

The Heiress Revived from the Ashes

The Heiress Revived 381

Chapter 381 Vengeance and Rescue

“Eat. I told you to eat! If you don’t finish every last bite today, I’ll beat you to death!”

Willow’s mouth was stuffed full, her eyes wide with terror,

She gagged repeatedly, but Alice pressed her hand over Willow’s mouth, refusing to let her spit anything out.

Like that, Willow was forced to eat every last crumb—**five times** more than she normally would.

She collapsed to the ground, clutching her bloated stomach, crying silently **in** agony.

That was when Elliot finally snapped out of his shock.

“Mom, how **could you** do this to Willow? It was Dad who made the **mistake**, not her! Willow’s innocent! **You** need to take her to the hospital—can’t you see she’s in pain?”

Alice turned to him again, her eyes hollow.

“If you care so much about her, then go live with her and her real mother.

“Mom, I’m your son! Why are you being so cruel to me?”

Yes, he was her son—
but Lauren had been her daughter, too. And yet Lauren had been brutally abused by her own father, mother, and brother.

Three years with the Bennett family. Five years in prison. More **than** eight years of relentless torment had broken Lauren’s body and spirit.

Lauren had endured unimaginable pain. **And** the ones who caused it didn’t deserve peace.

They all deserved to be punished.

“Get **out**”

Elliot clenched **his** jaw. “You’ll regret this someday, Mom.”

He

struggled to lift Willow into **his** arms and carried her out the door.

Outside, David—his eye ruined—had just regained consciousness:

He saw his son and daughter bruised and battered and was instantly overwhelmed with fury.

Alice, just wait. I'll pay you back for this tenfold. A hundredfold

You **care** about that little brat Lauren **so** much, don't you? Then I'll make it my **mission** to destroy her.

David gathered Elliot and Willow and stumbled away with them.

Alice unsmilingly **watched with** cold indifference. **She** didn't try to stop them.

Two **days** passed in **a blur**. On the third day, Lauren was due to report to **school**.

Mr. Tumely
cleared his entire schedule to take her there personally, alongside Madam Shirley.

In the car. Madam Shirley clutched Lauren tightly, reluctant to let go. "Our baby's still so little. There's **no** way she can live on **campus alone**. College is full of adults, and you're still a child—

how could you possibly manage by yourself? I've made up my mind. For the next four years, I'm going to live near your school. I'll buy a house right next to campus so you can come home. every **day**"

Chapter 381 Vengeance and Rescue

The car was filled with warmth and laughter.

Elsewhere. Willow was wearing a smug smile as she looked up at her birth mother, Sharon.

"Mom, once I get her kidney. I'll be cured, right?"

Finished

Sharon, dressed in surgical scrubs and preparing to operate on her own daughter's behalf, gently stroked Willow's hair.

"With me here, you've got nothing to worry about. You'll be just fine."

Willow beamed with joy, though a trace of worry lingered in her voice.

“Mom if we forcefully take her kidney, won’t she call the police?”

Sharon reassured her calmly. “Don’t worry. After we take her kidney, that idiot David will sell her overseas. Once she’s there, no one will be able to find her. Even if she dies, it won’t trace back to us.”

Willow finally relaxed.

As the anesthesia kicked in, she slowly closed her eyes and slipped into unconsciousness,

Sharon picked up the scalpel and stepped toward Lauren

Behind her surgical mask, her lips curled into a sinister smile.

“All because of you, that woman Alice abused my daughter. She suffered over ten years of mistreatment because of you. Today, I’ll make you pay.”

The cold steel blade glinted under the operating lights as it drew closer and closer to Lauren.

Sharon didn’t even bother disinfecting Lauren’s body—she was going to take the kidney right then and there..

With every inch, the scalpel neared Lauren’s skin. Sharon’s eyes lit up with anticipation.

But just as the blade was about to pierce her—

The

operating room doors were kicked open from the outside.

A group of police officers stormed in, weapons drawn.

“Freeze” Drop the knife! Hands in the air!”

The sudden raid shocked everyone in the room—Sharon, the doctors, the nurses—none of them were prepared.

Chapter 382 Bonds That Broke Beyond Repair

The moment Sharon saw the police burst in, her heart dropped into her stomach.

What's going on? Why are the police here!!

One officer stepped forward and kicked her to the floor, then swiftly cuffed her hands behind her back.

Other officers moved in and restrained every other medical **staff** member in the room.

The police chief rushed to Lauren's side. Seeing her unharmed at last, he finally let out the breath he'd been **holding**. They'd been mere seconds away—just one more breath, and Comrade Lauren would have been carved open on that table. If anything had happened to her, his **career** would have been over.

Rage boiled in the chief's chest. He turned sharply and slapped **Sharon** across the face with a resounding crack.

"You filthy scum! You dared to kidnap one of our nation's top scientific talents and tried to harvest her organs by force. Do you have a death wish!! Do you **realize** if anything had happened to her, it could have endangered the future of our entire **country**? You're not just looking at **charges** of kidnapping and illegal organ harvesting—you could also be tried for endangering national security."

Those charges combined were more than enough to land Sharon on death row.

Sharon was stunned. This was **not** how things were supposed to go

"No! I d

idn't—I mean, you've got it all wrong. I swear!"

"We'll see **about** that at the station. Take her away!"

Sharon, along with every doctor and nurse who participated in the illegal surgery, was dragged away in handcuffs.

Even Willow, still unconscious from the anesthesia, wasn't spared. She was taken into custody too.

Outside the operating room, Sharon realized with horror that David—**bloody**, one-eyed, and defeated—had also been

arrested.

That's when she

she knew: they were finished.

Everyone involved was **taken** to the police station for interrogation. Even Elliot, who had secretly informed them, was handcuffed and questioned in a separate room.

When Lauren finally woke up, she found Alice seated beside her, face drawn tight with worry.

“Lauren, are **you** alright?”

Lauren sat up in the hospital bed.

The anesthetic had simply knocked her out-

-now that it had worn off, she was perfectly fine.

She glanced at Alice calmly. “Thanks for what you did this time. With that, our grudges **from** the past life are settled.”

Jy flickered **across** Alice’s face. “Lauren, does that mean... you finally forgive me? Does that mean **you’ll** stay with me now? Come home with me!”

Lauren’s expression cooled. “Alice, I think you misunderstood something. I said the past—life grudges **are** settled—

I never said I was going home with you or that I recognize you as my mom. Have you forgotten? My last name is Mavis now, not Bennett. I already have parents and a brother. Why would I go back with you?”

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Chapter 382 Bonds That Broke Beyond Repair

leave him, so I turned them down.

D

-8 Pearls

I’ve regretted that decision ever since. If I’d said yes, I would’ve had a loving family and a protective brother. Instead, I returned to the Bennett family—only to be beaten, starved, and destroyed by you people.”

Alice wilted at her words, visibly deflated.

“Lauren, I’m sorry. I know I was wrong.

“Enough.” Lauren cut her off. impatient. “I heard **you** say ‘I was wrong’ so many times in the last life I practically grew calluses in **my** ears. And every time you said it. you just did the same things all over again. That phrase means nothing to me now, Don’t say it anymore. It’s annoying”

Her tone was blunt and cutting, leaving no room for dignity.

Alice’s face turned ashen.

Alright. I won’t say it anymore.”

She went silent.

Lauren had no intention of staying in the same room. Since her health was fine, she might as well leave the hospital early.

She’d spent the last six months at the research institute, and it had been over eight years since she’d **seen** her parents and

brother.

All she wanted now was to go home.

Eight years... They probably won’t even recognize me anymore..

Lauren swung her legs off the bed and began putting on her shoes.

Alice suddenly stood. “Lauren, where are you going?”

“I’m going back to Balewood. To see my mom and dad.”

Alice felt a bitter sting in her chest. She’s my daughter—yet she calls someone else Mom sortly.

She stepped in front of Lauren, hesitating. “Lauren...”

Chapter 383 No Mercy Left to Give

Lauren’s patience wore thin. She didn’t even want to spare Alice a glance.

“You still have something to say?”

Alice pressed her lips together, gathering her thoughts before speaking “Lauren... could you... could you write a letter of forgiveness for your brother?”

Lauren let out a sharp, cold laugh. "He helped someone try to steal my kidney, and you want me to forgive him?"

Alice knew her request was shameless, but she persisted. "But he's your biological brother! You're fine now, right? Do you really have the heart to watch your brother go to jail over something like this? You're Corwynale's youngest scientific genius- if you just say a word, I'm sure the court would go easy on him. Just pity your brother a little, okay"

"Enough!"

Lauren's voice cracked like a whip through the room.

"You want me to pity him? And who pitied me? Yes, he's my brother—my biological brother. And yet he teamed up with others to steal my kidney. That's how he treats me? In our last life, he framed me and got me thrown into prison for five years. Before that, he humiliated me for three **years** in the Bennett family. After I got **out**, he kept coming at me, again and again. I've already been generous enough not to settle the score in this life. If he **had** stayed away, I would've treated him like nothing but air. But what did he do? He tried to make me a cripple again! And you **dare** ask me to forgive him? Alice, you know how I feel about becoming disabled. Last time, you and your family ruined me—cost me a leg and a kidney. Do you really **think** I'll let it happen again?"

Tears streamed down Alice's face. She shook her head desperately. "No, that's not what I meant, I-

"Ha." **Lauren's** cold sneer sliced right through her. "Elliot isn't a child. He's an adult. **And adults** should take responsibility for their actions."

"But don't worry—he was just an accomplice. He won't be sentenced to death. It's just a few years in prison. Not a big deal, right?"

Alice's eyes widened.

She knew that phrase. Knew it all too well.

Because in their past life, Elliot had used those exact same words on Lauren),

"It's just five years in prison. So what? Elaine became a vegetable."

Alice couldn't even look Lauren **in** the eyes anymore.

Lauren's tone was flat and calm. "Since Elliot thought jail time wasn't a big deal, he can experience it himself. I'm sure prison will 'reform' him nicely. Don't worry—I won't **have** anyone target him inside. All he's losing is his freedom.

I lost a leg. And a kidney. He's still got it easy."

Alice's mind went blank. She **couldn't** speak.

Lauren pushed past her **and** walked out of the **hospital** room.

She didn't expect to crash straight **into** someone's chest.

Startled, she looked up—and her pupils shrank in shock.

Kenneth?

Chapter 383 No Mercy Left to Give

But compared to the Bennett family or areas Kenneth wounds were no more **than a** light drizzle.

Still, the suddenness of the encounter caught he completely off guard.

Kenneth, in a **sharp** black suit, couldn't take his eyes off her the moment he saw her.

Is that really.. her?

The youngest, most brilliant scientific mind in all of Corwyndle.

A name that most average people might not recognize but wasn't most people.

He had known of Lauren since school.

He **had** once thought himself talented—until he learned otherwise. At the age **when** he was still playing with crayons in preschool, she had already entered college.

To him. Lauren wasn't just a genius—she was a legend. His co

And now...

that idol had just thrown herself into his arms.

Kenneth's face flushed bright red from excitement.

Elaine, who stood beside him, gasped in amazement

“Whoa! Kenneth—
isn’t this the Lauren you’re always talking about? Your idi?jusawa news segment on her
yesterday! She’s even more beautiful in person than on TVT”

Her eyes sparkled as she gazed at Lauren.

Lauren came back to her senses, her expression calm, her voice distant.

“Could you let go of me now?”

Kemeth blinked and suddenly realized he was still holding her slender waist—so—
sodtamaludicate that Lauren had no choi burn lean into him.

Between—shampoo and body **wash**, subtle and clean—clung to him. Addictive.

Send Gifts

Chapter 384 Home Is Where the Heart Stays

Kenneth stood frozen, his hands still tingling with the warmth of Lauren’s waist. For a moment, he couldn’t bring himself to let go.

But before he could respond, a large hand appeared out of nowhere and shoved him aside with force.

Lauren was pulled from his arms and **into** another man’s embrace.

A voice rang out—icy and sharp as frost, its tone cold and indifferent.

“What do you think you’re doing to my fiancée?”

The moment Kenneth’s arms were empty, **a** strange hollowness filled his chest.

He looked up instinctively—and froze.

The man standing before him was none other than Felix Brooker, heir of Balewood’s most powerful family, the Brooker family.

Kenneth instantly bristled.

He didn’t like this man.

Not just because of who he was—
but because he had seen the articles online. He knew that his idol, Lauren, was said to be the **liancée** of this so-called Brooker heir.

And Kenneth, though aware he wasn't worthy of someone like Lauren, still believed no man could possibly deserve her. She was the moon in the sky—untouchable, to be admired from afar.

Felix might be powerful, but in the end, he was just a businessman. What right did he have to lay claim to Corwynale's brightest scientific genius?

And that so—called engagement? A childhood promise. A game. Nothing more than a fantasy from long ago.

He turned back to Lauren, his gaze full of concern as though ready to rescue her, if she gave the slightest sign of distress. But instead what he saw was Lauren looking up at Felix with glowing joy,

Felix was **only** twenty two now, still carrying the youthful sharpness of his age—but there **was** already a hint of the cold restraint and gentle gravitas that had defined him at twenty-eight in their last life.

To Lauren, who had suffered **so** much in that previous life, Felix **had** been salvation—a ray of light in her darkest days.

And now, the boy from her past had grown into a man. He had found her. And, incredibly, he had recognized her at first glance.

The frost in Felix's eyes melted as he gazed at Lauren. His voice softened to something only she had ever heard. "Lauren you're finally **back**."

He raised his hand, brushing a finger gently over her brows and cheeks.

"I've missed you all these years"

Lauren gave

him a soft

smile. "I've missed you too."

Felix's voice dropped, filled with emotion. "Then come back to Balewood with me. Let's get engaged."

Chapter 384 Home Is Where the Heart Is

Victor's tears **flowed** freely **as** he sobbed into his hand

Fint

The soft, chubby little girl from **his** memons hul grown into a beautiful young woman. And he hadn't been there for eigh whole years

A second later, Madam Shirley came rumming in

"My baby girl! My precious little one!" She threw mam—amund Lauren hugging her tight

Even Mr. Timely's eyes turned misty, His long **arms** cerebellauren Victor, and **Madam S** hirleyall at once in a warm family embrace.

Lauren, you heartless little rascal—
leaving the instituendung straight to Hoverdale? You got yourself kidnapped an nearly lost a kidney! If something had happened to you wouldropped dead on the sport

They all held her close, laughing and **crying**, overwhelmed withhentaion.

Behind them, at the doorway of the hospital room. Alice watchertently

She looked at the family—
her daughter, smiling brightly in the arms omple **who** mily loved her and realized, for the first time, that she no longer **had** a place there.

Her own daughter had left her behind. And she wasn't part of thist world anymore.

Chapter 385 Out of Reach

She wanted to hug Laurie just like they did—tightly, warmly, like family

But Laurie hated her.

Even in their previous life, after Laurie had gotten hier revenge—
after she'd had her locked up in a psychiatric hospital and left her to suffer—
Laurie still couldn't bring herself to forgive her.

Alice's eyes filled with tears as she watched the family of four together, so happy, so close. It hit her only then—she had never once hugged Laurie.

In their past life, when Laurie returned to
the Bennett family from the orphanage, Alice had been worried Willow would feel displaced. So she chose to ignore Laurie.

She had even gone out of her way to get close to Willow right in front of her.

She never thought that in **this** life, just holding her own daughter would become **such a** far-fetched dream. Alice drew a deep breath, trying to hold back her tears.

All she could do was silently watch her daughter being loved by others

It wasn't until a long moment later that Mr. Timely, Madam Shirley, and Victor finally let go of Lauren

Madam Shirley gently stroked Lauren's long hair. "Eight years flew by in a blink. Our precious girl has grown up.

Mr. Timely's eyes were full of tenderness, "**Laurie's** grown, but she's also gotten thinner . Were you not eating well at the

institute?

Victor quickly added, "Let's hurry home. Once we're back, we'll fatten you right up again ."

Warmth bloomed in Lauren's chest. "Okay. Let's go home."

As she spoke, she held her hand out to Felix. "Felix."

A soft smile tugged at Felix's **lips**, He reached out his long, well-defined fingers and gently clasped her hand.

Surrounded by the **Mavis family**, Lauren and Felix walked toward the hospital exit

Alice still had so much she wanted to say to Lauren. But when the words reached her lips, she didn't know how to start. In the end, she could only watch them go in silence.

Kenneth stood there with a bitter look on his face. He didn't know why, but he felt like he **and** Lauren weren't supposed to be

Deep down, it felt like they should've known each other—more than **just** known each other, even

But the reality was, this was their first meeting Lauren didn't even **know** who he was

And why would she? Lauren was a genius scientist, a national treasure admired by millions.

And him? Sure, he came from a wealthy family, but they were just businesspeople.

Wanting something deeper with someone like Lauren? He wasn't qualified.

He knew that much. But why didn't Felix seem to

The Brooker family was also just a merchant family. So why did Felix get to have Lauren!

The more Kenneth thought about it, the more unfair it all felt. As Lauren was about to walk away, he finally summoned the courage to ask, "Lauren, will we meet again?"

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Chapter 385 Out of Reach

with her little white canine teeth, she looked like pure sunshine.

Finished

"Lauren, you're my brother's idol. He's always **wanted** to meet you. Now that he finally **has**, he's really excited. He **wants to** be friends with you. Do you think he has **that** honor?"

Lauren stopped and looked at Elaine.

In her past life, if Elaine **hadn't** shown up when she did, she would've been the one pushed down the stairs. **Elaine** had taken that hit for her. Because of that, Lauren couldn't just brush her off.

But what Elaine was asking—she couldn't say yes to that.

She owed Elaine. The rest of the Gray family? Not at all.

Lauren gave Elaine a gentle smile. "You have that honor. But **him**..." She turned to Kenneth.

He was staring at her, eyes filled with hope.

Lauren's heart turned cold. "He doesn't."

The moment she said it, the light vanished from Kenneth's eyes. He looked crushed.

He stared at Lauren, as if trying to find some reason for her rejection in her eyes—maybe even disgust.

But why? They had just met. Why would she hate him already?

Kenneth couldn't understand. He could only swallow the pain and bear it alone.

Even Elaine froze in place. She could feel that Lauren didn't dislike her. But she also sensed Lauren didn't like her brother.

Lauren didn't spare Kenneth another glance.

In her past life, they had once been so close.

Chapter 386 A Savior Unexpected

But back then, all it took was a few **words** from Willow to sway Kenneth. He **would** believe her without hesitation, and immediately begin doubting Lauren. He never believed a single word she said.

Someone like that? She couldn't wait to **stay** as far away from him as possible. There was no way she could ever be friends with him again.

"Let's go."

Surrounded by her loved ones, Lauren slowly walked out of the **hospital**. **She** thought she'd be heading home right away.

What she didn't expect was the crowd of reporters waiting outside. The moment they **saw** Lauren, their eyes lit up. They surged forward, desperate to be the first to interview her.

But before they could get any closer, the bodyguards stepped in and blocked their **path**.

Victor winked at her. "I figured something like this might happen, so I hired security in advance."

~Thank you, Victor."

"I'm your brother. It's my job to protect you. Why are you being polite with me?"

Lauren was moved again.

Her biological brother, Elliot, had never protected her. He had only ever brought her harm.

But now, she had someone who called her sister and actually meant it.

Lauren got in the car with her family.

"Mom, Dad, are we heading back to Balewood now?" she **asked**.

Madam Shirley held Lauren's **hand** and said, "Not yet. First, we need to thank the person who saved your life."

"The person who saved **me**?" Lauren **was** surprised.

Wasn't it Alice who saved her?

She had come to Hoverdale fully aware that **David**, Sharon, and Willow wouldn't let her go easily.

Given her current status, anyone who dared harm her would **face** serious consequences.

In their past life, they had framed her and thrown her **in** prison. This **time**, **she** planned to turn the tables—and make them

suffer the same fate.

That's **why** she went to find Alice. She had hoped **that** if she were kidnapped, Alice would immediately call the police and get her rescued.

"Wasn't it Alice who called the police?" she **asked**.

Madam Shirley shook her head "According to the police, it was a young man who called it in after you were kidnapped. Thank goodness he did it in time—otherwise, you really might've had your organs **harvested**"

Just thinking about it made Madam Shirley **tremble** "Laurie, you nearly scared me to death, you know that?"

She went on. "I know you came to Hoverdale because you wanted to meet your biological mother. But you're only seventeen. How could I possibly feel okay letting you travel so far alone? You're never doing this again, do you hear me?"

"I'm sorry. Mom. It won't happen again" Lauren said sincerely

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Chapter 386 A Savior Unexpected

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Lauren immediately thought of what happened **last** night—when **she'd** run into Jeffrey. Could it have been Jeffrey who called the police?

When they arrived at the Gordon **family** home, her suspicions were confirmed. It really had been Jeffrey.

She had actually pinned her hopes on Alice. **And** once **again**, **Alice** couldn't even do th at one thing right.

If it hadn't been for Jeffrey, she'd probably be lying on some operating table right now.

The Gordon family **gave** the Mavis family a **warm** welcome.

The moment Jeffrey saw Lauren, he was so excited he nearly jumped out of his skin.

He rushed **over** in three quick strides **and grabbed** Lauren's hands, lus eyes shining as he stared at her without blinking.

"**Lauren?** You're really Lauren? I can't believe I'm seeing our country's genius scientist with my own eyes. Ms. Mavis, you're my idol—an inspiration to all of us,"

Jeffrey **was** so excited he could barely form a complete sentence.

Lauren felt overwhelmed by his enthusiasm. After all, in their past life, Jeffrey had always been sarcastic and snide toward her.

Even after he found out the truth and stopped insulting her, he'd still acted like an entitled rich kid who didn't take anything seriously.

She never thought he'd look at her like this in this life—with such pure **admiration**.

Lauren tried to pull her hands back, but he was gripping them too tightly.

Just then, Felix stepped forward and shoved Jeffrey away, pulling Lauren into his arms with a firm motion.

Jeffrey scowled. "Who are you?"

Felix answered coolly. "I'm Lauren's fiancé."

Jeffrey was stunned. Ms. Mavis had a fance? No way. How could she possibly have a fiancé?

Chapter 387 The Genius and Her Shadow

Someone as dazzling and brilliant as her, so young and full of promise—just how little must she **have** thought of marriage to get engaged at such a young age?

Jeffrey felt absolutely crushed. He hadn't even gotten the chance to fall in love, and he **was** already heartbroken.

Watching Felix hold Lauren so close made him seethe with jealousy.

To show their gratitude for Jeffrey saving Lauren's life, Mr. Timely decided to gift the Gordon family a business contract worth a billion dollars.

James and his wife were overjoyed, beaming from ear to ear.

The Gordon family was a prominent name in Hoverdale, but even so, they couldn't compare to the elites of Balewood—not by a long shot.

Landing that billion-dollar deal from the Mavis family meant the Gordons would instantly rise to become the richest family in Hoverdale.

It was like winning the lottery. **How** could James and his wife not be thrilled?

Once they had thanked the Gordon family, **Lauren** and her loved ones finally returned to Balewood.

The return of someone like Lauren naturally caused a stir throughout the city.

The Mavis estate **was** flooded **with** guests. Every day, a new stream of visitors arrived.

In the past, it had mostly been people from the business world.

But things had changed. Now, the Mavis family **was** connecting with people from all kinds of circles.

They were no longer just a business family. Not anymore.

Of course, when Flynn, Jim, and Rayne **heard that** Lauren **was** back, they were ecstatic.

Rayne threw an **arm** around Lauren's shoulders, beaming. "Laurie, you have no idea how jealous my classmates are that I've got a scientist like you for a friend."

Flynn and Jim **looked** just as proud.

Lauren was the youngest of the **group** in terms of age, but having **lived** two lives, **she was** actually the most m

mature of them

all.

She loved watching them laugh and **joke** around. She loved the warm, **carefree** feeling of being with them.

This time around, the people in her life weren't filled with mockery and malice like they had been in her past life. Now, she was genuinely happy.

And nothing **made** her feel happier than seeing **Mia** again.

After a week of rest at **home**, the president of **Hoverdale Tech University** personally invited Lauren to return to her alma mater and give a speech to the students

There was no reason for Lauren to **refuse**.

What she didn't expect was **to** see **Mia** in the crowd after the speech.

She only found out later **that she** hadn't just changed her own fate this time—**she** had changed Mia's, **too**,

Maybe it was destiny. Maybe she and Mia were always meant to be friends.

Chapter 387 The Genius and Her Shadow

Finished

Mia knew she wasn't a genius. But she never gave up. She pushed herself to the limit, studied harder than anyone, and held the top spot in the entire school for years.

She kept skipping grades until, at fourteen, she was accepted into Hoverdale Tech University—becoming that year's **youngest** SAT champion

the second-youngest student in the university's history, right after Lauren.

With Lauren as her role model, the school held high expectations for Mia.

Her greatest dream was to walk the same **path** Lauren had taken.

Now, she was Lauren's junior. And someday, she hoped to be her colleague,

It was with that dream in her heart that she had applied to National Defense University—and now, she was finally meeting her idol.

After Lauren's speech, a swarm of students surrounded her, forming an impenetrable circle.

Everyone's eyes sparkled as they looked at her.

The crowd was massive, and everyone wanted an autograph.

But Lauren's gaze found only Mia, Saw only **Mia**.

Mia got into college? At just fourteen?

Lauren had always known Mia was a brilliant girl

as just a tragedy that, in her past life, Mia had gotten dragged down by her.

She hadn't just broken her arm trying to protect her—
she had also gone on to kill for her, seeking revenge and shedding

Marilyn had been so kind. Naturally, the daughter she raised was the same. But because of Lauren. Mia had ended up on a path of violence.

She owed Mia and Marilyn far too much.

Lauren's eyes welled with tears. The noise around her seemed to fade away. Step **by** step, she walked toward Mia.

Mia had been excited the moment she saw Lauren walk on stage.

Now, watching Lauren move closer with every step, her heart pounded wildly.

Was Lauren looking at her? Was she really walking toward her?

She couldn't understand why Lauren's gaze was fixed on her. Her cheeks **flushed** pink, and her mind went completely **blank**.

Even her voice trembled "Lauren Could I could I have your autograph?"

Lauren stopped right in front of her and took the pen and paper from Mia's hands without hesitation. She **quickly** scrawled

The crowd around the

screamed even louder than Mia.

Mia clutched the signed paper, giddy beyond words.

And then she heard Lauren say, "Young lady, what's your name?"

"**M—my** name is Mia Tarvis"

Oh my god—

Lauren was so gentle, so kind, so perfect. She wanted to just melt into her arms.

Mia stared wide-eyed at her.

Finished

Then Lauren added, “Mia, getting into National Defense University at such a young age ... you must be incredibly gifted. I believe **that** when you **graduate**, you’ll do great things for this country. I’d be honored to **have you as** a colleague one day?”

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Chapter 388 Never Again

Being praised by her idol left Mia so overwhelmed she didn’t even know what to say.

She clutched Lauren’s hands tightly, unable to look away from her. The more she looked, the more she liked her.

Even Mia herself didn’t understand why she felt this way.

It was as if something in the universe had destined her to be drawn to Lauren.

It wasn’t just because Lauren was a genius—it was that she naturally clicked with her.

Mia had grown up without a father, raised solely by her mother. Because of that, her classmates often mocked her, calling her a fatherless stray.

Her personality wasn’t exactly sweet, either, but around Lauren, she found herself instinctively hiding all her negative

emotions.

With hopeful eyes, Mia asked, “Hey, can I take a photo with you?”

Lauren, of course, didn’t refuse. Not only did she take the photo, she even set it as her phone’s wallpaper.

“I’ll be waiting for you at the research institute.”

Lauren’s special attention stunned everyone present.

“Oh my god, Mia’s so lucky! She actually caught the school genius’s eye!”

“This is insane. Is this what they mean by like minds recognizing each other?”

“We’re all just standing here jealous as hell.”

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Hearing the amazement around her, Mia felt warm inside and nodded firmly. “Don’t worry. I’ll work hard to get into the institute and become your colleague.”

The speech concluded in complete success.

Inspired by Lauren, Mia pushed herself even harder. Even at a university overflowing with prodigies in national defense technology, her youth didn’t hold her back one bit.

Lauren **was** escorted out of the school by the principal and several others.

After a long day, she was exhausted and just wanted to get home and collapse into bed.

What she didn’t expect **was** to run into Alice the moment she stepped out of the car.

Lauren no longer dwelled on the things Alice had done to her in their past life, but that didn’t mean she wanted to see her.

Some people just didn’t know when to stay gone.

“What **are** you doing here?” Lauren asked coldly.

Alice winced **at** her emotionless tone. “Lauren, I just wanted to....”

Lauren cut her off, annoyed. “Yeah, **yeah**, you came to find me, right? We don’t **have** anything **to** do with each other anymore. I just want us to live our lives separately. Isn’t that better?”

“I won’t bother you, and you don’t come pestering me. I’m someone who holds a grudge — doesn’t matter how many **lives** I have, I’ll never forget what you all did to me. I’ve got a strong **taste** for **revenge**, **so** don’t ever show your face in front of me again. I might just **kill** you.”

Alice staggered like she’d been struck, nearly losing her balance.

To an outsider, she would’ve looked completely heartbroken and pitiful.

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Chapter 388 Never Again

But to Lauren, this display was the most disgusting thing of all.

+8 Pearls

Because in her past life, every time the Bennett family hurt her, Alice would pull the same act. Anyone watching would think she was the one being mistreated, when the one being torn apart was Lauren.

“That’s enough.” Lauren’s irritation spiked.

“Alice, put away those tears. They just make you look fake. Let me warn you one last time—

I don’t want to see you, and I don’t want you going to my parents’ house either. This is the last time. If you come back, don’t blame me for what I do.”

Her parents were her bottom line.

Alice showing up at the Mavis family’s home over and over would only upset them. Lauren wanted her parents to live happily, not be dragged into the mess of the Bennett family.

She’d been through too much unprovoked pain. Even if Alice had changed, people don’t just shed their nature. Lauren didn’t

trust her.

That’s why she hit her where it hurt—with words sharper than any blade.

Lauren said a lot, and not a single word was gentle. Each sentence pierced Alice like a thousand arrows.

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To be hurt by the one you love... it was unbearable.

But Lauren had suffered for years at the hands of those she loved. How had she managed to survive it?

“I’m sorry, Lauren,” Alice choked out.

“If you’re really sorry, then disappear from my life. Never show your face again.”

With that, Lauren turned and walked into the house.

Alice stood there watching her leave, tears streaming down uncontrollably.

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Chapter 389 A Bowl of Noodles

This was the consequence of her own actions—Alice knew she deserved it.

All she could hope for now was that Lauren would live a happy life in this lifetime.

And honestly, Lauren didn't need her anymore.

The Mavis family adored her, treated her like a princess.

Felix, the one who had been her redemption in her past life, was now by her side.

She had a group of wealthy and influential friends. No one dared bully her anymore.

Today, Alice had even brought Lauren the person she cherished most.

With that, she could leave in peace.

Alice turned and walked away, unwilling but resolute.

Inside the villa, Lauren pushed open the door and was instantly greeted by the familiar aroma of a home-cooked meal.

Her eyes drifted toward the dining table, where a bowl of noodles sat waiting.

Step by step, she walked over, staring in disbelief at the steaming bowl.

That smell—it was just like....

“Lauren, you're back.”

Madam Shirley's voice rang out behind her. She smiled warmly. “You must be hungry. Come try this bowl of noodles.”

Lauren sat down and took a spoonful.

The taste hit her instantly—so familiar it made her nose sting. Tears welled up in her eyes and spilled over before she could stop them.

In the seventeen years since she'd been reborn, she had eaten countless delicacies, but in her heart, no dish ever compared to Marilyn's noodles.

And now, tasting that flavor again—it broke her.

Huge **tears** splashed into the bowl as she slurped the noodles down between sobs.

Madam Shirley chuckled gently. “Look at you, poor thing. Slow down or you’ll choke.”

Lauren devoured every last bite, even drinking all the soup. Then she wiped her nose forcefully, forcing **back** the **tears**, and finally turned to **ask**, “Mom, who made this bowl of noodles?”

Madam Shirley pulled a **tissue** from the table and gently wiped the remaining **tears** from Lauren’s cheeks.

“I told you **to slow** down. Look at you, crying from eating too fast.”

“Come on, Mom, **tell me**. Who made **it**? It **was** really, really good.”

Madam Shirley laughed. “I thought **so** too, which is why **I** asked her to **stay**.”

Then she turned toward the kitchen and called out, “Marilyn, could you come here for a moment?”

The **next** second, a **face** Lauren knew better than her own appeared before her.

At the sight of her, Lauren could no longer hold back her emotions. She ran over and wrapped Marilyn in a fierce hug.

“Marilyn...”

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Chapter 389 A Bowl of Noodles

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Marilyn stood frozen in shock, confusion written all over her face. Why was the Mavis family’s young lady being so affectionate?

Madam Shirley was also surprised. “Lauren, what’s going on?”

Lauren forced herself to calm down. “Mom, I just really love her noodles. That’s all.”

"If you like them that much," Marilyn said sincerely, "I'll make them for you whenever you want."

Lauren nodded eagerly, eyes never leaving Marilyn's **face**.

But then, she suddenly thought of Alice.

Just now, she had assumed Alice had come to the Mavis home to bother her. But now she realized—maybe she had misunderstood.

Maybe Alice had come to bring Marilyn to her.

Because no one in this world understood what Marilyn meant to her better than Alice did .

Alice had finally done something that truly made her happy.

+8 Pearls

Letting go of Marilyn, she smiled. "Marilyn, do you know how to make dumplings? One bowl of noodles wasn't enough."

Marilyn grinned. "Of course! Just give me a bit. I'll make some right now."

She cheerfully headed to the kitchen.

Lauren walked toward the front door. But once she stepped outside, she found no sign of Alice.

She stood there, dazed.

Madam Shirley came up behind her, placing **a** comforting hand on her shoulder.

"Lauren, your birth mother sent Marilyn over. She said Marilyn is kind and caring, and she wanted her to stay and take care of you. She thought you'd like her."

She paused, then added softly, "I admit I held some resentment toward your birth mother in the past, but over the years, she's changed a lot. Lauren, if you ever-

Before she could finish, Lauren spun around and threw her arms around her.

"Mom, I don't want that. In my heart, you'll always be my mother. You're the only one I'll ever **call** 'Mom.'"

Madam Shirley **was so** moved, she almost burst into tears.

She **had always** sensed Alice's desire to pull Lauren away from her, and it terrified her.

But hearing Lauren's words now, her heart felt completely at **ease**.

Chapter 390 A Daughter's Warmth

Though she knew it wasn't right to **steal** someone else's daughter, Madam Shirley wanted to be selfish—for once. Lauren was her daughter. Always had been. And she didn't want to let go.

It had to be fate. Some higher power must have heard her wish for a daughter and sent Lauren, such a wonderful child, into her life.

Madam Shirley took a deep breath, taking in the soft, sweet scent on her daughter.

When Lauren was little, she'd smelled like warm milk, and Shirley had wanted nothing more than to keep her close, protect her with everything she had.

Now that Lauren was grown, the milky scent was gone, but a delicate floral fragrance had taken its place. It was still **so** comforting, so Lauren.

*Oh, my sweet girl... how did **you** turn **out** so smart, so kind, so perfect?*

No matter how old Lauren got, she would always be her sweet little girl.

"Ma'am, Lauren, dinner's ready."

"Come on now. Didn't you say you weren't full? Let's **go** eat," Madam Shirley said, tugging Lauren toward the dining table.

Lauren picked up a spoon, about to dig in, but paused suddenly.

"Mom, where's Dad and my brother?"

"They're still at the company," Shirley said. "Our company's working on an independently developed holographic gaming headset. It doesn't have a spokesperson yet, so your dad and your brother are busy discussing endorsement deals."

The launch of the holographic headset had sent shockwaves across the world.

Now, every big-name celebrity in Corwynale was scrambling to land the endorsement.

Being chosen as the face of the headset meant instant fame on a global scale.

Lauren nodded. "They haven't eaten yet, have they?"

“No. They’ve been so busy lately, neither of them has time to eat properly.”

Lauren pressed her lips together and turned to Marilyn. “Marilyn, are there any dumplings left?”

“There **are**.”

“Then could you pack some for me? I’m going to take lunch over to my dad and Elliot.”

In her **past** life, she’d **always** worried about Elliot skipping meals and triggering his stomach problems. She used to bring him food whenever she had time.

But he **never** appreciated it. He never let her into the company either, saying she looked shabby and embarrassed him.

In this **life**, she had **a** family who truly loved her. She would give them everything she could.

Even someone like Elliot had enjoyed **her** home-cooked meals there was no **reason** her dad and brother shouldn’t.

Lauren quickly finished her food, then **grabbed** the thermal container and hopped on her little electric **scooter**.

“**Be careful, sweetheart!**”

“Don’t worry, Mom!”

Lauren arrived at the **company** with the container in hand.

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Chapter 390 A Daughter’s Warmth

The receptionist stopped her at the front desk. “Miss, who are you here to see?”

Lauren smiled politely. “I’m here to see Mr. Timely and President Victor.”

+8 Pearls

“I’m sorry, but the chairman and the president are in meetings. If you don’t have an appointment, I can’t let you in.”

Lauren held up the food container.
“I’m here to bring lunch to my father and my brother.”

The receptionist froze.

Father? Brother?

She took a closer look at Lauren—then her eyes flew wide open.

No wonder the girl had looked familiar. She just hadn’t been able to place her at first.

Now it hit her—she’d seen Lauren in the news.

This was Corwynale’s youngest scientific prodigy, the daughter of their chairman and the sister of their president.

It was because of Lauren that Mavis Group even had access to the holographic tech they used to develop the headset.

The receptionist was nearly trembling. “You’re really the young miss?”

Lauren quickly made a hush gesture. “Can I go in now?”

The receptionist shut her mouth and nodded furiously.

Lauren gave her a sweet smile. “Thank you.”

Ahhhh! She’s so pretty, so gentle... So smart and talented... And she’s the heiress of Mavis Group—but she’s so down to earth! She’s perfect!

Lauren stepped into the elevator.

The receptionist immediately called the executive assistant.

“Ms. Lauren just arrived at the company with food for the chairman and Mr. Victor.”

The assistant looked toward the office, where the chairman and Victor were currently interviewing celebrity candidates. He hesitated for a second, then made his way in and leaned down to whisper in Victor’s ear.

“Sir, Ms. Lauren is here with lunch for you and the chairman. She’s in your father’s office right now.”

Victor’s stern face instantly softened, glowing with warmth.

He shot to his feet, his chair screeching loudly across the floor.

All the celebrities in the room looked around, confused. The famously cold and unshakable President Victor was suddenly acting like someone had flipped a switch. What could've caused such a reaction?

Mr. Timely frowned at his son.

Victor leaned in and whispered, "Dad, Lauren's here. She brought us lunch. She's waiting in your office right now."

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