

ABANDONED 441

Chapter 441

The next morning, Roxanne was still fast asleep when a knock sounded on her door.

"Mommy!" Benny's childish voice called out from outside her bedroom. "Mommy, wake up!"

The noise jolted Roxanne awake, and she quickly sat up. Thinking that the children were calling her because something had happened, she hurried over to open the door without even brushing up. When she opened the door, Archie and Benny greeted her with an innocent look. Looking up at Roxanne with puppy eyes, they whined, "Mommy, will you send us to the kindergarten today?" Their eyes were filled with anticipation.

By then, Roxanne was fully awake.

Upon hearing the boys' question, Roxanne was reminded of the disappointed looks on their faces the night before.

After a few seconds of hesitation, Roxanne finally agreed, "You boys go ahead and have breakfast first. I'll be down in a few. After breakfast, I'll send you two to the kindergarten."

Archie's and Benny's eyes lit up. Nodding obediently, they immediately trotted downstairs.

After freshening up, Roxanne changed out of her pajamas. By the time she headed downstairs, the two boys were already waiting for her patiently at the table.

During breakfast, the two boys were warmer than usual. They kept putting food onto Roxanne's plate.

Knowing the reason behind Archie's and Benny's joy, Roxanne felt a mild exasperation in her heart, but there was nothing she could do about them.

Remembering what Lucian had said to her the previous day, Roxanne could not help but agree with him.

Archie and Benny were perfectly normal kids, but as soon as they started whining, Roxanne found herself fulfilling every request they had and even more so toward someone emotionally unstable like Estella. Even though that was what she had told Lucian, it might not be effective.

She had finally settled the problem with the research institute. Moreover, she managed to get such an amazing opportunity. She really did not want Sonva to get in her way again.

Roxanne's gaze soften as she looked at the two boys beside her. In a nonchalant tone, she informed them, "I'll send you guys to the kindergarten today, but I'm going to be busy again soon. You will have to let Ms. Lane or Aunt Madilyn fetch you, okay?"

- Archie and Benny looked at her suspiciously. "Isn't everything all right with the research institute now? What else are you busy with, Mommy?"

Roxanne took a deep breath before explaining patiently, "There's this really awesome family of doctors who will be organizing a medical consultation in a few days. I will be joining the consultation, so I need to prepare. This opportunity means a lot to me.

You two have to be good, okay?"

Upon hearing Roxanne's explanation, Archie and Benny nodded reluctantly.

Even though they felt sorry for Estella, they would ultimately still prioritize Roxanne's work.

Seeing that her children were so thoughtful, Roxanne secretly sighed with relief.

After breakfast, Roxanne brought the kids to the kindergarten.

It was so early that there were not a lot of people at the kindergarten gate.

Roxanne scanned her surroundings. When she did not see even a glimpse of Lucian or Estella, she felt the tension on her shoulders relax. After bringing Archie and Benny to Pippa, Roxanne turned to leave, hoping to get away before the two arrived.

Archie and Benny, however, tried to get Roxanne to stay a little longer because Estella had not yet arrived.

They knew that Roxanne would be busy again soon, and it would be harder for Estella to meet Roxanne. Archie and Benny did not want Estella to be upset.

Needless to say, Roxanne was well-aware of the boys' plan. After some words of comfort and encouragement, she quickly handed them over to Pippa and turned to leave without hesitation.

With their gazes on Roxanne's diminishing silhouette, Archie and Benny lowered their heads dejectedly, not knowing how to face a disappointed Estella.

Chapter 442

After Roxanne left, Archie and Benny adamantly refused to enter the kindergarten

A headache assailed Pippa as she looked at them. Well, this is the first time they're being so stubborn.

"Archie, Benny, why don't you both go in first?" She bent down and tried to persuade them.

Archie merely pursed his lips without saying a word.

Beside him, Benny blinked his eyes and gazed at Pippa pitifully. "We're waiting for Essie, Ms. Ward."

Upon hearing that, Pippa recalled their relationship with Estella. She patted them on the head, tacitly acquiescing to their request. Shortly after, Lucian's car slowly came to a stop at the kindergarten gates. Then, Estella was carried out of the car by Lucian.

No sooner had she gotten out of the car than she lifted her head and darted her eyes around.

The instant she caught sight of Archie and Benny, she instinctively searched for signs of Roxanne nearby but to no avail.

At that, she hung her head in disappointment.

Lucian inexorably frowned when he noticed that only Archie and Benny were standing beside Pippa.

"Mr. Farwell." Pippa greeted respectfully as she took Estella from him.

However, Lucian didn't leave immediately but lowered his head to gaze at the three children.

Since last night, Essie has been in low spirits, probably because she didn't get to see Roxanne. This morning, she also clamored to come earlier, hoping to wait for her at the kindergarten. Unexpectedly, the woman took off again! She must be utterly disappointed.

Likewise, chagrin swamped him.

At the sight of Estella's disappointment, Archie and Benny went over to her in distress. They took her hands, one on either side. "Mommy is very busy with work. She said there's an exceedingly important opportunity, for which she has to make preparations. That's why she left so early."

All Estella heard was that Roxanne was busy with work. The disappointment on her face intensified. "Then, is Ms. Jarvis not coming anymore?" Previously, Ms. Jarvis always had no time to pick them up when she was busy with work. At times, she even uses work as an excuse to avoid me.

Despite her tender age, she had always been very sensitive in that matter.

- Hearing that, Archie and Benny exchanged a glance, both feeling a tad guilty.

Mommy did say that this morning, but how are we supposed to admit it when Essie is crestfallen now?

They hesitated for a while before changing the subject nonchalantly. Beaming, they declared, "Although Mommy isn't coming these few days, she said we'd still be staying in Chanaea for some time!" Estella's eyes lit up. Nonetheless, she eyed them in mild disbelief.

Seeing that, Benny patted his chest confidently. "It's true! Mommy's work this time has to be done in Chanaea. But we're not sure how long we'll be staying."

Following that, Estella turned to Archie.

Archie nodded solemnly, confirming his brother's words.

Only when he had indicated as much that a smile bloomed on Estella's face.

I thought Ms. Jarvis was going to go abroad soon, and I wouldn't be able to see her again. That was the reason for my sheer disappointment. But if they're telling me the truth, I'll still have an opportunity to see her as long as she's in the country!

At that thought, she was ecstatic, grinning so widely that her eyes became mere slits.

At the side, Lucian overheard the entirety of the three children's conversation.

When he heard Benny saying that Roxanne would be busy with work, he quirked an eyebrow thoughtfully.

Sure enough, Jonathan's strategy has borne some fruit!

Chapter 443

Over the next few days, Roxanne bustled around in preparation for the medical consultation.

Her understanding of the Damaris family was limited to mere rumors and the forum forwarded by Harvey.

However, all that wasn't quite enough for her.

The opportunity this time was truly too rare for her. If she wanted to take advantage of it, she needed to make preparations as much as possible.

Consequently, she had become a regular visitor to the Queen residence in the past few days. Alfred admired her greatly, so he answered every question she asked about the Damaris family.

After they finished chatting about the Damaris family, Alfred had Roxanne help him to his seat. Then, he ventured solemnly, "Previously, I tried to feel you and Jonathan out, but neither of you has feelings for the other. I know that. But it's still not done for you to raise two children by yourself. Is there someone you like? Tell me, and I might be able to give you some suggestions."

Roxanne was inevitably stunned when the subject went from the Damaris family to her without warning. Subsequently, she shook her head in slight embarrassment. "Archie and Benny are both sensible children, so I don't need to worry much about them. Besides, taking care of them is no trouble at all. I'd like to expand my career first before considering any romantic entanglements."

Upon hearing that, Alfred cast her a disapproving look. "It might not matter to you, but the two children should have a father. Ultimately, all children yearn for a whole family."

At the mention of Archie and Benny, Roxanne felt apologetic for a moment. She went silent and said nothing further.

Retracting his gaze, Alfred suggested languidly, "The representative of the Damaris family this time is a young man who's outstanding in all aspects. I think you can consider him."

No sooner had his words fallen than Jonathan's voice rang out at the mansion entrance. "Grandpa, what are you saying to Dr. Jarvis? How could there be a lack of suitors pursuing her when she's so outstanding? She naturally has her own plans that she's not considering them."

He had nothing much to do at the office, so he came home early that day. After learning from the help that Roxanne was visiting, he decided to come over to greet

her. Unexpectedly, he heard his grandfather playing matchmaker right as he stepped into the back garden. Hence, he hurried over to interrupt the man.

Alfred might be in the dark about things, but he knew the truth all too well.

Lucian has designs on Roxanne, so how am I to explain things to him if Grandpa really matches her up successfully with a stroke of luck?

- At his voice, both Alfred and Roxanne swung their gazes over in concert.

Roxanne didn't want to speak of that topic in the first place, so she breathed a sigh of relief when Jonathan helped to diffuse the situation. Smiling, she greeted the man.

Contrarily, Alfred shot a disgruntled glare at his grandson and chastised, "Brat, you don't even have a girlfriend, but you're poking your nose into Dr. Jarvis' matters!"

Jonathan touched his nose sheepishly as he stood beside the two of them. "How's your preparation for the medical consultation since you've been working so diligently these few days, Dr. Jarvis?" Smiling, Roxanne replied, "Thanks to Old Mr. Queen recommending me to the Damaris family and patiently answering my questions about the Damaris family these few days, my confidence has skyrocketed." When Jonathan heard that, he casually arched an eyebrow. "Your medical skills are superb. You'll perform well even without all this. There's no need to be so nervous."

Roxanne nodded smilingly. "Hopefully, that's the case, Mr. Queen."

It was late then, so Roxanne took her leave.

Jonathan saw her out. Before bidding her farewell, he suddenly remarked, "Don't listen to my grandfather. If you really plan to find the children a father, I think Lucian is a pretty good candidate."

Chapter 444

Unaware of Jonathan's intentions, Roxanne merely regarded it as a joke. She calmly countered, "Don't make such a joke, Mr. Queen. Mr. Farwell already has a fiancée. Besides, I don't have any plans for a romantic relationship."

"Then, will you consider him if he doesn't have a fiancée?" Jonathan pressed.

Roxanne was startled for a moment. The smile on her face gradually faded, and she ended the subject coldly. "It's late. I've got to hurry home. You should also go back in quickly, Mr. Queen."

After saying that, she climbed into her car straight away.

Before Jonathan could gather his wits about him, the car in front of him had already sped away.

It wasn't until after Roxanne's car had disappeared from sight that he snapped back to his senses. Recalling her reaction earlier, he couldn't shake off the strangeness of it.

I asked whether she'd consider Lucian, but her first reaction was that he had a fiancée...

After she left the Queen residence, a mix of emotions brewed within Roxanne on a rare occasion.

She had been busy with matters pertaining to the Damaris family recently, so she had tossed everything about the Farwell family into the back of her mind.

Only occasionally did she hear Archie and Benny speaking about Estella when she went home.

Lucian, on the other hand, seemed to have vanished from her world.

Earlier, Jonathan had mentioned the man before her out of the blue and even proposed a question she had never once considered.

If he doesn't have a fiancée...

Roxanne wavered for a while before she gave a self-deprecating chuckle.

How would he possibly allow such a possibility when he had been obsessed over Aubree for so many years? On top of that, the lesson I learned six years ago was sufficient to have me give up on him. I don't want to repeat the same mistakes again.

By the time she arrived home, Archie and Benny were already home. When they saw her stepping into the house, they docilely trotted over. But then, they weren't as enthusiastic as they were in the past. Ever since she started avoiding Estella, they appeared despondent every time she came home.

At the sight of them, Roxanne was inexorably reminded of Estella.

"When will you be finished with work, Mommy?" Benny queried in curiosity.

Roxanne patted them on the head in consolation. "I'm not sure either, but this matter is really important to me, so the two of you have got to behave. When I'm done with work, I'll bring you out to have fun, okay?"

The Damaris family would be choosing a collaboration partner after the medical consultation concluded. She didn't want any mistakes at any point in the process.

Archie and Benny were clearly not quite eager to go out and have fun, for they merely nodded woodenly upon hearing that.

Chuckling in exasperation, Roxanne led them both to the dining table.

After dinner, Archie and Benny weren't in the mood to play either. They retired to their room early.

Roxanne dithered for some time before she followed them into their room.

When Archie and Benny saw her coming in, they obediently sat on the edge of the bed side by side.

With a smile on her face, Roxanne sat down beside them. "Are you both unhappy because Essie isn't happy?"

Archie and Benny kept their lips pressed into a thin line in silent admission.

Seeing that, Roxanne lifted her hand and stroked them on the head. "The two of you have always been very smart. But why are you so silly this time?"

Archie and Benny tilted their heads in puzzlement.

"I like Essie a lot, too. But because of some reasons, I can't have too much contact with her. You should be understanding. If she's unhappy at the kindergarten, you've got to take good care of her on my behalf and make her happy."

Roxanne then continued explaining patiently, "She doesn't just like me. She also likes the two of you very much. As long as you treat her better, she'll definitely cheer up."

Chapter 445

Speaking of Estella, Roxanne couldn't help feeling somewhat distressed. The smile on her face turned a touch forced.

Estella was unhappy because of her, yet she could only have Archie and Benny mollify the girl on her behalf.

As Archie and Benny clocked her expression, their eyes dimmed. Self-reproach was written all over their faces. "We're sorry, Mommy."

Roxanne's brows furrowed in bafflement when they apologized all of a sudden.

Benny muttered weakly, "We shouldn't have thrown a tantrum with you because of Essie. You must also be very tired every day, Mommy. Don't worry. We'll do our best to make her happy henceforth!" "Just focus on your work, Mommy. We'll take good care of Essie!" Archie echoed.

Roxanne beamed in gratification. "Thank you, Darlings."

"But it'll be far better if you can go and visit Essie, Mommy," Benny added in a whisper.

After saying that, he was afraid that Roxanne heard him, so he smilingly announced, "It's okay even if you can't visit her. We'll help take good care of Essie on your behalf, Mommy!"

Roxanne smilingly patted him on the head. She watched as the two children went to bed before she stood up and returned to her room.

Meanwhile, at the Farwell residence, Estella had been down in the dumps ever since

she came home from kindergarten.

Lucian's brows knitted together.

Her mood has improved significantly after learning that Roxanne isn't going abroad so soon, but she's abruptly depressed again today for some inexplicable reason. "What's wrong?" He regarded her in bewilderment.

"Ms. Jarvis..." Estella admitted sullenly.

Sure enough, Roxanne is the only person who can cause her such emotional turmoil.

Lucian's gaze darkened a shade. "Isn't she no longer going abroad? Why are you still sad?"

Pouting, Estella glowered at him in displeasure. "I haven't got to see her!"

She had thought she would have the opportunity to see Roxanne when the latter wasn't going abroad, but Roxanne had never once appeared in the past few days. Every day she went to kindergarten and back, she was hopeful beyond words. Alas, she ended up disappointed each day.

After a few days, she couldn't help feeling dejected to the point that she was irate about seeing Lucian.

It's because of Daddy that Ms. Jarvis is avoiding me!

Lucian had no idea about her thoughts. It merely occurred to him out of the blue that the look in her eyes as she gazed at him was somewhat similar to Archie's and Benny's. Ever since Rozanne's showed up, all three kids seem to detest me.

At that realization, he felt a headache building. Nonetheless, he patiently mollified her, saying, "You'll get to see her eventually since she isn't going abroad."

Conversely, Estella shot daggers at him, making it evident that she didn't believe him.

Lucian massaged his temples. "I'll figure out something for you. Now, go and sleep, okay?"

Estella eyed him skeptically for a long time. Then, she slowly extended her little finger at him and urged in a sweet voice, "Pinky promise."

Lucian stretched out his hand and hooked pinkies with her before she relented.

He sent her back to her room, but recalling her relentless wails when she had a nightmare back then, he didn't dare leave immediately. Instead, he waited until she was deep in slumber before getting to his feet and leaving.

As he stood at the door, his expression was frightfully grim.

She's so dependent on Roxanne, yet that woman is so cruel to her that she's unwilling to visit her even once. If she were to know what Roxanne told me that morning, she'd probably cry buckets.

Chapter 446

Early the following morning, Roxanne saw the message Larry had sent last night as soon as she awakened. It read: Are you free tomorrow? How about a meal together? She mulled over her work that day before texting back: At noon, then. We'll have lunch near the research institute.

On the other end of the phone, Larry promptly agreed.

As soon as it was noon, Roxanne received a call from Larry.

"Have you finished your work? I'm waiting for you at the research institute gates." Larry's voice rang out the instant she answered the call.

Roxanne happened to be discussing a recent project with Colby. When Colby saw her taking the call, he timely halted the conversation and waited at the side.

Hearing that Larry had already arrived, Roxanne reflexively glanced at Colby, who was standing across from her. Then, she murmured apologetically, "Please wait for a while, Larry. I've got something to wrap up on my end. You can come in and wait."

Larry declined with a chuckle. "It's okay. I'll just wait for you at the gates. Take your time."

Roxanne murmured in acknowledgment. Subsequently, she hung up the phone and continued speaking to Colby about the project.

In the few days to come, she wanted to concentrate on preparing for the Damaris family's medical consultation. Furthermore, the work at the research institute had long since stabilized, and the issue with the medical herb suppliers had been resolved. Therefore, she planned to entrust the matters at the research institute to Colby.

After they talked for quite a bit, the handover of the work at the research institute finally came to an end.

Roxanne still wanted to remind Colby of a few other things, but the man commented with a chuckle, "I've been with the research institute for a long time, and I've also been handling things with you all this while. You don't have to worry. Just leave everything here to me. Someone is waiting for you, no? Hurry up and go!"

Upon hearing that, Roxanne hesitated for a second before she nodded smilingly.

Speaking of that, he has been working at the research institute even longer than I have. And ever since I came over, we've been handling things together. Indeed, I don't have to worry.

"In that case, I'll stop rambling. You should be going to lunch as well. Let's go out together!"

She snagged her handbag and waited for Colby.

While there was a cafeteria in the research institute, few ate in the cafeteria. Instead, they mostly patronized restaurants outside. Colby was no exception.

Colby dithered for several seconds, knowing that he would inevitably see Larry if he went out with her.

Since Roxanne was waiting for him, he ultimately fell into step with her after a brief hesitation. The two of them exited the research institute together.

As Larry said, Roxanne caught sight of him waiting at the gates when she arrived at the entrance of the research institute.

It was as though he was afraid that she couldn't see him, for he deliberately waited outside the car. The moment he spotted her coming out, he waved at her, signaling her over to him. Roxanne took her leave from Colby and strode over.

As Colby gazed at her retreating back, his eyes dimmed, but they reverted to their usual calmness in the next heartbeat, and he inclined his head at Larry courteously.

In turn, Larry flashed him a warm smile.

That was the two of them greeting each other.

When Roxanne reached him, Larry lifted his eyes and stared at Colby, who had turned around and gone a distance away. "Who's that?" he inquired, curious.

Smiling, Roxanne explained, "That's Colby Galloway. He's a colleague of mine at the research institute, and he's also an outstanding doctor. I've collaborated with him abroad, but I don't know whether the two of you have ever met."

Larry nodded in acknowledgment. "Get in the car."

I'm not sure whether I'm imagining things, but the look in his eyes when he regarded her earlier was seemingly strange. But then, I can't pinpoint what exactly bothered me.

Chapter 447

Roxanne knew absolutely nothing about the two men's thoughts.

During the drive to the restaurant, she smilingly asked Larry, "Why did you suddenly decide to ask me out for lunch today? And did you just return from Summerbank?"

Larry nodded nonchalantly. "I just returned last night. I only boarded the flight after seeing Mr. Lynch off. It was already midnight by the time I landed."

Recalling the time he sent her the message, Roxanne surmised that he had texted her mere moments after disembarking the plane.

I wonder what important matter he has to tell me.

"Mr. Lynch told me to convey his regards to you and asked whether the issue at the research institute has been resolved," Larry stated.

The smile on Roxanne's face widened when she heard that Gerald remembered her. "It's all thanks to you and Mr. Lynch that night. Those medicinal herb suppliers were initially hesitant, but they respected Mr. Lynch, so they readily agreed after he said a few words."

Larry inclined his head a fraction. "I'm glad to hear that the matter has been resolved. I'm just worried that Mrs. Farwell will make things difficult for you again in the future."

Throughout it all, he had found things very much unfair on her behalf.

He could somewhat guess the reason Sonya was targeting Roxanne, reckoning that she resented the latter for leaving without a word back then and getting so familiar with Lucian at present.

In his opinion, however, Roxanne was the victim. Furthermore, she wasn't the one who wanted to have so much contact with the man right then.

Rather than wasting her time on Roxanne, he felt that Sonya would be better served

to keep a closer eye on Lucian.

He really wanted to help Roxanne, but he wasn't the head of the Morrison family. Besides, the Morrison family was no match for the Farwell family, so his hands were tied even if he wanted to help. Fortunately, the matter had been resolved.

At the mention of Sonya, Roxanne's heart felt heavy. "I don't know either, but I've already done my utmost best to keep myself out of her line of sight. Hopefully, she'll

forget all about me."

It's particularly true at present when I've got a rare chance to attend a medical consultation with the Damaris family. Later, I still want to compete for the opportunity to collaborate with them. If I were to lose the chance because of her interference, I really wouldn't know what I'd do in retaliation.

When Larry glimpsed the worry on her face, a flash of regret flitted across his eyes. He felt remorseful for bringing up such a sore point.

The car plunged into a brief silence.

A while later, Roxanne composed herself and changed the subject nonchalantly. "Oh yes, Larry, is something the matter that you asked me out for lunch all of a sudden today?" After all, the last time we dined together was when he invited me to Bellridge to attend the medical conference together back then. I wonder what it is this time.

Hearing that, Larry put away his wandering thoughts and went straight to business. "You've been staying abroad all these years, so I don't know whether you've heard of the Damaris family. It's considered the leading prestigious family in traditional medicine, but it has recently retreated behind the scenes and rarely made any appearances. On the whole, it's a very mysterious family."

Hmm, it's the Damaris family again. This is the second time I've heard someone speaking of the Damaris family lately.

Roxanne was a touch puzzled. "I've heard of it previously, and I've always had much interest in the Damaris family's ancient medicine books. When I was abroad, I had hoped that I'd be so fortunate to have the opportunity to visit them, but I never had that opportunity. But I heard that they'll be having a medical consultation soon."

The instant her words rang out, Larry arched an eyebrow and glanced at her in surprise. I wonder where she got that news

"This is precisely what I want to speak to you about today."

As Larry and Roxanne conversed, the car arrived at the entrance of the restaurant,

After Larry parked the car, the two of them entered the restaurant and sat down by the window.

Larry had made a reservation long ago, so the food was served no sooner had they taken their seats.

While eating, they talked about the Damaris family's medical consultation

"News of the Damaris family's medical consultation is usually circulated within closed circles. How did you learn about it?" Larry couldn't resist querying.

Roxanne had nothing to hide, so she admitted, "I initially had no idea about it and was already planning to go abroad. But when I went to the Queen residence to thank them two days ago, Old Mr. Queen suddenly brought it up to me. That's why I decided to stay a bit longer in Chanaea."

When Larry heard that, he frowned "Go abroad?"

In response, Roxanne chortled airily. "As you can see, the research institute is targeted by Farwell Group with me here. Rather than staying in Chanaea and dragging the research institute down with me, it's better that I go abroad. I can't afford to offend Farwell Group, but I can at least stay away."

Larry sighed soundlessly, finding it all truly unfair for Roxanne.

"But now that I know about the Damaris family's medical consultation, I'm not going to leave even if Mrs. Farwell wants to give me the boot." Roxanne flashed him a casual smile. Larry regarded her in exasperation, but all he saw on her face was anticipation for the medical consultation. Thus, he didn't mention Sonya again, lest he wreck her good mood.

Instead, he uttered gently, "That's also why I asked you out today. The Damaris family's medical consultations have always been done in collaboration with doctors in the field. Are you interested? If you are, we can contact Mr. Lynch right now. If he recommends you to the Damaris family, you'll be able to participate for sure. I've got a spot for a member of the Morrison family, so we can attend together at that time." Roxanne's eyes lit up. "You're also going to attend, Larry?"

She had been worried that she would feel awkward then, but that wouldn't be an issue if Larry would also be there.

At that, Larry quirked an eyebrow. "Also? Your attendance has already been confirmed?"

Roxanne nodded with a grin. "After Old Mr. Queen told me about the Damaris family's medical consultation, he said he'd recommend me to the Damaris family. I've been making preparations for the medical consultation these few days, afraid that I'd make some blunder then and embarrass him and my mentor."

"With your medical skills, you definitely won't embarrass anyone as long as you perform as usual," Larry asserted.

Hearing that, Roxanne smiled modestly.

Larry then continued, "That's also a good thing. With Old Mr. Queen recommending you, we don't need to trouble Mr. Lynch, though the spot on his end was also prepared for you."

At his remark, a hint of mystification flashed across Roxanne's eyes.

"Mr. Lynch hasn't accepted mentees for many years. He admires you greatly since he met you back then. When he learned about the Damaris family's medical consultation this time, he thought of you right away. Hence, he had me return to ask you about your plans. If you'd like to attend, he'd recommend you to the Damaris family personally," Larry explained with a smile.

Following his words, Roxanne felt very much flattered. She hastily replied, "I really appreciate the sentiment. I'll thank him profusely if I have the opportunity to meet him again next time. Please tell him that I'll do my best during the medical consultation this time without disappointing him."

Larry agreed smilingly.

After lunch, Larry drove Roxanne back to the research institute.

"I'll pick you up after the location of the medical consultation has been decided in the next few days, and we'll go together," he suggested when Roxanne was getting out of the car.

Roxanne assented with a smile.

Chapter 449

Just when Roxanne walked over to the entrance of the research institute, she spotted Colby standing by the gates.

The man was deep in thought, for he didn't even see her coming in. He was leaning against the wall in a trance with his face devoid of expression.

Curious, Roxanne called out to him, "What are you thinking about, Dr. Galloway?"

When her words rang out, Colby was evidently shocked. His brows furrowed, and he snapped back to his senses. Straightening, he swung his gaze at her. "The two of you have finished talking so soon?" Roxanne nodded with a smile. "Larry is also planning to attend the Damaris family's medical consultation. We merely chatted briefly and agreed to go together."

At that, a flash of desolation flitted across Colby's eyes.

When he saw Roxanne with Larry at noon, he had no appetite during lunch. He merely took a few bites before driving back and waiting for Roxanne at the gates. As he was waiting, he subconsciously thought of the gap between them.

Further hearing that Roxanne would be attending the medical consultation with Larry, he found the distance between them increasingly vast.

Colby suppressed the misery within him and nonchalantly flashed Roxanne a smile. "It's good that the two of you are going together. You can keep each other company."

Roxanne didn't think much of it, merely presuming that he was disappointed because he couldn't attend the Damaris family's medical consultation. She patted his arm in consolation. "Don't overthink things. You're very outstanding as well. It's just that there are limited spots available on the Damaris family's end. Otherwise, we could go together."

Colby flashed her a forced smile. "It's okay. We're both working at the research institute, so it makes no difference which of us attends."

After saying that, he hurriedly took his leave from her without waiting for her response and went back to the office himself.

Roxanne was utterly bewildered at the sight of his quickly retreating figure. Nonetheless, she didn't pay it much mind but went back to her office with her handbag

When they met at the research facility in the afternoon, Colby was clearly much less

talkative than usual. He was also somewhat distracted when he conducted experiments.

Roxanne didn't pressure him into staying focused but silently took over his duties.

By the time they got off work in the evening, Colby finally gathered his wits about him. Remembering his performance earlier in the afternoon, he apologized to Roxanne. "I'm sorry I was a bit out of it in the afternoon. Give me a night, and I'll compose myself."

Roxanne flashed him an understanding smile. "It's okay. Everyone has a time when they're preoccupied with something else. If you need it, you can also talk to me. I'm free anytime."

Colby was stunned for a few seconds before he pursed his lips, his thoughts indiscernible. "Got it. I'll seek you out if I need it."

As they spoke, they left the research institute together.

Roxanne glanced at the time.

The kindergarten probably hasn't let out yet. If I rush over to pick Archie and Benny up, I can make it in time. Besides, I really want to see Essie. I wonder if her condition has improved these days. However, on second thought, she remembered that the medical consultation would be held in two days. Therefore, she truly didn't dare take the risk.

After turning it over in her mind, she decided to give Lysa a call.

Lysa was just about to leave to pick Archie and Benny up when she suddenly received the call. Puzzlement inundated her. "What's the matter, Ms. Jarvis? Are you going to pick Archie and Benny up?" She couldn't think of any other reason Roxanne would call at such a time.

Roxanne was taken aback for a moment. "No, I just... wanted to remind you to pick them up."

Chortling, Lysa chided, "I've been picking them up for a few days now. How could I possibly forget such an important thing?"

Roxanne found herself rather ridiculous. I don't know what I was thinking when I phoned Lysa!

Chapter 450

After hanging up the phone, Roxanne hesitated before driving toward the kindergarten

The kindergarten ended at five o'clock in the afternoon, and the teachers led the children out of their respective classrooms uniformly, waiting for their parents to pick them up. Archie and Benny accompanied Estella at the back of the line. As the boys watched her look at the crowd expectantly, they looked at each other with concerned faces "Look at me, Essie. I can turn into a bird!" Benny tried to attract Estella's attention he spoke, he shaped his fingers into the shape of a bird and showed it to Estella. Alas, Estella merely glanced at his hands absent-mindedly before turning her gaze toward the crowd again. She seemed to be looking for someone.

It could be her imagination, but she could feel Roxanne watching her. However, s couldn't find her.

When Archie and Benny noticed that Estella didn't bother to look at them, they weren't discouraged. Instead, they still tried their best to cheer Estella up.

Even when Lucian arrived to pick Estella up, the girl was still looking for Roxanne the crowd.

Looking at Estella's actions, Lucian couldn't help but frown.

He knew who Estella was looking for, but that was the first time he saw her this persistent.

"Ms. Jarvis..." Estella grabbed onto Lucian's hand and followed him to the car whil her eyes were still scanning the crowd for Roxanne.

When he heard Estella's voice, Lucian stopped walking and bent over to look at th little girl's face. "Essie, Ms. Jarvis isn't here."

Estella pouted and shook her head while wearing a serious expression. "She's here

She could clearly feel Roxanne watching her. Lucian frowned and looked around the crowd with suspicion.

However, there was no sign of Roxanne.

"I looked. Ms. Jarvis didn't come. Let's go home," Lucian explained to Estella

patiently.

However, Estella stubbornly refused to get in the car.

Lucian had no idea what to do, so he could only hold her hand and wait next to her by the car.

At the same time, Roxanne was standing in the corner. Her heart was thumping wildly.

In the past few days, Archie and Benny wouldn't stop talking about Estella, and she couldn't help but worry. Hence, she decided to come over and take a look at Estella from a secluded corner.

Unexpectedly, Estella seemed to have noticed her. After searching through the crowd for some time, their eyes nearly met a few times. Fortunately, Roxanne reacted quickly enough to prevent the girl from spotting her.

Moreover, she almost got discovered by Lucian.

Luckily, Lysa arrived in time to pick Archie and Benny up.

"Ms. Lane is here." When Lucian saw Lysa, his expression turned grim, and he looked down toward Estella next to him.

Estella pursed her lips unhappily. She glanced around the crowd for the last time before slowly getting into the car.

When Lucian's car slowly drove away, Roxanne breathed a sigh of relief and returned to her own car.

Lysa brought Archie and Benny to the side of the road to wave down a taxi, but Roxanne's car stopped before them as soon as they arrived at the curb.

"Mommy!" Archie and Benny jumped in excitement.

Roxanne smiled at them and got out of the car, wanting to help them into the car.

However, the boys stopped smiling and looked in the direction where Lucian's car went.

Mommy is finally here to pick us up, but Essie didn't get to see her.

Looking at their behavior, Roxanne could roughly guess their thoughts.

She saw how hard the boys tried to cheer Estella up and immediately felt mixed feelings in her heart.