

Chapter 9 Deserves to Be Left for Dead

The cramped space contained only a worn-out folding bed and a few sparse, rudimentary household items. The rest was all clutter. The walls were yellowed, exuding a damp, musty smell, and cobwebs had formed in the corners. Seeing such living conditions, Elliot burned with rage. "Marilyn, what the hell were you thinking? Laurie is my sister. Who gave you permission to let her live here?"

Marilyn looked aggrieved and helpless. "Mr. Elliot, wasn't it you who told Ms. Bennett to move in? Have you forgotten?"

"When did I ever..." Elliot stopped mid-sentence.

Eight years ago, the day Lauren was brought home, he had let her choose a room.

She picked the guest room next to his bedroom. He refused immediately. "I'm turning that into a study. Pick another."

She then chose the room next to Willow's bedroom. Again, he refused. "Willow's using that as an art studio. You can't have it."

Finally, Lauren chose the attic, but he rejected that as well. "You're one of the members of our family. If people find out you're living in the attic, they'll laugh at our family. Marilyn, isn't there another room?"

"There is... But only the storage room is left."

"Then clean it up and let her stay there for now."

He had assumed the storage room was like the guest rooms, spacious, with good lighting. He never expected it to be a windowless box.

His mind involuntarily conjured images of Lauren spending night after night in this cold, lonely space. The pain in his chest deepened.

In a villa this grand, even the servants had private bedrooms, yet his own sister had been forced to live in a damp, dark storage room for three years.

The realization nearly suffocated him.

Elliot radiated a chilling pressure. Marilyn hesitated before suggesting, "The storage room is too damp. Mr. Elliot, why don't you let Ms. Bennett stay in my room?"

"No need," Elliot rejected firmly. His heart felt as though countless needles were piercing it, each one laced with guilt and sorrow, twisting together into an unbearable knot.

Taking a deep breath, he ordered, "Call Jeffrey. Tell him to come to my room."

With that, he carried the unconscious Lauren and strode straight toward his bedroom.

Watching his slightly urgent figure, Marilyn felt happy for Lauren. *Mr. Elliot cares about Ms. Bennett after all. He's always ignored her, leaving her to fend for herself, but today, he finally looks like a real brother.*

She quickly dialed Jeffrey Gordon's number. "Hello, Dr. Jeffrey. Mr. Elliot's sister is sick. Please come quickly..."

Five minutes later, the bedroom door swung open. Even before entering, a teasing voice rang out.

"Mr. Elliot, you really are obsessed with your sister. Willow's sick, but instead of letting her rest in her own room, you just have to... Wait, it's not her?"

Jeffrey strolled in casually, but the moment he saw Lauren's pale face on the bed, the amusement vanished from his expression, replaced by cold contempt.

"I don't treat criminals." He grabbed his medical kit and turned to leave.

"Jeffrey." Elliot frowned, his voice low but resolute. "She's my sister. Don't call her a criminal."

Jeffrey's face remained icy, his words like frost. "She's your sister? Then what about Willow? She's the one who grew up with you. Elaine is in a vegetative state because of her. Lauren only served five short years in prison, and now she gets to live like a normal person. But who's going to give Elaine another chance to wake up? Elaine's life was ruined by her!"

Elliot's hands clenched and loosened repeatedly, his expression troubled.

On one side was his guilt and unbreakable bond with Lauren. On the other was the injustice Willow and Elaine had suffered. He felt like he was being crushed between two immovable stones, unable to move forward or retreat.

"She... she's still my sister after all." His voice was weak, yet he stubbornly held his ground.

Jeffrey's gaze swept over Lauren's frail, sunken face. His lips curled into a scornful sneer. "That's none of my concern. If I heal a woman as vicious as her, she'll only hurt more people."

"Jeffrey!" Elliot's voice hardened. His sharp gaze locked onto Jeffrey, filled with both a plea and an undeniable command. "At least check her injuries. Especially her right leg."

The two men locked eyes.

After a tense pause, Jeffrey sighed in defeat. "I'll check, but don't expect me to treat her."

He stepped back to the bed, set down his medical kit, and roughly pulled up Lauren's pant leg, muttering under his breath, "I don't know why you're wasting your time on her. She should've just..."

His words stopped abruptly.

The moment his gaze landed on Lauren's leg, it was as if his eyes were glued to it, unable to look away. A wave of shock crashed through him.

Lauren's right leg was grotesquely twisted at the shin, the bone jutting at an unnatural angle. Her skin was stretched tightly over the protruding bone, with barely any flesh beneath. The scar at the fracture site looked like a hideous centipede crawling across her almost translucent skin, surrounded by dark red bruises.

Jeffrey's long, slender fingers trembled as he hesitantly touched her mangled leg. Every inch he examined made his heart pound faster.

Despite his personal hatred for Lauren, his medical instincts kicked in right away—this injury was beyond severe.

"Was her leg always like this?" His voice was unsteady.

Elliot's eyes flashed with a dangerous glint. "Of course not. Her leg was perfectly fine for three years at home."

Jeffrey understood immediately. The injury must have happened in prison.

Suppressing the shock rising in his chest, he continued examining Lauren.

The more he checked, the deeper his frown grew. His expression turned grim.

Lauren's health was in a disastrous state. Prolonged malnutrition had left her extremely weak. Her body bore a mix of old and fresh wounds, marks from beatings, some too cruel to imagine.

Jeffrey had seen enough. He stood up, his voice hoarse. "Elliot, step outside with me."

Once in the study, Elliot asked seriously, "What is it?"

Jeffrey steadied himself, choosing his words carefully before speaking. "Do you know how hard it is to break human bones?"

Elliot shook his head.

Jeffrey stared at him and said slowly, "Bones, especially the tibia and fibula in the legs, are incredibly tough. A comminuted fracture like hers usually results from high-impact trauma, like a severe car accident or a fall from a great height. But since she was in prison, those scenarios are unlikely. Her leg was most likely shattered by blunt force. And from the way it healed, she clearly never received proper treatment. The bones fused on their own, leaving her leg permanently deformed. The pain she endured is unimaginable. The fact that she's still alive is a miracle."

Elliot's entire body trembled. His hands clenched into fists so tightly that his knuckles turned white.

His eyes reddened instantly, and rage roared inside him like an unstoppable inferno, threatening to consume him whole.

"In prison? How dare they!"

His mind flooded with images of Lauren being tortured, her frail body enduring blow after blow.

A dull ache pressed against his chest, making his vision blur. He forced himself to swallow the rage.

"Jeffrey, can her leg still be cured?"

Jeffrey shook his head. "It's been three years. It's too late."

Elliot stood frozen.

He didn't know when Jeffrey left. When he came back to his senses, he was slumped in his chair, his mind in chaos.

His shaking hands reached for a cigarette, but no matter how many times he tried, he couldn't light it.

Frustrated, he threw the unlit cigarette to the floor, ran his fingers through his hair, and pressed his head into his hands, his body trembling.

For a long time, he sat in silence. Then, with icy determination, he picked up his phone and made a call.

"Michael, find out exactly what happened to Lauren in prison. I want every detail." His voice was low and frigid, every word laced with an unforgiving chill.