

## **ABANDONED 251**

Chapter 251 It was weekend soon. Roxanne brought the kids to the kindergarten early in the morning.

That was the first time Archie and Benny attended a group activity.

Holding Roxanne's hands, the two kids could not contain their curiosity as they continuously took in their surroundings eagerly.

Many children walked over and greeted Archie and Benny one after the other, and the siblings responded in kind.

Only then did Roxanne realize how popular Archie and Benny were at the kindergarten.

"Ms.Jarvis!"

Suddenly, a childish voice sounded from behind her.

Roxanne had not met Estella for a long time, so she also missed the latter dearly.

When she heard the little girl's voice, Roxanne grinned out of habit and turned around to hug Estella.

However, when she turned on her heels, Roxanne was instead met with Lucian's gaze.

Her expression stiffened as the smile on her face gradually dissipated.

She merely lifted her arm and patted Estella s head.

"Good morning, Essie." Then, she looked up indifferently at the man standing before her.

"Good morning, Mr. Farwell." As they were participating in an outdoor activity, Lucian was dressed in casual attire.

The dark-colored lightweight windbreaker that wrapped around his body accentuated his tall and broad figure.

His fringe hung loosely over his forehead, giving him a younger look.

Lucian's eyes darkened when he held Roxanne's gaze.

The next moment, he flashed an impassive smile as well.

"I thought you would not come today, Ms. Jarvis."

Roxanne was stunned upon hearing that.

Naturally, she fathomed he was hinting at the way she had been avoiding him lately.

At that thought, she could not help but feel the sarcasm.

Shouldn't he know better why I'm avoiding him? Who gives him the right to criticize me, then?

Roxanne gazed downward nonchalantly after recollecting herself.

"This is the first time Archie and Benny are attending a group activity, so I should accompany them." Lucian glanced at Estella who was standing next to him and agreed, "You're right, Ms. Jarvis."

This is also Essie's first time participating in a group activity since her recovery, so I have to make time to keep her company regardless of my busy schedule." Roxanne's heart softened at the mention of Estella's illness as she regarded the little girl with an expression filled with the utmost tenderness.

Estella was staring at Roxanne with her large eyes.

When their lines of vision came in contact, Estella beamed at the latter.

Taking in Estella's innocent smile, Roxanne merely felt her heart ached.

She could not bear to pull her eyes away from Estella even after a long while.

As the crowd began to swell, many parents walked over, attempting to become acquainted with Lucian.

Only then did Roxanne look away from Estella and take a step back.

"I shall not keep you occupied since you're so busy, Mr. Farwell." With that, she turned around and left with Archie and Benny.

The parents surrounding Lucian were still talking, but he was not paying any attention to them.

Instead, his pensive eyes bore into Roxanne's leaving figure from behind.

Roxanne wore a yellow dress with white flower petals design that day.

She gave off a gentle and motherly vibe with her long hair casually placed behind her ears with a hairclip.

Archie and Benny, holding their mother's hands, were dressed identically in white sports outfits.

They appeared no different from two little princes.

The trio was exceptionally eye-catching amidst the crowd.

When Estella noticed Roxanne leaving, she anxiously broke away from Lucian's grasp.

Lucian knew his daughter's intention.

Still, he did not stop her and simply let go of her hand, allowing Estella to do as she pleased.

Roxanne had just moved a short distance away when she sensed someone grabbing the hem of her dress.

Assuming that a naughty child had done that, she turned around, wanting to ask the child to let go.

However, her eyes fell on Estella's pitiful-looking face the next instant.

"Ms. Jarvis, do you not like me anymore?" Clutching the hem of Roxanne's dress, Estella pouted and gazed at the former with sad eyes.

Chapter 252 Estella wore a blue lace top paired with a long white skirt. She looked like a little princess with a big red ribbon perched on her head and a faint blush on her fair complexion.

Moreover, everyone at the kindergarten knew she was Lucian's precious daughter, so when they saw Estella grabbing the hem of a woman's dress in a pitiable state, the crowd turned in the little girl's direction. Roxanne had a soft spot for Estella, to begin with.

With so many people staring at them, Roxanne was at a loss at that instant.

She glanced at Lucian, who was standing in the distance.

At that moment, he was surrounded by a group of parents and was politely engaged in a discussion, seemingly ignorant of the ongoing scene on Roxanne's end.

In the end, she could only retract her gaze, crouched down, and patted Estella's head.

"There's no way I will dislike you.

You're such a good girl, Essie." Estella sniffled before complaining in a childish voice, "You never come to visit me lately, Ms.Jarvis.

I miss you so much." Roxanne's heart melted at once.

She had the urge to embrace Estella and coax her.

However, because of the many pairs of watchful eyes around them, she could only hold the little girl's hands and say, "I've been very busy recently and just came back from outstation work two days ago." Upon hearing that, a hint of confusion flashed across Estella's eyes as she looked at Roxanne in bafflement.

"Why did you walk away then?" If Ms.Jarvis likes me, why didn't she spend more time with me when we finally meet after so long? Roxanne was rendered speechless by Estella's question.

There was no way she could tell Estella that she had walked away because of her father, Lucian.

Sensing Roxanne's prolonged silence, Estella began to pout again as disappointment filled her eyes.

Roxanne was overwhelmed by guilt at the sight of Estella's demeanor.

Just when she was at a loss of how to comfort the little girl, Roxanne felt someone's shadow loom over her.

She gazed upward.

Lucian strode over through the crowd without Roxanne realizing it.

Standing in front of her, Lucian gazed down at her with an unfathomable look on his face.

"Essie, Ms. Jarvis has to take care of Archie and Benny.

Let's not bother her," Lucian uttered in a hoarse voice after a few moments and bent down to hold Estella's hand.

Feeling reluctant to leave, Estella turned sideways to avoid her father's hand.

Then, she inched closer to Roxanne and said stubbornly, "I want to stay with Ms. Jarvis." Lucian and Roxanne's expressions froze after seeing Estella's reaction.

Many people around them had been keeping an eye on Lucian's every movement.

As a result, they were all staring in Roxanne's direction.

Panic surged within her like vomit.

When she made the decision to join the activity with Archie and Benny, Roxanne had actually anticipated something like that would happen.

Still, she did not know how to react when she was stuck in that awkward situation.

According to her plan, she should have gotten up and left mercilessly.

However, when she met Estella, she could not bring herself to do that.

"Ms. Jarvis, if you don't mind, why don't we stick around together for some time?" Lucian straightened himself and gazed at Roxanne.

Estella turned to look at Roxanne in anticipation after Lucian uttered those words.

Roxanne hesitated briefly before nodding finally.

Meanwhile, Archie and Benny looked at Lucian warily.

Nevertheless, they were also looking forward to what would happen next.

Although they did not like their father, that was their first time participating in a class activity.

The two kids were delighted to have both their parents accompanying them.

Roxanne stood up and glanced at the crowd.

In the end, she did not reach out to hold Estella's hand.

Lucian understood her concern.

His eyes darkened as he held Estella's hand and brought her to his side.

This time, Estella did not avoid his approach.

She obediently took her father's hand, but her eyes remained fixed on Roxanne.

Chapter 253 When everyone had finally arrived, Pippa asked them to gather around before letting them board the bus according to the list of names compiled the previous night.

Roxanne, Archie, and Benny were right at the end of the list.

The others in the class did not have siblings, so Roxanne was the only one who had two kids with her.

Hence, the arrangement was for them to sit in the last row.

After calling Archie's and Benny's names, Pippa looked up to confirm their presence when she spotted the person standing next to Roxanne.

"Mr. Farwell, what are you... Is Estella going as well?"

Lucian nodded indifferently.

"Estella wants to join too." Hearing that, Pippa looked a little uncertain.

"But..." Essie has never joined this activity in the past.

That's why I thought she wouldn't be participating this time and didn't book their seats on the bus or the hotel room.

Lucian frowned.

"Is there a problem?"

Pippa looked at him apologetically.

"Seeing that you have never participated before this, I thought you wouldn't come this time too.

So, you might have to squeeze in with the other parents.

Of course, this is my oversight, and I'll take care of it."



When collecting the list of names the other day, he didn't inform me that Estella would be joining.

Neither did he say that she wouldn't be coming.

Well, I should've considered that and set aside two extra seats and a room just in case.

Now that the seating was already planned, she could not think of a way to free up two seats.

Lucian glanced toward the woman next to him.

"Ms. Jarvis has two children with her.

I wonder if she'd be willing to let me and Essie have one of her seats."

Roxanne had been preparing to get onto the bus with Archie and Benny, but when she heard him mention her name, she subconsciously halted her footsteps.

Thanks to Lucian's suggestion, Pippa turned toward Roxanne immediately.

"Ms. Jarvis, Archie and Benny have always gotten along well with Essie.

Do you think..." In other words, she's also hoping that I'll give up one of my seats to him.

But if that happens, we'll end up sitting together.

Roxanne turned and looked at Lucian, then suggested calmly, "Mr. Farwell, your driver should still be waiting outside, am I right? Why don't you get your driver to send you and Essie there? It'll also be more comfortable than taking the bus." "I have told the driver to go back first," he replied without batting an eye.

Roxanne pressed her thin lips together slightly at that, unable to come up with any other excuse to refuse.

Meanwhile, Pippa gazed at Roxanne with a pleading look in her eyes.

After a moment's silence, Roxanne finally relented.

"All right. I'll sit with Mr. Farwell."

With that, she turned and boarded the bus.

Lucian followed her while holding Estella's hand.

There were five seats in the last row.

A father-daughter pair were already sitting there, and initially, the three remaining seats were for Roxanne, Archie, and Benny.

Roxanne gazed at her two sons, unsure who she should have on her lap.

Considerately, Archie piped up, "Benny wriggles around constantly, so let him have a seat to himself."

Benny had no objections.

I know Mommy loves us both equally.

Besides, Archie is right.

It'll be uncomfortable for Mommy and me since I can't sit still.

Hence, Roxanne carried Archie and placed him on her lap, leaving an empty seat for Lucian and Estella.

As soon as Lucian got onto the bus, all eyes fell on him.

Before getting on the bus, the others had seen how Estella treated Roxanne differently.

And now, they watched as he sat next to Roxanne.

In an instant, they were somewhat perplexed but did not give it much thought, thinking that it was just because Archie and Benny were close with Estella.

Chapter 254 Lucian had just sat down with Estella when he felt her twisting around in his arms. He frowned in puzzlement.

Meanwhile, Estella was staring fixedly at Roxanne.

Ms.Jarvis hasn't carried me in a long time.

I want her to carry me too.

Also, being held by Daddy isn't comfortable at all.

Roxanne had planned to ignore Lucian and Estella, but with the little girl staring so intently at her, she had no choice but to turn her head and glance over.

"Ms.Jarvis." Estella reached out her arms toward Roxanne, wanting the latter to carry her.

Observing that Roxanne was already struggling with Archie, Lucian tightened his hold and trapped Estella in his arms.

"Stop messing around, Essie." Feeling more and more uncomfortable, Estella began squirming around even more.

"I want Ms. Jarvis to carry me!" By then, a few people had noticed how Estella was making a fuss.

Not wanting to attract even more attention, Roxanne nodded at Lucian.

"Give her to me.

I'll carry her! Then, she extended an arm toward Estella.

The little girl leaned into her embrace almost immediately.

After taking Estella, Roxanne now had to carry two children on her lap.

Hence, her seat was getting a little cramped.

Furrowing his brows, Lucian said softly, "Let me take Archie."

Roxanne was taken aback upon hearing that.

Thinking of Archie's relationship with Lucian, she felt conflicted.

Moreover, she had noted how her son resented Lucian and didn't think Archie would agree, especially since Archie was usually cold and indifferent.

But to her surprise, the boy in her arms actually stretched his arms toward Lucian.

Roxanne's and Lucian's expressions shifted as soon as they saw Archie's response.

SA hint of surprise flashed across Lucian's eyes as he had not expected Archie to agree to his offer.

Then, he reached out and carried the boy over.

As for Roxanne, she lowered her gaze as an inexplicable sense of fear rose within her.

Archie only did that because he did not want Roxanne to tire herself out.

Although he had stretched his arms toward Lucian, his expression was tense.

And once Lucian carried him, he sat without moving and merely stared straight ahead.

It was Lucian's first time holding another child apart from Estella, so his movements were somewhat careful.

As Benny sat in the middle and watched Archie getting carried by Lucian, he could not help feeling a little envious.

After that, all of them fell silent.

Only Estella was in high spirits as she sat on Roxanne's lap and happily played with the latter's fingers.

None of them uttered a single word throughout the journey.

Finally, they arrived at their destination.

Archie leaped down from Lucian's arms as soon as the bus came to a stop and stood next to Benny as they waited to get off the bus.

Roxanne also put Estella down, letting her return to Lucian.

As they got off the bus, Roxanne went back to holding Archie's and Benny's hands while Lucian held Estella's.

It was as though the scene on the bus had never happened.

Once outside, they were greeted by a stretch of verdant greenery.

The site the kindergarten had chosen for the tree planting was a botanical garden in the suburbs.

It was situated halfway up a mountain, surrounded by lush forests, and appeared to be brimming with energy and life.

The only thing was that it was in quite a remote area with only one hotel nearby.

Pippa had contacted the person in charge of the hotel on the way there, hoping to secure another room for Lucian and Estella at the last minute.

But when she found out the rooms were fully booked, she felt both anxious and regretful.

She went looking for Lucian immediately after getting off the bus.

"Mr. Farwell, the rooms at the hotel are fully occupied, so I'm afraid you'll have to share a room with one of the other parents."

Lucian frowned and glanced at Estella.

I don't mind sharing a room with others, but Essie may not be willing to do so.

Chapter 255 Seeing that there was no other alternative at that point, Lucian nodded in agreement.

Hence, Pippa gathered the other parents and asked who would be willing to share their room with Lucian.

Estella was holding Lucian's hand, and when she heard what Pippa said, she instantly glanced toward Roxanne.

I want to sleep with the beautiful Ms. Jarvis! With Lucian's identity and exceptional good looks, it did not take long for a group of parents to swarm forward and express their willingness to let him share their rooms.

There were even some ladies who rushed over with their children.

Due to her autism, Estella paled when she found herself surrounded by a group of strangers. She broke free from his grasp and darted away when Lucian was not paying attention.

She ran straight into Roxanne, who happened to be standing at the periphery while waiting.

Lifting her gaze, Estella stared at her.

"What's the matter, Essie?" Roxanne could not help feeling worried when she saw the expression on the girl's face.

Estella grabbed the hem of Roxanne's skirt and declared with a determined look in her eyes, "Stay with Ms. Jarvis!"

Hearing that, Roxanne froze.

if it were only Essie, naturally, I wouldn't refuse.

However, if I agree to let her stay with us, it'll mean that Lucian will be in the same room too! Roxanne had no idea how she would bring herself to face such a situation.

Lucian was about to get Estella to come back after seeing her run off.

However, a sudden realization struck him when he saw that she had gone to Roxanne.

Estella doesn't know any parents here except for Roxanne.

If I don't want her to get scared, the only solution is to stay with Roxanne.

However, I don't know what Roxanne thinks about this.

With that thought in mind, Lucian smiled and nodded at the others, then strode over to Roxanne.

He asked in a low voice, "Ms. Jarvis, would it be convenient for you to take Essie and me in?" Stunned, Roxanne looked up when she heard him say those words.

I thought he'd think the same way as me...

I didn't expect he would take the initiative to make such a request of me...

For a moment, Roxanne was at a loss for what to say.

Naturally, she had no desire to stay in the same room as Lucian.

However, she could not help but worry about Estella.



Estella still looked pale after getting startled earlier, and when she saw that Roxanne appeared reluctant to let Lucian and herself stay with them, her eyes reddened, and she lowered her head sadly. The parents who Lucian had turned down the offers of their rooms had trailed after him.

They already felt jealous when they saw Lucian ask to stay with Roxanne after rejecting them, but the sight of Roxanne's reluctance irked them even more.

"Essie likes you so much, Ms.Jarvis.

How could you have the heart to make a child feel so miserable?" one of themasked.

"Even if you're unwilling, you should make it clear.

We're ready to welcome Mr.Farwell and Essie with open arms!" someone else remarked.

Roxanne's expression darkened as more and more of them made comments about her.

Meanwhile, Lucian swept an icy gaze over the people who had spoken.

They shuddered and fell silent upon meeting his eyes.

Then, Lucian withdrew his gaze and looked at Roxanne.

"Essie's condition is a little unique.

She can't accept living with strangers.

It's rare for her to like someone as much as you, Ms.Jarvis, so I hope you'll agree to let us stay with you for her sake."

Essie had been behaving so normally around Roxanne to the point that she had forgotten about the child's condition.

Now that Lucian had mentioned it, she felt a pang in her heart as she recalled the startled look on Estella's face earlier. Pippa also came over and gazed at Roxanne with a look of distress.

"I'm so sorry to trouble you, Ms. Jarvis.

If you're agreeable to it, I'll let you have the large room with the twin beds.

It'll be more convenient that way." Seeing how pitiful Estella looked, Roxanne sighed inwardly.

"Very well, then.

Thank you, Ms.

Chapter 256 By the time they settled in their room, it was already nighttime. Pippa led the parents to the restaurant the botanical garden had arranged for them. Roxanne took Archie and Benny to get their food.

There were far more employees of the botanical garden at the restaurant than when they first got off the bus, and Estella did not like that.

She followed closely behind Roxanne, never taking her eyes off the latter.

Roxanne turned around when she sensed Estella's gaze, and a pained look appeared in her eyes upon noticing the girl's timid expression.

She immediately let Archie and Benny hold hands, thus allowing her to free one hand to take Estella's.

Seeing Roxanne reach her hand out toward her, Estella took it without hesitation, her eyes crinkling as she beamed.

All signs of timidity had vanished from her face without a trace.

Lucian was still worried about Estella, so he followed her.

Then, he saw Roxanne and Estella holding hands, and mixed feelings surged within him as he walked behind Roxanne.

When it came to Roxanne's turn to get their food, she found it hard to take four portions at once.

Just as she was considering taking one portion first, then coming back to queue again and get more, a large hand reached over from behind her.

"I'll do it," Lucian said in a low voice.

She was stunned for a brief moment.

But when she gazed at the children and thought about how they must have been hungry, she did not refuse.

Handing him one of the plates, she continued taking her food.

In the end, she even took a plate of food for Lucian.

When it was time to eat, Estella did not want to leave Roxanne's side and wanted to sit beside her.

Roxanne led the three kids to a table and sat down.

Then, Lucian sat on the other seat next to Estella.

The little girl was all happy to have Lucian sitting on one side and the beautiful Roxanne on the other.

Meanwhile, Archie and Benny could not help feeling resentful as they stared at the man next to Estella.

Those who didn't know better would think that we were a family if they saw us like this.

However, this lousy daddy wants to marry another woman.

He doesn't want to be with Mommy anymore! Infuriated by that thought, they had no wish to look at Lucian any longer.

They lowered their heads and focused on eating.

"Let's eat, Archie and Benny!" Estella smiled as she scooped up some food with her spoon and placed it on the two boys' plates. Archie and Benny were momentarily stunned.

Looking up, they saw Estella solemnly using her small spoon to scoop some food from her plate to Lucian's and Roxanne's.

She gazed at them innocently and said, "Let's eat, Daddy and Ms.

Jarvis." Seeing the small spoon stretched out toward her, Roxanne's heart melted into a puddle.

if my daughter had survived all those years ago, she'd probably be as adorable and sensible as her...

Meanwhile, Lucian's gaze darkened when he saw what Estella did.

After the news got out the last time, Mom came to the house and talked about Roxanne and me.

At that time, Essie asked me with an expectant expression whether I was marrying Roxanne.

She said she would like it if Roxanne became her mommy.

I don't know whether I'm just imagining things, but I get the feeling that Essie thinks of Roxanne as her mother whenever they're together.

If Essie knew that the Ms.

Jarvis she adores is indeed her biological mother...

Thinking of that, Lucian glanced at Estella and the woman attending to her as he ate with a complex expression.

Roxanne sensed his gaze and looked up, glancing into his eyes in confusion.

Lucian furrowed his brows slightly when their eyes locked.

In the end, he merely withdrew his gaze without saying anything.

Chapter 257 Roxanne thought of leaving right after dinner, yet the three children froze in their tracks when they stepped out of the restaurant, utterly transfixed by the view outside. She followed their line of sight.

The restaurant was located in a botanical garden atop a mountain.

Naturally, there were fewer manmade structures and artificial lighting around.

Thus, the primary source of illumination came from the full moon.

Filtered through the shade of the trees, the moonlight appeared soft and hazy, lending an attractive glow to the plants in the botanical garden.

Many adults strolled through the beautiful garden with their children.

Benny tugged on Roxanne's hand and pleaded, "Let's walk through the garden too, Mommy!" Roxanne rarely had the chance for a leisurely stroll.

The lovely scenery was simply irresistible, and she said to Lucian, "I'm taking the kids for a walk in the garden."

"Why don't you bring Essie home first, Mr. Farwell?" After that, she tried to let go of Estella's hand and have the girl follow Lucian home.

Alas, the young girl refused to let go of Roxanne's hand.

Roxanne had no choice but to bring her along for the stroll.

They wandered to a deserted part of the garden.

Benny grew excited as he surveyed the tall trees around him and suggested, "Mommy, let's play hide-and-seek!"

Roxanne smiled and agreed.

"All right, but don't run too far away. It's not safe."

The children nodded obediently.

Roxanne planned to search for the boys with Estella, yet the young girl seemed eager to hide.

No one had ever played hide-and-seek with Estella before, and her gaze turned expectant as the boys suggested the game.

In the end, Roxanne reminded Archie and Benny to take care of Estella before she closed her eyes and allowed the children to hide.

"Are you ready? I'm going to look for you!" Roxanne shouted after giving them some seconds to hide.

The words had barely left her mouth when Estella's childish voice drifted out from behind a tree.

"Ready!"

Roxanne could not help but laugh.

Although Estella's reply had given away the children's hiding spot, Roxanne pretended not to know their whereabouts and put on a good show of looking for them.

Suddenly, a woman's voice rang out beside Roxanne.

"You must be Archie's mother, yes?" Roxanne lifted her gaze and saw a lavishly dressed woman before her.

The woman held a young girl's hand and shot Roxanne a sly smile.

Sensing her visitor was less than kind, Roxanne concealed the wariness that swelled in her chest before asking, "I am. You are?" The woman shot her a disdainful glare before replying, "My identity doesn't matter. I'm here to remind you of something, Ms. Jarvis.

"I hope you don't take my advice lightly." Her words brought a frown to Roxanne's face.

The woman continued, "Essie has always been the apple of Mr. Farwell's eye.

Mr. Farwell only holds you in higher regard because her daughter is close to you and your sons.

This is an honor for your family." Her tone turned icy as she got to the point.

"Ms. Jarvis, I hope you're mindful of your situation.

Don't assume you have a chance of developing a relationship with Mr. Farwell because of your children's friendship.

Mr. Farwell only interacts with you for the sake of his child.

Don't have any ideas about weaseling your way into the Farwell family."

Roxanne's head pounded inadvertently at the woman's words.

tknew running into Lucian here was catnip for unsavory comments.

I just didn't think it would come so soon.

"You must be mistaken about the situation..." Roxanne tried to explain.

Alas, the woman cut her off disgustedly and retorted, "Mistaken? Everyone knows how much time you're spending with Mr. Farwell these days.

Know your place, Ms. Jarvis! Mr. Farwell's fiancée is Ms. Pearson, and their relationship is stronger than ever.

I hope you don't humiliate yourself in this hopeless scheme to win Mr.



Chapter 258 The mention of Lucian and Aubree's impending wedding caused Roxanne to lower her gaze. She swallowed the retort on the tip of her tongue and replied to the nasty woman, "Thank you for your advice.

I'll be more mindful in the future." The woman took Roxanne's meekness as a sign of her victory.

She made a mental note to tell Aubree about that night's incident and used it to butter up the future Mrs.

Farwell.

As that thought crossed her mind, the woman stared at Roxanne scornfully and spat, "Good.

You would never be a good match for Mr.

Farwell." Their conversation had lasted so long that Estella began wondering why Roxanne had not come searching for them.

She peeped out from behind a tree and noticed a fierce-looking woman standing in front of Roxanne.

Estella thought the woman was bullying Roxanne and hastily clambered toward them.

"Don't bully Ms.

Jarvis!" Estella yelled after latching onto Roxanne's legs.

She even shot the nasty woman a glare for good measure.

The young girl's sudden appearance stunned the woman, who quickly smiled and knelt down.

She tried to stroke Estella's head and cooed, "Isn't this Ms.

Estella? You're such an adorable girl." Estella shied away from strangers because of her autism.

When she saw the unfamiliar woman trying to touch her head, Estella pushed her hand away and stared cautiously at her.

The woman's expression froze at Estella's rejection.

The young girl's closeness to Roxanne vexed her as well.

Still, the woman stubbornly tried to approach Estella.

"Don't worry, Ms.

Estella.

I mean no harm.

I just think that you look adorable." As she spoke, she stretched her hand toward Estella once more.

Panic filled Estella's gaze, and she hid behind Roxanne, wrapping her arms around the latter's leg.

Roxanne scrunched her brows in concern and stopped the woman from coming closer to Estella.

She said, "Essie's scared of strangers.

If you really like her, it would be much better to keep a distance from her."

Estella's repeated rejection and Roxanne's advice enraged the woman, who stood up and argued, "I'm close to Ms.

Pearson, and she's going to become Essie's mother soon.

"My relationship with Essie has nothing to do with you." Roxanne's expression shifted when she heard Aubree's name again.

This woman's telling the truth.

I don't deserve to interfere in Essie's relationships, but Essie seems truly frightened by this stranger.

She's shaking so much even as she hugs my leg.

With that in mind, Roxanne said, "Since your daughter and Essie are in the same class, you should know about Essie's condition.

She doesn't like it when strangers touch her.

Thank you for your earlier advice, but if there's nothing else, please take your leave.

Essie's still a bit shaken." After that, Roxanne tenderly pulled the frightened girl into her arms.

Upset and scared, Estella glared at the unfamiliar woman behind Roxanne with tears in her eyes.

Naturally, the woman ignored Roxanne's words.

With a hostile expression on her face, she was about to say something more when footsteps approached them.

Lucian's cold baritone soon followed.

"What happened to Essie?" When she saw her father, Estella ran toward him and hugged him tightly, wailing, "That lady doesn't like Ms.

Jarvis."

Lucian frowned slightly.

He had planned on following Roxanne and the children but was unfortunately held up by idle chitchat with some parents along the way.

He never expected to come across Estella crying when he finally arrived.

Lucian quickly deduced that "the lady" his daughter mentioned was the unfamiliar woman standing in front of Roxanne.

Chapter 259 The woman who had accosted Roxanne earlier quickly tamped down her rage when she saw Lucian. She sputtered, "Mr. Farwell."

Lucian nodded coolly at her before approaching Roxanne.

Softly, he asked, "What happened?" Roxanne's gaze swept over the contrite woman.

She thought of their conversation earlier and decided not to cause more trouble by telling the truth.

Instead, Roxanne shook her head and said, "Nothing.

She came to say hi, but Essie doesn't like strangers, so she was scared."

After hearing her words, Lucian stared at the unfamiliar woman suspiciously and commented, "Essie isn't usually this timid." His imposing demeanor unsettled the woman, who lowered her head guiltily and replied, "I just thought Ms.

Estella looked adorable and wanted to stroke her hair.

I didn't think I would scare her.

Please accept my deepest apologies." Lucian stared at the young girl in his arms, who was pouting silently while staring straight at Roxanne.

Things obviously were not as simple as the woman had described.

It was also clear that Roxanne would not tell him the truth.

As he thought of how Roxanne was keeping her distance from him, Lucian's displeasure grew, and it showed in his darkening gaze.

He declared coldly, "I thought the parents of Essie's classmates should know about her condition.

Since you seem utterly clueless, I hope you stay away from my daughter for the next two days.

Don't frighten her again." The woman bit her lip in resentment.

She wanted to use the next two days to grow closer to Lucian and Estella, building a good relationship with the Farwell family.

Lucian's hostile words had put a swift end to her plan.

Nonetheless, she dared not voice her objections before a frosty-looking Lucian.

Instead, she promised to heed his words before leaving with her child in tow.

Estella sniffled as the nasty woman departed.

She broke free from her father's arms and walked toward Roxanne, grabbing the latter's skirt.

Recalling how Estella had rushed forward to protect her earlier, Roxanne was moved, and she stroked the young girl's head fondly.

Then, she held Estella's hand and asked, "I still don't know where the boys are.

Let's look for them together, okay?" Estella's eyes lit up when she realized that they could still play hide-and-seek.

She nodded her head in excitement, which brought a smile to Roxanne's face.

Roxanne led Estella around the botanical garden to look for her sons.

Archie and Benny had been raised overseas, and thanks to Roxanne's busy lifestyle, the boys had grown up with a lot of freedom.

Thus, they were more daring compared to most children their age and had run off to a much further place to hide.

However, Roxanne was not worried because she knew they would take care of their safety.

Meanwhile, Lucian trailed Roxanne and Estella.

His gaze softened as he watched the two walking hand-in-hand.

"Archie! Benny!" Estella called out as she walked.

It reminded Roxanne of how Estella had replied to her question earlier, and she could not help but smile at the child's cuteness.

Suddenly, Estella tugged on Roxanne's hand and said, "Over here!"

Roxanne followed Estella through a complicated route and was surprised to see the boys hiding behind a manmade hill.

"How did you know Archie and Benny were hiding here, Essie?" asked a surprised Roxanne.

The boys always hid in the most creative places, and Roxanne had always struggled to find them during their hide-and seek sessions.

She never imagined Estella would find them so easily.

Estella tilted her head and replied, "I don't know.

It was a guess." Roxanne did not think much of Estella's response and promptly believed her.

Chapter 260 By the time Lucian, Roxanne, and the children returned to their rooms, it was already nine at night. Archie and Benny were dripping in sweat from playing hide-and-seek earlier.

Roxanne quickly ushered the boys into the bathroom to shower them once they got back.

Their playful chatter drifted out of the bathroom from time to time.

From where she sat on the bed, Estella stared at the bathroom door enviously.

Ms.

Jarvis always gave me a bath when I stayed at her house.

After Daddy brought me home, only Ms.

Catalina gave me baths.

Ms.

Jarvis was so gentle when she gave me a bath, and her shampoo smells so good! Meanwhile, Lucian stared at his daughter's expectant expression with conflicting emotions.

Estella was far too dependent on Roxanne.

Or is it because the bond between a daughter and her mother is simply too powerful? Amid his musings, Roxanne led the boys out of the bathroom.

Archie and Benny's hair were still wet as they scuffled with each other.

Roxanne grabbed a hairdryer and prepared to blow-dry the boys' hair.

Suddenly, Lucian asked, "Ms.

Jarvis, if it's not too much trouble, could you help Essie with her bath?" Roxanne stiffened in surprise.

Estella stared at her expectantly and pleaded, "Please, Ms.

Jarvis!" Lucian explained softly, "I'm a man, and it's not appropriate for me to give Essie a bath.



I hope you can do me this favor, Ms.

Jarvis." Alas, Roxanne's heart softened when she saw the expression on Estel's face, and she relented.

Her gaze soon landed on her two sons and their dripping wet hair.

"Give me a moment.

Let me dry their hair." As she spoke, Roxanne switched on the hairdryer, ready to dry the boys' hair.

A large hand reached out beside her and took the hairdryer from her.

Roxanne looked to the side.

She did not know when Lucian had walked over to her.

you don't mind, Ms.

Jarvis, I can help you with that instead.

Essie sweated a lot earlier, and I'm worried she'll catch a cold if she doesn't bathe soon."  
Lucian explained while approaching Archie and Benny with the hairdryer.

The boys fell silent at the same time when they realized Lucian was drying their hair for them.

Benny turned his attention to his fingers, resisting the urge to look back at his father.

Archie, on the other hand, sat stiff as a board, his eyes looking straight forward.

Roxanne had been worried that the boys would be wary of Lucian but their obedience relieved her.

Then, she did not say a word and led Estella into the bathroom.

Estella was a ball of excitement during her bath now that she got her wish.

Her antics reminded Roxanne of the baths she had given Estella during the young girl's stay in her home.

She sighed inwardly when she remembered why Lucian had eventually taken Estella away.

The unpleasant incident in the botanical garden was the final nail in the coffin.

No matter how much Estella appeared to rely on Roxanne, the young girl would eventually become Aubree's daughter.

Roxanne could not allow Lucian to spend more time with her because of Estella.

After Estella's bath, Roxanne came out of the bathroom to the sight of Archie and Benny fiddling with a laptop on the bed, their hair already dry.

Roxanne left them to their devices and began blow-drying Estella's hair.

Lucian scrutinized Roxanne's expression, noticing that she appeared more somber than before she entered the bathroom.

Evidently, she had no plans of talking to him.

That conclusion caused Lucian to frown.

However, he did not force her to explain herself but stood quietly by the window.

Instantly, the atmosphere in the room grew tense.