

The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

The Heiress Revived Ch 281

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Chapter 281 Cake Crashers and Slap Dash

##Finished

In

their collective memory, Lauren had always been a loner, taciturn and reserved. During high school, she poured **all** her time into studying, and even during vacations, she never hung out with classmates.

For all **three** years of high school, Lauren kept to herse. If she had been more ordinary-looking or academically inclined, she would have been invisible in her class. But her beauty combined with her brains made her solitary nature stand out even more.

By the time everyone reacted, Lauren had already slapped Timothy six times.

Timothy finally snapped out of his shock, exploding with rage.

“You wench, you dare to hit **me**? You’re asking for it!”

He raised his hand to strike Lauren.

Just then, the door to the private room suddenly swung open.

Who is Ms. Tarvis?” A gentle female voice asked.

Everyone turned to look at the door, where a smiling waitress stood, pushing a small, elegant cart topped with a beautiful birthday cake.

“Excuse me, who is Ms. Tarvis?” the waitress asked **again** seeing no one responding.

Kelly stood up and said, “I am Ms. Tarvis.”

Indeed, her surname was Tarvis, the same surname with Mia.

She looked puzzled **and** asked, “May I help you?”

The waitress looked at her, dressed in a festive red dress and finely made up, and thought. She must be celebrating her birthday today.

The manager had specifically instructed that the Brooker Corporation's CEO had reserved Suite 101 for Ms. Tarvis's birthday celebration.

Getting the attention of the Brooker Corporation's CEO was no small feat, and she was definitely **not** someone to be taken lightly.

With this in mind, the waitress's smile grew even sweeter as she presented the cake to Kelly and said crisply, "Ms. Tarvis, this is a birthday cake specially prepared for you by the Lavette Grand Hotel. Happy birthday!"

Kelly stiffened. Birthday? It wasn't my birthday **today**. My birthday wasn't for another half a month. Could *it be that* the **class** hunk had arranged this with the Lavette Grand Hotel? Yes, that must be it.

After so many years since graduating from high school, they had finally managed to get together. After today, who knew when we could meet again? So, the class hunk **had** ordered the birthday cake in advance.

Now **a** sales manager at Brooker Corporation, the class hunk had the clout to book the VIP Suite 101 and arrange a birthday cake **at** the hotel with just a **word**.

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Chapter 281 Cake Crashers and Stop Bash

graciously said. "Then please thank your manager for me."

The waitress, with a professional smile, softly replied. You're welcome; it's all part of our service."

Then she gracefully pushed the empty cart out of the room.

As the door closed behind her, all eyes turned to Kelly with envy.

Finished

Once the compliments ceased, Timothy, still smarting from the slaps, twisted his face in rage. He grabbed

a plate from the table and furiously hurled it at Lauren's head, cursing.

"You ungrateful wench, dare to hit me? I'll show you!"

Lauren reacted swiftly, grabbing a fork from the table to defend herself.

But before she could strike back, Marilyn shielded her,

With a crack, the plate shattered against Marilyn's head, splitting into pieces.

"Marilyn—Lauren cried out..

"Ms. Bennett, I'm okay, go find Mr. Brooker," Marilyn managed, despite the pain..

"Ha, you think you know Mr. Brooker?" The laughter erupted again in the room.

"Do you even know who Mr. Brooker is? He's a top-tier tycoon from the capital of Corwynale, who, within just half a year in Hoverdale, spent millions to acquire the Eastgate area **and** is now the richest man in town. And you think you can just rub shoulders with him?"

"If you really want to meet Mr. Brooker, it's not impossible. Just beg for mercy from our class hunk when he arrives; maybe he'll be happy enough to give you a glimpse of Mr. Brooker's glory."

"Our class hunk is no ordinary person now; trust me, he wouldn't bother with someone like her."

"What do you mean, someone like her?"

Suddenly, the door was pushed open again, and a man in a white checkered suit walked in confidently. True to his reputation as the class hunk back in high school, his features **were** indeed more handsome than any other man present.

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Chapter 282 Unwelcome Reunion

Finished

But he was only relatively good-looking, after all; high school was five years **ago**, a time when he was somewhat brash yet his eyes still held a purity and clarity.

Now, having entered society, his eyes brimmed with cunning and calculation, and he exuded the air of a **small**-time **schemer** making good.

"Callum, you finally made it."

It **was** as if they were seeing a royal emissary; everyone warmed around him, showering him with flattery.

Callum responded with modest phrases like “You’re all too kind,” but his expression was undeniably arrogant, his **chin almost** pointing to the sky.

“Callum, why are you so late? We’ve all been waiting for you for ages.”

Callum boasted. “I was just discussing business with Mr. Brooker.”

This statement **was** a mix of truth and bluff. He had indeed been with Felix, but to call it discussing business was a stretch; he was merely serving tea **and** water.

He had heard that Felix was at the Lavette Grand Hotel today, so he shamelessly went to see him.

At the time. Felix was **about** to discuss the Eastgate project with someone and **had** dismissed him outright.

Callum had planned to go to his reserved Suite 107, but on the way, he encountered a waitress pushing an empty cart.

He casually asked, “Have all my guests arrived?”

The waitress politely replied. “Sir, are your friends a group of people in their **twenties**, including Ms. Tarvis?”

Callum nodded repeatedly, “Yes, that’s them.”

“**Sir**, your friends are all in Suite 101.

Callum was puzzled. Suite 101? But I had definitely booked Suite 107.

“Not 107?”

The waitress explained, “Sir, Mr. Brooker reserved Suite 101, and your friends are already there.”

Callum was flabbergasted.

He had never imagined Felix would value him so highly, knowing he had a class reunion today and specifically reserving the Lavette Grand Hotel’s VIP room to boost his status.

He had thought Felix didn't even know him.

Without any doubt, Callum joyfully headed to Suite 10 and indeed found his classmates there. Basking in their adulation, Callum felt on top of the world, almost losing himself in the elation.

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Chapter 282 Unwelcome Reunion

At his command, everyone took their seats,

Finished

Callum's gaze immediately locked onto Lauren, the unattainable goddess of his high school dreams.

He had pursued her for a long time back then, but unfortunately, she was an oddity who remained unmoved no matter how much he courted her.

As the saying goes, what you can't have always seems the best. Although he was now married, it didn't stop him from pursuing other women.

Moreover, he was planning to divorce soon, take all her assets, and leave his wife with nothing.

Once he had her money, he could play the field as much as he liked. He eyed Lauren unabashedly, liking her face even more now than in high school, and felt she had even improved with age.

He couldn't help but think to himself that his tastes hadn't changed over the years; he had always had a thing for women like Lauren.

Unfortunately, to get ahead early in life, he had married a woman from a somewhat wealthy family, who was as appealing as a pig. Sleeping with her felt no different from sleeping with a pig.

Callum's blatant, lustful stares were obvious to everyone present.

"Lauren, you came uninvited today; isn't it because you're here for our Callum? Now that you've seen him, why not come over and say hi to him?"

Lauren detested the way Callum looked at her, as if he wanted to strip her bare, which was utterly repulsive.

Lauren frowned and said, "Callum, are you sure you booked Suite 101?"

Callum raised an eyebrow, full of confidence, "Of course, would I forget my own reservation?"

Lauren was silent. Could it really be Mr. Brooker who got it wrong?

Regardless, she needed to leave immediately and find Mr. Brooker for clarification.

Lauren grabbed Marilyn and headed for the door. But the crowd blocked the exit, refusing to let her pass.

"You're already here; don't **leave**."

"What? Playing the innocent again? I really can't stand your act

"Enough already, it's getting boring."

Suddenly, someone shoved Lauren hard. Caught off guard, she stumbled and fell right into Callum's arms.

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Chapter 283 The Fury of a Woman Scorned

"See, I told you she came here today just to throw herself at Callum.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk. With so many of us watching, she's not even embarrassed. She must have a hide like a battleship."

Finished

"Back in high school, when Callum **chased** her, she flatly refused him. Now that she sees he's made money, she's all over him. How cheap can you get?"

"Hold off on the comments. If Callum is into it, why not have a little fun? She's practically begging for it, so why not?"

"True, she's a felon with a record. Getting a job must be hard for her, so selling her body seems like an easy way to make money."

Their words were unbearable.

Marilyn trembled with anger, "Shut up, Ms. Bennett is nothing like what you're saying."

"Ms. Bennett? Ha! Looks more like she's an escort to me

Lauren struggled to break free from Callum's embrace, but he held her **too** tightly for her to escape.

It was Callum's first time holding Lauren, and he found her incredibly soft. Her scent **was** intoxicating. almost like an aphrodisiac to him, eliciting an immediate reaction.

Lauren keenly felt his change and was utterly disgusted her stomach churned so violently she nearly threw

1. up.

Callum's lips curled into a wicked, suggestive smile. He tightened his hold and whispered in her ear, "Lauren, after all these years, you're still so enticing. Now that you're here, why rush off? Stay and keep me company, huh?"

His breath on her ear made her skin crawl.

Lauren struggled fiercely, but Callum was too strong, and she couldn't move.

Just then, the door to the private room creaked open again.

Everyone turned to see a woman in a white dress with long, straight black hair, standing gracefully at the doorway. She looked pure yet alluring-

Her gaze swept across the room, finally landing on Callum and Lauren. Her face turned ashen with anger and disbelief.

"Taylor?" Callum, seeing the woman in white, showed a flicker of embarrassment but quickly regained his composure. He released Lauren and approached Taylor. "Taylor, you finally made it? We've all been waiting for you."

Taylor, as if she **hadn't** heard him, stared fixedly at Lauren, her eyes filled with disgust.

Ever since being abandoned by Saint and Kenny, she had been looking for another man to take shelter

with..

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Chapter 293 The Fury of a Woman Scorned

Callum was a high branch she had managed to cling to after much effort.

Finished

She had done her research; though Callum was only a small-time sales **manager** and couldn't compare to a rich second-generation like Kenny or a local heavyweight like Saint, his quick rise to sales manager at Brooker Corporation, a top company in Corwynale, showed his promising future.

Moreover, Callum was in the process of divorcing his wealthy wife from Hoverdale. Once divorced, he'd likely secure a large settlement from her.

Being **with** Callum meant she wouldn't **have** to worry about **hardship**.

If Callum got promoted by Felix in the future, her life would **soar**. Even if Callum changed his heart later, she wasn't worried.

Because, she had already planned to use her time **with** Callum to meet Felix.

With her beauty and skills in managing men, winning Felix's favor wouldn't be difficult.

She knew marrying into a wealthy family might be a stretch, but just being associated with one could bring her many benefits. A mere trickle from such wealth would ensure a life of luxury.

Her status made meeting someone like Felix nearly impossible, so using Callum as a stepping stone was crucial.

Now, her carefully chosen stepping stone was being seduced by some shameless girl, and they were all over each other. How could I tolerate that?

Determined not to let her plans be ruined, she wouldn't let this slide.

Taylor clenched her teeth in fury at Lauren, shouting. "You shameless girl, seducing my man? Are you tired of living?"

Lauren, realizing this woman must be Callum's girlfriend, quickly tried to

plain, "You've got it all wrong, I didn't seduce Callum; he was the one **who** made a move on me. You're his girlfriend, right? Then please keep your boyfriend in check."

Taylor ignored Lauren's explanation, even feeling that Lauren, the 'mistress, **was** deliberately provoking her, the legitimate girlfriend.

Enraged, she swung her purse wildly at Lauren, cursing nonstop, "You wench, dare to seduce my man? I'll reach you a lesson."

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Chapter 284 Cake Wars

Lauren instinctively raised her arms to shield herself, but the blow still hurt.

Finished

Seeing this, Marilyn immediately tried to protect Lauren but was grabbed and forcefully pinned down on

the table.

“Stop it, don’t hit her anymore. Ms. Bennett is engaged she would never seduce another man.”

Taylor scoffed. “She’s engaged and still seduces my **ma** Shameless. Is your man not satisfying **you**? A seductress like you should be an escort, satisfied by different men every day

Her words **were** harsh **and** unbearable. Lauren tried to retaliate but was seized by Timothy, the corpulent

man

Lauren had slapped him six times earlier, and he had not forgotten. Now, seeing Lauren getting hit, he reveled in her misfortune, his face twisted with schadenfreude.

The ungrateful little tramp: he was worth a million and just wanted a fling with her.

Lauren had no money and was **a** convicted felon. He had given her the chance to serve him, and she had dared to act innocent. She deserved to be hit.

With Timothy restraining Lauren, she **couldn’t** move, and Taylor’s **purse** hit her relentlessly, soon leaving several bloody marks on her face.

Marilyn’s eyes reddened with anger.

“Ms. Bennett’s fiancé is the CEO of Brooker Corporation. If you don’t want retaliation, you better stop

now

At this. Taylor actually stopped.

Everyone else was stunned, not so much by Marilyn's words but more like they had heard a tall tale.

After a moment of silence, the **room** burst into deafening laughter, as if the laughter could lift the roof off.

"If the CEO of Brooker Corporation is Lauren's fiancé, I'll eat my hat."

"Mr. Brooker is worth millions; why would he give a second glance to a convict like you? Do you think you're something special?"

"Right, she should take a good look at herself in the mirror."

Their mockery of Lauren continued relentlessly, the laughter lasting a long while before **finally** subsiding.

Callum cleared his throat and said insincerely, "Let's settle down, everyone. We're all classmates here. Let's talk this out."

Taylor **glared** at Callum, "Callum, do

you like her? Have you been seeing her behind **my** back?"

Callum shook his head quickly, "No, no, how could I like her? I'm just trying to be a peacemaker **since** we're classmates. If you want to teach her a lesson, go ahead. I won't **stop** you."

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Chapter 284 Cake Wars

But she was stopped by the woman in red.

"Don't dirty your hands hitting her. I have a cake here; why don't we use that instead?"

"Great idea!" Everyone agreed enthusiastically.

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The room erupted into chaos as people grabbed chunks of cake from the table and threw them at Lauren.

Piece by piece, the creamy cake hit Lauren accurately: ick cream covered her eyes, nose, and mouth. nearly suffocating her.

The jam from the cake splattered everywhere, staining her pristine clothes and tangling her hair into a messy blob.

Marilyn screamed angrily, her voice hoarse, but in the midst of the chaos, her cries seemed futile.

Her face was pressed down on the table, she could only turn her head to watch **Lauren** suffer helplessly.

Tears uncontrollably streamed down Marilyn's face, dripping onto the table.

"Stop, just stop-"
" she cried desperately, but the only response was more laughter and continued attacks .

"Ha, look at her mess; it's hilarious."

"Yeah, let's see if she still acts all high and mighty now."

As the crowd jeered, they kept smashing cakes at her.

Lauren's entire body was filthy, trembling with humiliation and rage.

Just then, the door to the private **room** was kicked open from the outside.

The loud noise stunned everyone, and their frenzied **actions** stopped abruptly.

Marilyn strained to lift her head and, seeing the newcomer, a glint of hope flickered in her eyes.

Felix stood at the doorway, dressed in a sharp black suit his posture as straight as a pine. Seeing Lauren in distress, his **deep** eyes blazed with fury.

He strode quickly to Lauren, kicked out fiercely, and precisely knocked Timothy to the ground. Timothy's corpulent body fell like a collapsing **wall**, thudding heavily on the floor as he cried out in pain.

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Chapter 285 Felix Flips the Script.

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Felix, seemingly unfazed by the cream covering Laure gently cradled **her** in his arms, his hand softly stroking her back.

Leaning against him, Lauren clutched at Felix's suit jacket, **as** if grasping a lifeline. At that moment, everyone in the room froze, struck by Felix's commanding presence.

The man's aura was overpowering. Dressed in a sharp black suit that accentuated his tall, imposing figure, his high nose and tightly pursed lips exuded an air of authority that rendered the onlookers speechless.

It took a moment for them to regain their composure.

"Who the heck are you? Attacking our classmate, are you looking for trouble?"

"Sure, he looks decent, but he's clearly **got** no manners. Do you even know where you are? **This** is the Lavette Grand Hotel's VIP suite. Callum is highly valued by the CEO of Brookero Corporation. You mess with us, you're messing with Mr. Brooker."

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"Dude, are you friends with Lauren? She's a real piece of work, seducing other **men even** though she's a convict. For your own **good**, because you're handsome. I'd stay away from **that** bad news."

People hurled accusations and taunts at Felix.

Callum stood by, his earlier smug expression wiped clean, incredulous at the sight of Lauren embraced by Felix, his mind going blank.

He opened his mouth to say something but was drowned out by the crowd, forced to just stand there, sweating **and** shifting uneasily.

Felix's icy gaze swept across everyone in the room, sending shivers down their spines.

Finally, his eyes fixed on Callum. "You're Callum, the one they've been **talking** about?"

Felix's voice was deep and chilling

A bad feeling surged in Callum, his legs trembling, yet he managed a sycophantic smile. "Yes, I am. Mr. Brooker, what brings you here?"

Felix's glare was piercing. "I reserved this suite. Why do you **think** I'm here?"

The crowd exchanged uneasy glances, their faces changing from arrogance to shock and then to deep fear.

So, *the* impeccably dressed man before us is the CEO of Brooker Corporation. Seeing how protective he is of Lauren, could he really be her fiancé?

The men's demeanor immediately turned deferential, Practically bowing, their faces plastered with obsequious smiles; the women's eyes were filled with admiration, their gazes greedy, contemplating how to forge a connection with this wealthy man.

Taylor stared at Felix, unable to look away.

She quickly dropped her aggressive front, trying to appear soft and appealing, saying in a sweet voice, "Mr. Brooker, the woman in your arms was flirting with Callum. We couldn't stand it and just had to teach her a

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Chapter 285—Felix Flips the Script

She even tossed her hair flirtatiously, attempting to charm him.

Felix didn't even glance at Taylor, treating her as if **she** were mere air.

Finished

His eyes remained on Callum, pressing on, "I specifically reserved this suite for my friend's birthday. Who allowed you in? And the cake the hotel manager prepared for my friend who gave you permission to ruin it?"

Callum, trembling with fear, stammered, "Mr. Brooker ... I didn't know you had reserved this suite for a birthday. If I had known. I never would have come in."

"It's their fault; I came here because they were in Suite 1, Callum said, pointing at his classmates.

Seeing Callum throw them under the bus, his classmates couldn't care less about loyalty; the CEO of Brooker Corporation was not someone they could afford to offend.

"It's not our fault; you told us to come to Suite 101.

"Cut it off, I said Suite 107. You got it wrong, why blame me?"

"You're the one who's been using Mr. Brooker's name to show off.

Felix, tired of their squabbling, coldly stated, "Callum, the Sales Manager, right? You're fired."

Callum's eyes bulged in shock.

“Mr. Brooker, please, it wasn’t on purpose. Give me another chance.”

“A chance? Did you give my fiancée a chance to explain

Everyone’s face turned red at his words.

Felix turned to Gael standing behind him, “Order it so that no company working with Broker Corporation **hires** Callum. Anyone who dares employ him will be making an enemy of me.”

Callum’s knees buckled, realizing his career was over.

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Chapter 286 Cake or Death

Finished

Felix turned around and addressed the staff of the Lavete Grand Hotel. “They seem to love cake so **much**, so let’s give them their fill. Order a five-tier cake for each person. Have them eat here at the Lavette Grand Hotel for a month. They can’t leave until they finish it.

After saying that, he scooped up Lauren and strode out of the private room, leaving behind a group of people shivering in fear. Although the cake was delicious, the idea of having to eat it continuously for a month—and a **five**-tier cake at that—was daunting. Not to mention, cakes were famously fattening: the thought of how much weight they had gained was terrifying.

As Felix **and** Lauren reached the entrance of the hotel, they bumped into Josh and Mia.

Seeing Lauren’s disheveled appearance, Mia’s heart leaped into her throat.

“What happened to Laurie?” she asked.

With tears in her

eyes, Marilyn recounted the events that had unfolded in the room.

Mia’s fists clenched instantly. *Do thugs just flock to Laurie? Why did she always end up encountering the worst of people?* Mr. Brooker’s punishment seemed *far* too lenient.

These people need someone to deal with them, and I'll make sure they never forget it," Mia vowed, a murderous glint in her eyes. Josh, standing beside her, frowned deeply. He knew Mia's methods well; they were bloody and brutal, verging on criminal.

He grabbed Mia's arm and shook his head at her.

Mia shook off his grip and marched back to the private room.

In her hand, a butterfly knife spun at her fingertips, its blade catching the light and reflecting her icy

demeanor.

The hotel manager had already prepared the cakes.

"What are you all staring at? Eat!" Mia commanded coldly, devoid of emotion.

Callum's face fell, and his hands trembled as he broke off a large chunk of cake and shoved it into his mouth.

His cheeks puffed out like a frog's, and he chewed laboriously, soon choking and rolling his eyes back as he made gurgling sounds.

His eyes, filled with pain and pleading, met Mia's icy stare, which only grew colder.

Before he could recover, Mia kicked his leg, and Callum collapsed with a thud, his piece of cake falling to the ground.

"Pick it **up** and eat it!" Mia's knife pressed against his neck, **drawing** a trickle of blood.

Terrified, Callum obeyed, picking up the dust-covered cake and swallowing it down.

Taylor never imagined that Mia, that wretch, would be friends with Lauren, another wretch.

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Chapter 286 Cake or Death

nemesis.

Finished

Faced with the pile of cakes, her stomach was already in turmoil.

She forced herself to take a bite, and the overly sweet ste instantly spread in her mouth, overwhelming **her** sensitive nerves.

She couldn't help but retch.

"I said, eat what you spit out," Mia stated as she glared a Taylor, who was now crying in despair, trembling as she scooped up the vile mixture of vomit and cake crumbs and shoved it back into her mouth, her face a mess of tears and cake.

Timothy and several others were as pale as ghosts, their bellies distended like balloons. With each swallow of cake, they felt like their stomachs would burst,

"Please... we can't eat anymore," Callum—sobbed, his voice trembling. His cheeks bulged with cake, cream oozing from the corners of his mouth, mixing with his tears **in** a pitiful sight.

Mia sneered coldly, her smile chilling to the bone. "Now you beg for mercy? Too late!"

With that, she swung her butterfly knife, stabbing precisely into Callum's thigh.

"Ah!" Callum screamed, his legs buckling as he fell to the ground, begging for mercy.

The intense pain darkened his vision, yet he dared not stop chewing, his sobs muffled by the cake in his mouth.

The others looked on in terror, mechanically stuffing cake into their mouths, their faces smeared with cream. They ate silently, tears tracing paths through the frosting on their faces.

The sounds of chewing, retching, and crying echoed throughout the private room.

Mia, knife in hand, paced leisurely around the room, cutting down anyone who disobeyed, like a grim

reaper.

Josh watched this version of Mia, feeling like she was a stranger to him.

The Mia he **had** first met appeared as pure and sweet as the driven snow. *But* who could have guessed that such a seemingly innocent demeanor was merely a carefully crafted facade?

In reality, she was more like a hidden dagger, ready to **strike** anyone who dared provoke her or her friends.

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Chapter 287 Weighty Retributions

Finished

Mia watched the group struggle through the cakes as if he were enjoying a perfect performance.

Only when they had finished every last crumb of the cakes, each of them sprawled helplessly on the floor, too bloated to **even** move, did she nod slightly in satisfaction and turn to leave.

Outside the Lavette Grand Hotel, Josh asked, "Mia, do you have class this afternoon?"

Mia responded coolly, "What's up?"

"You haven't celebrated your birthday yet. I was thinking, if you're free this afternoon, why not come over to my place? I could throw a birthday party for you.

Mia looked at him, meeting his earnest eyes.

She lowered her gaze. "No need."

As she started to walk away, Josh firmly grasped her wrist.

Mia frowned at him. "Is there something else?"

"Mia, why are you always so cold to me? You used to be indifferent, maybe because you thought I was gay, but what about now? Why?"

Why? *Of* course, it's because we could never be together. Soon, I'll be moving abroad with Laurie and *my* mom. Mia thought with a bitter smile inside.

She had never let herself fall completely into a relationship, fully entrusting her emotions to a man, only a fool in love would do such a thing.

With Lauren as a painful example, she vowed never to make the same mistake, to never put herself in a

time, all passion fades.

dire situation. Love was nothing more than hormones playing tricks. Or

She was convinced that once abroad, it wouldn't take long for her to stop being attracted to Josh.

After all, there would be so many tall, blond, blue-eyed handsome men overseas.

How could I settle for one man and give up all other men? That's what Mia told herself.

But these were thoughts she **would** never share with Josh.

She simply said, "It's just for fun; don't take it seriously

Then, pausing, she added, "Josh, you'd better not get too involved with me. Don't forget, I'm not a good person. I've even **killed** people before, and it might not be long before the police catch up to me. Getting too close to me could be bad for you."

She pulled her **hand** away from Josh; she had **a** lot to do.

Before leaving the country, she needed to deal with everyone who had hurt Laurie. Even if she got caught one day, Laurie wouldn't have to worry about being bullied anymore.

Josh watched her defiant departure, his eyes filled with pity.

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Chapter 287 Weighty Retributions

Finished:

"Ms. Bennett is great, but you shouldn't lose your own eye over her," he said softly, his words lost to the

wind.

She was such a promising young woman. Why turn herself into a cold-hearted killing machine?

Someday, when her crimes came to light, she would face a ruinous end. Josh wanted to pour out his heart to Mia,

But he **knew** it was useless, Mia valued Lauren more than herself; she would sacrifice even her life for her

friend.

In that moment, Josh even **felt** a tinge of jealousy towards Lauren.

Mixed with the jealousy was a bit of resentment.

Mia, an outsider, had become so tough, even extreme, for Lauren's sake. Why couldn't Lauren, the person directly involved, bravely **stand** up to her own toxic family?

Because of her, even Mia's birthday was ruined.

Watching **Mia** walk further away, Josh couldn't hold back. He called out to her retreating figure, "Mia, next year on this day, I will make sure you have a grand birthday."

Mia's figure paused abruptly, a surge of unnameable emotion rising within her, but ultimately, she didn't turn back.

Josh couldn't know that next year, he **would** no longer have the chance to celebrate Mia's birthday.

From that day forward, life seemed to return to a semblance of normalcy.

Every day after school, Mia would promptly visit the Lavette Grand Hotel, supervising like a strict overseer, ensuring that the group in the private room ate their cakes.

Suite 101, as a super VIP room, had all the necessary amenities, a spacious dining area, a lounge, and restrooms. Otherwise, with all the eating and other bodily functions confined to that room, it would have turned into an unbearable, stinking dump **within** days.

For that group, the month was akin to being in hell. They had to eat cake until they vomited, but as soon **as** they **did**, Mia, like a demon, forced them to eat the disgusting vomit back up, compelling them to endure the physical discomfort and dare not vomit.

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Chapter 288 The Heavy Price of Cake

Finished

Five—
tiered **cakes** were served daily, and each person had to eat an entire one. Under such torture, the group **ballooned** in size, visibly gaining weight as if they were inflating like balloons.

Kelly, Taylor, and other women, who had once boasted enviable hourglass figures, weighing no more than 110 pounds each, were extremely particular about their

appearances, considering beauty as precious as life itself.

However, just a month later, **their** weights rocketed to 155 pounds like a rocket taking off.

The rapid weight gain left their bodies riddled with horrific stretch marks, resembling grotesque centipedes crawling across their skin, even more alarming than those seen on pregnant women about to give birth.

They didn't just become overweight; their health deteriorated severely, with some **even** developing diabetes. Their beauty and confidence had vanished without a trace.

The men didn't fare any better.

Callum, once a high school heartthrob, standing at 5 feet 11 inches and weighing 160 pounds, had been quite well-proportioned.

But in just a month, his weight soared to 220 pounds, turning him unrecognizably bloated and erasing his once-charming looks.

Timothy was worse off; already overweight, he now resembled a round ball, struggling even to **stand** up and reduced to sitting on the ground like a mound of flesh.

Mia, seeing them transformed into this sorry state, felt some of her pent-up anger dissipate.

She sneered, 'Considering you didn't cause Laurie any real harm, I'll let you off this time. But if you hurt Laurie again, you won't need your lives.'

Having witnessed Mia's ruthless methods, none dared oppose her, and they all vowed to better themselves and steer clear of Lauren in the future.

With a cold laugh, Mia dismissed them. After a month of confinement, Callum, Timothy, and the others were too frightened to even think of revenge.

Moreover, they knew well that with Lauren backed by Felix and the substantial influence of the Brooker family, any attempt at retaliation would only bring them more trouble.

Unlike the others, Taylor harbored all her hatred inside.

Her appearance **and** figure **had** always been her pride. Now, with everything gone, she felt she had nothing left, no means to attract wealthy men with her looks as she once did .

Her eyes brimmed with hatred. Mia, that madwoman, was out of her reach for now. So, she would target. Lauren, that cowardly wretch.

Felir and Mia both cared about Lauren, right? When she ruined Lauren, she believed it would devastate them both.

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Chapter 288 The Heavy Price of Cake

Finished

During this tumultuous month, Lauren had stayed at home, embroidering, blissfully unaware of the

outside events.

Lucas, on the other hand, was less fortunate. He had been supposed to represent Callum in a divorce case.

But after waiting endlessly and unable to reach Callum who seemed to have his phone permanently switched off, Lucas grew desperate. He had been counting on the attorney fees from winning Callum's case—140,000 dollars—to turn his life around.

Now unable to contact Callum, Lucas faced the prospect of returning to his days of scavenging to survive.

At his lowest point, Lucas unexpectedly ran into Callum on the street, barely recognizing him due to his drastic weight gain.

Fortunately, despite the weight, Callum's features were mostly unchanged.

Seeing Callum gasping with each step, Lucas could hardly believe it. "Callum? How did you end up like this in just a month?"

Embarrassed, Callum, once proud of his looks and a bit narcissistic, now resembled a greasy, overweight

man.

He **had** lost not only his job but was now left with nothing but his wife.

Callum just gave Lucas a weary glance and continued trudging home without a word.

Lucas, anxious, pressed on, "Callum, didn't we agree over a month ago to file for divorce? Why did you disappear all of a sudden? What have you been up to?"

"It's none of your business. Don't bother me," Callum replied, breathless and weak from his rapid weight gain.

Lucas persisted, not caring about Callum's frail state, "Okay, I don't care where you've been, but right now, our priority is the divorce. Weren't you planning to take all your wife's family assets? We need to fabricate evidence of her infidelity."

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Chapter 289 Garden of Madness

Callum **was** utterly frustrated; with his current grotesque appearance, a second glance if he really got divorced.

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no beautiful woman would give him

Moreover, Felix, that ruthless man, had made it **clear** that no company collaborating with Brooker Corporation should hire him. He was practically blacklisted in Hoverdale.

Now, he couldn't even **think** about divorcing his wife.

Callum took a deep breath and said, "I'm not getting a divorce anymore. You can go."

Lucas was taken **aback** when he heard Callum wasn't pursuing the divorce.

"How **can** you just decide not to divorce when we had everything planned? I was going to win you the divorce and get your wife's fortune, and you were going to pay me \$140,000. You can't just go back on your word.

Callum **was** already in a terrible mood, just wanting to get home, lie down, and rest. Once he felt a bit better, he planned to have his wife take him to the hospital.

But Lucas kept nagging, igniting Callum's fury. His face contorted with rage as he bellowed at Lucas,

“Do you not understand human speech? Whether I get a divorce or not is none of your damn business.”

Life had been rough for Lucas, and he had grown somewhat deranged.

Being publicly humiliated by Callum, whom he referred to **as a** ‘dead weight, was too much for his ego to

handle.

“It was you, you dead fat pig, who wanted to divorce your wife, and now you’re blaming me? You turned yourself into a fat slob in just a month. For all I know, you might have caught some disease from your sketchy escapades that made you like this.”

Stung by Lucas’ words, Callum lunged at him, **starting** a fight.

Lucas fought back fiercely. The **spectacle** was quite the **match**, an enfeebled overweight man and a legless disabled man.

The **two** scuffled, **drawing** a crowd of onlookers who formed a circle around them, intrigued by the drama.

However, their poor physical conditions didn’t allow for a prolonged fight. Soon, both were gasping for air, separating with faces **bruised and** battered, looking utterly pitiful.

Callum snorted coldly and dragged his heavy body away.

Lucas, having fallen to the ground, struggled mightily to climb back into his wheelchair and slowly wheeled himself away from the scene.

But he hadn’t gone far when a heavyset woman blocked his path

It was none other than Taylor.

“I heard you have **a** thing for Lauren? Want to get your hands on her? I **can** help you,” she said.

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Chapter 289 Garden of Madness

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Lucas eyed the unfamiliar woman in front of him and frowned, "Who are you? Why would you want **to** help **me**?"

Taylor's lips curled into a meaningful smile, "I'm Taylor and I want to help you get Lauren because I have my **sights** set on Felix."

Lucas sized up Taylor, imagining Felix being tormented by this heavy woman, and a petty sense of triumph filled him.

If he could match Felix with this Taylor, Felix would become the laughingstock of high society. "Dare to compete with me for Laurie? That'll be Felix's downfall

Time flew by, **and** six months passed. **During this** period. Taylor and **Lucas** concocted plans to target Lauren.

Yet, Lauren stayed secluded in the Brooker's Villa, hardly stepping outside, which thwarted their malicious schemes

Lauren's health was declining, and all she focused on was speeding up her embroidery work,

Once her embroidery **was** completed, she planned to leave the country with Mia and Marilyn. After six months of relentless effort, her labor-intensive embroidery was finally finished.

But she didn't inform Felix or Kate of her completion, planning to let them see the finished piece after her departure.

Now **that** the embroidery was done, it was time to tend to her own affairs. Her first stop would be the **psychiatric** hospital holding **Alice**.

Alice had been confined there for six **months**. Before leaving **the** city, Lauren wanted to see for herself **what** had become of her biased mother.

Only by seeing **those** who had **hurt** her receive their karma could she depart this life without regrets.

As her personal bodyguard, Gael would naturally accompany her.

Gael **started** the car, driving Lauren **towards** the psychiatric hospital.

The city's hustle and bustle were shut out behind the car windows. Lauren watched the fleeting street scenes, her mind filled with anticipation of the upcoming encounter with Alice.

At the psychiatric hospital, guided by the medical staff Lauren and Gael slowly walked down the corridor.

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Chapter 290 The Doll Heist

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As they walked down the corridor, on either side were courtyards separated by iron fences. Inside, patients in hospital gowns engaged in various activities, each in their own state.

Some sat on benches with a vacant stare, mumbling to themselves. Others walked in slow, mechanical circles, seemingly trapped in an endless loop, while a few flailed their arms at invisible foes, their faces etched with terror and anger.

They passed through the corridor and entered a garden.

Following the direction pointed out by a nurse, Lauren spotted a woman with

gray-streaked hair. Her skin was loose and rough, lacking the refinement she once had as a lady of leisure, appearing a decade older than her actual age—a true embodiment of her twilight **years**.

The woman cradled a doll in her arms, humming an unrecognizable **tune** and tenderly soothing it oblivious to her surroundings.

This woman was none other than Alice.

Lauren stood at a distance, quietly observing Alice, her eyes filled with complex emotions. Alice, did you ever think that rushing into marriage with a scoundrel would wreck your life beyond repair? Your son's in prison, your daughter's permanently disabled, and you've lost an eye. What could have been a wonderful life has crumbled because of your shortsightedness. You really brought this karma on yourself.

With a smirk on her lips, Lauren reflected on the shame of having such a mother.

She despised David, but she hated Alice even more. Reviewing her own tragic life over the past **two** decades, although David was the instigator, Alice **was** equally to blame.

Lauren watched Alice with an indifferent expression.

Alice gently put the doll to sleep in her arms and then began talking to the air.

“Laurie, my dear daughter, I will protect you. I won’t let the bad people take you away again. You must believe me, I really do love you very much.”

She kissed the doll’s cheek, treating it as if it were her beloved, precious daughter.

Watching **this**, Lauren’s eyes sparkled with mockery. Where was this care before? Now that you’ve lost everything, you understand what you had, but sadly, it’s too late.

Now that Alice had received her due punishment, some of Lauren’s bitterness was alleviated.

She felt there was no need to stay any longer, especially since, during her wrongful imprisonment, Alice had never visited her even once.

Her visit **wasn’t** about concern; it was about witnessing firsthand the pitiful downfall of the person who had caused her immense suffering.

Just as Lauren was about to turn and leave, suddenly, a madman charged at Alice, snatching the doll from her hands **and** running off.

Alice, who seconds ago was lost in a tender fantasy, erupted like a volcano, losing control at the sight of her

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Chapter 290 The Doll Heist

“Ah—my daughter, stop! Give my daughter back to me

Alice screamed hoarsely and ran after the madman, but he was too fast for her.

“Give it back! My daughter, my Laurie-

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The madman, realizing he was not being pursued, eventually stopped and turned around. Seeing Alice in tears, he grinned, revealing his uneven teeth, and laughed with delight.

“You’re crying, crying, how amusing.”

Furious, Alice shook as she pointed at the madman and yelled, "Give me my daughter back!"

The madman treated it like a game, "No, no, I won't give it back. Come and hit me if you can!"

He raised the doll high and then slammed it to the ground.

Each slam felt like a hammer blow to Alice's heart.

Her eyes turned blood-red as she screamed, "I'm going to kill you, you monster!"

She charged at him again. Seeing her approach, the madman quickly grabbed the doll and, laughing heartily, ran off again.

Alice continued the chase but failed to catch him. However, during the pursuit, her gaze suddenly caught Lauren standing not far away.