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Sarah delivered her news with a smile, her red lips curling up at the corners as if breaking my daughter's leg was something to be proud of.

Ignoring Tom's horrified stare, she bustled past him into the living room, her designer heels clicking on the marble floor.

She arranged the mountain of presents and three-tiered cake in front of Grace with exaggerated care. Each gift was wrapped in custom paper with real gold ribbons.

"Sweetheart, it's your special day!" She adjusted Grace's silk party dress.

"Mommy won't let anything spoil it - especially not that little mistake. She can spend her birthday thinking about how worthless she is."

As Grace reached for a present, Sarah noticed a small cut on her hand. Her face instantly darkened like a storm cloud.

She rounded on me, fury in her eyes. Her perfectly manicured nails dug into my arm. "What did you do to my precious Grace? How dare you let her get hurt! I'll have you fired for this!"

I kept my face expressionless. "Children get hurt sometimes. Mistake is covered in bruises every day."

Sarah's face turned purple with rage. Her voice rose to a shriek. "How dare you compare that worthless brat to Grace! "

She caught herself mid-scream, suddenly aware of how she sounded in front of the birthday guests. A few of Tom's law partners were staring.

Taking a deep breath, she smoothed her silk dress and continued in a syrupy voice,

"What I mean is, Grace is delicate, refined! Not like that rough little mistake. You need to watch her more carefully!"

Tom scoffed from his leather armchair, barely looking up from his phone. "If you hadn't splattered blood all over our kitchen yesterday beating Mistake, Grace wouldn't have tried cleaning it up and cut herself."

Sarah whirled to face Grace, her jewelry jangling. "Baby, is that true? Did you try to clean that filth?"

Grace nodded solemnly, her golden curls bouncing. "I wanted to help clean up the mess, Mother. There was so much blood..."

Sarah's face crumpled in exaggerated concern. She pulled Grace into a suffocating hug.

"Oh darling, you're too precious for cleaning! That's what we have servants for. That's why we keep trash like her around."

She jerked her head toward me, sneering.

"Your only job in this house is to be our perfect little princess, understand? Leave the dirty work to dirty people."

With that, she threw herself into party preparations, determined to erase the unpleasant moment.

She insisted on cooking the meal herself, though she'd never cooked before Grace was born. Every dish was Instagram-perfect.

She decorated every inch of the house with imported flowers and crystal arrangements. The party looked like something out of a magazine.

All while Mistake lay unconscious in the basement, her arm twisted at an unnatural angle.

After the cake and presents, Sarah hugged Grace close, breathing in her expensive French perfume. "Tell Mommy your birthday wish, angel. Whatever it is, I'll make it come true!"

Grace didn't hesitate. Her blue eyes sparkled. "I want to go to Harvard! Just like Daddy!"

Sarah stroked her hair proudly, shooting me a triumphant look. "Well, Mommy can't guarantee that, but with your brilliance, you'll definitely get in!"

"And when you do, I'll have the most amazing surprise for you!"

I watched her shower Grace with adoration, my lips curving in the smallest smile.

A life-changing surprise, Sarah?

Don't worry.

I have one planned for you too.

Every year, Grace's birthday celebrations grew more extravagant. Designer dresses, imported cakes, endless gifts.

While Mistake wasn't allowed to appear in public since Sarah broke her leg. She lived in the basement, forgotten.

Whenever Tom asked about her, Sarah would sneer, "Don't mention that worthless mistake. She makes me sick."

Ten years later, Grace got her Harvard acceptance letter.

Sarah had donated \$10 million to ensure her place - money that even made Tom wince.

The Harvard acceptance celebration filled the mansion's grand ballroom. Crystal chandeliers sparkled above tables laden with champagne and caviar.

Sarah had spared no expense. Even the waiters wore custom uniforms.

I watched her showing off Grace's acceptance letter like a trophy. "Harvard's newest legacy!" she bragged to her society friends.

I brought Sarah's limping daughter upstairs.

I had waited eighteen years for this moment.

"Sarah," I called out across the ballroom. "There's something you should know about Grace and Mistake."

Sarah turned from where she was showing off Grace's acceptance letter.

I handed the document to her.

"Now, open the gift I have prepared for you, and I hope you won't get too excited."