

ABANDONED 1121

Chapter 1121

Aubree followed Estella closely into the room. Hesitantly, she muttered, "Lucian..."

She felt somewhat guilty when she noticed the young girl fuming at Lucian.

At the same time, she was relieved that Estella had not said a word to her father.

Lucian nodded at Aubree and said, "Sorry for troubling you to look after Essie."

Aubree was delighted by his words. She sputtered, "Not at all. I'm happy to do this. Essie's a lovely girl."

As for how she upset Estella in the car earlier, Aubree decided to sweep things under the rug if the young girl kept things to herself.

"Dinner's ready. Why don't you eat with us?" Lucian offered.

Aubree was over the moon. "Sure."

They entered the dining room one after another.

Catalina had already set the table for three.

Aubree said, "I'll go get Essie."

Despite her suggestion, she was not confident about coaxing Estella downstairs.

After all, the young girl was put out because of Aubree, and she might not listen to her instructions. If she throws a tantrum in front of Lucian...

Amid her distress, Lucian piped up, "It's fine. She might be angry at me. She still doesn't like her new kindergarten. Let her calm down on her own."

After that, Lucian picked up his cutlery and began eating.

Aubree stopped in her tracks, though the tension in her heart gradually eased. Still, she did not forget to put on her loving stepmother's act.

"Essie's still so young. She shouldn't be starving herself. If she doesn't want to come downstairs, Catalina, could you put together a plate and bring it upstairs?"

Now it was Catalina's turn to stiffen in shock. She was pleasantly surprised at Aubree's thoughtfulness.

She quickly collected herself and began filling a new plate with some food. Then, she brought the food upstairs to Estella, leaving Lucian and Aubree alone in the dining room.

Silence fell over the room. It was absolutely stifling, yet Aubree quietly ate her dinner, as she dared not utter a single word. She had no idea how much time had passed before Lucian's voice suddenly rang out. "How are Mr. and Mrs. Pearson?" Aubree's heart skipped a beat. Elation bloomed in her chest.

In the past, she had always been the one scrambling to find a topic of conversation between herself and Lucian.

Now, however, Lucian took the lead and even asked after her parents.

Is this what | think it is?

The possibility filled her with hope, though Aubree suppressed her excitement and feigned composure.

“They've been well. It's just that my dad, well...”

Here, she trailed off and smiled wryly at Lucian before continuing, “You probably know how he had a huge argument with me after the whole issue with our engagement. He even kicked me out of the house. And he still hasn't let go of the topic after all this time. I've told him that you won't break off our engagement anymore, but he simply won't believe me.”

As she spoke, Aubree carefully observed Lucian's expression.

She noticed his brows creasing slightly, and she inadvertently tensed as she awaited his answer.

I can't be obvious enough with my hint. | wonder how he'll reply to that...

Lucian was not a fool, and he immediately knew this was Aubree's roundabout way of asking about their marriage. It was also a thinly veiled request for him to clear things up with her parents.

But...

Despite making up his mind to go along with the engagement, he still felt irritated when Aubree brought the topic up.

It took him a long time to suppress his annoyance. In a low voice, he replied, “If you're free, help me arrange a meal with your parents. | haven't met them in a while.”

In a way, that remark answered Aubree's hopes. As expected, Aubree agreed happily to his request. “Of course. I'll tell them about it tonight!” Estella never appeared in the dining room, not even after Lucian and Aubree had finished their dinner

Aubree would not allow the young girl to throw a wrench in her plans, not after she had worked so hard to draw a promise out of Lucian regarding their engagement

After dinner, she offered, “Til head upstairs and check on Essie”

Lucian nodded indifferently in response.

She trudged upstairs, her heart in her throat

Catalina stayed with Estella in her bedroom and watched as the latter slowly ate her dinner.

When she spotted Aubree at the door, Catalina greeted her amiably, “Ms. Pearson”

Aubree nodded in acknowledgment and said, “You can head downstairs. I'd like to talk to Essie.”

Catalina hesitated briefly but had no excuse to protest the young woman's wishes. Eventually, she left the room. Aubree and Estella found themselves alone.

Estella puffed her cheeks indignantly and slammed her fork on the table. She turned around and jumped on the bed, wrapping herself in the blankets. Then, she busied herself playing with her doll, seemingly intent on ignoring Aubree.

Her behavior caused Aubree's expression to fall. She hastily approached the girl and pleaded, "Essie, | didn't mean to say those things about you. Won't you stop being mad at me, hmm?"

In the past, Aubree would have lectured the girl for her tantrum. However, Estella now held the key to her future, and Aubree had no choice but to worship the girl on a pedestal. Estella kept her head lowered and ignored Aubree's pleas.

Aubree gritted her teeth and said, "Can you promise me not to tell your father about what | said to you in the car? Please? | promise I'll never say those things about you again."

Estella harrumphed softly at her words.

She had no plans to tell her father about Aubree's words in the first place.

Though she hated admitting it, Estella knew something was indeed wrong with her.

Still, even if she told her father about it, he would only say that Aubree should not have made those remarks. Telling him would not achieve anything.

Meanwhile, Aubree took Estella's silence as an agreement and sighed in relief. "Well then, you should get some rest. I'll be here tomorrow to bring you to school."

Chapter 1122

After finishing that sentence, Aubree turned and headed for the door.

Still worried, Aubree stopped at the door and added, "I promise I'll take good care of you in the future. Be a good girl, okay?" Only after she closed the bedroom door did Estella drop the doll in her hands. Tears welled in her eyes, blurring her vision.

| miss Ms. Jarvis, Archie, and Benny so much..

Downstairs, Lucian watched Aubree leave, though his thoughts remained on his sulking daughter. Concerned, he headed upstairs to check on Estella.

His daughter was brooding under her blanket when he arrived.

When she heard her bedroom door opening, she thought Aubree had returned and wrapped the blanket tighter around herself. Lucian furrowed his brows in concern at her reaction. "Essie?"

Her father's voice coaxed Estella out of the cocoon of her blanket.

"What's with you today? Why are you so upset?" asked Lucian as he sat beside his daughter.

Estella sniffled and shot her father a pitiful look. "Daddy, | don't want my new school."

Frowning, Lucian said, "If you don't like your current kindergarten, I'll transfer you to a new one."

She clung to his sleeve and wailed, "No! | want to go back!"

"No," Lucian rejected her pleas coldly.

Realizing Estella was about to burst into tears, Lucian forced himself to soften his tone as he cajoled her, "Essie, don't throw a tantrum. I've made up my mind about this. | won't change it easily."

Estella said piteously with teary eyes, "I want to talk to Ms Jarvis, Archie, and Benny

Lucian could not bear to see his precious daughter crying, so he stroked her head and comforted her, "How about another day when I'm not busy?"

"Really?" Estella grabbed his sleeves and probed

If Daddy is willing to give Ms Jarvis a phone call, does that mean there are chances for them to reconcile?

Lucian nodded without a change in expression "Yes."

Essie would have come to accept Aubree by the time | finish my work. She won't bother me to make the phone call by then Unaware of Lucian's thoughts, Estella broke into a smile as she thought her father would eventually call Roxanne

Afraid that Estella would mention Roxanne again, Lucian patted her head and said, "All right, get some rest. | have work to do" Estella nodded obediently as she watched Lucian get up to leave.

Meanwhile, Aubree was driving to the Pearson residence with delight.

As soon as she walked through the door, Gina called out to her. "What took you so long? Did Lucian ask you to stay for a meal?" Gina knew that Aubree went to pick up Estella from school.

At that moment, Aubree was in a great mood.

Upon hearing Gina's question, she was suddenly reminded of something and sat down beside her mother with a smile, holding the latter's arm.

Feeling puzzled, Gina asked, "What did you guys talk about to make you so happy?" Aubree grinned and replied, "When are you free? Lucian wants to treat you to a meal." "What?" A joyous smile formed on Gina's face instantly.

They had waited for this moment for years. They had invited Lucian for a meal dozens of times throughout the years, but the latter turned down their offer each time.

Therefore, they could not believe that Lucian would take the initiative to meet them this time. Aubree smiled proudly, extremely pleased with herself. "Lucian was the one who proposed it. | was taken aback too"

Astonishment flooded Gina once again. "What's wrong with Lucian these days? Why the sudden change?"

As soon as she finished the sentence, she remembered something and pursued, "How's your relationship with Estella now?" Upon hearing Estella's name, Aubree felt her head hurt.

"We were fine this morning, and even Lucian thought we were getting along quite well. However, when we got home from kindergarten..."

Gina's heart sank at once. "What went wrong?" Aubree told her what had happened in the car. Panic seized Gina when she learned that Aubree had made Estella upset again

"Lucian must have believed that Estella has accepted you, which is why he's treating us to a meal. This can't go on. You have to fix your relationship with Estella."

Aubree was also filled with frustration. The smile on her face faded away slowly when she heard her mother's words. "I'm also thinking of a way."

Frowning, Gina looked at Aubree and suggested, "Since Lucian has invited us for a meal, I don't think he will oppose it if you want to stay at the Farwell residence."

Aubree's eyes lit up when she heard Gina's suggestion.

I almost forgot about that! If I can stay in the manor, I can spend more time with Estella. By then, I won't have to worry about not having the opportunity to strengthen our ties.

With that in mind, Aubree came up with an idea. "Also..." Gina's voice sounded again. "What happened between Lucian and Roxanne?" Lucian's persistence toward Roxanne was evident to all of them.

Therefore, they were curious about his sudden change of mind.

Chapter 1123

Hearing her mother mention Roxanne, Aubree was a little irritated "Is she even worth mentioning?"

Since Lucian had decided to meet Aubree's parents officially, that meant they were only a step away from getting married. From her perspective, regretting this decision would not be one of Lucian's options.

However, that was not enough to soothe Gina's worries.

"In any case, Roxanne is still Estella's biological mother. What if Lucian regrets it? There is nothing we can do if he chooses to go back on his word."

Aubree's heart sank when she heard that I've come this far, and I won't allow Lucian to regret it again!

However, her concern did not go unnoticed. Gina said faintly, "If you don't want Lucian to go back on his words, you must figure out what happened between them. If there is a misunderstanding between them, we will prevent them from clearing it up."

An icy glint flashed across Aubree's eyes. "Got it!"

Gina looked at her daughter as mixed feelings surged within her heart. "I hope you won't blame me for dampening your spirits. We've waited for six years, and we're not going to wait any longer."

Aubree smiled. "I should be thanking you for reminding me." The two chatted about Lucian for a while before Aubree returned to her room.

After being blackmailed by Cory the last time, Cory left Aubree another new contact number that Lucian would not find out.

Deep down, Aubree still had her reservations.

However, her mother's reminder left her no choice but to risk it and give it a shot. She gritted her teeth and tried making the call.

The person on the other end answered almost immediately.

“Ms. Pearson, can | help you?” Cory’s lazy voice sounded over the phone.

Chapter 1124 Aubree couldn’t help hesitating.

This man ripped me off! Is it wise to work with him again? However, he is the only person who can escape Lucian’s investigation...

Cory was starting to get impatient on the other end of the line. “If there’s nothing else, I’m hanging up. It’s late, and we private detectives have to get some sleep too.”

“Wait!” Aubree hastily stopped him from hanging up. “I need to talk to you,”

Cory arched a brow. “Oh? What else do you have to say? | did not owe you anything in your previous commission. If you have another request, you will have to pay extra.”

Cory was apparently trying to rip Aubree off again. Aubree clenched her fists tightly. “I’ve given you ten million! What you did previously isn’t even worth that much!” As soon as she finished saying that, she heard Cory sneering. “I’m afraid you’ve misunderstood. The ten

million you gave me is for my service fee and the price of buying the photos I’ve taken. Or do you think those photos are worthless?”

Aubree gritted her teeth. “How much more do you want?”

Without any hesitation, Cory named his price. “Ten million.”

Another ten million!

Aubree flew into a rage. “Don’t cross the line. We are in the same boat, remember?”

Cory shrugged nonchalantly and said. “That’s why | ask for this much. Don’t forget that Mr. Farwell’s men are tailing me now. It’s way harder to stalk him now.”

After saying that, he turned to look around.

Lucian’s men were still watching him in the shadows.

Although Lucian had decided to cut ties with Roxanne, in the end, Estella was also one of the victims who suffered previously. Naturally, Lucian would not let the mastermind go easily.

Aubree could not refute Cory’s words. After weighing the pros and cons, she clenched her teeth and agreed to the latter’s request. “All right, but you must do a good job!”

Chapter 1125

Cory was in a good mood, knowing he had once again made a fortune. He then said, “Of course. Ms. Pearson, I’m sure you’ve come to me again because you believe in my capabilities. Now, tell me. What is it that you want me to investigate?”

Narrowing her eyes, Aubree said, “Investigate what happened between Roxanne and Lucian!” Cory let out a meaningful chuckle when he heard what she said. Aubree questioned coldly, “Why are you laughing?”

As if unaware of her anger, Cory muttered, “Since you’ve agreed to the price | proposed so readily, | have to show you something.”

With that, he took out a phone from the bag beside him and typed away on the screen.

Soon, Aubree received a few messages on her phone.

“| believe what you're about to see won't disappoint you, Ms. Pearson.” Cory sounded confident.

Aubree furrowed her brows and swiped open her phone, checking the messages he sent

The chat interface showed that Cory had sent her more than ten pictures.

Each picture was attached with the time it was taken.

Those were recent pictures of Roxanne and Jack hanging out together.

Judging from the date attached, the two had been meeting each other almost every day.

Moreover, they seemed intimate with each other in the pictures.

Aubree was hesitant. “What does this mean? Are you trying to suggest that Jack was why Lucian and Roxanne separated?”

On the other end of the line, Cory said in a mischievous tone, “Come to think of it, it's kind of amusing. The princess of the Farwell family stayed overnight at Ms. Jarvis' house. The next morning, Mr. Damaris came. After that, Mr. Farwell came in the afternoon as well. Then, he left with her daughter and never returned to Ms. Jarvis' place again.”

There must be some correlation between these two incidents judging by the time they happened.

However, Aubree was still doubtful.

Roxanne and Jack meeting up frequently was no longer something new.

Before this, she had tried disclosing this matter to Lucian, but nothing significant happened.

Lucian indeed got furious, but he didn't cut off contact with Roxanne because of it.

However, Aubree couldn't think of anything other than this that would possibly cause Lucian and Roxanne's separation. Consequently, she was filled with puzzlement.

A few moments later, Aubree broke the silence. “It shouldn't be this simple. Continue to investigate and find out why Lucian and Roxanne separated. Otherwise, you will not receive a penny from me!”

“Ms. Pearson, are you threatening me?” Cory's tone turned cold.

Roxanne was momentarily at a loss for words. After struggling to suppress her anger, she said, “My apologies. | shouldn't have said that. I'm counting on you.”

Satisfied with her response, Cory scoffed, “That's better. Don't forget that we're not in a simple employer- employee relationship He then hung up without giving her a chance to reply.

Aubree's face clouded over as she stared at the darkened phone screen.

| swear | won't show Cory any mercy once I've become Mrs. Farwell in the future.

She then remembered something and scrolled through the pictures Cory sent her.

A cold glint flashed across her eyes as she looked at the way Roxanne and Jack interacted with each other in the pictures.

Regardless of the reason behind Lucian and Roxanne's separation, Roxanne's relationship with Jack is still worthy of exploitation! It'd be even better if | can get something to actually happen between them...

However, she couldn't come up with a plan for the time being.

Hence, she needed to discuss with someone how to put her idea into action.

Chapter 1126 Remembering her task of bringing Estella to school tomorrow, Aubree set an alarm for six o'clock in the morning. She felt extremely irritated when the alarm rang the next morning, disturbing her slumber.

Last night, she barely got any sleep as she couldn't stop thinking about Roxanne and Jack. She had only slept for three to four hours

Raising her hand to turn off the alarm, she closed her eyes, wanting to go back to sleep.

But | still need to gain Lucian's favor

After lazing around under the covers for a while, Aubree reluctantly climbed out of bed, suppressing her anger. She then went downstairs after washing up.

Gina was leisurely watering the flowers downstairs and was surprised to see her daughter up so early. "Why are you up so early?"

Still grumpy from lack of sleep, Aubree's expression was grim. "I have to send Essie to school."

Hearing that, Gina bobbed her head understandingly. "You should. You're suffering now in exchange for a bright and happy future after you marry Lucian. Hang in there."

Aubree was, of course, aware of this. Otherwise, she wouldn't have woken up this early in the morning. "Did you look into what | told you last night?" Gina turned to look at her daughter after she finished watering the flowers.

At the thought of that matter, Aubree nodded with furrowed brows. "Yes, | asked someone to investigate it, but I'm not sure what's the reason."

She had been pondering about it all night long. According to the information Cory had provided her, Roxanne's daily routine hardly changed during this period.

It won't make sense to say that Lucian gave up on Roxanne because of her relationship with Jack. Roxanne is already on friendly terms with Jack before she and Lucian had a fallout.

However, if that wasn't the case, Aubree couldn't think of another reason.

Seeing that her daughter had taken what she said into consideration, Gina stopped saying anything else. After the two had a simple breakfast, Aubree drove to the Farwell residence.

When she arrived, Lucian was having breakfast with Estella.

The man frowned slightly when he saw Aubree. “Why are you here this early in the morning?”

Aubree said, beaming. “Farwell Group is quite far away from Essie’s kindergarten, and it’d be quite inconvenient for you to make a trip there. So, I was thinking I’d do it instead.”

With that, she flashed Estella an amicable smile. Estella pursed her lips in silence as she remembered what had happened between them yesterday.

Lucian, on the other hand, pondered for a moment, feeling inexplicably awkward.

Estella stayed with Roxanne for some time before she transferred to the new kindergarten. Back then,

Roxanne would be the one sending Estella to school.

Now, however, Estella had transferred to another kindergarten, and the person who sent her to school had also changed. A self-deprecating look flashed across Lucian’s eyes when he realized what he was thinking.

I’ve already decided to cut ties with Roxanne. So why am I still thinking about her?

Aubree felt somewhat uneasy when she didn’t get a response from Lucian after a long time, thinking he was giving her the cold shoulder again.

“If you have already asked someone else to send Essie, I’ll— Before she could finish her sentence, Lucian’s deep voice sounded. “You’re here just in time. Have you had breakfast? If not, come join us.”

When Aubree heard that, her eyes lit up suddenly. “It’s fine. I got up very early, so I’ve already eaten.

After that, she pointed at the couch cautiously. “I’ll sit on the couch and wait.”

Chapter 1127 Lucian nodded, his expression giving nothing away as he continued to have breakfast with Estella. Estella was reluctant to go to school, and she ate exceptionally slower than usual.

Her appetite plunged with Aubree’s sudden visit, and it took a turn for the worse when the woman expressed her intention of sending Estella to school later.

Estella put down her fork gloomily.

Lucian did not make much of her demeanor and assumed that Estella was only acting out because she didn’t want to go to school. In a low voice, he ordered, “Follow Ms. Pearson after you’re done with breakfast.”

Estella’s face sank. She gave her father a puppy-eyed look.

However, before she could say anything, Aubree’s voice rang. “Don’t worry. It’s still early. Essie can still have more food if she’s not done yet.”

Estella furrowed her brows and shot her a look.

Aubree was afraid that the little girl, if unhappy, might tell Lucian what happened yesterday. Hence, Aubree didn’t give her a chance to speak.

Noticing that Estella was looking at her, Aubree immediately said, “Are you done, Essie? We can go now if you’re done with your breakfast!”

Estella puffed her cheeks in exasperation, as Aubree interrupted her right when she was about to talk. Aubree grew more and more apprehensive as she trained her eyes on Estella. “I’ll see you guys to the door.”

Lucian was thinking that even though Aubree’s relationship with Estella had recently improved, the little girl might still need to get herself used to Aubree taking care of her. He wanted to help the two of them get along.

Then, he put down his fork and started to clear the table. Estella was alarmed when she noticed Lucian standing up. “I don’t want to go to school!” Lucian frowned. “If you don’t go now, it’s going to be more difficult for you to get used to getting along with others.

Estella remained seated in her chair and turned her head away grumpily to avoid Lucian’s gaze, making a physical proclamation of her protest.

The atmosphere between the father and daughter became very tense in the dining room. Aubree hadn’t expected that that would happen and took a few moments to fully grasp the situation.

“Lucian, Essie is still young. Don’t force her. If she really doesn’t feel like going to school, so be it. | know a friend who can do homeschooling-”

Lucian interrupted in a cold tone before she could finish, “No. We can’t indulge her.”

The thought of letting Estella be homeschooled did cross his mind as well.

However, when he thought about how Estella had been doing recently, Lucian was suddenly reminded of his initial intention of sending his daughter to kindergarten.

It was imperative for Estella to get along with others to improve her condition, and it would be best that others approach her.

Besides, it had taken her so much effort to improve her condition by this much. If she continued to stay cooped up in the house, Lucian was afraid that Estella might relapse.

That was definitely not something he wanted to witness. “But...” Aubree pretended to take Estella’s side.

Naturally, she was hoping that the little girl would go to kindergarten. Otherwise, she would have lost her chance to show herself in front of Lucian.

However, there were times when concessions had to be made.

It was apparent that Lucian had already made up his mind. He turned around to head for the door, not caring whether Estella had tried to keep up.

At the sight of her father turning her back against her, Estella was aggrieved. Even Ms. Pearson is saying that it’s all right if | don’t go to school. Why does Daddy insist that | go?

Moreover, it was obvious from Lucian’s body language that he would no longer pay heed to her if she didn’t keep up.

Chapter 1128

Estella looked at her father, who was already at the door and turned to look at Aubree, who was still standing by the couch. A few moments passed, and the little girl finally begrudgingly got out of her chair and jogged to keep up with Lucian. Aubree let out a relieved sigh and caught up to them as well.

“Daddy,” Estella mumbled. She gave her father a puppy-eyed look and tugged at the corner of his shirt in a bid to curry favor with her father.

Lucian lowered his gaze to meet Estella’s. He lifted his hand and patted her head. “I’m really busy lately. Please don’t throw a tantrum at me.”

Estella pursed her lips in disapproval, refusing to believe what he said. She knew as a matter of fact that Lucian was in a bad mood because he had quarreled with Roxanne.

Estella was flabbergasted that Lucian was still trying to lie to her, despite the fact that even she knew the real reason her father was upset.

Why are adults so weird? Why doesn’t Daddy just make up with Ms. Jarvis?

Of course, Lucian had no idea what was on Estella’s mind. He averted his gaze after he was done talking and turned to look at Aubree, who was standing right behind Estella.

As Aubree’s attention had always been on him, she flashed him a smile the moment his gaze landed on her. “What’s the matter?” Lucian furrowed his brows and asked in a low voice, “Have you asked your parents? What did they say?”

Aubree was overjoyed to hear him. However, she gave nothing away and replied, “I talked to them when I got back home yesterday. They said that since you’re busy, we could arrange to have a meal together at your convenience.”

She sounded like a considerable and genteel woman. Aubree carefully gauged Lucian’s reaction after she was done talking.

If he was serious about setting a date for their wedding, he wouldn’t have a reason to delay having a meal together with her parents.

Moreover, Lucian was the one who brought up the topic today. Thinking that Lucian was contemplating on setting a date right away, Aubree was brimming with hope. However, moments passed by, and she couldn’t seem to get a response from him.

Aubree’s heart sank, but she had to put up an understanding front and said, “I know you’ve been busy lately. There’s no need to rush to have a meal together. We can always do it after you’re done dealing with your matters.”

Lucian finally responded and nodded impassively.

Aubree gritted her teeth.

It was clear as day that Lucian was still on the fence about their marriage.

The deafening silence was Lucian trying to tell Aubree to let him off the hook.

“It's getting late. You should send Estella to school,” he uttered in a swift attempt to change the topic of conversation.

Aubree didn't feel right to press on and forced a smile. “All right. I'll go pick her up later so that you don't need to make another trip.”

A hint of hesitation fled across Lucian's eyes.

However, when he thought about how he'd just got himself out of having a meal with her parents, Lucian felt bad for rejecting her goodwill yet again.

Hence, he agreed and said, “Essie will be in your care then.”

Aubree's lips pursed into a thin smile. She wanted to leave after bidding goodbye to Lucian. However, the little girl refused to let go of Lucian's shirt

“Essie, we're going to be late if we don't leave now,” Aubree egged her on with a strained smile. The little girl pouted and cast a glance at Lucian stubbornly.

Lucian suddenly recalled something and held Estella's hand. “Let's go. I'm sending you.”

The little girl finally relented and followed her father out of the mansion.

Aubree heaved a sigh of relief and jogged to keep up with them.

Chapter 1129

After sending Estella into the car, Lucian left.

Aubree started the engine and slowly drove toward Estella's kindergarten.

On her way there, she tried to tell the girl not to take what she had said the day before to heart.

However, no matter what she said, it was as if Estella could not hear her—the girl just kept fidgeting with her fingers. Aubree gritted her teeth at that. It took her a long time before she managed to stop herself from actually hitting Estella.

After sending Estella to the kindergarten, she dared not linger around, fearing that her urge to hit the girl would reveal itself if she were to stay there a second longer.

On the other side, Roxanne sent Archie and Benny to the kindergarten early in the morning.

She found out that Lucian was not going to send Estella there anymore, so there was no need for her to stay away from the kindergarten anymore.

Furthermore, she knew that the boys were feeling awful lately. If she sends them to kindergarten herself, the boys would be in a better mood.

Upon reaching the entrance, Roxanne suddenly recalled something. In a worried tone, she said to the boys, “You can't sneak off to look for Essie even if you miss her. If you really want to meet her, you have to tell me about it.”

Roxanne would not know what to do if the boys sneaked off to look for Estella again.

Lucian clearly wanted to cut ties with me based on the way he left. Well, it's what | wanted all along too. | don't want Lucian to think that I'm regretting this.

The boys obediently answered, "Got it, Mommy." Roxanne then patted their heads apologetically before asking them to enter with Pippa.

After watching the boys disappear from her line of sight, Roxanne turned and went back into her car. At the same time, she let out a sigh of relief.

She had been wracked with worry since waking up about whether or not the boys were going to ask her what happened after she called Lucian.

Archie and Benny knew her too well; they would figure out her lies swiftly.

If they really interrogated her about the matter, Roxanne would not know how to answer them.

Fortunately, it seemed like Archie and Benny had forgotten about the matter after Jack's appearance the day before. Even after stopping the car at the research institute's entrance, Roxanne was still feeling conflicted.

That was why it took her a while to register the two minivans parked before the research institute.

"Dr. Jarvis."

Colby was with a few researchers, and he was instructing the workers to transport the medicinal herbs.

His expression changed when he saw Roxanne, but he soon schooled his expression to a neutral look before walking over to her nonchalantly.

Roxanne pursed her lips and smiled at him before casting a confused look at the busying workers. "These are..."

With a smile, Colby explained, "I heard that these are a batch of medicinal herbs given to us by Mr. Damaris. Mr. Damaris said that he has already told you about it."

Roxanne froze for a second before finally recalling the conversation she had with Jack.

Jack did mention that he was going to send a batch of medicinal herbs to the research institute when he came to deliver me the book about ancient medicine yesterday.

However, Archie and Benny threw a tantrum then, so Roxanne did not manage to find out more about the batch of herbs. | never thought that he would give me such a large batch.

"Dr. Jarvis, our research institute could get enough supply of medicinal herbs all thanks to your good relationship with Mr. Damaris," Colby politely said when he noticed that Roxanne was in a daze.

As he spoke, his gaze was fixed on her face, seemingly trying to catch her changing her expression.

Chapter 1130 Hearing that, Roxanne instinctively furrowed her brows as her tone turned indifferent.

"Oh, no, no. Mr. Damaris is only a business partner. He has provided us with the medicinal herbs in time to ensure that the research continues according to schedule."

Colby's words had reminded Roxanne of her boys, and certain thoughts crossed her mind.

How will the boys believe me if even Colby has mistaken my relationship with Jack? Also, I simply can't think of why others will mistake the nature of my relationship with Jack.

Colby flashed her an unfazed smile. "You don't need to be in a hurry to deny it, Dr. Jarvis. After all, it's normal for Mr. Damaris to be impressed by someone as skillful as you, Dr. Jarvis."

Then, as if fearing Roxanne would not know about what they knew, he beamed and said, "I'm afraid you don't know about this, but everyone in the research institute has been talking about your relationship with Mr. Damaris."

Roxanne stiffened. "What are you talking about?"

Colby shrugged. "Mr. Damaris is always by your side when he visits the research institute, and he's so considerate of our establishment. It will be difficult for us to not assume that the two of you aren't romantically involved."

Roxanne parted her lips but soon realized she had no way to refute that. Thus, the only thing she said was, "Dr. Galloway, if you ever hear anyone talking about this again, please explain to them that Mr. Damaris and I are only friends. There isn't anything else between us."

Colby inclined his head. "I will.

Then, he added, "Still, this matter won't die down just because they hear an explanation or two from me. If you don't wish for others to mistake your relationship with Mr. Damaris, it's best to keep a distance from him."

Roxanne nodded. "Thank you for the reminder. I will pay attention to that."

After that, Colby said nothing else and led his men to take stock of the medicine.

Unbeknownst to Roxanne, a peculiar look flashed across Colby's eyes.

Jack had been going to the research institute almost every day.

Every time he was there, the two of them would take almost half a day to talk about the progression of the research.

Indeed, the other employees at the research institute had been talking about them, but Colby's earlier words mostly stemmed from his worries about their relationship.

Only after hearing Roxanne's denial did Colby finally feel relieved. In contrast, Roxanne only felt more and more frustrated after what Colby had said. In the afternoon, Jack came to the research institute as usual to discuss the research's progress.

"How's the research? Was the batch of medicinal herbs I sent in the morning enough? If not, I can get another batch, Jack said to her in front of other researchers.

Roxanne did not know whether it was a trick of his mind or not, but she felt as if everyone around her was watching them right after Jack said that.

However, when she lifted her head to survey her surroundings, she only saw them busying away with the research.

At that, Roxanne began jeering at herself.

At the end of the day, she was only worrying about that because she was feeling guilty after hearing Colby's words.

Speaking of which, I'm always by Colby's side too, so why is Jack the only one they think I'm romantically involved with? Then, the thought of her two sons popped into her head again, and Roxanne pressed her lips tightly together.

"Dr. Jarvis?" Jack called out, puzzled when he noticed her expression. "What are you thinking about?"

Roxanne snapped back to her sense and gave him a quick smile. "Nothing."

"These medicinal herbs..."

Right as Jack was about to say something, Roxanne cut him off by saying, "Why don't we talk outside? Let's not disturb the people's concentration in their experiments."