

ABANDONED 1131

Chapter 1131

Jack froze for a few seconds before coming to some kind of realization and agreeing to it. The two of them then went out of the research institute.

A look of delight danced across Colby's face when he saw them leave.

Ever since Jack came for Roxanne, Colby had been keeping his focus on the two. Therefore, he saw the look of struggle on Roxanne's face.

Evidently, what he had said in the morning was effective.

Meanwhile, Roxanne came to a stop in her tracks at the entrance of the institute with mixed feelings still surging in her heart. In the meantime, Jack stopped behind her.

"Sorry." Roxanne had calmed herself down on their way out and realized that she had been a little too carried away earlier.

Jack raised a brow and teased, "What's the matter? Why are you apologizing to me all of a sudden? You couldn't have secretly done something terrible to the project, could you, Ms. Jarvis?"

Roxanne shook her head immediately. "Of course not."

I've done so much for this project. Why would I do anything bad to it?

Jack chuckled. "I'm just joking. Still, I have no clue as to what could possibly make you apologize to me other than this." Roxanne lowered her gaze. "I just think that my attitude earlier wasn't too good."

"I don't think it's a big deal. I don't mind any kind of attitude from you as long as your research goes well."

Jack was making it clear that they only had a professional relationship.

However, Roxanne only felt even guiltier upon hearing his words.

Jack shares the same thought as I do—he's only doing so much for the research institute to ensure that the project goes well. But here I am, getting suspicious about Jack's intentions because of some stupid gossip.

"So, Ms. Jarvis, was there something you wanted to tell me by asking me to come here?" Jack queried. His words pulled her out of her thoughts, and she found herself unable to string a sentence in response. Originally, she had wanted to tell Jack that they should keep a distance from each other.

Yet, she had to swallow those words after what Jack said.

When Jack heard nothing from her, he lifted a brow questioningly.

Finally, Roxanne quietly said, "Let me thank you on behalf of the research institute for the batch of medicinal herbs this morning, Mr. Damaris."

Jack stood transfixed for a moment before a smile appeared on his lips. “Did you ask me to come out here to say this?”

Roxanne guiltily averted her gaze before nodding.

At that, Jack deliberately fell silent for a few seconds before suggesting, “Since you would like to thank me, Ms. Jarvis, why don’t you... thank me by making me some homemade food?”

Roxanne’s lashes fluttered, and she inhaled sharply. Jack’s earlier words had made her think that she had mistaken him, but now, his request seemed a little too intimate.

Seemingly sensing the difficult situation he had put her in, he smiled and added, “There is no rush. If I’m going to eat what you’ve made, I’ll certainly want to try a dish you’ve mastered. Please prepare for it and get me to try it once you’re ready.”

In a way, Jack was giving her the chance to digest his words. However, Roxanne’s head remained hanging as various emotions flashed past her eyes.

Alas, she was the one who mentioned how grateful she was for Jack’s help. Thus, the request he made was something she would not be able to reject after that.

Furthermore, the request was not something urgent. That meant that he might change his mind over time.

With those thoughts in mind, Roxanne agreed to it. “Okay.”

Chapter 1132

The two of them were preoccupied with their conversation, so they did not notice Cory’s figure appearing around the corner across the street.

As Cory looked at the photo he just took, he grinned.

Even though Roxanne was not standing close to Jack earlier, the angle he took the photo made it seem as if the two of them were hugging.

After going through the photos he had taken, he finally chose two and sent them to Aubree.

In the meantime, Aubree was strolling on the streets with Frieda because the Pearson residence was not close to Estella’s kindergarten, and Aubree did not wish to travel so far.

Furthermore, she had something to talk to Frieda about. “Are you saying it’s highly likely that Lucian broke up with Roxanne because of Jack?”

Frieda had been listening to Aubree the entire time, but she was still confused. “Although Jack’s an excellent man, he still isn’t as good as Lucian. Is there really a need for Lucian to give up on her just because of Jack?” Aubree hummed in ruminative thought. “That’s what I’ve been doubtful about, so I’ve sent Cory to look into this.”

Right as the two were chatting away, Aubree’s phone suddenly buzzed.

At that, Aubree halted and took out her phone to glance at the screen.

She had received two photos from Cory.

In the photos, Roxanne was with Jack, and it looked like they were in an intimate embrace.

“Are they dating?” Frieda blurted out in surprise when she saw the photo.

Her misunderstanding was not surprising. Anyone would share the same thoughts like her upon seeing those photos. Even Aubree stiffened for a few seconds before coldly saying, “No, | don’t think so.”

With that, she showed Frieda the photos Cory took in the past.

However, the more photos Frieda saw, the more confounded she was. ‘If they aren’t a thing, aren’t they spending a little too much time together? Moreover, some of their actions in these photos look intimate...

Right then, a thought entered Aubree’s mind, and she curled her lips mockingly. “If even you are mistaking the nature of their relationship, I’m sure others would be even more stunned by these photos.”

“What do you mean?” Frieda was a little confused.

A ruthless look crept onto Aubree’s face. “Regardless of whether they’ve separated because of Jack, | can use these photos to make Jack the wedge I’m going to drive between Roxanne and Lucian!”

As long as everyone thinks that Roxanne is in a relationship with Jack, Lucian will never go back to her. Frieda vaguely guessed what Aubree had in mind, but she dared not confirm it until she heard Aubree’s

words.

Promptly, she tensed up.

Even though Aubree had yet to take any action, Frieda knew that the plan would be a risky one.

“Aubree,” Frieda nervously started. “Are you really planning to send these photos out?”

Then, in an even softer voice, she said, “I just hope you remember how the Hightower family came to its end back then...”

If Lucian had truly cut ties with Roxanne, Aubree’s plan would be a good move.

However, if Lucian had a tinge of regret about Roxanne, the photos would catch his attention and make him look into the matter.

If he ended up tracking them down, Frieda was afraid that her family and Aubree’s would end up like the Hightower family-gone in a night.

Aubree furrowed her brows in irritation. “Obviously not. Why would | be that stupid?”

Therefore, she was not going to be the one to initiate it.

Chapter 1133

“In that case...

Frieda was puzzled. “When are we going to use these photos?”

Aubree’s eyes narrowed. “I’m still waiting for the right opportunity. In fact, | called you here today to discuss this matter.”

The right opportunity.

Frieda knitted her brows when she realized the meaning behind Aubree’s words.

She was of the opinion that the photos were not enough to prove anything. She wanted to create a scenario where Roxanne had nothing to defend herself with.

However, the plan was easier said than done.

If only they were on good terms with either Roxanne or Jack, the chances of success would be higher. Unfortunately, there was bad blood between both of them and Roxanne, and neither was familiar with Jack. Under such circumstances, Frieda, too, drew a blank.

“Have you managed to come up with any ideas?” Aubree began to grow impatient.

Her relationship with Estella had improved due to Frieda’s suggestion. She figured that the latter might be able to give her some useful ideas.

Unfortunately, all she got was silence after waiting for a long time.

Frieda looked troubled. “Given our relationship with them, it would be difficult not to leave any tracks. If you insist on carrying on, we’ll have no choice but to create an accident.”

Especially one that involves Roxanne. Once Jack shows his concern for her, it will be enough for us to make a big fuss out of it.

Aubree rejected the idea outright. “It wasn’t easy to change Lucian’s impression of me. He would definitely cancel our engagement if he were to find out | was behind it.”

“| failed to take that into account,” Frieda admitted with a grim look on her face.

“Do we have no choice but to wait for them to develop feelings for each other with the passage of time?” Aubree wondered aloud.

Frieda’s eyes lit up. “Not necessarily!” Aubree gave her a baffled look.

“We can’t create an accident to hurt them, but we can increase the time they spend together. Sooner or later, it won’t come as a surprise if they end up as a couple, will it?” Frieda said.

In other words, the plan is to discreetly matchmake them. Even if Lucian finds out, it will be easy to explain it away, making this a low-risk scheme.

Nodding thoughtfully, Aubree reassured Frieda, “I would have felt so lost if it wasn’t for you. Frieda, don’t you worry. After all that you have done for me, I’ll definitely make it worth your while once | become Mrs. Farwell.”

Frieda forced a smile. “That’s the least | can do for my best friend!”

Now that she had a plan, Aubree’s mind began to wander as both of them continued to shop.

When the sky began to darken, Frieda checked the time and reminded Aubree, "Aren't you supposed to pick

Essie up from school? You're going to be late if you don't leave now.

She had assumed the latter had lost track of time.

However, Aubree surprised her by replying matter-of-factly, "What's the hurry? Even if I'm late, the teacher will wait with her. It's not like she'll be lost."

Her response confused Frieda again. We're obviously not far from Essie's kindergarten, so what is Aubree up to now?

Aubree didn't bother to explain herself. It wasn't until they shopped for a while longer that she finally decided to drive nonchalantly to the kindergarten.

Chapter 1134 Meanwhile, Estella and Pamela were the only ones left at the kindergarten entrance.

"Essie, who's coming to pick you up today? Were you always picked up so late in your previous kindergarten?" Pamela patiently clarified the matter with Estella, for it was the first time she had encountered such a

situation. Estella pursed her lips in silence as if she didn't hear Pamela at all.

It was never her desire to come to the new kindergarten, and now that she was left to wait for a long time, she couldn't help but feel depressed.

Just when Pamela was wondering whether to give Lucian a call, a car gradually rolled up beside them. Aubree alighted from it with an anxious expression on her face.

"I'm sorry for being late, Ms. Yaxley. Traffic was really bad." After speaking to Pamela, she gave Estella an apologetic look. "I'm sorry to have made you wait, Essie. I'll definitely come earlier next time!"

Estella continued to pout in silence.

Seeing that, Pamela defused the situation with a smile. "It's normal for kids to throw a tantrum after waiting for such a long time. She'll be fine after a while."

Aubree nodded in acknowledgment. She pulled Estella to her side, then bade Pamela goodbye and ushered Estella into the car. Throughout the journey, Aubree kept apologizing to Estella.

"I'm really sorry. | stay far away from your kindergarten, and | also didn't expect to encounter such heavy traffic."

With her head hung low, Estella ignored Aubree while fiddling with her fingers.

When they arrived at the Farwell residence, Lucian was about to give Aubree a call.

The sight of her car coming to a halt elicited a frown from him.

"Lucian, I'm sorry | was late picking up Essie. | was stuck in traffic."

Aubree had already gotten into character, complete with a remorseful expression and reddened eyes. Lucian suppressed his urge to demand an explanation from her.

“This is all my fault. Essie never liked her new kindergarten, and | had to make things worse by letting her wait. It’s no surprise that she’s mad at me,” Aubree blamed herself.

Behind her, Estella looked up to glance at her. Despite the minute change in her face, she didn’t say a word at all. All this while, she had felt that Aubree was just putting on an act. But now, she was no longer as certain.

Ms. Pearson was speaking in that tone inside the car. If this was all just an act, why would she bother to pretend in front of me?

As Lucian watched how Aubree blamed herself, his expression changed.

“Why don’t | find a place to stay that’s nearer to Essie’s kindergarten? Otherwise, it would be troublesome if | got caught in traffic again...” Aubree added while discreetly observing Lucian’s expression.

The sight of his furrowed brows filled Aubree with secret delight. She could see that the time was right to pile on the pressure. “I’ll get my mom to look for a place for me once | get back.”

A

“There’s no such need,” Lucian said in a deep voice. “You can move into the manor for the time being. It will be more convenient for you to pick Essie up and watch over her here.”

Aubree feigned hesitance. “Wouldn’t Essie feel uncomfortable if | were to move in? | feel that we should take it slow when it comes to improving our relationship.”

“Since it’s just a matter of time for us to live together, we might as well let her get used to it earlier.” Lucian then turned around and instructed Catalina, “Prepare the guest room for Ms. Pearson.”

Aubree was naturally delighted by the turn of events.

Just as | expected. Lucian’s attitude toward me will soften as long as | demonstrate through my actions that | have Essie’s best interest at heart. From the looks of it, my days in the Farwell residence won’t be as painful anymore.

Chapter 1135 Archie and Benny didn’t see Estella for another day and didn’t hear from her.

Even though the three of them had previously agreed to get Lucian and Roxanne to reconcile, they had no visibility on Lucian’s situation without any feedback from Estella.

It was evident that Roxanne had no desire to patch things up with Lucian. The boys couldn't help but worry about the current state of affairs. After dinner, both of them returned to their room earlier than usual.

"Archie, why don't we go and see Daddy?" Benny suggested. "If he knows that we're his sons, I'm sure he will come and see Mommy."

Even though Archie was anxious for his parents to reconcile, he rejected his brother's suggestion without any hesitation, "Mommy must have her reasons for hiding the truth from Daddy. If we were to reveal it to him, we would definitely hurt Mommy's feelings."

Benny cupped his glum-looking face with his hands. "What should we do, then? We also have no idea what's going on at Essie's side."

Just as they were discussing, a sudden knock was heard at the door. It was then followed by Roxanne's voice.

"Archie, Benny, are you asleep? Can | come in?"

The boys held their tongues instantly as they got up to open the door.

Upon entering the room, Roxanne gave both of them a look of concern. "What's going on with the two of you? Are you mad because of what happened yesterday?"

Usually, they would have stayed back and accompanied her at the table after dinner. If they went up straight, it was clear that something was bothering them. The boys exchanged glances.

Both of them had been discussing how to get Lucian and Roxanne to reconcile, a topic that they could never share with their mother.

For a moment, neither of them said a word. Assuming she had guessed right, Roxanne felt utterly helpless. "Do you dislike Mr. Damaris because you think something is going on between the two of us?"

After all, even the staff at the research institute had such a misconception. It wouldn't be a surprise for the boys to think the same way.

While Archie pursed his lips in silence, Benny nodded without a second thought.

"| don't like it when you see Mr. Damaris every day, accept his flowers, and invite him to dinner!"

Upon hearing Benny's innocent comment, Roxanne couldn't help but feel bad for Jack.

He was only concerned about the project, yet he had become the subject of everyone's misunderstanding on her account

In fact, her attitude toward him had even sparked intense hostility from the children.

"There's nothing going on between Mr. Damaris and me. | simply did all that out of courtesy," she explained patiently. With a frown on his face, Benny questioned further, "In that case, why are you rude to Mr. Farwell?"

Roxanne was at a loss for words.

It's true that | treat Jack differently from Lucian, but that's because...

"You treat Mr. Damaris cordially, and yet you don't like him. Does that mean you're rude to Mr. Farwell because you like him?" Benny asked innocently.

Roxanne was stunned yet again. Their question was exactly the same as Estella's from that fateful night. Through the eyes of the children, the world was as simple as black and white.

Just like that particular night, Roxanne was stumped for an explanation. All she could do was deny it adamantly. "I don't like him too.

"But | like Mr. Farwell!" Benny lowered his head in disappointment. "And | like Essie too..."

Chapter 1136

"Mommy, please don't dislike Mr. Farwell." Devastated by Roxanne's response, Benny tugged her sleeve pitifully. "Even though Mr. Farwell has made you mad, he still cares a lot about you. Every time you were sick, he would always be by your side."

His words triggered a flicker in Roxanne's eyes and tugged at her heartstrings.

It was true that ever since her return, Lucian had always been by her side when she wasn't feeling well. Prior to that, Roxanne had never had anyone care for her other than the children doing their clumsy best. | can't deny that Lucian has given me a sense of security, but...

Oblivious to what was going through his mother's mind, Benny mumbled, "Mr. Farwell treats you very well, and he doesn't let us tell-

It was then Benny felt a sudden poke from Archie.

Biting his tongue, he quickly tried to change the subject. "No matter what, Mr. Farwell is the best. Can you stop quarreling with him already?"

However, Roxanne's brows were already knitted. "What did you mean just now? What else did Mr. Farwell do?" Benny lowered his head, brimming with guilt. The look on his face ended up intriguing Roxanne further.

At that moment, Archie knew that it was too late to salvage Benny's slip of the tongue. Trying to hide it any further would only intensify Roxanne's suspicions.

With that thought in mind, Archie spoke candidly. "It was Mr. Farwell who took care of you when you were drunk." His words inadvertently caused Roxanne to recall the events of that night.

Back then, she had assumed that she was dreaming. Little did she expect the entire incident to turn out to be real. The thing is, when did he leave?

"Mommy, Benny is right. Can you stop fighting with Mr. Farwell already?" Archie casually changed the subject. "We really like playing with Essie. Every time both of you quarrel, we won't be able to see her"

The mention of Estella caused Roxanne to set her thoughts aside as she gave Archie an apologetic look.

Can what's going on between Lucian and me be described as a quarrel? It could be in the past, but given Lucian's stance, it's clear that he wants to sever ties with me

It was a fact that Roxanne had no illusion about but didn't know how to explain to the boys.

"I'm sorry, | didn't want things to turn out this way too, but not everything is as simple as you think."

The pale-looking Roxanne eked out an explanation a short while later.

Archie responded with a sensible nod. "I can understand where you're coming from, Mommy. It's just that can you convince Mr. Farwell to allow Essie to return to the kindergarten?"

A conflicted look spread across Roxanne's face. "Darling, Mr. Farwell is Essie's father, and he has his reasons for transferring Essie to another kindergarten."

Archie countered, "He doesn't want Essie to see us because both of you are fighting." Roxanne was surprised that Archie not only knew the reason but also dared to speak out about it.

"| feel that Essie shouldn't have been placed in a new environment so abruptly. If Mr. Farwell doesn't want her to see us, we're willing to transfer out instead." Archie's childish voice rang out again.

Chapter 1137

Roxanne was surprised by her son's words.

She knew they had always been very sensible and had always taken good care of Estella.

However, what she didn't expect was that they had been thinking about this even more than she did.

Benny chimed in sweetly, "Mommy, please talk to Mr. Farwell about this. We're worried that Essie might get bullied, and we won't be there to protect her."

Roxanne felt her chest tighten at the mention of Estella being bullied. She recalled the incident when Estella had been bullied by her classmates when Archie and Benny first entered the classroom. Back then, the boys had stepped forward to protect Estella and helped her to smoothen things over with her classmates.

However, now that Estella was in a new kindergarten, she no longer had any playmates she was familiar with. Roxanne was worried that if Archie and Benny weren't beside Estella, the past would repeat itself.

There's a possibility that it would be just like what the boys said. Estella would be ostracized by the other kids.

Thinking about this, Roxanne relented and said, "All right, I'll have a chat with Mr. Farwell regarding this soon. That being said, you guys need to prepare yourselves to transfer to another kindergarten."

The boys' eyes lit up.

Mommy's willing to talk to Daddy! It doesn't matter what they'll be talking about. At the very least, this will end the silent war they're waging against each other. Besides, we're the ones who brought up the idea of transferring kindergartens, anyway. This way, we'll be able to keep Essie's condition from deteriorating further.

With that thought in mind, the boys agreed to it without hesitation. Roxanne flashed a smile and tousled the boys' hair. "It's getting late now. Get some rest." Since they had achieved their goals, the boys nodded at her obediently in response.

As Roxanne walked out of the boys' room, words from their conversation earlier kept replaying in her mind, making her feel slightly guilty.

She had always thought that matters between adults should be kept between adults and children should not be involved in them. However, because of her relationship with Lucian, all three children had their lives affected in some way or the other.

The case was especially true for Estella, whose condition kept relapsing.

At the end of the day, Roxanne reckoned this was all because of her determination not being strong enough.

All she wanted at first was to avoid Lucian, but somewhere down the line, she got involved with him again instead.

She wanted nothing more than to take care of Estella, but because of her relationship with Lucian, she had no choice but to treat the little girl indifferently.

Now that she thought about it, Archie's and Benny's words reminded her of something.

Since I'm involved with Essie now, and her condition is affected because of me, I should be firm with my decision. No matter what my relationship with Lucian is, I should prioritize Essie's condition. At the very least, I should make sure her condition is stabilized. This way, I will not have any regrets.

Roxanne headed back to her room and hesitantly drew up Lucian's number from her phone.

She hadn't contacted him ever since they fought that day.

Naturally, Lucian did not take the initiative to contact her either.

Roxanne tapped into his contact detail and hesitated.

Even though all she needed to do was to tap her finger down on her screen, she couldn't bring herself to do it. After all, their interaction last time had ended on really bad terms.

Roxanne had no idea how to start the conversation with him.

After hesitating for a while more, she glanced at the time and saw that it was near midnight.

Lucian should already be asleep at this time, right?

Taking that into account, Roxanne eventually put her phone away.

Now that I think about it, there's no need for me to go through Lucian in order to know about Essie's condition. I can always find out which kindergarten Essie goes to and go check on her.

during her recess. It'll be even better if | can see that she's getting along well with the other children so that | won't be so worried.

That was the last thought that surfaced in Roxanne's mind as she fell asleep.

Chapter 1138

Perhaps she was concerned about Estella's matters because she got up early the next morning despite going to bed late the previous night.

Going downstairs, she saw that Archie and Benny were already waiting for her. Seeing the two boys, Roxanne couldn't help but be reminded of the phone call she almost dialed out last night. Benny's face lit up with anticipation when he saw his mother. "Mommy! Have you given Mr. Farwell a call?"

Roxanne's eyes dimmed, and she flashed a small smile at her son before saying apologetically. "I haven't. | was thinking of visiting Essie at the kindergarten first."

After saying that, she thought of something and added, "Do you know which kindergarten Essie is in now?"

She reckoned Archie and Benny must have already found out which kindergarten Estella transferred to, given how concerned they were for her.

Seeing that his mother had taken the initiative to ask him that, Benny nodded calmly. In truth, he had already found out which kindergarten Estella went to the day after her transfer. Relief washed over Roxanne when she saw Benny nodding

Here | was worrying about how I'm going to find out about Essie's new kindergarten when the sight of Benny reminded me of just how capable he is. Luckily, he already knows which kindergarten Essie goes to.

"Send the address of Essie's kindergarten to me later," Roxanne said to Benny
"Mommy, are you going to visit Essie?"

Roxanne nodded noncommittally. "Well, aren't you guys worried about Essie getting bullied? I'm going to check up on her on your behalf"

Hearing that, Benny hurriedly asked, "Can Archie and | tag along?"
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Roxanne shook her head. "You guys need to go to class. Don't worry. I'll tell you about her condition when | get home."

She thought it would be too much of a fanfare for all three of them to go.

Naturally, the boys could not help feeling a little disappointed to hear that.

Benny was going to persuade his mother again when Archie stopped him.

He said sweetly, "We'll leave it to you to console her, Mommy. And please tell her we'll visit her next time."

He knew it was already good enough for his mother to go see Estella and that they shouldn't ask for anything more.

Roxanne let out a relieved sigh before flashing a smile at the boys. Nodding, she said, "All right. I'll pass your message to her." After breakfast, Benny sent the address he had found to his mother.

Roxanne then took the kids to the kindergarten before going to the research institute to give Colby a heads- up and then to Estella's new kindergarten.

Perhaps Lucian was trying to stop the kids from seeing each other again. Estella's new kindergarten was a lot further away than her previous kindergarten. In fact, it was in the opposite direction of Farwell Group.

After driving for half an hour, Roxanne finally arrived at the kindergarten entrance.

Sensing the graceful aura she exuded and the fact that she could say Estella's name, the security guard let her in without thinking too much about it.

Estella's new kindergarten had a small class system, with only a dozen children in the class. When Roxanne arrived, the kids were in their recess. Through the window of the classroom, she noticed that the situation inside seemed to be rather chaotic.

A dozen children could be seen running around in the classroom, and in the corner, a child was bawling their eyes out, all while Pamela was trying her best to coax them.

After sweeping a glance, Roxanne realized that Estella was nowhere to be seen. It wasn't after she searched for a while more that she was able to see Estella in the middle of the crowd.

At that moment, Estella was surrounded by the children who were running around. It looked as if they were inviting her to play together.

Chapter 1139 Roxanne heaved a sigh of relief.

She could see that although Estella was a bit out of place, the other children approached her enthusiastically and played with her.

Yet before she could feel totally at ease, she saw Estella letting out a yelp.

The children who were skipping around also halted their actions one by one.

Feeling her heart tighten, Roxanne instinctively looked in Pamela's direction

Something was obviously wrong with Estella, and Pamela could probably see that from where she was standing

However, there was a child who wouldn't stop crying next to Pamela. Although she did notice a small commotion over here, she was occupied with coaxing the child beside her

Left with no choice, Roxanne turned back to Estella and observed her worriedly. The girl hung her head low as she massaged her hand on her lap. Roxanne could only see Estella's actions vaguely from her spot, but she could guess that the latter was hurt.

Upon realizing that, Roxanne felt a little distressed. Nevertheless, she did not overthink it and assured the other kids had just hurt Estella accidentally.

Sadly, the actual situation in the classroom was different from her assumption.

An aggrieved Estella rubbed her injured hand with pursed lips, looking evidently upset. Because of her behavior on the first day of school, her classmates deemed her a weirdo. Estella couldn't be bothered to play with them as well, so she barely spoke in the past two days

As a result, her classmates started calling her a mute and a weirdo. They tried all sorts of antics in an attempt to make her speak and regarded her as a joke.

The more they did that, the more resistant Estella felt toward them. She did not expect them to treat her even worse on this day.

Right after class ended, a group of children surrounded Estella and began singing a rhyme they made up while moving around her in circles.

When Estella tried to cover her ears, a little girl stepped on her hand.

"Wow, she really is a mute!" exclaimed the girl upon seeing how Estella remained silent even when she was hurt.

The other kids immediately chimed in in agreement.

Estella hung her head low and couldn't help but feel sad.

| miss Archie and Benny. If they were here, they would definitely protect me

"Hey, say something. It's not like we're going to do anything bad to you," another girl said, even giving Estella a shove. Caught off guard, Estella staggered and wobbled for a while before regaining her balance.

| don't want to speak to these mean kids!

"Why did you transfer here if you don't like this place? Do you think we like you?"

"Go to a special needs kindergarten if you're mute. Why did you even come here?"

"| heard she has no mommy. No wonder she's so weird."

The kids chattered on while standing around Estella, throwing insults at her.

Estella had ignored them with her lips tightly pursed.

Yet at the mention of her mother, she suddenly lifted her head with anger written all over her face.

"| have a mommy!"

Her sudden outburst stunned the children, but they soon regained their senses and retorted at her more aggressively. "That's not your mommy. She's your stepmom! | heard stepmoms are the meanest."

"Your mommy probably abandoned you because you don't speak. Who would like a mute?"

The topic of mother was a sensitive matter to Estella. When she heard the other kids claiming she was abandoned, her face started to turn sour.

Chapter 1140

“You're speaking nonsense!”

Estella got up from the floor and furiously pushed the kid who had last spoke.

Amused at her courage to fight back, the other kids began running their mouths off even more. The girl whom Estella pushed stepped forward and shoved her in return.

“Did I say anything wrong? You're just a mute! If we hadn't played with you today, would you have spoken on your own? Adults hate kids who can't speak, Little Mute!” After saying that, the girl raised her arm in fury and yelled, “How dare you push me! Not even my mommy and daddy have ever hit me.”

Estella was no match for that girl in terms of strength. Not only that, there were lots of kids watching them from the side.

Despite her anger, Estella couldn't help but feel scared at the sight of the girl lifting her arm. In her helplessness, she glanced at Pamela.

If Ms. Ward was here, she would surely come here and help me

Unfortunately, Pamela was busy dealing with the wailing kid, and she couldn't see what was going on since Estella was encircled by the children.

As the girl's hand was about to fall on Estella, the latter closed her eyes out of reflex. At that moment, she missed Archie and Benny dearly.

“What are you doing?” Just as despair filled Estella, Roxanne pushed the classroom door open and strode in. She had been watching from the outside for quite a while and finally realized Estella was being bullied.

She had thought that the teacher would intervene and help Estella, but it seemed that Pamela was unaware of what was going on at all.

Seeing that Estella was about to get hit, Roxanne barged in in a panic and hurried over to the group of children. At the sudden arrival of an adult, the children were shocked.

The girl who had her arm raised stepped backward in fright. She swiftly hid her hand behind her back, glancing at Roxanne nervously.

These kids were the best at pretending to be nice and obedient in front of adults. “Miss, you've misunderstood. She pushed me first...” the girl mumbled with an aggrieved expression.

Roxanne was bewildered to see the girl acting so innocently. If she hadn't witnessed the entire situation earlier, she would have been fooled.

Nevertheless, she wasn't in the mood to scold the girl. She crouched down instead and pulled Estella into her arms.

Estella was clearly terrified, as she couldn't stop trembling.

“Don't be scared, Essie. You're okay now,” Roxanne comforted Estella while stroking her head.

Upon hearing her voice, Estella looked up cautiously

Her face crumpled when she saw that it was Roxanne. She sniffled loudly, tears welling up in her big eyes.

Having been triggered by the children's words earlier, Estella wrapped her arm around Roxanne's neck and choked out, “Mommy...”

That word made Roxanne's heart skip a beat, and she subconsciously tightened her hold around Estella.

She knew very well that she did not deserve that title, but she could more or less guess what the children had been talking about earlier from the way their mouths moved.

One of the biggest reasons they bullied Estella was that they thought she didn't have a mother.

That thought pained Roxanne. In the end, she did not refute Estella's way of addressing her.