

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 1

The onlookers murmured, “So, she’s the top socialite in Northville. She’s stunning, but it’s a shame she’s a killer. After three years behind bars, her life is probably over.

“What’s the point of her beauty if she’s so ruthless? I heard Dylan Clifford, the heir of the Clifford family, put her behind bars himself. Everyone in Northville knows how much Audrey Hernandez was infatuated with him.

“Not only did her fiancé break up with her, but he also personally had her imprisoned. I heard the Hernandez family even disowned her. If I were her, I’d have given up. How can she still show her face to the world?”

In Northville Prison.

Sarah Hernandez gazed at Audrey, clad in prison attire, a smug expression crossing her face. “Audrey, it must be awful to be sent to prison by the man you love the most. I came here specifically to see you and share some good news. I’m getting engaged to Dylan.”

“Is that so? Congratulations,” Audrey replied, her face pale and indifferent as she cast a cold gaze at Sarah, her half-sister. When Dylan had personally placed the handcuffs on her, her heart had shattered.

“Audrey, you should understand that from now on, everything that was once yours – the title of the top socialite, being Mrs. Clifford, the status of Miss Hernandez – it all belongs to me.

“Perhaps you didn’t realize, but Dylan has always loved me. You were just a nuisance to him. Enjoy your time in prison.” Sarah laughed triumphantly, finally feeling victorious over the woman she had always envied.

“Sarah, tell him I no longer want him. He means nothing to me from now on,” Audrey replied coldly.

As Sarah left the prison, she made a phone call. “It’s me. Have her transferred to a men’s prison. Ensure she faces some hardship,” Sarah instructed coldly.

With that, a malicious smile crept onto her face as she thought wickedly, ‘Audrey, you’re going to wish you were dead in there.’

At Clifford Mansion

A tall, slender figure stood by the window, his eyes akin to twinkling stars, his brows stern, and his exquisitely handsome face exuding an air of indifference. His entire

demeanor spoke of inherent nobility and authority. Merely by his presence, he exuded a commanding aura that sent shivers down others' spines.

After a long silence, Dylan's icy voice echoed in the study. "What else did she say?"

Behind him, Sarah, adorned with delicate makeup, gazed affectionately at the noble and handsome man before her. "Audrey said she doesn't want you anymore. She's done with you," Sarah stated, attempting to discern his reaction but finding his expression inscrutable.

Sarah bit her lip, feeling a mix of infatuation and frustration. 'Without Audrey, this most noble man in Northville would be mine, she thought.

After a long pause, the cold, noble man spoke again. "Richard, throw her out. She is not to set foot in Clifford Mansion ever again."

Sarah's face turned pale as she looked at him in shock. "Dylan," she uttered, her voice trembling with disbelief.

"Richard!" Dylan's voice grew colder. The next moment, Richard Jackson, clad in black, escorted Sarah out.

"Get Dr. Freeman here," Dylan commanded again.

"Yes, sir."

Shortly after, a doctor arrived. "Mr. Clifford," Dr. Freeman greeted respectfully.

"Do whatever it takes to restore my memory," Dylan said firmly.

Seven years later.

"Audrey, wake up!" Brian Hernandez exclaimed.

Audrey was abruptly awakened from a nightmare, still haunted by the shadowy figure that seemed to engulf her entirely. Since inhabiting this body, the nightmare had recurred frequently, causing her to furrow her brow in irritation.

"Audrey, did you have a nightmare again?" Brian inquired.

The woman, whose typically icy features now softened, displayed a rare warmth as she gently patted the head of the little boy beside her. "Yes. Are we almost there?"

"Yes, we'll land in about half an hour," Brian replied.

At Northville Airport.

A stunning woman and a handsome young boy walked out, drawing the gaze of numerous passersby.

The woman donned a black, waist-cinching dress that accentuated her slender legs and shapely figure, rendering her a captivating sight. Her exquisite features and aloof demeanor exuded an aura of nobility and detachment.

Beside her, the boy, aged around five or six, possessed an equally exquisite face, exuding a cool and impressive demeanor as he pushed a large suitcase.

Shortly after, a black SUV pulled up, and the two got in.

Not far behind, inside a black sedan, someone exclaimed in surprise, "Look at that woman. Doesn't she resemble Audrey?"

Cade Smith stared in disbelief at the scene ahead. "After vanishing for years, she's returned."

Two other young men glanced ahead, catching sight of Audrey's stunning face, and couldn't help but click their tongues in admiration. Three years behind bars, four years vanished, and now she's back, they thought.

"Should we inform Dylan?" Cade asked, feeling conflicted.

"You think Dylan isn't aware she's back? Stop worrying, and let's move." Shawn-Longman glanced at the departing SUV, noting the impressive license plate but unable to discern who had picked Audrey up.

In the SUV.

"How come you're back all of a sudden?" Jessica Miller asked, glancing at the mother and son in the back seat.

"To save someone," Audrey said, her gaze fixed outside the window, her exquisite face carrying a trace of nonchalance and indifference.

"Anyone who can bring 'Magic Hand' back must be someone significant," Jessica remarked.

Just a side mission. Tomorrow night, the Bamboo Reishi will be at Silvandel Auction House," Audrey replied.

"Convenient timing for a side mission, huh?" Jessica chuckled, then turned to the little boy beside her. "Brian, want to visit my research institute?"

"No, Lucas said I must protect Mommy at all times. Otherwise, he'll cut off my supplies," Brian insisted.

"With your mommy's capabilities, no one in Northville can touch her," Jessica remarked. She knew better than anyone how formidable Audrey was. Even with the entire Aripary Research Institute at her disposal, she might not be a match for Audrey.

"Lucas said we must always be vigilant. If Mommy gets taken away, Lucas and I will be motherless," Brian said, wondering, 'Especially since the big bad guy who once hurt Mommy is still in Northville. We can't afford to let our guard down!'"

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 2

After dinner, Jessica drove them to their hotel. Just as they arrived, Audrey received a text message on her phone, which read, [Ms. Hernandez, have you arrived? Please come. to my house for a meal tomorrow.]

Audrey replied, [No need, I will come the day after tomorrow in the morning.]

The response read, [Okay, then. Rest well, Ms. Hernandez. See you the day after tomorrow.]

Audrey had just finished replying to the message when the doorbell rang. The hotel manager stood respectfully outside. "Ms. Hernandez, someone just sent this for you."

Thank you, Audrey said as she accepted the package and glanced at it.

"Audrey; is this from Mr. Davis?" Brian asked, coming out of the bathroom and noticing the invitation on the table.

Audrey nodded and sent a message to Jason Davis before turning to Brian. "We'll go to Silvandel Auction House tomorrow night."

Brian obediently nodded. "Got it. I'll go chat with Lucas now."

The presidential suite featured a bedroom and two living rooms. After Brian returned to his room, he promptly retrieved his laptop from his backpack to video chat with Lucas. On the other end, Lucas, with his stern little face, appeared older and more mature than his years.

"Lucas, I'm here," Brian said.

Lucas had been waiting for a while. "Brian, is Mom asleep?"

"Not yet. Mr. Davis just sent an invitation. Audrey is taking me to the Silvandel Auction House tomorrow," Brian replied.

Lucas nodded, not forgetting to remind him, "Keep your card safe. If Mom likes something, make sure to buy it for her."

"Got it. I have money too." Brian nodded. "Let's get started."

"Okay," Lucas agreed. The twins' faces turned serious as Brian's chubby fingers began typing swiftly. Lines of code flashed on the screen, followed by red alert signals as his attack was blocked.

Brian's expression hardened with determination. The bad guy's company's firewall is tougher than I expected, he thought.

Without a word, Brian focused, his small, chubby hands moving quickly over the keyboard. After a while, his serious face broke into a triumphant smile. "Done! Haha, I even planted a virus to make their system crash."

Lucas, maintaining his stern demeanor, reminded him, "Make sure to clean up any traces so they can't track us."

"Don't worry. They won't." Brian chuckled. Then he was surprised when he saw the face. of the bad guy. "Lucas, Lucas, the bad guy looks just like you!"

"Oh. I'm going to sleep," Lucas replied coolly and ended the video call. In the video, his stern little face indeed resembled the photo on the screen, just a smaller version. Shortly after, Lucas sent a message, saying, [Send me the picture of that bad guy.]

Brian sent the photo to Lucas, saved it on his phone, and encrypted it to prevent Audrey from discovering it.

Meanwhile, the entire system had crashed at Clifford Group headquarters in Northville. The IT team worked through the night to fix it. Even Dylan had been called from Clifford Mansion to the company.

"Have you found out who attacked us?" Dylan's cold voice carried a dangerous undertone.

"Not yet, but we found this," Richard showed Dylan the footage from the IT department. On the black screen were the words "Big Bad Guy" in blue, with a colorful lollipop and the letter "R" in the right corner.

It seemed like a prank, but who would dare to play such a trick on Clifford Group, the Dylan, the heir to most powerful company in Northville? Plus, everyone knew th Group, the Clifford Group, held the reins. Dylan was known for his ruthlessness and cunning, even sending his fiancée to prison.

“Bring in Patrick Murphy for an investigation Dylan ordered, his eyes narrowing with a dangerous glint.

“Mr. Clifford, the source appears to be from the Grandview Hotel. However, the hacker’s skills are impressive, nearly on par with mine,” Patrick reported half an hour later.

Richard frowned, pondering, ‘If the hacker is as skilled as Patrick, they must be formidable. Who in Northville could pose such a threat?’

“Monitor Grandview Hotel closely and report any suspicious activity,” Dylan ordered.

After resolving the crisis, Dylan and Richard departed. As they settled into the car, Shawn’s call came in. “Mr. Clifford, please come to Northville Hospital the day after tomorrow. My grandfather’s teacher is arriving to perform surgery on Samuel Roscente.”

“Got it.” Dylan agreed.

The Longman family held a prestigious position in the medical community, and Shawn’s grandfather, Aaron Longman, was widely recognized as a prominent figure in the field of medicine across the nation, particularly in the realm of surgery.

Dylan had been under Aaron’s treatment for headaches for the past seven years. Unfortunately, the condition persisted without a cure and had only worsened over time.

At Silvandel Auction House the next day, the biggest auction venue in Northville, the elites gathered.

At half past six, a black car pulled up at the entrance, catching the attention of onlookers. “Isn’t that the Hernandez family’s car?” someone remarked, noting the distinctive license plate. Before long, the car door swung open, and a trio stepped out with poise.

A middle-aged man in a silver-gray suit, looking remarkably spry for his age, accompanied by a graceful woman in a rose-red evening gown, her demeanor exuding elegance. Between them walked a young woman in a white dress, radiating both elegance and gracefulness.

Their arrival caused quite a commotion. “It’s indeed the Hernandez family. I didn’t anticipate seeing them here.”

“I heard that Mr. Dylan Clifford is also attending. It makes sense for the Hernandez family to be here. They’re supposed to get engaged soon.”

“With Miss Audrey Hernandez in prison, I thought the engagement was off. But it seems they’ve just replaced her with a younger Miss Hernandez.”

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 3

With the impending alliance between the Clifford and Hernandez families, people approached William Hernandez to exchange pleasantries and praised Sarah. "This must be Sarah. You're looking more beautiful than ever, truly the top socialite of Northville," Michael Jolson said.

"Mr. Johnson, you're so sweet. Just the other day, I saw your daughter Emily, and she's truly stunning." Sarah replied.

Sarah, already a popular star in the entertainment industry, relished the compliments. Her gentle smile and elegant demeanor attracted a lot of attention. She was particularly eager to see Dylan tonight.

Just as everyone was about to enter, a voice called out from behind. "Hey, isn't that Audrey, who was sent to prison seven years ago?"

The mention of Audrey's name wiped the smiles off the faces of the Hernandez family. Sarah's smile froze, and she quickly glanced back.

Outside Silvandel Auction House, the previously lively crowd parted as two figures approached. It was as if they were walking with starlight, dazzling and captivating all eyes.

Audrey wore a black strapless evening gown that complemented her smooth, glowing skin. The strapless design emphasized her long, swan-like neck and graceful collarbones, enhancing her voluptuous figure. Her wavy black hair and impeccable makeup further heightened her breathtaking beauty, leaving onlookers in awe.

Beside her, the little boy in a plaid three-piece suit, with his delicate features, looked like a charming little prince.

Seeing Audrey's beautiful face, Sarah's eyes filled with shock, jealousy, and hatred. 'Audrey has actually returned! She should have died in prison, especially after being sent to a men's facility, where most women wouldn't survive the torment. But how is this possible? She not only survived but returned more dazzling than ever.

'So what if Audrey is back? Northville isn't the same as it was seven years ago. And she's even brought a bastard child with her, Sarah pondered, sneering inwardly. Her disdainful gaze swept over the little boy standing next to Audrey.

The crowd began to murmur. "It really is her. Weren't there rumors she died in prison? How is she out?"

"Not only did she go to prison, but she also brought back a bastard child. She must have come today because she knew Dylan would be here. How shameless!"

“Does she really think she can enter Silvandel Auction House? It's not a place for criminals like her. She'll be thrown out for sure.”

The crowd remembered the scene from seven years ago when Dylan personally handcuffed Audrey and sent her to prison. They looked at her with contempt and ridicule. ‘Dylan dumped her, the Hernandez family disowned her, and yet she still acts. as if she's the same Northville socialite, completely oblivious to reality,’ they thought.

Seeing the little boy by Audrey's side intensified their scorn. ‘Rumors have it that Audrey cheated on Dylan, and it seems true, given the child, they wondered.

Hearing the crowd's whispers, William's face flushed with anger. He glared at Audrey and shouted, “You shameless woman! How dare you come back! Take your bastard and get out. You think you can enter Silvandel Auction House? You've already brought more than enough disgrace.”

William's rage was fueled by the belief that Audrey had tarnished the family's reputation.

“Audrey, I can't believe you're back. I thought you left us to run away with that man. Is child? He's: this your so much.” Sarah's Face lit up with surprise as she looked at Audrey, feigning delight at her return. However, her words stunned everyone present.

‘So, Audrey left the family to run off with another man after getting out of prison? No wonder she has a child now. The man was probably someone she met in prison, and the child was born from their illicit relationship. How shameless!’ thought the crowd.

Sarah was pleased with the chaos her words caused and glanced smugly at Audrey. She thought, ‘Audrey, seven years ago, you couldn't beat me, and the same holds true now. I will crush you underfoot.

Suddenly, a loud slap sounded, startling everyone. Audrey stood there with a cold stare, a sneer playing on her lips, exuding arrogance and defiance. “Sarah, don't play games with me, or you'll regret it,” she warned icily.

“You wicked woman! How dare you lay a hand on Sarah! I'll teach you a lesson,” William roared angrily, his fists clenched as he lunged toward Audrey.

But Audrey was no longer the same. She seized William's wrist and tightened her grip, causing him to pale with pain.

“Let go! Are you trying to break my hand?” William's face contorted with anger and pain.

“I suggest you refrain from provoking me unless you want your hand broken,” Audrey said coldly, tightening her grip even more.

William had no doubt that she could break his hand. Sarah hadn't expected Audrey to hit her and felt both angry and humiliated. But her face betrayed a mix of worry and hurt. "Audrey, how could you stoop to this? You're only disappointing and hurting Dad."

"Sarah, enough with the act. I've hit you once, and I won't hesitate to do it again if you push me," Audrey said icily, her expression dripping with disdain.

Sarah was certain that Audrey would slap her again. She was furious that after seven years, Audrey had become so difficult to handle.

Observing the flicker of reluctance and animosity in Sarah's eyes, Audrey sneered. "Don't fret. I'll reclaim whatever the Hernandez family owes me." She pondered, 'Since inheriting this life, I'm determined to ensure those who wronged the original host face consequences.'

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 4

Audrey let go of William's wrist and headed toward the Silvandel Auction House with Brian.

Behind her, Sarah, unwilling to relent, bit her lip and remarked pointedly, "Audrey, do you really think you can just stroll into the Silvandel Auction House? You need an invitation to gain entry."

Sarah harbored a deep-seated hatred toward Audrey and naturally sought to humiliate her. Since Audrey had slapped her, Sarah yearned to witness Audrey become the laughingstock of everyone present and be summarily ejected from Silvandel Auction House.

Sarah pondered, "The Silvandel Auction House strictly issues invitations to Northville's elite and prestigious families. Even affluent but ordinary families wouldn't make the cut. It's inconceivable that someone like Audrey, disgraced and once a convict, could possess an invitation."

Audrey glanced at Sarah with a smile. "Who said I don't have an invitation?" With that, she produced a black invitation adorned with platinum edges, holding Sarah's gaze with calm assurance.

Sarah had initially believed Audrey truly possessed an invitation, but upon seeing the black card, she sneered. Onlookers who had stayed to watch the drama began to laugh mockingly. Their gazes towards Audrey were filled with disdain and mockery.

"Audrey, if you're going to forge an invitation, at least do your homework. Don't you know the invitations for Silvandel Auction House are always white?" Sarah remarked, almost bursting into laughter at Audrey's stupidity.

'Audrey is truly naive, thinking she can stroll into Silvandel Auction House with a fake invitation. In less than half an hour, she'll become the latest joke among Northville's elite, Sarah thought.

Audrey remained oblivious to the mockery around her and regarded Sarah with disdain. "Sarah, dare to make a bet with me?" she asked, her eyes glinting with calculation.

Brian, noticing the smirk on his mother's face, knew she was about to stir up trouble.

"What's the bet?" Sarah asked.

"I bet this invitation is authentic, and I can gain entry into Silvandel Auction House with it, Audrey said, Sarah inwardly sincerity, thinking, Audrey is digging her own grave. The invitations. have always been white. There's no way she'll get in with a black one.

"Alright. And what if you lose?" Sarah asked, brimming with confidence.

"If I lose, I'll kneel and apologize to you. But if you lose, you have to kneel and bow to me three times," Audrey replied.

"Agreed!" Sarah said eagerly. To ensure Audrey couldn't back out, she turned to the guests and declared, "We'll need witnesses for this bet."

The guests readily agreed. "Miss Sarah, don't worry. I'll be a witness," one of them assured her.

"We will, too," chimed in another. Sarah thanked them, casting a triumphant glance at Audrey.

Audrey disregarded Sarah's smugness and handed her black invitation to the staff at the Silvandel Auction House. The staff member glanced at it and sneered. "I'm sorry, but this invitation is counterfeit. You can't enter.

Upon hearing this, Sarah smiled triumphantly. "Audrey, you've lost."

"Not necessarily," Audrey said, casting a cold smile at Sarah. She then pulled out her phone and sent a message.

"Audrey, a loss is a loss. You're not thinking of calling for backup, are you?" Sarah taunted.

"You'll find out soon enough whether it's real or not," Audrey replied calmly, showing no sign of panic.

A moment later, a hurried figure emerged from the Silvandel Auction House and made a beeline for Audrey. The staff member who had inspected Audrey's invitation turned pale.

"Why are you still out here? Why haven't you gone inside?" Jason asked, hurrying over after receiving Audrey's message.

"Mr. Davis, they won't let us in. This gentleman here insists our invitation is fake," Brian explained, gesturing towards the staff member.

The staff member, already pale, felt his knees go weak upon hearing Brian's words. I'm doomed. This woman knows Mr. Davis, and that invitation might actually be genuine,' he thought.

Jason narrowed his eyes at the staff member and said coldly, "You're fired." The staff member collapsed to the ground in fear. The other onlookers, puzzled by the situation, glanced curiously at Jason.

Although Jason was the person in charge of Silvandel Auction House, he rarely appeared in public. Naturally, not many people recognized him. Watching him dismiss the staff member with just one sentence left everyone speculating about his true identity.

"Let's go inside," Jason said to Audrey, his tone respectful.

"Wait a minute. Sir, my sister's invitation is fake. Are you sure she can enter? Even if you work for Silvandel Auction House, you don't have the authority to let someone in with a fake invitation," Sarah said, her voice full of dissatisfaction.

Jason chuckled at Sarah as if she had said the funniest thing. "Ms. Hernandez, you have no idea what you're talking about. Just because you've never seen a black invitation doesn't mean they don't exist. It simply means you're not important enough to receive one. Only those of the highest status get black invitations. Besides Audrey, Dylan also has one."

He didn't mention that Audrey's invitation was even more special, adorned with platinum edges. Moreover, Audrey wasn't merely a guest; she was the rightful owner of Silvandel Auction House.

"Impossible!" Sarah's face drained of color. 'How could Audrey possess such a prestigious invitation?' she wondered, refusing to believe it.

The other guests were equally shocked. The idea of Audrey, who had been imprisoned and disowned by her family, possessing such a prestigious invitation was beyond their comprehension.

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 5

"You must be doing this intentionally. It's obvious you're a staff member Audrey bribed. Aren't you afraid Silvandel Auction House will dismiss you for this?" Sarah adamantly refused to believe that Audrey could possess such an invitation. It had to be counterfeit.

Jason chuckled abruptly and regarded Sarah with a hint of amusement. Then, he gestured towards the dismissed staff member. "Tell her who I am."

Sarah and the others turned toward the staff member, who explained, "This is Mr. Davis, the General Manager of Silvandel Auction House."

Something seemed to explode in Sarah's mind. She shook her head in disbelief, wondering. 'How is this possible? Audrey is supposed to be a disgraced murderer, despised by everyone. How could she possibly know the general manager of Silvandel Auction House?'

The other guests were equally stunned to discover that the young, handsome man was the General Manager of Silvandel Auction House. Their expressions shifted abruptly.

Sarah, you lost," Audrey said icily, her gaze fixed on Sarah with a mocking smile. "Now, it's time for you to bow."

Sarah's face drained of color as she stared at Audrey, her voice quivering with fear and resentment. "Audrey, you did this intentionally, didn't you? You knew the invitation was genuine and orchestrated this to humiliate me."

"I never claimed the invitation was fake. It was you who chose to challenge me. Now, you must face the consequences of your actions," Audrey replied icily.

"Audrey, she's your sister. How dare you force her to kneel? Go ahead and try it!" William suddenly shouted angrily.

Audrey glanced at William, her voice icy. Then why don't you do it for her?"

"You..." William's face flushed red with anger.

Sarah bit her lip, determined not to kneel and bow to Audrey. Just as she was about to feign fainting, Brian, who had been standing quietly by Audrey's side, suddenly smirked mischievously. His chubby little hand moved discreetly.

"Thud!" Sarah, who had been adamant about not kneeling, suddenly dropped to her knees and respectfully bowed three times toward Audrey. The sudden turn of events left everyone in stunned silence.

“Sarah, Sarah, what’s gotten into you?” Rebecca Hernandez exclaimed, rushing over. As a prominent public figure, how could her daughter kneel to this wretched woman? This was absolutely unacceptable.

Upon hearing her mother’s voice, Sarah snapped back to reality. Seeing herself kneeling on the ground, she turned pale and quickly stood up. “Mom, what just happened to me?” Sarah had no idea why she had lost control and knelt.

“You just knelt and bowed to Audrey three times,” Rebecca said, her tone tinged with concern and disbelief.

“What?” Sarah exclaimed, a mix of shock and anger coloring her voice. Realizing she had involuntarily knelt to Audrey, Sarah paled and started trembling with anger. “Audrey, this is your doing, isn’t it? You must have done something!” Sarah accused.

Audrey laughed coldly at Sarah, who had finally dropped her act. “Sarah, don’t make unfounded accusations,” she replied calmly.

“It was you! It had to be you!” Sarah seethed with hatred, wishing she could smash Audrey to pieces.

“Audrey, cut it out! Apologize to Sarah and get out of here with your bastard,” William demanded, his expression dark with anger.

Upon hearing William repeatedly call Brian a bastard, Audrey’s fury intensified. She laughed mockingly and retorted, “No matter how disgraced I may be, it pales in comparison to your affair and illegitimate daughter.”

Rebecca and Sarah paled at Audrey’s words. Even after all these years, the fact remained that Rebecca was a homewrecker, and Sarah was an illegitimate child. That’s why upon returning to the Hernandez family, Sarah would compete with Audrey for everything.

“From now on, no member of the Hernandez family, except Audrey, is allowed in the Silvandel Auction House,” Jason announced with a cold laugh, looking at the Hernandez trio as if they were clowns.

“Escort them out,” Jason ordered. By “escort,” he clearly meant to throw them out.

“You... How dare Silvandel Auction House to oppose the Hernandez family? Believe me, I can shut this place down in Northville!” William roared, forgetting Silvandel Auction House’s formidable status in the city.

“You can try,” Jason replied, completely unfazed by William’s threat.

If Silvandel Auction House were so easily threatened, it wouldn't have grown so powerful in just four years. Even families more influential than the Hernandez family dared not provoke it. Rumor had it that Silvandel Auction House was backed by a powerful overseas organization.

The surrounding guests, who had stayed to watch, were stunned to see the Hernandez trio thrown out of Silvandel Auction House. Observing the General Manager's respect towards Audrey, they realized she wasn't just anyone and might have a powerful backer.

After all, Audrey had once been known as the most beautiful woman in Northville. It wouldn't be surprising if some influential man had taken a liking to her.

As Jason escorted Audrey and Brian inside, Shawn and his group, who had watched the entire scene from a distance, developed a newfound respect for Audrey.

"Seven years later, and Audrey has really made something of herself. It looks like she has a special relationship with Jason," Shawn commented, casting a glance at the cold, noble man beside him.

"Keep your comments to yourself," Andrew Roscente reminded, eyeing the man with the aloof demeanor.

"I'm more curious about that young boy with Audrey," Cade remarked.

Dylan strode ahead, his expression dark and his lips tightly pressed.

Observing Dylan's expression, Cade furrowed his brow and asked, "Audrey is finally back, but why isn't Dylan more excited?"

"He's just stubbornly holding on to his pride. Who knows what he's really thinking?" Shawn chuckled, knowing Dylan's type well.

"You two better keep quiet. If you provoke him, you'll regret it," Andrew warned, well aware of Dylan's volatile nature. Contemplating the consequences of angering Dylan, they both fell silent.

Outside Silvandel Auction House, the Hernandez trio stood with expressions of embarrassment and anger. Spotting Dylan and his group, Sarah's eyes lit up, and she hurried over. "Dylan, you have to support us. Audrey treated us so cruelly."

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 6

Sarah pondered. Even though I was humiliated in front of Northville's elite, as long as I have Dylan by my side, who in Northville would dare to ridicule me?"

Dylan turned slightly and cast a cold, indifferent glance at Sarah. His deep, dark eyes were icy and distant. "Richard, throw them out," he ordered.

Upon hearing Dylan's command, Richard stepped forward to escort them out. Sarah trembled, staring at Dylan in disbelief, while William and Rebecca's faces turned sour.

"Wasn't Mr. Clifford supposed to be engaged to Sarah? It doesn't look like it," someone in the crowd murmured, their probing stares leaving Sarah feeling exposed and humiliated.

Sarah had basked in the admiration of everyone before Audrey arrived, but now everything had changed. Sarah seethed with a desire to exact revenge on Audrey for ruining her life.

Dylan leaned over to whisper something to Richard before entering Silvandel Auction House with Andrew and the rest of the group.

That night, a video of Sarah, Northville's top socialite and a popular star, kneeling and bowing went viral. The footage also captured the moment when the Hernandez trio were forcibly removed from Silvandel Auction House.

Within half an hour, another video surfaced, showing them being pelted with rotten eggs and garbage on their way home. Sarah and her family had never experienced such disgrace and humiliation.

"Dylan, what did you ask Richard to do?" Cade couldn't resist asking once they were inside their private room.

"What else? He's taking care of some business for someone," Shawn chuckled, glancing at Dylan.

"Audrey already has a son. Shouldn't you just move on? Are you really planning to raise someone else's kid?" Cade looked at Dylan, unable to hold back.

"That's cool. Instant fatherhood, isn't it great?" Shawn added with a laugh.

Dylan's eyes narrowed, his gaze turning cold, "Richard, take these two for some sparring practice."

Richard stepped forward at Dylan's command. Cade and Shawn's faces paled.

"Dylan, we were wrong! I have an interview with a boxer tomorrow. Please don't let Richard hit me," Cade pleaded, covering his face. The prospect of sparring with Richard meant a month in bed.

Shawn quickly backed away, keeping his mouth shut.

The auction officially began at seven o'clock in the evening. Audrey focused solely on the Bamboo Reishi, ignoring everything else. Meanwhile, Brian attentively observed each item but didn't find anything to his liking.

When the final item, the Bamboo Reishi, was brought on stage with a starting price of 200 thousand dollars, Audrey didn't hesitate. One million dollars!"

If the owner hadn't refused private sales, Audrey would have already bought it. This was a life-saving item for Brian, and she had to get it.

Few recognized the value of the Bamboo Reishi, so there wasn't much competition. The bidding quickly escalated to two million dollars when a deep, cold voice from a second-floor room called out, "Four million dollars!"

Recognizing Dylan's voice, most people stopped bidding.

"Ten million dollars!" Audrey's eyes narrowed as she icily placed her bid.

The deep voice immediately followed, "20 million dollars!"

Audrey sneered, thinking, 'You want to compete with me in wealth? I'll crush you with money!

The Bamboo Reishi, though rare, wasn't worth more than a few million. 20 million dollars was already an outrageous price.

"40 million dollars!" Audrey's voice echoed through the auction house. In the private room, Cade and the others were shocked.

"When did Audrey become so rich? 40 million dollars for a plant? You two are insane!" Andrew and Shawn were equally stunned.

'Seven years ago, Dylan himself sent Audrey to prison and she was disowned by her family. How does she have this much money now? Could someone be sponsoring her?' they thought, sending shivers down their spines. 'If this is true, Dylan would lose it.'

They glanced at Dylan, whose tightly pressed lips and deep, inscrutable eyes revealed no emotion.

Outside the private room, everyone was also awaiting Dylan's bid.

"40 million dollars going once, twice, sold! Congratulations to the guest in Room 88!" the auctioneer announced.

Dylan's eyes flashed with a dark, inscrutable intensity as he glanced towards Audrey's room. "Richard, thoroughly investigate everything about her past seven years," he commanded.

"Yes, sir," Richard replied.

As the auction concluded and Dylan and his group exited their room, they spotted Jason holding the young boy and engaged in conversation with Audrey. Dylan's gaze turned colder as he observed. "Seven years apart, and she's become even more formidable, he thought.

Audrey noticed Dylan's intense gaze and responded with a cold stare of her own. Her eyes narrowed momentarily before she resumed her conversation with Jason. Dylan's demeanor grew even colder.

"Audrey, shall I escort you?" Jason asked respectfully, noticing Dylan approaching.

"No need. Please take Brian with you," Audrey replied coldly.

Brian frowned. "Audrey, I won't leave you," he insisted, concerned about the possibility of that bad guy bullying his mom.

"Be good, okay?" Audrey's tone hardened. Brian pouted but obediently followed Jason. Before leaving, he shot a warning glare at the approaching man.

As soon as Jason and Brian left, Dylan stood before Audrey, his icy, piercing gaze fixed on her.

Audrey was no stranger to the man standing before her. Dylan, Prince of Northville, the eldest son of the Clifford family, the current head of the Clifford Group, and the former fiancé of the person whose body she now inhabited.

Yet, she had no recollection of him. While she had inherited the original host's memories, anything related to Dylan was a complete blank

She wasn't aware of how deeply this man had hurt the original host, but the sight of him still made her heart ache. Audrey frowned slightly, her discomfort evident.

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Dylan's handsome and noble face, with his exquisite features illuminated under the light, made him appear even more mysterious and elegant. Setting aside the grudges between this man and the original host, Dylan was undeniably the most handsome man Audrey had ever seen.

"I'll take you home," Dylan commanded, his voice deep and cold, leaving no room for refusal. He fixed his icy eyes on Audrey's face trying to decipher her thoughts. He spoke as if the seven years apart had never happened.

"No need," Audrey replied curtly, her tone cold and detached. Regardless of what the original host and Dylan had gone through, she had no desire to be entangled with him.

Dylan's gaze grew colder and more dangerous. "Then who do you want to take you?"

Audrey met Dylan's intense gaze with calm composure. Despite his intimidating and dangerous aura, she remained unfazed. "It's none of your business."

The next moment, the atmosphere around Dylan grew dangerously cold. Andrew and the others, standing not far away, tensed up, worried that the two might escalate into a fight.

"What's going on? Wasn't Audrey always gentle with Dylan?" Cade whispered.

"You said it—used to be. Seven years ago and now are different," Shawn replied, his tone matter-of-fact. "Besides, Dylan personally sent her to prison. She has every reason to hate him."

"Poor Audrey," Cade muttered with a shake of his head.

"Seven years have passed. It's hard to say who's truly unfortunate now," Andrew remarked, observing Audrey's steadfast defiance toward Dylan.

In the next moment, Dylan reached out to Audrey. Audrey's eyes narrowed, and she swiftly stepped back, evading his hand. Dylan's expression turned even colder and more intimidating. "Audrey, come with me!"

"No," Audrey refused icily.

Behind her, Cade, Shawn, and Andrew were almost awestruck by Audrey's commanding presence. It was their first time seeing someone defy Dylan, especially a woman who had once loved him deeply.

They pondered, 'Can time truly change everything? Seven years have passed, and it appears Audrey no longer loves Dylan.

It makes sense though. Being sent to prison by someone she once loved deeply would inevitably erode even the strongest feelings, especially under those circumstances.

Dylan reached out again, and this time, Audrey didn't dodge. Instead, she countered as soon as Dylan extended his hand. Onlookers hadn't anticipated Audrey fighting back, but she did so skillfully.

Audrey's side kick was blocked by Dylan, but she swiftly followed up, a silver needle appearing in her hand, aimed directly at Dylan's neck.

"Mr. Clifford, you'd better stay away from me Audrey warned, her aura defiant and arrogant. She then withdrew the silver needle, cast a cold glance at Dylan, and turned to leave.

Cade, Shawn, and Andrew were stunned. They pondered, 'When did Audrey become so strong and confident? She even had the nerve to threaten Dylan. Unbelievable!'

On the other hand, Dylan, who once appeared indifferent to Audrey, now watched her departure with a deeper, more complex expression. Rather than anger, his eyes betrayed a new emotion akin to regarding a prized prey. That gaze sent shivers down others' spines.

In the lounge, Brian was anxiously about to go out to find Audrey when she returned.

"Audrey, are you alright?" Brian rushed over, his concern evident as he scanned her for, any signs of injury.

"I'm fine. Let's go," Audrey replied calmly, her gaze softening as she looked at Brian.

Seeing that Audrey was unharmed, Jason also breathed a sigh of relief. "I'll have the driver take you back," he offered.

Back at the Grandview Hotel, Brian promptly went to his room and initiated a video call with Lucas.

"Brian, did you manage to get the Bamboo Reishi?" Lucas asked eagerly, having awaited Brian's update.

"Yeah, I got it, but that bad guy showed up and upset Audrey," Brian replied.

Upon hearing this, Lucas's expression turned icy, reminiscent of Dylan's. "I heard he has a shipment at the border. I'll teach him a lesson for Audrey," Lucas declared.

"I'll hack into the Clifford Group's system later. Let him taste the consequences of-bullying Audrey," Brian agreed, their shared anger fueling their resolve.

That night, the Clifford Group's network came under another malicious attack. Simultaneously, their border shipment was targeted by unknown assailants. While Patrick managed to swiftly counter the hacking attempt, preventing any losses, the evident hostility was promptly reported to Dylan.

"Mr. Clifford, I've got the list of recent guests at the Grandview Hotel, but..." Richard hesitated.

“But what?” Dylan took the list, his refined features furrowed in a frown, his voice icy.

“But Audrey and her son also checked in yesterday,” Richard revealed.

Dylan paused briefly, then ordered, “Find Audrey’s number.”

Audrey had just finished her bath when her phone rang. Seeing it was a Northville number, she hung up immediately. However, less than two minutes later, the phone rang again. Audrey frowned and answered, “Who is this?”

“It’s me,” came a deep, magnetic voice in response.

Audrey’s eyes narrowed as she recognized Dylan’s voice, and she immediately attempted to hang up.

As if anticipating her move, Dylan coldly warned, “Audrey, try hanging up...” Before he could finish, the line went dead. Dylan’s expression

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At the Hernandez family.

That night, Sarah and her family not only made a spectacle of themselves in high society but also became a trending topic online. Given Sarah’s current status as a popular celebrity, the entire internet was abuzz.

“What? The supposed chosen one, the wealthy and beautiful heiress, is actually illegitimate? I’m going from being a fan to a hater. I detest mistresses and illegitimate children the most!”

“Isn’t Sarah’s mom that former famous actress, Rebecca? She clawed her way up as a mistress. Ugh, disgusting!”

Reading the online comments, Sarah was seething with fury, nearly grinding her teeth in rage. This was undoubtedly the most humiliating moment of her life.

Someone had recorded the entire event on video, capturing everything from start to finish. Once it was revealed that Sarah and her mother were illegitimate, people began digging up old scandals.

Sarah’s once- -glorious reputation now bore the stain of being an illegitimate child, with a mother who had schemed her way up. The online abuse was relentless and vile.

By the time they arrived home, they were covered in rotten eggs and leaves, their faces dark with anger.

"It's Audrey. It must be her. I won't let her get away with this!" Sarah seethed, recalling how her reputation had been destroyed tonight, yearning to see Audrey suffer a thousand cuts.

"Audrey is insufferable. Darling, you have to stand up for our daughter this time. We can't let her bully Sarah like this," Rebecca said, her fury deepening at the thought of her beloved daughter being slapped and humiliated by Audrey, forced to kneel before her in public.

Instead of gaining prestige, they had been thoroughly shamed. Now, the whole internet was mocking and insulting them as illegitimate. Rebecca thought with regret, 'I should have killed Audrey when I married into the Hernandez family so she and her annoying mother could rot together in hell!'

"Don't worry. Sarah is my beloved daughter. I won't let that wicked woman bully her," William vowed. The disgrace they suffered today in front of high society was a blow he couldn't bear.

"But what's with Mr. Clifford today? Not only did he not defend Sarah, but he also threw us out. What about my dignity?" William complained.

He had always believed that, no how embarrassing the situation, he still held the status of Dylan's future father-in-law. Who would dare to laugh at him? Yet, Dylan's action of throwing them out further humiliated them.

"Mom, do you think Audrey will take Dylan away from me now that she's back?" Sarah asked, her voice tinged with fear.

"Don't worry. Audrey, a convict with an illegitimate child, even if she tries, she won't succeed. Dylan might want her, but Mrs. Clifford and the entire Clifford family won't accept someone like her," Rebecca assured confidently.

"But Dylan embarrassed me in front of everyone. Now, I'm sure people are laughing at me, Sarah lamented. Every socialite in Northville dreamed of marrying Dylan, and after today's flasco, they would surely be mocking her.

"Why rush? Tomorrow, I'll visit the Clifford Mansion and speak with Mrs. Clifford. Your engagement with Mr. Clifford should be settled soon," Rebecca said.

The next day, at Northville Hospital.

In the VIP room on the top floor, where Samuel was receiving treatment, several members of the Roscente family were gathered. Dylan and his associates were also present.

“Grandpa, why hasn’t your teacher arrived yet? Do you think she’s not coming?” Shawn asked anxiously. He had specially called Dylan here today and was curious about his grandfather’s teacher, expecting her to be an elderly woman given his grandpa’s age.

“What’s the rush? If my teacher said she’s coming, she’d definitely come,” Aaron snapped at Shawn.

“Aaron, are you sure there won’t be any issues with my grandpa’s surgery?” Andrew asked again, concerned for his grandfather’s life.

“Rest assured. If I were doing the surgery, the success rate would be around 50% at best. But with my teacher, it’s an 80-90% chance. Your grandpa will be fine.” Aaron’s words brought a sigh of relief to everyone, and their curiosity about his teacher grew.

Someone capable of earning such high praise from a medical authority like Aaron must be incredibly skilled. ‘Maybe there’s even hope for Dylan’s chronic headaches, they thought.

Just then, Aaron’s phone rang. “You’ve arrived I’ll come down to meet you. Oh, you’re coming up? We’re in VIP Room No. 8 on the top floor.”

Shawn was stunned to see his usually stern grandfather so excited and happy, almost like a young man in love.

Three minutes later, a figure appeared at the VIP room door. All eyes turned toward the entrance, and everyone was taken aback.

A young woman stood there, clad in crisp, tailored black attire, her wavy hair pulled back into a ponytail. Her features were strikingly beautiful, exuding an air of cold detachment and a nonchalant elegance. Even as she faced the roomful of people, she maintained her composure and indifference. Her cold, exquisite beauty was indescribable.

Even those who had seen Audrey just yesterday, including Shawn and the others, were taken aback to see her here.

“Audrey, why are you here?” Cade was the first to recover from the shock, asking bluntly. He wondered, ‘Could it be that Audrey knew Dylan is here and came for him?’

The Roscente family members were equally puzzled. They were familiar with Audrey, particularly recalling the infamous scene years ago when Dylan personally handcuffed her and sent her to prison.

After her release from Northville Prison four years ago, she disappeared. Now, seven years later, this once–disgraced heiress of the Hernandez family had returned.

Audrey's indifferent gaze swept over everyone before settling on Aaron.

"Ma'am, you've here." Aaron's voice shattered the eerie silence in the room, intensifying the surreal atmosphere.

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The sentence left everyone in the room stunned.

"Come on, Grandpa, you're pulling my leg, right? Audrey as your teacher?" Shawn exclaimed, incredulous at Aaron's words. 'It's too unbelievable. The person we've been eagerly awaiting turns out to be Audrey?' he pondered, his mind reeling with disbelief and confusion.

"You disrespectful boy! Is that how you talk to my teacher? Show some respect!" Aaron scolded.

Shawn remained silent, seriously questioning whether his grandpa had lost his mind or if this was all some kind of joke.

The others in the room also voiced their doubts, "Aaron, could there be a mistake? How could Ms. Hernandez be your teacher?"

"Samuel's health is precious. How can you entrust it to a young girl who knows nothing?"

"Exactly, Aaron. Ms. Hernandez is so young and she didn't even study medicine. How could she possibly perform surgery? This must be a mistake."

Audrey remained unfazed by the questioning looks and words from the others. She walked forward, her tone calm and indifferent. "What's the status?"

"All indicators are normal. We can proceed with the surgery," Aaron replied, handing over the medical record he held. It contained the results of the preoperative tests done that morning.

Audrey glanced at the data, her expression serious and focused. "We can proceed. It's manageable."

Hearing her words, Aaron sighed in relief and smiled at the Roscente family. "I understand your doubts, but rest assured. I'm willing to bet my life on it. If my teacher says there's a 90% chance, then Samuel will be fine." He knew that Audrey's youth made her appear less credible.

Despite Aaron's reassurance, Andrew looked at Audrey with concern and explained, "Ms. Hernandez, please forgive us, but we can't entrust my grandfather's life to you. We can't take that risk."

"Andrew, if someone other than my teacher performs the surgery, your grandfather won't last two more months. Consider that carefully," Aaron reminded, his brow furrowed.

"I understand, but I still can't trust Ms. Hernandez with my grandfather's life. We can't take that gamble," Andrew responded firmly.

Aaron furrowed his brows, but Audrey fixed her cold gaze on Andrew. "If you don't trust me, you're welcome to join us in the operating room," she said, her voice unwavering.

Andrew frowned, deep in thought. At that moment, Dylan, who had been silent, spoke up. "Let her proceed."

His tone remained cold and indifferent, yet it exuded innate authority. His intense, unwavering gaze stayed fixed on Audrey's face, betraying a curiosity about when she had acquired her medical skills.

With Dylan's decision, the Roscente family had no further objections. Audrey didn't spare Dylan a glance. "Ron, get ready for surgery."

"Yes, teacher," Aaron replied promptly.

Cade couldn't help but chuckle at the sight of the young woman addressing Aaron as Ron. Shawn shot a cold glare at Cade. He still couldn't grasp how Audrey had assumed the role of his grandfather's teacher.

Shortly after, Audrey and the others entered the operating room.

Dylan pressed his lips together, dark eyes brimming with inscrutable thoughts. His impassive face betrayed no emotion as he stared in the direction Audrey had disappeared. "Seven years ago, Audrey had no medical skills whatsoever. What could have caused such a drastic change in her?" he wondered.

In the operating room.

Everyone had changed into sterile surgical gowns. Aaron had everything prepared, with surgical instruments neatly arranged on the left side.

Audrey put on her sterile gloves and approached the operating table, checking the patient's vital signs. With a steady hand, she grasped the cold surgical knife and proceeded with methodical precision.

Andrew, who had known Audrey for years, remembered her primarily as the arrogant heiress of the Hernandez family who relentlessly pursued Dylan. Her infatuation with Dylan was an open secret in Northville's high society.

This was the first time Andrew had seen this side of Audrey—serious, meticulous, and dedicated. He wondered, 'What had transformed the infamous, once—disgraced heiress of the Hernandez family?'

The surgery lasted four hours. Afterwards, Audrey delegated the finishing tasks to Aaron. "The surgery was successful. Monitor him for an hour before transferring him to the recovery room. Keep a close watch on his postoperative condition," Audrey instructed.

Aaron nodded, still exhilarated by what he had witnessed. Every surgery performed by Audrey felt like an intense battle against death, thrilling and gripping.

The four—hour surgery had left Audrey slightly fatigued. "Thank you," Andrew said. sincerely, relieved by the successful outcome.

"Transfer two million dollars to my account, Audrey replied coldly, glancing at Andrew.

"Of course," Andrew agreed without hesitation.

Back in the hospital room, Andrew informed his family of the successful surgery, finally allowing them to breathe a sigh of relief.

"Andrew, was it really Audrey who performed the surgery?" Cade asked, still in disbelief that the once—spoiled heiress possessed such skills.

Even after witnessing it firsthand, Andrew found it hard to believe that the decisive, skilled surgeon was indeed Audrey. "Yes," Andrew confirmed, then glanced at Dylan. Regardless of Audrey's motives for saving his grandfather, the Roscente family owed her a tremendous debt.

"Where is she?" Dylan's voice was cold as his intense gaze fixed on Andrew.

"She went to Aaron's office," Andrew replied.

Dylan found Audrey in the director's office. As he entered, her already icy expression grew even colder.

"Why did you hang up on me last night?" Dylan asked, his tone icy, his eyes locked onto hers.

"I wasn't in the mood to answer," Audrey replied indifferently.

“Let’s have dinner later,” Dylan said, unfazed by her coldness.

“No time, Audrey declined flatly.

Dylan almost laughed in exasperation at her response. “You’re going to eat with me, whether you like it or not,” he declared coldly

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“I’m busy,” Audrey refused again..

“Then make time,” Dylan insisted.

“I can’t,” Audrey retorted.

“Audrey, do you think I won’t deal with you?” Dylan’s tone grew even colder.

“Then go ahead and try!” Audrey shot back defiantly, glaring at Dylan with an arrogant attitude.

This vivid and radiant side of Audrey was something Dylan had never seen before. Now, fully revealed in front of him, it made his gaze deepen.

Just then, Aaron entered the office, immediately sensing the tense atmosphere between the two.

“The prescription is on the table. Follow the directions, and call me if you need anything,” Audrey said to Aaron, ignoring Dylan. She then left the office.

“Ms. Hernandez, why don’t you come over to my place for dinner tomorrow?” Aaron called out loudly just as Audrey’s figure was about to disappear.

Without turning back, Audrey waved her hand and replied faintly, “No time, maybe another day.” Soon, she vanished down the hallway.

“Aaron, when did she become your teacher?” Dylan suddenly asked.

“Sorry, Mr. Clifford, I can’t tell you that,” Aaron replied.

Dylan pressed his lips, waved goodbye to Aaron, and then left the office. By the time he reached the entrance to the hospital, Audrey was already gone.

Gazing at the traffic and pedestrians outside the hospital, Dylan’s eyes narrowed icily, his expression becoming dangerous and stern. “Audrey, you can’t escape!”

In the car, Dylan lit a cigarette, the smoke veiling his face. Once he finished smoking, he directed Richard to start the car.

"Mr. Clifford, there's a call from Clifford Mansion, Richard informed.

Dylan's expression hardened as he took the phone. "What is it?"

"Come home for lunch tomorrow. We need to discuss your engagement to Sarah," his mother, Claire Clifford, said firmly over the phone.

Dylan's eyes grew icy. "I'm not available tomorrow."

"Dylan, you've put this off for years. You're not getting any younger. It's time to settle down." Claire's voice carried a stern tone.

"My affairs are none of your concern," Dylan retorted icily.

"Dylan, are you still hung up on Audrey? Let me tell you, she's not fit to enter the Clifford family. She's not worthy of you. Don't forget, she almost killed me. A woman with such malicious intent will never be accepted by our family!" Claire's voice suddenly grew sharp.

"She didn't succeed, did she?" Dylan's voice was icy, the atmosphere around him growing even colder. Richard could sense the dangerous aura emanating from him.

On the other end, Claire was clearly angered, her tone becoming icy. "Regardless, you must get engaged to Sarah. We've already arranged a meeting with the Hernandez family at Clifford Mansion tomorrow at noon. You better be there." She hung up without waiting for a response.

Dylan pocketed the phone, his demeanor turning icy and his expression chilling.

At the Hernandez family.

After ending the call with Dylan, Claire immediately dialed Rebecca's number. Rebecca's eyes brightened at the sight of Claire's call. She answered promptly, fearing the call might disconnect if she hesitated for even a moment.

"Mrs. Clifford, lunch tomorrow? Absolutely, we'll be there!" After hanging up, she beamed with joy.

"Mom, what did Mrs. Clifford say?" Sarah asked eagerly.

Rebecca smiled proudly at Sarah. "Mrs. Clifford invited us to Clifford Mansion for lunch tomorrow to discuss your engagement to Mr. Clifford."

"Really?" Sarah's eyes lit up with excitement.

"Of course, Mrs. Clifford called personally," Rebecca said.

"Will Dylan be there?" Sarah asked eagerly, her face filled with hope.

"If they're discussing your engagement, he'll naturally be there. You're the only one fit to be Mrs. Clifford. As for Audrey, she's nothing." Rebecca smiled warmly.

Early the next morning, Dylan arrived at the Grandview Hotel. After calling Audrey three times with no answer, she finally picked up on the fourth. "What is it?" Audrey's icy voice came through.

"Let's have lunch," Dylan said.

"I'm busy," Audrey declined.

"I'll give you fifteen minutes. If you're not down here by then, I'll have someone bring you down," Dylan said icily.

Fifteen minutes later, Audrey and Brian emerged from the hotel entrance.

"Get in the car," Dylan said, lowering the back window and giving them a cold look. Once they were seated inside, he asked, "What do you want to eat?"

"Whatever," Audrey replied, eager to finish the meal and get rid of him as quickly as possible.

"To Natural Heaven," Dylan ordered. Richard made a turn and headed towards Natural Heaven, an exclusive private club renowned for dining and entertainment.

Dylan and his friends frequented Natural Heaven, where they were accustomed to personal attention from Paul Martin, the manager. When Paul spotted Audrey with Dylan, he was momentarily taken aback.

He knew Audrey well from her days as a prominent socialite in Northville, often accompanying Dylan here seven years ago. Seeing her now, with a child, was indeed surprising.

However, Paul was smart enough to keep his curiosity in check. He respectfully led them to a private room and brought three menus.

Audrey didn't look at the menu, handing it to Brian. "Order whatever you like."

Brian had long wanted to teach Dylan a lesson. After flipping through the menu, he rattled off a series of expensive dishes. "Braised Fairyland Eel, Cheese Truffle Australian Lobster, Wild Yellow Croaker, Crocodile Tail Soup, Sake Marinated Abalone, Premium Black and White Caviar..."

As Brian listed each dish, Paul's hand trembled slightly. He stole a glance at Dylan, who remained calm and composed, prompting Paul to speculate whether Brian was indeed Dylan and Audrey's child.

After ordering over a dozen dishes, Brian added, "No onions, ginger, or garlic in any the dishes. Audrey doesn't like them. Also, two glasses of orange juice, please. Thank you."

Paul noted everything down and looked at Dylan, who handed back the menu. "That'll be all," Dylan said coolly.

With Paul departed, only the three of them remained in the private room.