped Lucas just as hard.

"Smack!"

The sound was sharp, her palm stinging.

Lucas's head snapped aside, his eyes wide with **shock**.

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Lauren shook her hand. "You dare ask what my problem is? I'd **like** to know what Willow's up to. She knows I despise her, yet she keeps coming near me. She's picking a fight, why can't I hit her? And you, what are you to question me?"

Lucas turned back, staring at her like she was a stranger

In his memory, Lauren was a sweet, sunny girl, simple and kind.

She'd trailed after him, calling **him** "Luca."

"Luca's my hero," she'd said. "With you, I'm never scared."

Now, that same mouth spat venom.

