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Good afternoon, everyone.

We're here for Lauren.

Loopy Lauren to those of us who knew the full sparkle of her.

I met Lauren first in laughter.

Not polite chuckles, but that infectious, uncontainable laugh that rolled through a room and tugged you into its orbit.

She had a way of setting the tone — showtime face on, a quick wink — even when illness had been tugging at her sleeve.

When she had the strength, she lit up the place.

When she didn't, she slept — unapologetically, sometimes right there in the middle of the day — because she'd spent every last ounce of herself on people, on plans, on love.

She was born on 24 February 1977, and she did not waste the years between then and now.

Lauren made life busy, bright and useful.

She was a gardener with soil under her nails and ideas blooming faster than the flowers.

An animal lover whose dogs knew every park path by heart.

Horses in her eyes, wind in her hair.

She baked like a hug you could eat.

She hosted like a mission, making sure there was always room for one more chair, one more story, one more plate.

She cared for people in a hundred quiet ways, and in a few loud, hilarious ones too.

She was entrepreneurial — always buying, selling, hustling — turning bits and pieces into something that worked.

A problem-solver wrapped in glorious chaos.

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On or off.

Black or white.

Blunt enough to make you blink and then somehow, in the very next breath, a little confusing and very wise.

She was selective with her friendships in recent years, and I admired that — she sought authenticity, and she offered it back.

My favourite memory is simple:

walking the dogs in the park with her.

We were silly and young — even when we weren't that young anymore.

She'd pull a face, break into a shameless, bold bit of goofing about, and that laugh would start.

Strangers would turn and smile without knowing why.

Those are the moments I'll carry — the small, ordinary ones she made extraordinary.

Lauren lived by values you could feel.

Family first.

Friendships tended like a garden — with time, with honesty, with cups of tea on the doorstep.

She showed love through acts of kindness — a casserole at the right moment, a lift, a text that said, "I've got you."

She was nurturing and open, and she was devoted to the kids in her life — fiercely, protectively, with that wonderful mix of mischief and care.

What we will miss most is obvious:

her laugh,

her fearless foolishness,

that switch-on magic that filled a space.

But we will also miss the steadier gifts:

the way she noticed what needed doing and just did it,

the way she solved things — sometimes chaotically — and somehow made it all come right in the end.

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If there is comfort today, it's this:

Lauren's life was not a single note.

It was a chorus — bright, messy, generous, brave.

We honour her best not by perfect words, but by living a little more like she did.

Be open.

Be kind.

Say what you mean.

Make something out of nothing.

Invite people in.

Walk the dogs and be silly.

Thank you, Lauren, for the laughter, the graft, the care, and the love.

You made rooms brighter and gardens grow.

We'll keep that light going, in parks and kitchens and among friends who choose each other — honestly, wholeheartedly — the way you did.

Rest now, Loopy Lauren.

We'll carry the show from here.

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