

## **ABANDONED 2001**

### Chapter 2001 Not Worth It

Despite Lucian's explanation, Madilyn still felt indignant about it.

The seed of love that was planted during their school days bore a bitter fruit after their much-anticipated marriage. "Mr. Farwell, you were being too presumptuous!" Madilyn concluded while shooting Lucian a vicious look.

The embarrassment that was written on Lucian's face elicited a faint smile from Roxanne.

That's all in the past now.

Unlike in the past, Roxanne felt differently now. She counted her blessings, for her wishes had come true one by one, albeit in a delayed manner.

Stroking the tiny bump on her belly, she could feel a new future brewing inside. The adversity the three children had gone through for the past few years would never happen again.

As if reflecting on himself, Lucian nodded as he admitted, "It's true that I, too, was at fault. | was mentally exhausted due to being embroiled in the struggles of the business world back then. | ended up letting my thoughts be dictated by societal convention."

Lucian's admission of his mistakes finally eased Madilyn's fury. When Jonathan gave Madilyn a slight tug, their discreet gesture didn't escape Jonathan's notice. He then threw his wife a questioning glance.

Roxanne responded with an affirmative look. She hadn't gotten the opportunity to tell Lucian that Jonathan had confessed his feelings the night before.

Nonetheless, Lucian curled his lips into a smile, for he immediately knew what was going on. "Jonathan, since it's almost noon, why don't you stay back for lunch?" Lucian suggested.

Just as Jonathan was about to nod habitually, a look from Madilyn prompted him to turn down the invitation. "Not this time, Lucian. | promised Madilyn that we would take Mdm. Xander out for lunch."

"Sure, no problem." Jonathan has finally learned how to say no after getting a girlfriend. It was a development that Lucian was glad to see.

After the newly minted couple departed, Roxanne related Jonathan's exploits from the night before to Lucian, to which the latter exclaimed, "I'm surprised that Jonathan was capable of pulling off something as interesting as that. | think he has outdone me when it comes to romance!"

As Roxanne looked at her husband from the corner of her eye, images of his face during their teenage years emerged in her mind.

Even now, the feeling she had from back then didn't change. Regardless of how much time had passed, it was one that she would never forget.

Even upon returning to the country after six years abroad and knowing that she might never end up together with Lucian, she knew that she could never love another man.

The young man in her youth would forever be engraved deep within her heart.

During the afternoon, Roxanne and Lucian headed to the research institute together.

With Peregrine's help, Colby quickly settled into the research institute's serious working environment. As the organization ran like a well-oiled machine, there was no need for Roxanne to get involved. The reason she came was just to throw a birthday party for Colby.

Colby, who was led into a conference room unaware, was greeted by a burst of confetti falling onto his head. His colleagues then came forward, wishing him a happy birthday as they sang the birthday song.

There were many familiar faces, all of them smiling vibrantly.

“Happy Birthday, Colby!” said Roxanne and Lucian upon emerging from the crowd.

Lucian came forward to help Colby put on a birthday hat before shaking hands with him.

With a gentle smile, Roxanne handed Colby a fork and knife as a massive birthday cake was carted up to him. Dumbstruck by the surprise, Colby—eyes glistening—didn't know how to react.

“Thank you. Thank you, everyone.”

All of a sudden, he began tearing up.

He had just returned to the research institute, and there was plenty he had to learn from scratch.

Given that his birthday was way down on his list of priorities, he was surprised that Roxanne and Lucian not only remembered but also specially made a trip over to celebrate it for him.

As someone who had once made a horrible mistake, he didn't think he deserved such treatment.

It wasn't until he got over the flood of complicated emotions that Colby broke into a smile. He then cut the cake and distributed it to his colleagues.

“Colby, | didn't only come to celebrate your birthday today, for | have something else to tell you. As a loyal employee of the research institute, you deserve to be granted shares in it. Even though it's not much after dilution, thirty percent of the company still belongs to you. After this, Old Mr. Lomax will follow up with you on the paperwork,” Roxanne announced the matter in front of everyone.

Thunderous applause soon filled the room.

“This...” Shocked, Colby was at a loss for words.

## Chapter 2002 A Stern Warning

Upon leaving the research institute, Roxanne and Lucian went to pick up the children from school.

When the school's management saw the two of them, they seized the opportunity to sincerely apologize for what happened. From their explanation, Lucian and Roxanne learned that the vice principal who was bribed by Dave had been sacked. Moreover, the four students who bullied Archie and Benny were also asked to leave the school.

On top of that, the school was reevaluating its disciplinary policies to prevent a repeat of similar incidents.

In the end, Lucian and Roxanne accepted their apology begrudgingly. They didn't want to burn any bridges, as the school did provide a conducive learning environment for the children.

Finally, they returned to the manor with the children after declining an invitation to dinner from the school management. Arriving at the gate, they were greeted by the sight of Grant pacing back and forth.

He looked weary as he moved around awkwardly.

Yet Roxanne—utterly disappointed with him—no longer fell for the pitiful charade he had put on.

“Mommy, is that Granddad?” Estella asked upon recognizing him.

Lucian's gaze shifted to his wife as if to ask her if they should stop.

At the same time, Archie and Benny stared out the window, wondering what their grandfather wanted.

Nonetheless, Roxanne shook her head in response.

She no longer wanted to be tricked again.

Lucian replied to the children, “We'll be heading home first. If there's anything your granddad needs, I'll deal with it later.” Meanwhile, Grant raised his gaze and gave the car a complicated look.

Realizing that the car wasn't going to stop, he hesitated momentarily before deciding to step aside.

Roxanne even averted her eyes, not wanting to spare him even a single glance as they passed him by.

Once their car drove into the manor and the gates closed behind them, Lucian told Roxanne to lead the children back to their rooms.

“If you don't want to see him, I'll go out and talk to him.”

If Grant were to continue playing the victim at their door every day, it would be difficult for them to explain to the children. Thus, Lucian figured that clearing the air was for the best.

With that, the butler drove Lucian to the main gate in the manor's buggy.

As he walked up to Grant, the previously cordial attitude he had was now replaced by indifference. “Mr. Jarvis, what are you up to this time? Are you planning to give the children presents again? If that's the case, you can save it. They don't need anything from you.”

Lucian had expected Grant to panic.

Yet a sense of numbness was written across his face. The listless look in his eyes made them look like a bottomless abyss. “Lucian... |... There's something | want to tell you.” Grant's lips twitched as he spoke in a helpless tone.

The surprised Lucian furrowed his brows. Who gave him permission to address me that liberally?

“Mr. Jarvis, | believe you have made a mistake. If money is what you need, you should be speaking to Mr. Crawford!” Lucian's eyes narrowed.

There was no need for him to conceal the fact that Grant was secretly working with Jonas.

"Is the millions given by Mr. Crawford not enough? How much money do you really want?" Lucian flashed a smirk as he waited for Grant's reaction.

Finally, the panic in Grant's eyes began to show. "Y-You knew about it?"

"There's nothing in Horington that gets past me, so drop your pathetic charade already. Now that the children have acknowledged you as their granddad, you had better not show your face here ever again!"

The threatening tone in Lucian's voice was unmistakable.

Chapter 2003 Are You Lying Again Stunned by the response, Grant attempted to move his chapped lips, but all he could manage was a wry smile.

"Since you already know about it, | might as well come clean. It's true that | succumbed to my greed and took Mr. Crawford's bribe. His objective was to place me by your side to gather information," Grant related the truth candidly.

"With that aim in mind, | divorced Winnie. Initially, the divorce wasn't meant to be genuine. Once | received enough money from Mr. Crawford, she would return to my side. Unfortunately, | was a fool..." Grant mumbled away.

Meanwhile, Lucian's brows knitted, for the last thing he wanted was to become Grant's agony uncle. He wasn't at all interested in what was on Grant's mind.

After all, it was Grant's decision to abandon Roxanne's mother and get together with Winnie. On top of that, he even brought two children into the family, causing Roxanne trauma that she would never heal from.

"Mr. Jarvis, there's no need to bring up the past anymore. Roxanne is well aware of your motives, so you had better not disturb our lives again. As for the children, I'll tell them that their granddad has gone overseas to set up a business."

With that, Lucian turned to leave but was unexpectedly held back by Grant. The latter was suddenly gripped by emotions, and he began trembling all over.

With a pleading look in his eyes, he said, "Lucian, | know that | have committed a terrible sin and don't deserve anything, but you have to trust me when | say that I have cut ties with Mr. Crawford. | have no way of paying back the money he gave me, so I'm currently in hiding. | have now lost everything and no longer want anything. However, Lucian, you have to tell Roxanne this—"

Losing patience with Grant's soliloquy, Lucian shoved the latter aside as he snapped, "I'm sorry, but I'm not interested in what you have to say. Please leave now before | ask my bodyguards to throw you out!"

He's sorry? He has repented? Aman like this will never know remorse! Lucian quickened his pace, for he no longer wanted to hear Grant's voice again. Behind him, all Grant could do was stare blankly at his leaving silhouette.

“I'm sorry. It's all my fault. This must be karma for what I've done. Even going to hell is too light a punishment for someone like

me... Within a few seconds, he dropped to his knees with a sorrowful expression.

“Lucian, | beg you to ask Roxanne to give me an opportunity to apologize. | have a terminal illness and my days are numbered. There are only two or three days left, I'm afraid. I...”

Just as Grant was yelling at the top of his voice, he swooned and collapsed head-first to the ground. Upon hearing the dull thud, Lucian stopped in his tracks immediately.

When he turned around to look, Grant was lying on the floor with his eyes closed, and his lips were pale.

The sudden turn of events stunned Lucian, causing him to wonder if this was another of Grant's tricks.

Terminal illness? I'm surprised he's using such a cliched excuse.

That said, Lucian did notice that Grant's skin appeared more yellowish than usual, which was a common symptom of ill health. However, it didn't seem a good idea to leave Grant unattended at the main gate.

Hence, he waved for his bodyguards to come over.

“Keep an eye on him!

With that, the bodyguards quickly carried Grant to a security post outside the gate.

Chapter 2004

Chapter 2004 Had It Coming

Back in the living room, Roxanne was chatting with the children about what their future siblings' names should be. “If it's a girl, can we call her Dawn? I'm Essie, so | want my little sister to be called Dawnie,” Estella suggested. Archie and Benny thought the name was too simple and wanted something more meaningful.

“Mommy, Archie and Benny's names are too simple too. Why did you choose those names for them?” Estella asked in puzzlement.

Benny quickly answered, “Isn't it obvious? Mommy gave us names that are easy to remember to make us more memorable to others, the same way as how Daddy left an unforgettable impression on Mommy.

“That's clearly not the case,” Archie refuted at once. Then, he offered his guess.

“Mommy, did you draw inspiration from one of your favorite shows?”

Roxanne was stumped by their questions. | merely felt the names were catchy and genuinely didn't put much thought into them.

Hearing their conversation, Lucian found their discussion about names interesting and chimed in, "Essie's name was chosen by your great-grandfather. He said he wanted you to shine bright like a star."

"Daddy, what do you think our future siblings' names should be?" The three children looked at their father expectantly. Lucian furrowed his brows as a few ideas popped up in his mind. He hesitated, unsure which one was best.

Ultimately, he threw the question back to the children. "How about this? You guys come up with two names each, one for a boy and one for a girl. Once you've decided, we'll have the whole family, including your grandparents, vote on them. Then, we'll adopt the name with the highest votes. What do you think?"

The kids were fond of that fair voting method and agreed with alacrity.

"I'll look up names in poetry!" Archie hastily went upstairs.

"I'll search in classic literature books!" Benny trod behind his brother's heels.

"I-I'll find names in storybooks!" Estella didn't want to be left out and immediately followed them upstairs. Subsequently, the living room plunged into silence.

Lucian took a seat, and Roxanne skillfully poured him a cup of coffee.

"How is it? Has he left?" she asked while wearing an impassive expression. She no longer wanted to concern herself with Grant's fate.

Her only hope was for him not to disturb her current bliss. "He didn't leave. He fainted. | had the bodyguards watch him." Lucian took a sip of the coffee, wondering if he should tell his wife

about what Grant had said. Roxanne is a renowned doctor. After examining his condition, she can easily ascertain whether he's truly suffering from a terminal disease. If Grant is lying even about this, he's genuinely an appalling sinner.

Subconsciously, Lucian believed Grant was being honest.

Roxanne knitted her brows. "You could've asked someone to send him away to the hospital if he fainted. Did he admit to taking money from the Crawford family's scion?"

Lucian nodded and decided to be frank with Roxanne.

"If he's just putting up an act by pretending to pass out, I'll kick him out right away. However, he told me he has a terminal illness and doesn't have much longer to live. Therefore, he wanted to see you and apologize to you in person," Lucian uttered gently.

Roxanne was stumped and fell into a momentary daze. Her eyes were filled with doubts, but her lips quivered.

"|-Is that true? Huh. | never thought his retribution would come so soon. He's only in his early fifties." Roxanne abruptly let out a pent-up sigh inwardly. This sigh is for my mom. Back then, that

man abandoned his wife and daughter, brought a mistress into our house, and ruined our once-happy family. He had it coming.

## Chapter 2005 Dying Words

Meanwhile, at the security post outside the manor, Grant woke up and suddenly started vomiting, spitting out a mix of sour gastric fluid and traces of blood.

The bodyguard was shocked to see that. Mr. Farwell told me to keep an eye on this man, but looking at his condition, he must be severely ill. He's even puking out blood.

Hence, the bodyguard hastily informed the butler. After considering the situation, the latter decided to report that to Lucian.

Noticing Lucian and Roxanne sitting in the living room, the butler immediately approached them and reported, "That man outside seems to be suffering from a serious illness because he just vomited blood."

Roxanne's right hand, holding the coffee mug, trembled after she heard that. She turned to look at her husband.

Lucian got to his feet at once and said to Roxanne, "Let's go take a look. If his condition is grave, we have to save him first." Pulling herself together, she nodded and quickly followed Lucian out of the house.

Less than half an hour had passed since they last saw Grant. However, taking in his appearance now, Roxanne was startled.

His face was extremely pale and waxy, his eyes were murky, and even his breathing seemed labored. It was as if he was on the verge of death.

As a doctor, Roxanne wasn't repulsed by the vomitus on the ground. Instead, she stepped forward and examined it.

"Roxanne. Is that you, Roxanne? I'm sorry. I've hurt you and your mother deeply..." At that moment, Grant struggled to prop himself up with assistance from the bodyguard next to him.

A faint smile of relief spread across his face when he saw her daughter. Then, he shifted his attention to Lucian. "Lucian, I'm indeed a failure."

"Stop talking. Do you have the medical report from the hospital?" Lucian had no interest in hearing his deathbed confession and searched his body for the report. Spotting a corner of a paper sticking out of his pocket, he reached out to take it.

Before Lucian could unfold the diagnosis report, Roxanne grimaced. "It seems to be stomach cancer." Lucian handed the document to his wife.

After a quick glance, the report indeed mentioned a malignant stomach tumor that might have metastasized to the liver. No wonder his complexion is so yellow. It's a result of elevated bilirubin levels.

In an instant, Roxanne felt an indescribable discomfort in her heart. Judging by the spread of the cancerous cells, he's probably beyond cure. Even my medical skills will be of no help. Hahaha! He deserves this.

Roxanne wanted to guffaw but couldn't bring herself to do it. Instead, she stared at Grant with complicated emotions in her eyes. Seeing his wife's reaction, Lucian noticed her gaze held a mixture of resentment, pleasure, pity, and a touch of sadness, all tangled together.

“Grant, your time is indeed running short. So, are you afraid of death?” Roxanne stepped closer, riveting her eyes on Grant's countenance.

At that moment, Grant revealed a faint, enigmatic smile. “Roxanne, I've been afraid for several days. But now, I'm genuinely not scared anymore. | spent a whole day thinking about what regrets | have in this life. In the end, all | can think about are only you and your mother. I've been impulsive and more prone to failure than success my whole life. | was arrogant, boastful, and didn't understand the concepts of love and family. | truly deserve this. | betrayed your mother, and | owe her an apology.”

He wore a griefful expression as he spoke, and tears slowly rolled down his eyes.

“| wish to apologize to you. | know you can't possibly forgive me, but | still have to say I'm sorry. | don't want to die without apologizing. Thank you, Roxanne and Lucian, for giving me this opportunity.”

The couple listened quietly, not interrupting him anymore.

It was said that the dying words of someone on his deathbed always came from the bottom of his heart, and they chose to believe that Grant was genuinely repenting and apologizing at that instant.

Chapter 2006 Forgive Him When He Is Dead Grant's voice trailed off as he lost consciousness yet again. Seeing that, Lucian ordered his bodyguards to bring Grant back into the manor.

“Roxanne, just do your best and leave the rest to fate!” Lucian said, squeezing her hand reassuringly. As he did, he noticed her hand felt slightly cold, a sign of how anxious she truly was.

Roxanne nodded and quickly made her way back into the manor.

Putting aside their relationship and the animosity that existed between them in the past, Grant was now just a dying patient, in need of Roxanne's medical expertise.

Roxanne was a doctor, so she had to do her best to save lives. Without hesitation, she began the preparations for Grant's acupuncture treatment. At the same time, Jonathan and Madilyn were also summoned to prepare the medicine as instructed by Roxanne.

Charcoal was needed to boil the medicine, so it could only be done outside the mansion. Madilyn was responsible for making sure the temperature was just right while Jonathan kept adding water to the pot.



“| guess this is what they call karma, huh? Grant doesn't deserve to be Roxanne's father. He got lucky as Roxanne is too kind. Otherwise, if someone else were in Roxanne's shoes, they would've ignored his plight!” Madilyn exclaimed indignantly.

Jonathan nodded in agreement. He sighed and said, “| guess he won't live for long. Roxanne is doing all she can, but in the end, it's up to fate how long he has left.”

“That's good enough. His own son and daughter don't even seem to care about him. Meanwhile, his mistress is too busy living a luxurious life and never bothers to visit him. Grant is blind as he is unable to comprehend who is actually being kind to him.”

Madilyn would never forgive him. She could understand how her best friend felt as she, too, had a horrible father.

In the guest room on the third floor, Grant soon regained consciousness after receiving Roxanne's acupuncture treatment. The help brought him the medicine that he was supposed to take.

Roxanne returned to the living room, looking exhausted.

Lucian came up to her and gently began to knead her shoulders. He was well aware of how exhausting it was for her to maintain the same posture while she was performing her acupuncture treatment.

Jonathan and Madilyn entered the living room and sat down on the couch. No one said a word. “The cancer cells had spread all over his body, and if | did not intervene and help him, he would most likely die within a few days.

For now, if | continue to treat him with acupuncture and he continues to take the necessary medicine, he could live for at least half a month,” Roxanne revealed calmly.

Despite their shared profession, Madilyn found herself in awe of Roxanne's knowledge and skill.

The case of a person diagnosed with stomach cancer that had metastasized throughout their body was typically considered a terminal prognosis, meaning that death was likely to occur at any given time.

However, Roxanne was able to state the time of death specifically, showing that she was in total control of the situation. “Roxanne, don't blame me for being nosy. Can you really forgive Grant?” Madilyn finally blurted out.

Roxanne was not sure how she should feel. She could feel a bitter smile creep onto her face as she replied, “I guess so. He only has a fortnight to live, so when the time comes for him to pass, I'll find a way to forgive him.”

She actually wanted to say that death was too light a punishment for Grant. He should be having a taste of his own medicine by experiencing how torturing the world could be.

It was every man for himself when trouble came knocking. That was particularly true for Grant, who had been abandoned by not only his wife Winnie but also by his children, Yosef and Yuliana. The two never regarded him as a father figure. As the saying went, “What goes around comes around.”

Atense silence hung in the living room when Elias and Sonya arrived home.

Upon hearing their son explain the situation, the couple exchanged a look and both indicated their approval of Roxanne's decision.

“No matter what, he's still our in-law in name. We should pay him a visit,” Elias announced. He then went upstairs to visit Grant. Sonya followed after him.

Suddenly, Roxanne recalled something and told Lucian, "Let the children say their farewells to their beloved grandfather. He won't be staying here any longer. We'll have to arrange for his transfer to the Jarvis residence, where I believe he'd prefer to spend his remaining days.”

## Chapter 2007 | Dreamed Of My Mom

“Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Farwell. I deeply regret that I have been an irresponsible father and have caused Roxanne irreparable harm. However, you have taken on the role of parents to her and have been loving and caring toward her. I sincerely hope that you will continue to look after her.”

After the visit, Grant's parting words left a lasting impact on Elias and Sonya. Sonya had mixed feelings, for she didn't think she deserved to be called Roxanne's mother as Grant had claimed. She had been guilty of numerous mistakes in the past and was merely attempting to atone for them.

Fortunately, she still had the opportunity to do so, unlike Grant, who only realized his misdeeds when he was on the brink of death.

The children also went to Grant's room to visit him.

The adults did not inform the children of the true severity of Grant's illness, instead opting to tell them that he was simply ill. As a result, the children assumed he was simply suffering from a minor ailment like a cold or fever.

Hence, they encouraged Grant by telling him to rest well and drink a lot of water for a quick recovery. Grant was overcome with emotion, his eyes misting with a combination of regret and yearning. Despite that, he had a sense of contentment.

That very night, Lucian and Roxanne hired an ambulance to bring him to the Jarvis residence.

Madilyn gave the house to Roxanne as a wedding present when she married Lucian. Roxanne was hesitant to go back to the house where she used to live with her mother, for fear that the memories they shared would haunt her.

Many years had passed since she last walked through that door. As she stepped inside, a wave of nostalgia washed over her, reminding her of the childhood and teenage days she spent here.

The house was clean as Roxanne had hired a team of professional cleaners to thoroughly clean it earlier. After Grant was brought into the old house, his expression suddenly turned calm. “Lucian, Roxanne, thank you so much. I'm blessed to be able to spend my remaining days here.”

“Dad, don't worry. I'll hire two helpers to take care of you. You must remember to take your medicine regularly. Roxanne and I will make sure to come and see you regularly,” Lucian promised.

Grant was surprised to hear Lucian calling him “dad” all of a sudden.

Roxanne bobbed her head in agreement and left the house hastily with Lucian.

She couldn't stay inside the house for too long as it reminded her of her mother.

Being sad would not be good for the child growing in her belly, so Roxanne knew she couldn't let herself wallow in sorrow. The following day was a sunny day.

Roxanne was smiling when she woke up.

Seeing that, Lucian asked, “Did you dream of something good?”

“I dreamed about my mom. She told me that I did a good job, and that Grant got on his knees to beg for her forgiveness,” Roxanne revealed.

Upon hearing this, Lucian let out a chuckle. “Yes, you did a great job. There’s no need to worry about that anymore. What matters now is that our family will have a good life from now on.”

Roxanne nodded in agreement. She then curled into a ball and buried herself in his warm embrace. Lucian wrapped his arms around her tightly and kissed her forehead gently.

The sound of the children washing up and chatting could be heard in the background. Elias and Sonya were reminding them to grab their books and other belongings.

They basked in the calm and peaceful atmosphere, feeling utterly contented. “I'm going to the hospital for a checkup today. You should come with me.” Roxanne's voice was soft.

Lucian immediately bobbed his head. His lips curled as he assured her, “Of course. Even if your checkup isn't due today, I'll still have to attend my classes. I'm going to graduate soon.”

“Really? Why didn't you show me anything? What did you learn?” Roxanne joked.

“I learned a lot. Didn't I remind you to take folic acid previously? And also...”

Chapter 2008 We Need To Talk It was three in the afternoon.

Lorraine was watering the plants in the garden in Madilyn's mansion when three black Mercedes-Benzes rolled to a stop at the entrance.

A few bodyguards hopped off their cars and opened the door of the Mercedes-Benz in the middle.

A well-dressed middle-aged man with a cane stepped out of the car followed by a woman of similar age, bedecked in expensive jewelry.

After emerging from the vehicle, she glanced at the mansion, disdain evident in her gaze.

“It looks like your daughter is doing well in Horington. She can even afford to buy a mansion!” the middle-aged woman said arrogantly in a thick Xandenian accent.

The man bore an icy and intimidating expression.

He was Norton Sheffield, the owner of Sheffield Group, which was the biggest company in Xendale. The woman standing beside him was his wife, Mildred Hinton.

His assistant came nearer to him and said politely, "Mr. Sheffield, this is the right address. Ms. Madilyn stays here." "Let's go. It's time to talk to Lorraine," Mildred said with a mocking smirk. She was talking about Madilyn's mother, Lorraine Xander.

When the doorbell rang, Lorraine assumed the delivery guy was there to drop off a parcel. Without checking who it was, she pressed the button to open the iron gates.

Asmile nudged her lips as she walked to the gate to receive the parcel. Without warning, a cane appeared in her sight.

Something occurred to her, and a look of panic crossed her face.

She then saw the face of the man outside her house.

Even though they had not seen each other in seven to eight years, she still couldn't stop her heart from racing. Despite being flustered, she was unable to contain her anticipation.

Norton soon came to a stop in front of her. At first glance, Norton still looked the same as before.

She couldn't help but notice that he had aged over time. His cheekbones were now more prominent, and his hair had turned partially white.

Lorraine felt her heart sink when she noticed he was gazing at her frostily.

When Mildred showed up, Lorraine swallowed the words at the tip of her tongue.

Two years ago, Mildred came to boast that her daughter would be marrying into an influential family in the south.

Meanwhile, Mildred was similarly at a loss for words when she saw Lorraine.

She had expected Lorraine to look ill and much older after being abandoned, but to her shock, Lorraine looked elegant and even a few years younger than her.

Fury flashed across her eyes as she glared at Lorraine.

"It's been a while," Norton greeted Lorraine. His gaze flickered with a hint of emotion, but it quickly vanished.

A bitter smile played on Lorraine's lips as she shook her head. "I'm sorry, but who are you? Did you come to the wrong place?"

She knew playing dumb was a childish act, but the sight of the man she once loved standing next to his seemingly perfect wife was the last thing she wanted to see.

Lorraine couldn't help but remember Madilyn's advice. The man had been cruel enough to break their wedding vows and abandon both her and their child for his own selfish interests. Hence, she didn't bother being nice to him.

As it seemed that Lorraine didn't welcome them, Mildred flew into a rage and barked angrily, "Lorraine Xander, stop putting up an act.

You might've changed a lot, but it's still possible to recognize you.

We're here to discuss something important. It doesn't matter whether or not you welcome us, for we must talk today!

Chapter 2009 Abducted At five in the evening, Madilyn finally wrapped up her work. She went down the stairs, feeling exhausted.

She spotted Jonathan waiting for her with a bouquet of roses in his hand. The sight of him hurrying over to her filled her with warmth, and she couldn't help but smile, feeling her exhaustion begin to fade away.

“Dr. Xander, Mr. Queen, you're a couple now? Oh, this is great. You're a perfect match!”

“Congratulations, Dr. Xander! Your wish has finally come true. Mr. Queen proved to be a capable man when he helped us solve our crisis previously. That was quite manly of him!”

“Wow! Is Dr. Xander dating Mr. Queen for real? That's great! Congratulations, you lovebirds. When are you getting married?”

Madilyn and Jonathan were greeted by smiling medical staff who were getting off work, wishing them well and giving their blessings.

Madilyn wasn't shy at all even though they were the center of attention. She extended her hand and allowed Jonathan to take it, a joyful smile playing on her lips.

“Come, let's go pick Mdm. Xander up. We'll be eating something delicious tonight,” Jonathan told her. He had already reserved a table at a restaurant tonight. As they approached his car, Jonathan opened the door for Madilyn like a true gentleman, waiting for her to get in before he took his place behind the wheel.

Holding the roses, Madilyn was overwhelmed with happiness. Before he could start the engine, she suddenly said, “Come nearer!”

“What's the matter?” Jonathan asked, confused. He moved closer to her, assuming something was wrong with the roses. In an instant, her lips landed on his right cheek, leaving a faint pink mark.

Jonathan was taken aback at Madilyn's sudden action, but he quickly regained his composure and scratched his head awkwardly. A silly grin graced his face as he realized what had happened.

After the kiss, Madilyn felt her cheeks flush with embarrassment. “Come on, let's go home and pick my mom up!” she urged. Jonathan inclined his head. He then started the engine and drove out of the hospital.

They soon arrived at Madilyn's neighborhood. From afar, Jonathan noticed the gates were wide open. Confusion flashed across his eyes.

He sped up and drove into the courtyard.

A sense of foreboding rose within him, so he started glancing around after getting out of the car.

However, Lorraine was nowhere to be seen.

“Mdm. Xander? Mdm. Xander!” he called out. From the corner of his eye, he noticed an overturned pot of flowers.

Madilyn had yet to realize what was going on. As she exited the car, she casually called out to her mother, “Mom? Mom! Didn't | ask you to get prepared ahead of time? Are you having trouble deciding what to wear again?”

When they went out for dinner previously, Lorraine spent a lot of time picking out her outfit as she didn't want to embarrass Madilyn and Jonathan.

“Maddy, go upstairs and find out what's going on!” Jonathan's brows furrowed. He noticed some peculiar dents on the ground that appeared to have been created by a walking stick. Noticing her boyfriend's grave expression, Madilyn quickly put her guard up and hurried up the stairs.

They scoured every inch of the house, both indoors and outdoors, but Lorraine was nowhere to be seen.

Shock struck Madilyn like a bolt of lightning. She tried calling Lorraine's phone, but it was in the living room. “What happened?” She grew flustered.

Jonathan remained calm. The mansion was situated in the city, and with surveillance cameras scattered throughout the area, it was seldom targeted by thieves.

After entering the mansion, he noticed that none of the valuable items were missing. Lorraine's purse was still on the coffee table in the living room.

Thus, they could eliminate the possibility of thieves or robbers. Jonathan pondered over it before deciding to check the surveillance footage on the third floor.

Madilyn hurried after him.

The surveillance footage showed Lorraine engaged in a heated argument with Mildred, following which Norton directed his bodyguards to forcibly take Lorraine away with them.

Madilyn froze at the sight. After what seemed like an eternity, her fury finally sprang to life.

She took deep breaths as her chest heaved, “I-It's that b\*stard! How dare he abduct my mom? D\*mn it!”

Chapter 2010 Mustered Her Courage Jonathan instantly recognized that man.

The man was Madilyn's biological father, whom she hated so much that she never wanted to talk about. He's the man who abandoned his wife and daughter so that he could marry someone else to advance his personal interests.

"He's Norton Sheffield, the chairman of Southern Star Group in Xandenia. You must have heard of him before. After all, he's quite a famous figure in the business world. But to me, he's nothing more than a piece of trash!”

Madilyn gritted her teeth as her eyes turned bloodshot.

The woman who accompanied Norton was Mildred Hinton from the Hinton family, the despicable bully who used her power to oppress Madilyn and Lorraine in the past.

After learning about Madilyn's birth, Mildred identified her as Norton's illegitimate child and viewed her as a curse.

Due to that, Madilyn was deprived of a normal childhood and couldn't even attend school like the other kids. Mildred tampered with their lives, determined to drive Madilyn and Lorraine away.

On top of that, Mildred would even bring her two daughters over to Madilyn and Lorraine's house to bully them and destroy their belongings.

When Madilyn was still a child, Norton had come to visit a few times and gave them money, but Mildred would forcibly snatch the money away from them.

Fortunately, Madilyn had always been strong and independent.

Lorraine worked hard doing manual labor to support her daughter's education. By the time Madilyn reached high school, she also started taking up odd jobs to pay for her own tuition fees.

When it was time for Madilyn to further her studies, Lorraine decided to let the former enroll in a university in Horington so that she could stay away from Xandenia. That way, her life would be free from disturbances.

Lorraine, on the other hand, continued to suffer from mental torture for years, and such a condition had taken a toll on her health. Yet, Norton did not appear to offer any assistance.

It was not until Madilyn brought Lorraine to Horington that Roxanne was able to save her life.

Jonathan knew who Norton was, as he was quite an influential figure.

The fact that he was able to expand his business in the challenging environment of Xandenia was an impressive feat, and his achievement earned him a place as one of the top ten businessmen in the country.

However, Jonathan did not see eye to eye with his methods and tactics for running a business. Running a business in Xandenia was like walking a tightrope, so that was why many transactions were done under the table.

“Why? Why did you have to take my mom away? Norton, Mildred, why are you still haunting us when we've clearly been avoiding you?” Madilyn bellowed in anger.

Yet, her anger soon turned to a feeling of helplessness.

Jonathan's expression turned grim. He grabbed Madilyn's hand, pulled her into his arms, and embraced her tightly.

After giving her a gentle pat on her back, he comforted her with reassuring words. “I'm here now, so don't worry. As long as I'm around, no one can bully you or Mdm. Xander anymore!”

His deep and soothing voice prompted Madilyn to release her pent-up emotions.

Years of accumulated grievance and sorrow burst out of Madilyn like a flood breaking through a dam.

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she hugged Jonathan tightly and cried uncontrollably.

“It's okay. Everything's going to be fine. Since I'm here, I'll take care of everything. Even if it means confronting Norton, I won't back down. I'm not afraid of him! No one can bully you because you're the love of my life!” Jonathan continued to console her. His reassuring words instantly warmed her heart.

After a while, she stopped crying and gradually regained her composure. It's great to have him by my side! Suddenly, a surge of courage filled her heart.

“He'll call again. I'm sure he took my mom away because he wanted me to do something for him.” With a clear mind, Madilyn was able to think more rationally now.

Jonathan nodded. "So let's not worry. We'll just wait for his call.”