

ABANDONED 1071

Chapter 1071

The children stood in line uneasily when they heard the word “punishment.” Solemnly, Roxanne swept her gaze past the three of them and remained quiet for a while. Then she pointed at the wall. “All of you will stand there for fifteen minutes.”

Although the boys were usually well-behaved, they had been punished before. They made their way to a corner and stood facing the wall. Estella moved exceptionally slowly.

When Roxanne saw that, she furrowed her eyebrows. Thinking that Estella still thought herself innocent, she urged, “You’ll need to stand there longer if you walk this slow.”

Upon hearing that, the girl gathered the courage to turn back to Roxanne. Roxanne was puzzled. Is the punishment too severe? Is that why she’s looking at me?

Aggrievedly, Estella asked, “If I accept the punishment, will you still like me, Ms. Jarvis?”

The girl’s question melted Roxanne’s heart into a puddle. “If you learn from your mistake and don’t repeat them, I’ll continue to like you, just as I always did.”

Estella’s eyes lit up as she promised, “Okay, Ms. Jarvis! I’ll definitely behave myself!” She quickened her pace and arrived next to the boys. “I’m sorry. It’s my fault for getting us punished.”

Archie and Benny shook their heads. “We’re best friends, and best friends share the joys and sorrows in life together!” When she heard that, Roxanne wasn’t sure if she should laugh or cry.

Those in the know would know that they were being punished, but those not in the know would think they had done something incredible.

As Roxanne gazed at Estella’s back, she fell into deep thought. The punishment was something she came up with after careful deliberations. While she doesn’t think Lucian will consider my punishment a little too much, she still feels uncertain about it since she doesn’t technically have the right to educate his child. This is the best harmless solution she could conjure. When he arrives, she still needs to explain the situation to him. Essie does

tend to go to extremes. wonder if it's because it's her nature or a symptom of her autism. She'll require a psychologist's intervention if it's the latter.

Fifteen minutes later, the children's punishment was over.

Upon glancing at the time, Roxanne realized it was almost noon, yet Lucian still hadn't shown up. When is he going to pick up Essie?

The children were similarly nervous.

Archie turned to Estella, looking serious. "Since Mr. Farwell hasn't arrived, let's play hide and seek!"

Her desire to play that game didn't slip his mind.

When she heard that, she lowered her head apologetically at him. "I'm sorry for lying to you earlier, Archie. just wanted to..." She had only used that excuse to hide her wrongdoing.

But after being lectured by Roxanne, she knew what she had done wrong

It was then Archie realized what she meant. Upon glancing at Roxanne, who was busy about in the kitchen, he turned back to Benny and Estella. "We still need to keep Mr. Damaris away from Mommy, but we can't act rashly."

The other two nodded in agreement.

Chapter 1072 Play Along

At noon, Roxanne had just finished preparing lunch when the doorbell rang. After two warnings from Jack that morning, Roxanne and the kids were now immune to the sound of the doorbell even though they knew it was most probably Lucian this time.

Roxanne set the table for the kids before she went to answer the door. As expected, Lucian was waiting outside. Roxanne opened the door, and he gave her a curt nod. "Where is Essie? I'm here to bring her home."

He looked in the direction of the living room. When the children realized Lucian was here, they held their breaths and strained to listen to the faint sounds of his movements outside the door.

Upon hearing Estella's name, the boys simultaneously turned their heads in her direction. Estella puffed her cheeks and met their eyes reluctantly.

According to their plan, she would have to follow Lucian back and try to convince him while the boys would be responsible for changing Roxanne's mind.

That way, Lucian and Roxanne could make peace with one another soon. It was time to leave, but Estella couldn't bear to part with Roxanne and the boys.

The little girl was feeling hesitant when Roxanne's voice rang out. "Are you in a hurry? If you're not, you're welcome to join us for lunch."

Everyone's expressions changed drastically when they heard that.

The children were overjoyed when they heard Roxanne inviting Lucian to stay, while Lucian was uncertain what her invitation entailed.

Roxanne turned over her shoulder to glance at the dining room. She lowered her voice and said, "I need to talk to you about Essie."

With that, she met Lucian's gaze boldly.

Lucian furrowed his brows. He accepted her invitation and followed her into the dining room.

The children were excited at the sight of him entering, but they dared not express their exhilaration openly. Benny hung his head low to conceal his excitement.

This is great! It's been a long time since Daddy and Mommy have sat down to enjoy a meal together. This means that their relationship has improved, right?

The children kept stealing glances at Roxanne and Lucian over lunch.

Roxanne had accurately predicted what the children were thinking. The realization caused her to look away as conflicting emotions swirled around in her heart.

Lucian could read the kids' minds, too.

As the children continued to steal glances at them, he couldn't help but become increasingly intrigued by Roxanne's response. He subtly raised his head to get a better glimpse of her.

The mere sight of Roxanne diligently chowing down on her food caused his gaze to harden. Suddenly, he had no appetite whatsoever.

"I'm done." Lucian put his fork down, his face devoid of expression.

"Daddy..." Estella thought he wanted to bring her home right now, so she grabbed his sleeves pleadingly. "Let's go back home later!"

Lucian's brows snapped together. He patted her head and assured her, "I need to talk to Ms. Jarvis. You can play a bit more with the boys.

Roxanne had lowered her voice deliberately when she mentioned Estella's name earlier, leading him to deduce that she wanted to keep her conversation with him a secret from the others.

It concerned his daughter, so Lucian was willing to play along with her. Estella had no idea what Lucian and Roxanne wanted to talk about.

However, relief washed over her when she realized she could spend a bit more time with Archie and Benny. She couldn't help but crack a broad smile.

Chapter 1073 Any Problem with That

Roxanne felt extremely uncomfortable under Lucian's penetrating gaze despite her valiant attempts to ignore him. When she heard his answer, she heaved a silent sigh of relief and put her fork down.

"Let's talk upstairs." Turning to the children, she instructed, "Finish your lunch before you go off to play.

Archie and Benny nodded vigorously. Roxanne rose to her feet and shot Lucian a look. Getting her hint, he complied by getting up and following her up the stairs.

They both came to a stop at the balcony on the second floor, one after another. Roxanne said nothing as she was wondering how she should start the conversation.

Even after Estella had admitted to her mistake and apologized, she still couldn't believe that the little girl was capable of committing such an action.

Naturally, Lucian would not believe her, as he loved Estella dearly.

If she were to reveal the truth bluntly, Lucian would most probably think she was trying to blame Estella for something the little girl didn't do.

She remained silent for a long time, causing Lucian's expression to turn as dark as thunder. "Ms. Jarvis, what is this about?" Roxanne snapped out of her reverie. She parted her lips but had no idea how to start. Lucian's brows furrowed. "Don't tell me you tricked me just so Essie could stay for a bit longer."

His words reminded Roxanne of the time when he had thought it was her idea for Archie and Benny to sneak into the Farwell residence.

She didn't manage to clear things up back then. If he continued to misunderstand her this time, she would never regain his trust.

With that thought in mind, Roxanne frowned and said, "Essie is your daughter, so she needs to go back home with you anyhow. Why would I resort to tricks to make her stay?"

Lucian cast her a suspicious look. "Then speak. What is it?"

Roxanne took a deep breath before meeting his eyes. "I believe Essie grew up by your side, right?" Lucian didn't respond for some time.

Roxanne noticed his expression changing.

She might be wrong, but she saw a hint of mockery on his face that was directed at her.

She was momentarily stunned by that.

She merely asked him if Essie grew up with him, as she wanted to know if he knows Essie's character well. Why is he mad at me? The confusion on her face only served to upset Lucian even more.

She's Essie's birth mother, but she never participated in her childhood. How dare she ask me that question?

Despite knowing it was a misunderstanding, Lucian couldn't help but fume silently.

It took him a while before he replied stiffly, "Yes. Any problem with that?"

Roxanne gathered her thoughts, as she could sense the tension in the air. She carefully asked the next question. "Then what do you think about Essie's character?"

Lucian replied calmly, "Essie has always been a good girl." Roxanne knitted her brows, seemingly displeased by his answer. Lucian never looked away from her, so he naturally noticed the change in her expression, which increased his fury.

"What do you think, Ms. Jarvis? Essie was diagnosed with autism at a young age, so believe you've seen her when she was sick. What do you think someone like her would be like?"

Chapter 1074 Blame

Roxanne had not explained it clearly, but Lucian could infer what the issue was about.

Essie must've done something that upset her, so she wants to confront me!

Roxanne could sense the change in his emotions clearly as the surrounding temperature kept dropping. She instinctively stepped back to maintain a distance from Lucian.

Upset with her thoughts about Estella, Lucian moved closer to her with an inquisitive gaze.

As the gap between them closed, Roxanne dug her nails into her palms and willed herself to remain calm so they could continue their conversation. "I think Essie is a bit stubborn. It may be because she has autism, but she can't express her emotions clearly."

Hearing that, Lucian finally halted in his tracks. Estella tended to be stubborn, and he knew that. However, he had never pondered over it.

Estella was particularly stubborn when it came to Roxanne. She refused to listen to anyone else, and as a result, her condition would worsen.

Yet, she would get better swiftly if she got to spend time with Roxanne. How does Roxanne know about this? Frowning, Lucian asked, "Why did you say that?"

Roxanne turned around and looked downstairs. From her position, she could see the spot where Jack had parked his car that morning. She could even visualize how Estella had done that in her mind.

Roxanne related the story to him. "Yesterday, was supposed to have a medical consultation with Mr. Damaris. had to take a day off because needed to take care of Essie. Mr. Damaris was worried and came to visit me this morning with a bouquet of flowers. Essie misunderstood our relationship and punctured one of Mr. Damaris' car tires."

Having said that, she let out a helpless sigh. Lucian followed her gaze, and his eyes immediately turned dark when he heard her mention Jack's name. "Do you have evidence to prove that Essie punctured Mr. Damaris' car tire? Or did you trust his words alone?"

Of course, he trusted Estella unconditionally.

Lucian couldn't imagine Estella doing such a deed when she was autistic. The only possibility was that Roxanne had chosen to believe Jack's version of the story and wrongly blamed Estella. Lucian felt a stab of anger at that thought.

Roxanne was surprised. "Mr. Farwell, understand that you have misunderstood my relationship with Mr. Damaris, but have always treated Essie equally to Archie and Benny. Why would accuse her falsely?"

Even if it wasn't Estella, Roxanne wouldn't blame any other child for something they didn't do.

She took a deep breath and continued, "Mr. Farwell, this may be difficult for you to accept, but Essie confessed to it. didn't believe it at first, but it's true."

Lucian's expression was icy cool as he scrutinized her.

Roxanne met his gaze calmly. "I don't want Essie to recount the incident. If you don't believe me, we can go check the surveillance footage."

It was pretty obvious by now that she was telling the truth, so Lucian chose to trust her.

He frowned and looked away from Roxanne, his thoughts a mystery to those around him.

Chapter 1075 No Longer Related

Roxanne knew Lucian finally believed her, so she broke the silence, her voice calm and gentle. "This is not a confrontation. I'm just worried about Essie's well-being. If it's her autism that causes her to be this extreme, hope you can help her by taking her to see a professional for support and guidance.

She had assumed that Lucian would consider her suggestion, but Lucian immediately responded curtly, "I don't think there's anything wrong with what Essie did."

Roxanne froze in shock. Estella damaged someone else's property at a young age, yet Lucian thinks she didn't do anything wrong? For a moment, Roxanne doubted herself and wondered if she was wrong.

Estella did that not because of her autism or her innate personality. She did that because Lucian taught her to. Could that be the reason?

Roxanne tried to reason with Lucian. "Even if she's a child, she should understand that it's wrong to touch someone else's property. It's a car tire, on top of that. The consequences of a punctured tire can be severe. It can even lead to accidents and injuries!" She stared at him incredulously. "Do you still think Essie didn't do anything wrong?"

Lucian met her gaze calmly. "This is a simple concept that even a child can understand. Don't tell me Mr. Damaris cannot grasp this."

His words brought a frown to Roxanne's face. She couldn't understand what he was referring to. Is Lucian saying that Jack touched someone else's property? What could it be?

Suddenly, a shocking answer emerged in Roxanne's heart.

She shot him a startled look before averting her gaze in panic.

Lucian continued looking at her calmly. "No matter what my opinion is, Essie has always considered you as her mother. I'm sure you're aware of that."

Roxanne hung her head low, as she couldn't refute his words.

Indeed, Estella was very attached to her. The young girl had mentioned more than once that she wished Roxanne could be her mother.

Roxanne was aware of Estella's wish but was not ready to face it. Now that Lucian had pointed it out, she felt guilty.

"Essie thinks you treat her well and that you will be her mother one day by marrying me." Lucian stepped closer to her. "So in her eyes, Jack has touched someone who belongs to me. Isn't that right?"

Roxanne instinctively took a step back as conflict swirled in her heart.

She had to admit that Lucian's words had nearly caused a tsunami in her heart.

"Please don't overstep your boundaries, Mr. Farwell." Roxanne forced herself to remain calm by digging her nails into her palm. It was uncertain who her words were meant for. "We are no longer related, so that is not a justification for Essie to do as she pleases."

Lucian merely let out a snort.

Roxanne felt her heart leap to her throat as she looked up and met his eyes. She might be wrong, but there seemed to be a hint of mockery in Lucian's eyes. Puzzled, Roxanne creased her brows and stepped back again.

She belatedly realized what she was doing and forced herself to come to a stop.

This is strange. was the one who came to Lucian to talk about Essie's condition, but he ended up forcing me into a corner as though was the one at fault.

Chapter 1076 Become Her Mother “No longer related?” The sarcasm in Lucian’s eyes intensified. “This is all wishful thinking on your part.”

Roxanne’s frown deepened. I’m stating the facts! Why is that wishful thinking? It was Lucian who used me all the while, and now he’s with Aubree. How are we related to each other now?

As though reading her mind, Lucian said icily, “You may be right, but do you think Essie will give up on you when you treat her this well?”

Roxanne was left speechless.

Lucian concluded, “You are responsible for giving her false hope, which led to her committing that act, and you don’t even know that.”

Hearing that, Roxanne couldn’t stop doubting herself.

He’s right. keep saying want to sever ties with him, but when Essie cries, can’t help but feel guilty and give in and shower my love on her. When she’s around, Lucian and will inevitably have to interact. According to Lucian, Essie committed that act because of me...

Awhile later, Roxanne finally found her voice. “If that’s the case, I’ll do what you and Mrs. Farwell want. won’t interfere in Essie’s matters anymore.

Lucian found her act of showing concern for Estella to be insincere just a moment ago.

But now, hearing her agree to give up on Estella so easily, he couldn’t help but feel anger rising within him. Roxanne was sensitive enough to sense the change in his emotions.

However, she couldn’t figure out why.

Before she could ponder over the matter, Lucian suddenly loomed over her.

Roxanne's head snapped up warily. "What are you doing?"

Right after she spoke, Lucian held her chin and forced her to meet his eyes.

Their faces were so close to each other that she could feel his breath on her cheeks. In fact, they looked to be in an intimate position.

Roxanne balled her fists. "Mr. Farwell, what are you doing? Let me go! I have agreed to do as you wish!" The more she spoke, the more enraged Lucian became, and the more forcefully he held her chin.

Roxanne frowned in pain.

"Do as I wish?" Lucian regarded her coldly. "You do things as you wish. Who do you think you are?" Shock flashed across Roxanne's eyes. She parted her lips but had no words to retort. Indeed, she had always had her way when it came to decisions concerning Estella.

Before she had the chance to piece together her thoughts to confirm that it was all Estella's idea, Lucian suggested, "Ms. Jarvis, if you're so keen on getting involved in Essie's affairs, why don't you take it a step further and become her mother?"

His face inched nearer to her once he said that. Roxanne's eyes turned as wide as saucers. Before she could speak, the man covered her lips with his. "Mm!" She struggled to free herself.

The children are downstairs and can come up any minute. What if they see us kissing? Lucian is clearly together with Aubree. What is he doing right now?

Chapter 1077 Hit Me

Lucian deepened the kiss, causing Roxanne to turn breathless. However, she couldn't free herself from his grip. A wave of fury crashed through Roxanne as she raised her arm abruptly. Lucian stopped kissing her and pulled away from her.

Roxanne's cheeks were flushed, but he seemed unfazed as though nothing had happened. She remained in a trance, her arm still lifted and her eyes glassy. "Why?" Lucian sneered. "Were you trying to hit me, Ms. Jarvis?"

Roxanne snapped out of her reverie and was about to retract her hand when an anxious but young voice cried out beside her, "No! Ms. Jarvis, don't hit Daddy!"

Estella's cheeks were flushed red with anxiety as she ran toward them and wrapped her arms around Roxanne's legs. She tugged hard, desperately trying to pull Roxanne away.

Roxanne felt her mind go blank when Estella showed up out of nowhere. When did Essie show up? Did she see us kissing? Estella didn't see them kiss. All she saw was Roxanne raising her arm as though she were about to slap Lucian.

"Ms. Jarvis, Daddy didn't make you angry on purpose. Don't hit him!" Estella pleaded as she clung to Roxanne's legs and gazed at her pitifully.

It had been a while since Lucian followed Roxanne upstairs.

The children had finished their lunch and were sitting downstairs, but they had yet to start playing.

Remembering that the adults were still in a disagreement, they couldn't help but wonder what the adults were discussing. Estella clenched her fists as anxiety spread across her heart.

Daddy keeps making Ms. Jarvis angry. They are already at odds, so what if he says the wrong thing to anger her again?

The more she thought about it, the more distressed she was. Unable to stay put any longer, she decided to go upstairs to see what was happening between the adults.

Upon arriving upstairs, Estella immediately noticed Roxanne with her arm raised. The latter looked as if she was about to strike Lucian.

The next second, she heard Lucian ask Roxanne if she wanted to hit him.

Fear coursed through Estella's entire being. She feared that Lucian had once again angered Roxanne, so she raced over to apologize on his behalf.

Seeing that the child was on the brink of tears, Roxanne felt her heart soften. She put her arm down and said gently, "I wasn't going to hit him, Essie. Don't be scared."

She knelt down to meet Estella's eyes apologetically. It was obvious Estella had a shock. Estella's eyes were red. "B-But..."

She carefully looked at the hand Roxanne had just put down.

Sensing her gaze, Roxanne clenched her fingers and fought back the urge to hide her hand behind her back.

Right then, Lucian's icy voice echoed above them. "Ms. Jarvis, why won't you tell her the truth? Did you really not have the urge to hit me a while ago?"

Roxanne stiffened and whipped her head up to glance at him in disbelief. What is he talking about? Does he want me to tell Essie about our kiss? Lucian did not say anything else.

However, Estella was strung along by his words. She gripped the edge of Roxanne's clothes. "Ms. Jarvis, don't blame Daddy, please?"

Her voice was quivering as she struggled to contain her tears. "It was all Daddy's fault. Ms. Jarvis, if you're mad at him, can teach him a lesson on your behalf. But please don't hit him."

Lucian's calculated speech and Estella's choking voice gave Roxanne a migraine.

Chapter 1078 An Insult Tears streamed down Estella's face as she sobbed, "Ms. Jarvis, please forgive Daddy!" Roxanne's eyes flickered.

She had just promised to stay out of Estella's matters, but the little girl's tears nearly caused her to go back on her word. A brief hesitation later, she reached out to wipe Estella's tears away.

"Essie, don't cry. Roxanne had wanted to explain that she wasn't mad at Lucian, but after remembering what he had said earlier, she couldn't bring herself to say that aloud.

As she began to speak, Lucian raised an eyebrow and appeared eager to hear her words. However, she left her sentence unfinished even after he waited for a while.

Lucian's face turned as dark as thunder, while Estella's cries grew louder.

Roxanne opened her mouth wordlessly. She felt sorry for Estella and looked up at Lucian, signaling for him to comfort Estella. The moment she did so, she spotted the blazing fury in his eyes.

When their eyes met, Roxanne felt her heart skip a beat.

"That's it. Essie, come. Let's go home."

Lucian looked away and bent down to take Estella's hand.

Estella was already flustered by their fight. Hearing her father's tone, she knew their disagreement had escalated.

She began crying her lungs out.

Archie and Benny ran up the stairs hastily. "What's wrong, Essie?"

Roxanne's stress levels had already been pushed to their limit by Lucian and Estella. The boys' arrival was the last thing she needed.

She closed her eyes and rubbed her temples, trying to remain calm as she spoke in a soft voice. "It's nothing. You guys wait downstairs."

Confusion crossed the boys' faces. However, they nodded obediently and trotted down the stairs, as Roxanne's expression was grim.

Roxanne confronted Lucian. "What was that, Mr. Farwell? Even if you want Essie to sever ties with me, this isn't the way to go about it!"

Lucian averted his gaze, his features unreadable. "You agreed to cut ties with Essie, so how it happened doesn't matter, right?" With that, he spun around and strode down the stairs with Estella in his arms. "Lucian!" Roxanne yelled.

For some reason, she felt that the man seemed decisive as she watched him walk away.

He was acting as if they were strangers.

To be exact, he made it seem as though they were sworn enemies.

Something told Roxanne if she were to let them leave, she might not see them again in the future.

That was what she had always wanted, but now that the moment had arrived, she felt a sharp pang in her heart.

Downstairs, Lucian halted in his tracks as she wished and turned over his shoulder. His voice dripped with disdain as he asked, "Ms. Jarvis, is there anything else you need?"

Before she could answer, he continued mockingly, "Don't tell me you changed your mind and want to interfere in Essie's matters again. If that's the case, you should consider my suggestion."

A deep line appeared between Roxanne's brows when she heard his words.

His suggestion is the same as his previous ones. He wants me to be Essie's mother. This time, however, he didn't mention Aubree's name. This is obviously an insult!

His composed attitude made her clench her fists and suppress her anger.

Chapter 1079 Must Stop Crying "Why are you upset? Did I say something wrong?" Roxanne forced herself to stay calm and looked at him.

She did want to break off ties with the Farwell family, but this wasn't how she expected it to happen. If she did nothing to stop him from bringing Essie away, no one knows what he'll tell her back home.

Seeing that she didn't seem to know her mistake, Lucian frowned angrily. "How are you wrong? Didn't Essie make it clear? It was my fault."

With that, he turned to leave. Roxanne gritted her teeth. It was obvious he said that out of anger, so she couldn't let him leave in this state.

Lucian was already downstairs when Roxanne finally made up her mind. She quickened her steps and grabbed his sleeves. As she approached, Estella's cries grew quieter.

Lucian glanced at her hand gripping his sleeve with his dark and inscrutable gaze.

wonder what she will say.

Roxanne's instincts acted faster than her mind. She stopped him but could not find the words to make him stay. "If you have nothing to say, please release me, Ms. Jarvis," Lucian said coldly.

Roxanne was taken aback, as it was a familiar scenario to her.

Previously, she would do the same thing to Lucian whenever he tried to make her stay.

It seemed that they had exchanged roles today, and she was the one getting pushed away.

Roxanne didn't know how to feel about that.

"Don't act recklessly. Let's sit down and talk," she said weakly a while later.

That seemed to spark Lucian's anger again. He held Estella with one hand and used his other hand to shove her hand away from his sleeve.

"We have nothing to talk about. Ms. Jarvis, please remember your promise earlier."

He then turned around to leave without hesitation.

Roxanne stretched her arm out weakly but did not have the courage to call his name again.

Estella also seemed to know that her father wouldn't relent no matter what she did.

At that realization, she was overwhelmed with sorrow. Tears welled up in her eyes, and her vision turned blurry. Archie and Benny were waiting quietly downstairs.

Their hearts sank when they noticed Lucian's expression.

Oh, no. Daddy and Mommy are fighting again. It looks like we have to work harder!

The boys watched silently as Lucian strode past them with Estella in his arms.

Estella's eyes were wet with tears, so it was obvious she had cried a lot.

The boys felt bad for her, but they didn't forget to mouth the words: Don't cry! Let's work hard together!

They gestured for her to wipe off her tears.

Estella pouted unhappily but bobbed her head and raised her hand to wipe off her tears obediently.

We've made a pact. If Daddy and Ms. Jarvis cannot reconcile, we'll have to work hard to make that happen! must stop crying! Lucian sensed her breathing calming down and frowned in confusion.

After all, it was the first time Estella had stopped crying or kicking up a fuss when he brought her away from Roxanne.

Is Essie losing control of her tears again?

Lucian's expression darkened when the thought of that possibility crossed his mind. He turned Estella around and observed her carefully.

There were tear stains on Estella's face, but she was no longer crying. Sensing his gaze, she gave him a tremulous smile.

Lucian's confusion heightened as he wondered what happened during Estella's stay at Roxanne's place.

Chapter 1080 Thank You Darlings:

The sound of the door downstairs being opened and closed was heard. Roxanne froze where she stood as she glanced at her empty hands. Lucian is gone just like that...

She rushed out to the balcony and looked down and managed to catch a glimpse of Lucian carrying Estella to the car before their car slowly pulled away from the mansion. Roxanne felt inexplicably aggrieved as she watched their car gradually disappear from sight.

All wanted was to discuss with him the issues with Estella's character, so how did the matter take such an unexpected turn? If we were to never see each other again, wouldn't Estella's final impression of me be terrible?

By the time she regained her senses, her cheeks were already wet with tears. Archie and Benny, who had been waiting for their mother downstairs, went up to check on her when they didn't see her come down.

The moment they came upstairs, they were greeted by the sight of Roxanne standing on the balcony with her back facing them. For some reason, they could sense the sadness just by looking at her silhouette.

"Mommy?" Benny called out warily.

Roxanne didn't respond at all as if she didn't hear a thing.

The boys, upon exchanging a glance, ran up to her side, where Archie gave her sleeve a tug.

His gesture jolted Roxanne back to her senses. Surprised by the sight of her sons, who had arrived unnoticed, she frantically wiped her tears away with her hands.

Unfortunately, it didn't escape the boys' notice.

"Mommy, are you crying?" Benny looked up with an anxious expression.

Realizing that it was too late, Roxanne sighed in resignation as she squatted down. "Why did you come up?"

As she spoke, the tears in her eyes continued to flow uncontrollably. The sight of the boys reminded her of Estella.

Archie extended his hand to wipe her tears away. "We were concerned when you didn't come down, so we decided to check on you. Mommy, are you worried about Essie?"

Smiling at Archie through the tears that clouded her vision, Roxanne choked out, "I'm fine. Sorry to have made you boys worry." Benny comforted her anxiously, "Don't cry, Mommy. Even Essie didn't shed tears when she left just now."

There was a glint in Roxanne's eyes when she heard that.

Essie didn't cry? clearly saw her tears just now.

Noticing the suspicion on Roxanne's face, Archie said in a childish voice, "Essie told us she would definitely come and play with us again!"

Thereafter, the boys gave Roxanne a long hug to comfort her, and only then did Roxanne regain her composure.

"Am ... not nice to Essie?" Roxanne asked hesitantly after a long pause.

The boys were surprised by her words. "Mommy, no one treats her better than you do!"

Daddy and Grandma don't concern themselves with Essie's feelings. Only Mommy cares about what she thinks.

Moreover, the boys could see that Roxanne treated Estella the same way as she did to them even though she didn't admit it. The love she has for Essie is on par with the love she has for us!

"This is all our fault. Not only did we not set a good example, but we also failed in taking good care of her."

"Mommy, we're the ones to blame!"

Roxanne pulled the boys into her arms and expressed her gratitude in a raspy voice. "Thank you, Darlings."