

Chapter 169 Epilogue: Game Over by Gary Geick

Leo looked at Eddy, smiled, and said, "You will be set for life. There is a mansion waiting for you in the Upper-East Side of town. It has eight rooms, a rec room, a pool, a gym, a roof-top deck, a home cinema, a game room, an office, a music room, studio, and every other luxury you could imagine. It comes fully furnished, fully stocked, and will be ready for you the moment you turn off your helmet.

"Your mansion is close to the mall, an excellent school, and hopefully every other amenity you could wish for. The mansion comes fully staffed with a small group of caretakers, a cook, two cleaners, a landscaper/gardener, and a nanny for Bethany. There are also several vehicles that come with your prize: A 1984, Jaguar, a hummer, a motorboat, motorbike, and a yacht. And for Bethany, a bike, skateboard, and rollerblades.

"And then there is the matter of money. Everything you could ever want, or need is being taken care of for you, but you will still receive a monthly allowance of ten thousand dollars, and should you ever need more, all you need to do is ask. How does that sound?"

"It all sounds very good," Eddy replied after a moment of hesitation. They had reached the Jaunting Station by now, but there had been an unspoken agreement between them that they would finish the conversation before they went anywhere.

Leonardo looked at Eddy curiously. "So, what's the problem?"

"There is no problem," Eddy replied quickly. "It's just a lot to take in, and it seems too good to be true; like there should be a catch or something..."

"Yeah, I can see that," Leonardo admitted. "But there is no catch. You won the game fair and square.

"Anyway, let's get out of here. You have some celebrating to do, I think!"

Leonardo still had his arm around Eddy's shoulder. Eddy walked through the gates of the Jaunting Station with Leonardo, and everything went black, which was not at all what had happened the last time Eddy had used a Jaunting Station, or what he had expected. Eddy waited a moment, and then he shouted, "Hello! Is there anybody there?"

Almost immediately, a System Prompt appeared: **Game Over. You Win –**

And then the Game Credits began to scroll down his field of vision.

Eddy began to laugh as he took off his helmet, and the more he laughed, the harder he laughed, until it seemed that he would never be able to stop laughing. Tears came to his eyes.

They were tears of joy, and he wept openly as he laughed. He laughed so hard that he began to cough and choke, but still, he could not stop laughing.

After a minute, Pamela and Bethany rushed into the room, and they began to panic at the sight of Eddy helplessly laughing and crying and choking. "What's the matter?" his sister cried, but he was utterly incapable of stopping.

Pamela sat beside him, and she rubbed his back. "There, there," she said, and she told him to take deep breaths. But it didn't help. Finally, Bethany went to the bathroom and came back with a cold wet cloth. She used it to wipe the tears away, and then she had Eddy hold it to his face, and eventually his breathing evened out, and he was able to get himself under control.

"What was that all about?" Pamela asked him, and he told them everything: About his final showdown with the Devil, how he'd won the game, and what the prize was for winning. Neither of them could believe what they were hearing.

Later that day, a limousine came to pick Eddy and Bethany up to take them to their new home, and Leonardo was there waiting for them, to give them the Grand Tour. They moved in that evening and invited Pamela over for dinner the next day. The chef made Chicken Cacciatore, and the night went well, and it was the first of many nights just like it.

Now that Eddy had his independence, he felt like a man again, worthy of someone like Pamela. He began courting her, and within a year they were married.

Leo was set for life, but he had no interest in doing nothing, so he began to assist Pamela with her work with the homeless and less fortunate. Unlike Pamela, though, he focussed on people who had been in situations like he had been in before he'd entered the game. After all, if he hadn't had his sister to care for, he would have long since committed suicide. But his responsibility had forced him to persevere, and his lack of opportunities had pressed him into a life of crime – so Leo opened a shelter/soup kitchen/resource center.

"As long as I am alive," he one day told Pamela, "nobody in this city will have to commit a crime to fill their belly, and I will help anyone who wants to turn their life around."

Thus, when his old friend, Monkey, showed up in the food line one day, he was able to help him clean up his life. Monkey got clean, got a job and an apartment, went back to school to become a psychologist, and returned to Eddy, to offer his assistance in this capacity at the shelter. He wanted to honor the helping hand that Eddy had given him by helping as many other people as he could.

And that is how the story ends. On their fifth anniversary, Eddy and Pamela went to Mexico. Nine months later, Pamela delivered two healthy baby boys, whom they named Orde and Leonardo, after those that had helped Eddy get to where he was, by helping him in the game.

Leonardo and Orde grew up, and as adults, they took over the shelter and opened new branches across the country, helping more people than Eddy and Pamela could have ever imagined.

And they all lived happily ever after.

The End.