

## **ABANDONED 261**

Chapter 261 The sudden ring of Lucian's phone broke the silence of the room.

Roxanne instinctively glanced at the phone screen when it lit up, only to quickly retract her gaze when she saw the caller ID.

The phone had been ringing for quite a while before Lucian turned around to pick it up.

Upon seeing the caller ID, he shot Roxanne a glance before answering the call by the window, "What is it?"

Aubree could be heard complaining on the other line.

"I heard Essie's kindergarten organized a tree-planting event.

Did you attend it with her?" "Yeah," Lucian replied coldly.

Aubree's expression was a little gloomy as she asked, "Essie dislikes crowded places, doesn't she? She has never attended events like these, so why would she attend this one?" Not wanting to waste his time arguing with her, Lucian said, "Essie wanted to attend it, so I brought her over." Naturally, Lucian wasn't about to explain why Estella wanted to attend it.

Aubree clenched her fists tightly and suppressed her rage as she pressed on, "Why didn't you invite me? Essie is a girl, so it'd be inconvenient for you to look after her.

I could help out if I were there!" Lucian looked at Roxanne, who was playing with Estella, and snapped back at Aubree impatiently, "Why would I? The school asked parents to attend it with their children.

Who are you to attend it?" Aubree fell silent for a few seconds before replying awkwardly, "E- Everyone knows we're getting married, right? Besides, I've looked after Essie for so many years-" "Anyway, I'll be hanging up now," Lucian cut her off.

He then hung up the phone before Aubree could say anything.

Roxanne was able to hear Lucian's conversation with Aubree due to how silent the room was, and she felt conflicted when she heard what Aubree said.

Although Lucian didn't let Aubree finish, Roxanne knew what she was about to say.

Aubree was probably going to tell him that she'd become Essie's mother sooner or later.

Since everyone knows about them getting married, no one would say anything about her attending the event as Essie's parent.

Feeling flustered at the thought of that, Roxanne patted Estella on the head and said, "It's getting late, Essie.

You need to wake up early to plant trees tomorrow, so you should go to bed now." Estella nodded obediently and climbed into bed.

Roxanne then nodded at Lucian before tucking Archie and Benny in..

Meanwhile, at the Pearson residence, Aubree was so stunned by Lucian's response that she stared at the blank screen of

her phone for quite a while before coming to her senses.

Her face was filled with rage as she swept everything off the table in frustration.

I deliberately asked him why he'd attend the event with Essie.

He brushed my question off coldly just as I expected, but I know it's because of that bitch! That event was meant to help parents bond with their children, so she'd definitely attend it with her two little basterds.

Lucian went all the way to Bellridge because of that bitch, so I wouldn't be surprised if he attended this event because of her.

There's no telling what could happen if I let them spend any more time with each other! No, I can't just sit by and watch as that b\*tch gets closer and closer to Lucian! Even if he rejects her in the end, I have to be there to witness it! The mere thought of what could happen between Lucian and Roxanne was driving Aubree crazy with rage.

Chapter 262 The tree-planting activity started very early the next morning.

After waiting for the parents and children to finish breakfast, Pippa led them to the venue of the event.

The kindergarten had collaborated with a botanical garden to provide the kids with an empty spot to plant some trees.

There was quite a lot of staff standing by when they arrived.

As the kids were all born with silver spoons in their mouths, the staff made sure they were extra friendly with them.

Pippa then introduced the parents to the staff, split them into groups, and had them follow the staff to collect their saplings.

Estella stared reluctantly at Roxanne when she heard they would be split into groups.

She refused to budge even when the teacher called her name.

Lucian frowned when he saw that and shifted his gaze toward Roxanne, who was standing nearby.

After hearing the conversation between Lucian and Aubree last night, Roxanne instinctively tried to keep her distance from them.

She then took Archie and Benny by the hand and walked away when she heard the teacher calling out to Estella.

"Ms.

Jarvis..." Estella lowered her gaze in disappointment as she stood rooted to the spot.

Lucian wasn't expecting Roxanne to just leave Estella like that, so he didn't know how to comfort her.

Noticing that Lucian and Estella were still standing there after everyone else had left, Pippa came over and asked worriedly, "What's the matter, Essie? Do you not like planting trees?" Estella lowered her gaze and shook her head in silence.

Unsure of what she was thinking, Pippa turned toward Lucian and asked, "What has gotten into her, Mr.

Farwell?" The look in Lucian's eyes turned gloomy when he saw Estella's disappointed expression and Roxanne returning with her sapling

Pippa didn't dare press on any further when she saw his expression.

"Essie rarely participates in such events.

Since this is her first time, it's normal for her to feel a little uncomfortable about it.

Maybe you should take her home so she can get some rest instead, Mr.

Farwell." Estella looked up at Pippa reluctantly and shook her head to indicate that she did not want to go back.

She wanted to spend more time with Roxanne, so going back meant she would have less time with her.

Pippa wasn't sure of what to do as Estella simply shook her head without saying anything.

Right as she was racking her brain to come up with a solution, Lucian said, "Ms.

Jarvis' two kids are the only mends that 'Essie has in this kindergarten, so it's only natural that she wantsto be with them.

She's probably throwing a tantrum because she wasn't placed in the same group as them." Estella noddedand said in an adorable voice, "I want Archie and Benny." Since she rarely spoke.

Pippa's heart melted when she heard that.

"I'm sorry.

I forgot to take this into consideration when I grouped everyone according to the total number of participants.

I'm sure you'll have more fun if you participate in this event with the kids you're close with, Essie.

In this case, you can join Archie and Benny's group." "Thanks," Lucian said with a nod before leading Estella over.

Estella's eyes lit up with joy when she heard she could be grouped with Roxanne.

She got so excited that she let go of Lucian's hand and ran up to Roxanne on her own.

"Essie must really like Archie and Benny.

I rarely see her smile so happily like this," Pippa exclaimed with a relieved smile when she saw how happy Estella looked.

Lucian simply nodded and made his way over without saying anything.

Chapter 263 Roxanne had collected three saplings as she wanted to join her two kids in planting trees.

Archie and Benny were so excited about the event that they woke up really early that morning.

Naturally, Roxanne didn't want to let them down after seeing their enthusiasm.

After receiving their saplings, the three of them followed the instructions of the staff and began digging at their designated spot.

Roxanne had deliberately put on a matching sports attire so she could join Archie and Benny in digging the holes.

With all three of them working together as a team, they were able to finish digging the first hole fairly quickly.

They were about to proceed with digging the second hole when a childish voice rang in their ears.

"Ms.

Jarvis!" Estella shouted excitedly while standing next to Roxanne.

Roxanne paused and glanced at her in shock.

"Essie? What are you doing here?" If I remember it correctly, Essie's spot should be on the opposite side...

"I'm on your team, Ms.

Jarvis!" Estella replied with an innocent look on her face.

Roxanne had confusion written all over her face.

Huh? She's on my team? What does that mean? Lucian interrupted her train of thought as he came over and said, "Essie couldn't stand being away from you guys.

I told Ms.

Ward about it earlier, and she allowed US to join your team.

Would that be okay with you, Ms.

Jarvis?"

Roxanne frowned upon hearing that.

Of course not! Everyone is looking in our direction just because he's standing next to me! I don't want any more trouble from people like that woman from last night! The look in Estella's eyes slowly turned gloomy when she got no response from her.

"Ms.

Jarvis..." Roxanne's heart softened when she saw how sad Estella looked.

"All right, Essie.

You can join Archie and Benny if you'd like," she said while moving aside to make space for Estella.

Since she had collected three saplings, she let the three kids have one each.

The kids were quite excited as it was their first time participating in such an activity, and having Roxanne accompany them only elevated their mood even further.

As Archie and Benny were physically stronger, they were able to get the job done rather easily.

Estella, on the other hand, struggled with it and got herself all muddy in just a matter of minutes.

Even so, she didn't seem bothered at all and continued digging with a smile on her face.

Roxanne chuckled in amusement when she saw how cute Estella looked.

She then stepped forward to lend her a hand and placed the sapling into the hole she dug.

After that, she helped them hold the saplings in place while they filled the holes up with soil.

Lucian borrowed a shovel from one of the staff and helped them fill up the holes.

As it was the kids' first time using a shovel, they struggled a lot with it.

Due to how much their hands were shaking, there was barely any soil left on the shovel by the time it reached the hole.



Roxanne wasn't too concerned as Lucian was around to help them out, but they were taking far too long to fill up the holes.

Upon glancing at Lucian out of curiosity, Roxanne nearly burst out laughing when she saw how awkward he looked when using the shovel.

Oh, right! I almost forgot! Someone of Lucian's status would never use a shovel like this! Also, he's probably the first person I've ever seen use a shovel while wearing a coat and leather shoes! Despite him being a grown man, he doesn't seem to be doing any better than the kids.

The only advantage he has over them is being able to have more soil in his shovel due to its size.

## Chapter 264

Lucian frowned in frustration as he found the shovel extremely unwieldy.

While struggling with it, he felt Roxanne's gentle gaze on him and looked up in response.

As their eyes met, Roxanne quickly retracted her gaze and put on a neutral expression.

Lucian frowned when he saw her response, but whatever frustration he had earlier seemed to have vanished completely. He then turned toward a staff and said, "Excuse me, I'm having some difficulty using this. Could you please show me how to use it?"

The staff had been observing him from the side for quite some time. He had wanted to tell Lucian that he was doing it wrong but held himself back when he saw how intimidating Lucian looked.

Seeing as Lucian had asked him for assistance, he quickly stepped forward to perform a quick demonstration.

Even Lucian chuckled in amusement when he saw the staff's technique and realized how funny he looked earlier.

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Having learned the proper way to use a shovel, they were able to speed up the process of filling up the holes significantly.

The five of them then worked together to finish planting the saplings. The three kids would chat with Roxanne

from time to time while Lucian watched

on quietly from the side.

"Are you guys a family?" the staff asked

curiously when he saw them having a great time together.

Both Roxanne and Lucian froze when they heard that.

"Why do you ask?" Lucian asked before Roxanne could say anything.

Not only did he not deny that staff's statement, but he'd also give the staff the wrong idea with that question of his!

Roxanne frowned in displeasure at the thought of that.

"Well, I just thought you all looked a lot like a family. On top of that, these three kids look just like you two," the staff replied without giving it much thought.

Whatever displeasure Roxanne felt had turned into uneasiness in an instant.

She really wanted to keep it a secret, but Archie and Benny did look a lot like Lucian. However, the resemblance wasn't that obvious as they were still very young, so Lucian didn't notice it at all.

As such, she was afraid that Lucian would pay more attention to Archie and Benny after hearing the staff's comment and finding out about their true identities.

Lucian arched an eyebrow and stared at the kids in response. While they did look a little similar to each other, he didn't think much about it.

Since all three of them were Roxanne's children, it was common for kids to take after their mother's appearance.

"You guys sure make a lovely family!" the staff exclaimed when he saw that Lucian didn't deny it.

Surely enough, Lucian wasn't about to deny that statement either.

Roxanne snapped out of her train of thought and told the staff coldly, "I'm afraid you've gotten the wrong idea. We're not a family. We just happened to be put on the same team because the kids are close friends."

The staff was shocked by her explanation. "Is that so? My apologies for making such an assumption. I just thought you guys were a family because you were all getting along so well..."

"That's all right. I just wanted to clear up the misunderstanding. That's all," Roxanne said with a forced smile.

The staff nodded profusely in response.

Lucian had a gloomy look in his eyes as he stared at Roxanne from the side.

They had finished planting the second sapling at the time.

As Roxanne got up to hand him the third sapling, a commotion broke out not too far away.

"Ms. Pearson? What are you doing here?" Pippa exclaimed in shock when she saw Aubree at the entrance.

Aubree was wearing a fancy red dress and a pair of expensive sunglasses that complemented her wavy hair.

She walked up to Pippa before taking her sunglasses off and scanning the crowd. "Lucian said the kindergarten has organized a parent-child activity today. I'm worried about Essie, so I came rushing over as quickly as I could. Where are they?"

Pippa pointed in Roxanne's direction and replied, "Over there with Archie and

Benny. Essie likes them so much that she doesn't want to be separated from them, not even for this activity."

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The look in Aubree's eyes turned cold when she heard that. She then thanked Pippa and quickly made her way toward Roxanne.

All the other parents were wearing sports attire to help their kids plant the saplings, so Aubree's bright red dress drew a lot of attention as she walked past them.

Those who recognized her shifted their gaze toward Roxanne and prepared themselves for a good show.

Roxanne's expression grew stiff when she saw Aubree storming toward them.

She knew Aubree wouldn't give up so

easily, especially after hearing what she said on the phone last night. However, she didn't expect her to show up like that.

"There you are, Lucian!" Aubree greeted him coquettishly while standing next to them.

She then shifted her gaze toward Roxanne as she continued, "Hello there, Ms. Jarvis! Long time no see!"

The awkward tension between them was so intense that everyone watching could feel it.

Roxanne nodded. "Yeah, long time no see."

"What are you doing here?" Lucian asked with a slight hint of displeasure in his tone.

Using Sonya as an excuse, Aubree said in the most matter-of-fact tone possible, "Mrs. Farwell told me you brought Essie here to attend an event. She said she was worried that Essie would feel uncomfortable with so many people around, and it'd be inconvenient for a guy like you to look after Essie, so she sent me here to take a look."

Lucian's frown deepened when he heard her mention Sonya.

Had it not been for my mother insisting that I marry Aubree, I would've called off this marriage long ago!

Oblivious to his anger, Aubree bent over to look at Estella, who was playing with

Archie and Benny at the time. "Come here, Essie! Give me a hug!" she said with her arms outstretched.

To her surprise, Estella pouted and moved behind the two boys in response.

I don't like this evil woman at all! I still remember how she hit me! There's no way I'd let her hug me!

The look in Aubree's eyes turned gloomy when she saw Estella pulling away from her, but she maintained a friendly smile on her face as she said apologetically, "Are you still mad at me for what happened last time, Essie? I'm sorry for losing my patience. Will you please forgive me?"

Estella pursed her lips and shook her head without saying anything.

You little b\*tch! I'd have taught your ungrateful as a lesson if we weren't in front of all these people right now!

Aubree thought to herself after getting rejected a second time.

## Chapter 266

Not wanting to attract attention to herself, Roxanne interrupted coldly. "Since Ms. Pearson is back and Essie's tree has been planted, I think you should take Essie and go back with Ms. Pearson, Mr. Farwell." Hearing that, Aubree shot to her feet and glanced at Lucian with a grin.

Aubree's motive for coming was to prevent Lucian and Roxanne from spending time with each other. Now that Roxanne had suggested the idea herself, Aubree could not be happier.

Lucian's gaze turned grim when he heard Roxanne's words. He looked at her with a frown and said, "Ms. Jarvis, you helped me and Essie to plant the tree just now. I can't just leave like that. Besides, there's one more tree left. Let's plant it together."

Roxanne furrowed her brows. When she was about to turn down his suggestion,

Estella called out timidly, "Ms. Jarvis..."

Roxanne's heart softened. She turned around, only to notice the look of aversion on Estella's face.

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Clearly, Estella was traumatized by what Aubree had done to her previously. She was still afraid of her.

I'd love to keep Essie with me if possible, but we're not even related. I can't do anything about it even if I want to protect her.

After pondering for a moment, Roxanne

lowered her eyes and agreed, "Since

you've said that, Mr. Farwell, I'm afraid.

I'll have to trouble you, then."

Lucian's expression relaxed. He picked up the shovel and continued filling up the holes.

Meanwhile, Estella's mood lifted when she realized Roxanne would not leave her. Smiling, she joined the boys to fill the holes.

All of a sudden, Aubree was neglected by everyone.

After a moment of silence, Aubree mustered her courage and made up her mind to take Lucian away from Roxanne. She asked, "Lucian, you must be tired. Why don't you stop and get some rest?" However, Lucian did not stop. It was as if

he did not hear her voice at all.

Aubree gritted her teeth in anger. She

summoned her courage and reached out

to take the shovel in his hand.

Archie and Benny could not stand it anymore.

Stopping whatever he was doing, Archie looked at Aubree innocently. "Ms. Pearson, if you're that worried, shouldn't Essie be the one you're worried about? Mr. Farwell has only filled in a few holes. It should be a piece of cake for adults, shouldn't it? Look at Essie. She's all sweaty already."

"Didn't you apologize to Essie earlier? Do you not mean it?" Benny added.

The boys' words caused Aubree's face to turn ashen. She pinched her palm to suppress her anger.

Now that the boys had spoken, Aubree had no choice but to give up on Lucian and walk over to Estella. She asked patiently. "Essie, are you tired? I'll take you out to get something yummy to eat. Would you like that?"

Estella shrunk away, biting her lip without saying anything while lifting her gaze to look at Roxanne.

Roxanne felt bad for Estella, but she did not know what to say.

After all, Aubree was Lucian's fiancée, and it was made known to the public. Moreover, she was also Estella's future mother. Roxanne basically had no right

to interfere with their matters.

Seeing that she was not responding, Aubree smirked and pulled Estella into her embrace.



Estella struggled, but it only made Aubree hug her tighter. In the end, she could only bite her lip and allow Aubree to hug her.

When Lucian saw Estella being so quiet, he thought that she did not hate Aubree that much. Aubree did not dare to bully Estella in Lucian's presence. Thus, she, too, did not speak.

After planting the last tree, Roxanne suggested again for Lucian to leave with Estella and Aubree.

Lucian nodded silently.

## Chapter 267

"Why are you here?" Lucian questioned expressionlessly after pulling Aubree to the edge of the planting site.

Upon hearing that, Aubree gazed at the little girl in her embrace with concern. "I was worried about Essie, so I came over to check on things. Don't worry. I won't make things difficult for all of you." As soon as she said that, Lucian's stern voice rang out again. "Well, you've seen everything now. Essie's adapting well. If there's nothing else, you may leave."

Aubree's expression stiffened. "Lucian, I traveled all the way here. Surely you won't let me go back just like that without a meal?"

With that, she hung her head guiltily and mumbled, "I know. You still blame me for hurting Essie last time, but I swear I didn't do it on purpose. I've been regarding Essie as my own for so many years. How would I bear to harm her? Besides, you've already punished me for that, and I know what I've done wrong. Please, just forgive me, will you?"

At the mention of the incident when she had harmed Estella, Lucian said frostily, "The person you should be apologizing to isn't me."

Aubree glanced at Estella, who was suffering in her embrace.

Estella could not break free because she was not strong enough to do so.

Feeling that Aubree had loosened her grip, Estella quickly pulled out her arms from Aubree's embrace and reached out to Lucian

Lucian quickly grabbed Estella's arm and pulled her into his embrace.

"Essie has the right to be mad at me. It's my fault. From today onward, I'll prove to her that I don't have ill intentions toward her." Aubree pretended to blame herself, for she knew Estella would never forgive her. After that, she gave Lucian a tentative glance. "Would you give me the chance to prove myself?"

In other words, she was asking if their marriage could come true.

Of course, Lucian understood what she was implying. With a mysterious smile, he replaced his frosty expression with a calm look and said, "It's time for lunch. You should leave after having lunch here." A look of disappointment flashed in Aubree's eyes when she did not get the answer she wanted. Even so, she forced herself to cheer up and nodded with a smile.

Soon, it was lunchtime. Lucian took Estella to the cafeteria to get their food, Aubree following behind them.

It was her first time queueing up to get food. In no time, she was strangely shoved to the end of the line.

Aubree frantically attempted to return to Lucian's side, but a few parents got in her way, surrounding her.

They stared at Aubree in admiration. "Ms. Pearson, you're so amazing. You've got such a good relationship with Mr. Farwell, and you even treat Essie so well by coming all the way here to take care of her." Delighted to hear their praises, Aubree smiled. "I'm just carrying out my responsibilities."

With that, she lifted her gaze and looked at Lucian shyly and fearfully.

"I've always heard rumors about you being a pretty person. Now that I've seen you in person, I can finally confirm that the rumors are true. Both you and Mr. Farwell are a fantastic couple."

"Essie never lets anyone get close to her, but she didn't struggle when you hugged her. She must like you, Ms. Pearson."

When Roxanne took Archie and Benny to sit in the corner, she heard the parents' praises and could not help but feel conflicted.

Lifting her gaze, she saw Estella, whose hand was being held by Lucian. A feeling of concern filled Roxanne's heart again. Aubree treated Essie so harshly last time. Will she really treat Essie well? Besides, Essie's terrified of Aubree...

Chapter 268

"Hmph!" Benny harrumphed in displeasure. He, too, had heard the praises that were showered on Aubree

Roxanne finally returned to her senses and eyed him in puzzlement. "What's wrong?"

Poking the food on his plate, Benny replied gloomily, "I don't like that lady."

Roxanne was briefly stunned by his words. "Why's that?"

Benny's only met Aubree twice. Why would he have such prejudice against her?

The boy lifted his head and glanced at Roxanne, wanting to tell her it was because Aubree wanted to marry Lucian and that Aubree was the reason Lucian them. However, it occurred to him that Roxanne did not know about them

finding out their identities. Hence, he pouted and swallowed the words he wanted to say. "Because Ms. Pearson treats Essie badly. Essie doesn't like her."

Roxanne's heart ached for Estella, but she could only smile and console the boys. "Oh, that's unlikely. Why would she treat Essie badly? She's going to be Essie's mom in the future. Come on now. Stop thinking too much and eat your food."

Benny lowered his head reluctantly, complaining about Lucian in his heart.

Just exactly how is Ms. Pearson better than Mommy? Why does Daddy want to marry that woman?

After lunch, Pippa invited everyone to

take a walk around the area.

When Roxanne took the boys out of the cafeteria, she realized they were still feeling low. Hence, she decided to take them out for a stroll. She suggested, "Why don't you take me to the place you hid last night? I have no idea how you boys find that place."

The boys finally cheered up at the mention of the hide-and-seek game. Just as they were about to take Roxanne to the location, they heard Estella's sweet voice.

"Ms. Jarvis..."

The fact that Aubree had replaced Roxanne's spot during mealtime put Estella in low spirits. She had barely eaten her food. Only when she saw Roxanne did she finally smile.

Roxanne stopped in her tracks and turned at her shoulder, only to find Lucian and Aubree standing side by side behind Estella. Seeing how great the two looked together, Roxanne immediately averted her gaze.

Archie and Benny, too, saw the couple. They put on a stern expression and tugged Roxanne's hand. "Mommy, let's go!"

They did not want to see the image of Lucian being with Aubree.

Roxanne nodded to the boys and lowered her gaze, explaining to Estella, "I'm taking Archie and Benny out for a walk.

Be a good girl and stay with your daddy. okay?"

She bent over and patted Estella's head

before leaving with the boys.

Estella stared fixedly at their backs. Seeing Roxanne had no intentions of turning around, Estella turned to Lucian and tugged his sleeve.

Frowning, Lucian called out to Roxanne, "Ms. Jarvis, if you don't mind, can we join you?"

Roxanne halted in her tracks and turned around to give Lucian a distant look. "I don't mind taking a walk with you and Ms. Pearson, your fiancée. I just don't want to be the third wheel. So please, don't put me in a tight spot."

Without giving Lucian the chance to speak, Roxanne took the boys' hands and marched away. Lucian's expression became grim as he watched Roxanne leave with Archie and Benny.

Fiancée? Third wheel? That woman really knows how to get on my nerves.

Estella never expected Roxanne to leave her behind. And with Aubree standing beside her, her lips quivered, and her eyes reddened. She looked as if she could burst into tears in the next second.

## Chapter 269

"Ms. Jarvis..."

Quickly. Roxanne vanished from their sight. Estella hung her head sadly, her voice shaking as she muttered, "I want Ms. Jarvis..."

Lucian was still feeling mad at Roxanne's words. When he heard Estella was still determined to look for Roxanne, he frowned. "Ms. Jarvis has her own children. You can't keep disturbing her." Estella lifted her head and glared at Lucian, who met her gaze with a frown.

Both of them had the same adamant look on their faces.

Alas, Estella could never defeat her father. After glaring at him for some time, she lowered her head angrily.

Fine. I won't go, then. We stay in the same room, anyway. Ms. Jarvis will definitely come back to pack her things.

At that thought, Estella recollected herself and said, "I want to return to my room."

Of course, Lucian was unaware of Estella's intentions. He merely thought she was getting uncomfortable in a crowded place without Roxanne around. Hence, he agreed.

Meanwhile, an idea came to Aubree. Before Lucian could even speak, she squatted and patted Estella's head. "Are you feeling unwell, Essie? Why do you suddenly want to return to your room?" Estella pursed her lips, not wanting to talk to Aubree.

However, Aubree took her silence as a yes. Getting to her feet, she said to Lucian, "Since Essie's feeling unwell, I shouldn't just leave like that. Why don't I go back with both of you? That way, I can take care of her."

Lucian cast her a glance. When he recalled how Roxanne had always behaved in a distant manner whenever Aubree was mentioned, a cold look flashed through his eyes. "It's okay. I can take care of Essie on my own. It's getting late. You should get home soon."

Aubree knew he would reject her suggestion. Hence, she had already come up with another approach. Putting on a smile, she said, "Essie is unwell. Mrs. Farwell will be worried if she finds out about this. If she knows I've returned without staying back to take care of Essie, she'll definitely be mad at me. Besides, I feel bad for treating Essie badly back then. I never got the chance to meet her and apologize properly. Please, let me stay today to make it up to Essie."

Lucian furrowed his eyebrows and remained silent.

"I'll feel bad if I can't make it up to Essie." Aubree pretended to lower her head guiltily. Even her tone was filled with guilt.

Estella only wanted to go back to the hotel to wait for Roxanne. Seeing that Lucian was not moving, she urged, "Daddy, let's go back!"

Lucian thought Estella was feeling extremely unwell. Hence, he ignored Aubree, bent over, picked Essie up, and walked toward the entrance of the botanical garden.

Aubree was not bothered by the fact that he did not answer her. When she saw him walking out with Estella in his arms,

she quickly followed after them.

After informing Pippa, Lucian took Estella back to the hotel.

He could not be bothered about Aubree, who kept following them.

Upon arriving at the hotel, Lucian placed Estella on the bed. He figured he should give James a call to ask for opinions in dealing with Estella's situation.

To his surprise, as soon as he took out his phone, Estella hopped off the bed and skipped to Roxanne's.

Lucian was stunned by what he saw, and he slowly understood Estella's intentions.

Here I was thinking Estella's sick. Who would've known that this kiddo only wanted to come back to wait for Roxanne and the boys?

Estella felt much calmer as she sat on Roxanne's bed. Her eyes gleamed, and she looked excited to see Roxanne and the boys return.

## Chapter 270

Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

Estella thought it was Roxanne and the boys who had returned. Her eyes lit up, and she leaped off the bed, dashing over to open the door.

The second she saw the person at the door, the sparkle in her eyes faded.

"Essie." The smile on Aubree's face looked forced.

Aubree was, after all, a woman. On top of that, she had to walk along the mountain path to reach the hotel. Most importantly, Lucian seemed to have no intentions of waiting for her. He had merely carried Estella in his arms and strode off.

After walking for some time, she was left behind, and she had lost sight of them. Thankfully, there was only one hotel nearby, and that was how she had found them. After asking the receptionist for their room number, she headed straight for the room.

Seeing who the visitor was, Lucian, too, was unhappy.



However, Aubree pretended as if she did not see the change in their expressions. With a smile on her face, she entered the room and glanced at Estella, saying, "Aren't you feeling unwell? Why aren't you resting in bed?"

When she finished her words, she gave Lucian a reproachful look. "Didn't I tell you already? I'll take care of Essie."

Lucian knitted his brows. "Essie's just a little tired. If you have no other matters, you should go home as soon as possible."

Aubree's expression froze, and she racked her brains in search of an excuse to stay back.

As she was thinking about it, she suddenly spotted the pink luggage at the bedside.

It did not look like it belonged to Lucian no matter how hard she stared at it.

"This is..." Aubree asked in puzzlement, eyeing the luggage suspiciously.

Lucian followed her line of sight and said plainly, "That belongs to a parent of Essie's classmate. There weren't enough rooms, so I had to squeeze into someone else's."

Upon hearing that, Aubree shot him a look of surprise. "You're sharing a room with a woman?"

Lucian's gaze darkened.

If it were another woman, he, naturally, would not agree to it.

However, that woman was Roxanne.

They were once husband and wife and had intimate moments back then. Thus, there was nothing to be shy about.

Moreover, they were very cautious by making sure they put on pajamas when they slept. In fact, they rarely spoke to each other.

When Aubree noticed the luggage, she immediately realized that the woman was most likely Roxanne and disgust rose in her heart.

I knew it! I can't let Lucian stay with Roxanne! They were already a wall apart when they were in Bellridge. And this time, they're staying together in a room! And Lucian doesn't seem to mind it at all! Aubree's blood boiled, but she pinched her palm to suppress her anger. Putting on a gentle smile, she suggested, "Well, if the hotel did not have enough rooms yesterday, maybe they have some today. Let me ask them. Even if you don't mind sharing a room with a woman, you still have to think from her perspective. It might be inconvenient for her."

With that, she turned around, wanting to head downstairs to request a change of room for Lucian.

Lucian merely frowned without saying a word.

Estella, however, pulled the hem of Aubree's skirt. Resistance was written all over her face. "I don't want that!"

Aubree calmed herself down and looked at Estella with a frown. "Be a good girl, Essie. If this gets out, it'll bring trouble to both your daddy and that lady."

Estella shook her head stubbornly.

Ms. Jarvis left because Ms. Pearson made her angry. This room is the only place I get to see Ms. Jarvis. If we change to another room, I don't know when I'll get to see Ms. Jarvis again. Estella's behavior only made Aubree more certain that Roxanne was the woman Lucian was sharing a room with.

Aubree was on the verge of losing her temper when she realized that fact. Taking a deep breath, she bent down and said patiently, "Let's get another room. I'll play with you, okay?"