

## **ABANDONED 541**

### Chapter 541

Not exactly a strong swimmer, Roxanne did just enough for the children's entertainment. Then, under the guidance of the crew, she returned to the surface to take a quick shower. Subsequently, she changed back into her own clothes before she made her way out.

Led by Lucian, the children were already waiting for her outside the changing room.

Once they caught sight of her, they eagerly jumped at her, exclaiming, "You looked so nice just now, Mommy!"

Mesmerized, Estella looked fixedly at Roxanne.

A genial Roxanne patted her children's heads. "Thank you for your compliments, Darlings."

"You looked very lovely indeed." Lucian's low voice rang out next to her ear.

Roxanne was taken by surprise as she had nearly forgotten about him, and for a moment, she was at a loss for how to react.

It was fortunate then that Lucian was not expecting a response from her. "Take care of the kids. I have to step away for a bit.

Regaining her composure, Roxanne nodded in acknowledgment.

Upon gaining her consent, Lucian turned around and left.

There was a hint of suspicion in Roxanne's eyes as she watched him depart, and she wondered what he was leaving to do.

Lucian only returned after she took the children for a second go around at the marine park.

By that time, the sky had darkened, and the children were all hungry.

Recalling the mention of a restaurant in the vicinity in the booklet, Roxanne proceeded to take them there.

A waiter approached to serve them the moment they stepped through the doors.

Seeing that they had arrived together, he naturally assumed that they were a family. "Welcome. We have a family suite available, so please follow me." Roxanne was rightly astounded when she heard that.

A family suite... Apparently, he's mistaken.

As they had already arrived outside the suite, it occurred to Roxanne that it might come across as a little rude to abruptly attempt to explain her way out of it. Hence, she held her silence.

The elegant interiors of the suite were also done up in the same style as the rest of the marine park, and the room itself was furnished with some toys that were suitable for the children to play with. Once inside, the children made a dash for the toys, leaving the two grownups behind.

After she took a quick look over to ascertain the safety of the space, Roxanne left the children to play on their own while she went on to order food alongside Lucian.

Shortly after, their orders were tabled, and the children were obediently back in their seats.

"You guys must be here on a family vacation, yes?" The waiter did not leave immediately, and instead, enthusiastically forwarded some recommendations. "A fireworks show is going to be staged here tonight, so be sure to go and check it out if you guys are interested."

Roxanne was about to explain that they were not a family when the rapturous cheers from the young ones cut her off.

"Fireworks, Mommy! We have to go and see it!" Benny grabbed her sleeve with eyes aglow.

Upon hearing that, Roxanne had no choice but to choke back the words she had back down her own throat.

"Your kids are so adorable. That fireworks display tonight will be perfect for you and your kids!" The waiter beamed in a way that was almost emotional.

Estella, too, regarded her own father imploringly, to which Lucian responded with a slight nod. "Thank you. We'll consider it."

His demeanor was almost tantamount to an admission that they belonged to the same family

Roxanne frowned. She was about to say something in reply, but the friendly waiter had already stepped away.

"Come on, Mommy! Let's go see it!" Archie begged.

Roxanne had only kept quiet because the waiter had mistaken them for a family. With the departure of the latter went any chance for clarification, her silence evolved into consent toward her children's request.

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After dinner, the lot of them headed directly to the beach to await the commencement of the fireworks display.

Illuminated by the light of the moon, the ripples upon the surface of the sea sparkled like glitter-a picture of perfect tranquility.

Although the beach was quite packed, there was not much noise.

Immersed in such a setting, the masses sat around and indulged themselves in infrequent bits of quiet conversations.

With one hand holding Estella and the other on Benny, Roxanne weaved her way through the crowd while Lucian followed behind them.

Being surrounded by so many bodies, Roxanne could not help but worry about the little ones and was hoping to find a more secluded spot where they could stay.

As the beach grew increasingly populated, it drew a frown from Lucian who called out to the quartet ahead of him. "Come to Daddy, Essie."

He was wary of Roxanne's way of herding the children and was afraid that Benny, who was occupying the fringes, would get lost in the crowd.

Estella's unwillingness to comply was written all over her face. She held on fast to Roxanne's hand and refused to let go.

With a slightly more solemn look, Lucian reiterated what he said previously, "There are too many people here. Come over to Daddy and let me take you."

The little girl stubbornly shook her head because she wanted to stick close to Roxanne and the boys.

Observing the stalemate, Roxanne felt sorry for the little girl. "I'll look after her. Just keep an eye out for us from the rear," she said in a gentle tone.

Hearing Roxanne's words made the girl smile from ear to ear.

Lucian's eyes darkened, and he went silent for a while before he quietly assented.

En route, Lucian kept pace with the four in front of him. His eyes were focused and vigilant on the off chance that any of the children were to become separated from the group

"Sir, Madam, how about some toys for your children!" said a toy vendor who came up to them to hawk his wares,

Forced to stop, Roxanne politely declined, "No, thank you."

With that, she tried to guide the children around him, but the persistent vendor went on to impede their advancement from the front.

Having both hands tied down by the children and surrounded by so many people around them, Roxanne could not be expected to free up her hands to make payment. Hence, the irate woman could only turn him down.

The children, who preferred to let their eyes wander all around them, did not mind that either.

Just as Roxanne was driven to the point of exasperation, the man behind them had already stepped up to the fore without her noticing.

"We're not interested in buying anything." The poker-faced Lucian regarded the vendor icily.

He was nearly a full head taller than his counterpart; he left the vendor doubtlessly dumbstruck

It took a moment before the latter replied sheepishly, "Sorry to bother you."

With that, the man promptly turned and vanished into the crowd.

Roxanne exhaled in relief. She was about to lead the children onward when she heard Archie's fretful child-like voice. "Mommy!"

Her heart tensed up when she heard the boy's voice.

"Benny's gone, Mommy!" The overwrought boy clutched her hand with the inside of his palms slicked with sweat.

He distinctly recalled holding his younger brother's hand, but in retrospect, he had no idea when exactly his own brother went missing.

Roxanne's heart started racing, and she stopped in her tracks when she heard that. Regardless, she suppressed the perturbation she felt inside and promptly followed up with Archie, "Calm down, now. Could you tell Mommy when Benny go missing?"

Shaken up from self-reproach, the anxious boy shook his head. "I don't know..."

The look on the liule chap caused the color to drain from Roxanne's face.

"I think that might have happened during the time I was talking to that man back there," came Lucian's voice from beside her.

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Roxanne turned to look at him with an awful expression on her face.

"I had my eyes on them just now. Benny was still there before I engaged the vendor," Lucian said.

That might suggest that Benny could not have gone very far.

"I'll go take a look around," a frowning Roxanne said in distress.

"I'll come too!" Archie quickly chimed in.

Feeling responsible for losing sight of his own brother, he thus felt obliged to help locate him.

Seeing that Archie and Roxanne were so agitated, Estella promptly said, "I want to come along too!"

Without time to overthink it, Roxanne intended to lead the children out on a search.

They had only taken two steps when Lucian stopped them. "Take the kids and wait outside. I'll look around here."

Roxanne wanted to reject that proposal.

"Benny has already gone missing, and it's crowded here. Surely you don't want Archie and Essie to get lost as well, do you?" Lucian regarded her in earnest. Hearing that made Roxanne hesitate.

With his deep voice, Lucian offered some words of consolation, "It's quite costly to holiday at this resort, so you can be sure that no one here will harbor designs on your boy. We need only to worry about whether Benny will be able to take care of himself."

Roxanne lowered her gaze in a bid to calm herself before she gave Lucian an affirmative nod. "Please help me find him."

Lucian acknowledged her before turning around to wade into the crowd, whereas Roxanne squeezed her way out with the children in tow.

"Does Benny have his watch on, Mommy?" reminded Archie when they arrived somewhere with fewer people around.

Roxanne lowered her eyes to regard the boy who pointed at the watch around his own wrist.

Those watches that each brother possessed could pinpoint their own location via GPS.

Roxanne became deeply annoyed with herself that in her disquietude, she had allowed such an important matter to slip her mind.

When she recovered her composure, she immediately pulled out her phone to track her younger son's position.

After a series of operations, she saw that the positional marker indicated that the watch was inside the hotel and had not moved an inch since.

Benny did not put it on when we came out today because he was apparently too lazy.

Staring at the red marker on the screen, Roxanne could not prevent her own eyes from reddening

It was the first time something of that sort had happened since Benny was raised in her care.

Despite Lucian's assurances that there would not likely be anyone with criminal intent against children present there, Roxanne could not repress her own worries. Benny must be so afraid to be separated from us...

Seeing that his own mother was on the verge of tears, Archie bowed his head in contrite. "I'm so sorry, Mommy. It's my fault for failing to take care of Benny..."

Looking down at Archie beside her, Roxanne suppressed the uneasiness she felt inside and patted the boy's head reassuringly. "It's not your fault. It's mine. I'm the one who failed to take care of you guys."

She would never have allowed the children to be brought into such a crowded area had she known any better. But at that point, it was too late for regrets.

Estella was very worried about Benny as well. Seeing Roxanne and Archie feeling so down, the girl blinked and lightly tugged at the corner of Roxanne's top.



Roxanne turned to look, only to see a concerned-looking Estella stand with her arms spread wide. "Hug me, Ms. Jarvis!"

Roxanne felt her heart ache. She squatted down and pulled both kids into her arms, tears welling up in her eyes.

"Don't be sad, Ms. Jarvis, Daddy will find Benny!" Estella did her utmost to try to comfort Roxanne.

Patting Estella on the head, Roxanne quietly nodded, for she feared that she might

sound nasal if she tried to speak.

Chapter 544 Lucian's face gradually turned grim, as he could not locate Benny after searching the crowd alone.

Although he was certain no one there would harbor ill intent toward Benny, he could not help feeling worried at that moment.

"Sir..." The toy vendor shuffled over again.

Upon seeing Lucian's face, the vendor stopped talking abruptly.

Inexplicably, he felt that the aura enveloping Lucian's body was immensely intimidating as if Lucian was about to swallow him whole.

Upon regaining his senses, the vendor cleared his throat and attempted to leave as if nothing had happened.

However, just as he turned on his heel, a large hand seized his shoulder.

Needless to say, that hand belonged to Lucian.

The vendor's heart trembled. He carefully turned his head around. "Sir, h-how may I help you?"

Lucian stared at him coldly.

Benny would not have gone missing if it wasn't for this person's sudden appearance.

The vendor developed goosebumps all over his body under Lucian's intense gaze, and he could do nothing but wait for Lucian to speak.

"When you tried to sell us the toys earlier, did you see where the little boy on the far side went?" Lucian questioned him coolly.

The vendor trembled uncontrollably after hearing that. He replied in a quavering voice, "N-No, I didn't see where he went."

Lucian's gaze darkened. His voice sounded more stern than before. "You can get lost now. Don't ever think of reappearing in this resort."

With that, Lucian strode away without waiting for the vendor to say anything.

The vendor slowly returned to his senses. He was frightened by Lucian's words but did not take them seriously,

After all, Lucian looked no different from a tourist. He wondered who Lucian was to

decide whether he could reappear at the resort or not.

With that thought in his mind, he turned around, wanting to approach the rest of the crowd to sell his toys. Just then, a series of footsteps sounded behind him. The next second, a large hand clasped his shoulder.

"Excuse me. Our boss said that you are not welcome here."

A man's voice reverberated beside the vendor's ears.

Before the vendor could make sense of the turns of events, he was already being dragged away from the beach.

After Lucian's subordinates were done dealing with the vendor, they hastily dispersed themselves among the crowd to resume their search for Benny.

Earlier, they had received instructions from their superior informing them of the owner of the resort's dissatisfaction with that place.

The first issue was the vendor's presence, which disrupted the peace at the resort.

More importantly, the owner of the resort, Lucian, had so rarely visited the resort but proceeded to lose his child because of the overwhelming crowd.

Everyone had hurried over after they were made aware of Benny's disappearance. "I heard the child who went missing is a little boy, but I thought Mr. Farwell's child is a little girl?" one of the employees asked his colleague in bewilderment.

Another employee reminded, "Regardless of the child's gender, that child must be someone Mr. Farwell regards with utmost importance since he said so. We should hurry up and locate the child!". The employee who asked the question sheepishly agreed.

With the help of almost all the staff in the resort in conducting a search that lasted nearly half an hour, they finally found Benny at the ongoing band concert held in the middle of the beach.

Watching Benny standing beside the band, the employee could not help but feel uncertain if Benny was Lucian's missing child.

After all, Benny did not appear anxious. Instead, he was even eyeing the drum set of the band with eyes gleaming in excitement. The employee wondered if any child who got lost would behave in that manner.

After a few seconds of hesitation, he cautiously took a picture of Benny and sent it to

his superior.

He received a reply swiftly: Watch over that child closely. Mr. Farwell will be there at once!

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Meanwhile, Roxanne was getting impatient after waiting for a long time with Archie and Estella.

However, she had no choice but to wait in distress because she was worried about Archie and Estella whenever she recalled Lucian's words.

Suddenly, her phone vibrated.

Roxanne frowned and instantly picked up the call without hesitation.

"We found Benny. He's watching the band's performance. I've already instructed someone to keep an eye on him. Come over." Lucian's deep voice sounded.

Roxanne felt relieved after hearing that. She immediately expressed her gratitude. "Thank you. I'll be there immediately."

On the other end of the line, Lucian grunted in response before hanging up the call and hurrying to Benny's location first.

"Have they found Benny?" Archie asked carefully after taking in his mother's expression.

Roxanne nodded slightly and flashed a reassuring smile at him.

Archie appeared more agitated than his mother. "Let's hurry up and find Benny! He's alone. He must be scared out of his wits!"

Archie tugged at Roxanne's hand as he spoke.

Roxanne was eager to check on Benny's condition too, but she did not forget Archie and Estella's presence as she reminded, "You two must hold my hands tightly later. Don't wander off and get lost like Benny."

Archie and Estella agreed obediently.

Only then did Roxanne lead them toward the crowd.

The venue of the band's performance was easy to find, but it was a challenge to reach there because of the dense crowd. With much effort, Roxanne finally pushed her way through the throng.

Lucian was waiting for their arrival at the outer edge of the crowd. He hastily strode forward in Roxanne's direction when he saw her bringing Archie and Estella over. Then he reached out to hold Estella's hand. This time, Estella did not refuse him and compliantly held his hand.

"Where's Benny?" Archie gazed at Lucian in perturbation.

Lucian gestured for them to look at the band.

Roxanne and the two kids saw that Benny had taken over the drummer's position. The latter was focusing on hitting the drums, seemingly in the groove, while wearing a cool facial expression. The people in the surroundings were engaged in a heated discussion about Benny.

"Where did this child come from? Is he the missing child the resort staff is looking for? How can he be so good at playing the drums at such a young age?"

"He's so cute and cool. I wonder whose child is this? His parents are so blessed!"

Compliments about Benny reverberated in the air.

Roxanne's tense emotion gradually relaxed when she looked at Benny's serious demeanor while listening to the praises from the crowd. She even felt a hint of contentment rise within her. Others might not know it, but Roxanne was well aware that Archie and Benny were much smarter than their peers since they were little.

Archie and Benny also had plenty of hobbies.

Roxanne had always allowed her children to do as they pleased, sending them to any lessons they were interested in.

Benny had started learning to play the drums at three years old.

The music instructor had commended Benny for having talent for playing the drums a few months into the course.

In fact, that was the first time Roxanne had seen Benny collaborating with a band, and that was also when she truly realized his capabilities.

Onstage, all the other members of the band were regarding Benny with an astonished expression too.

They had caught sight of Benny observing their performance, and the latter had been staring intently at the drum set.

The members of the band thought Benny was adorable, and they were merely putting on a casual performance that day, so they invited Benny up on the stage to be their drummer.

Assuming Benny was just keen to try out the drums in curiosity, the band members had already mentally prepared themselves to be embarrassed.

Unexpectedly, Benny was able to keep up with their tempo. Although there were some minor errors, his standards far surpassed the band members' expectations.

Following a drum beat by Benny, the fireworks show officially began.

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The colorful and dazzling fireworks emblazoned the sky.

Everyone simultaneously quieted down and looked up at the scenic view of the night sky.

At that instant, only the music played by the band echoed on the beach.

Seemingly to coordinate with the tranquil ambiance, the band members tacitly switched the song they were playing to a more relaxing piece.

Benny paused for a few seconds before slowly catching up with the band's rhythm.

Holding Archie's hand, Roxanne gazed up at the bursting fireworks in the sky. Then she turned her attention back to Benny, who was playing the drums. A heartfelt grin spread across her face.

Beside Roxanne, Estella grasped her father's hand and jumped on the spot, wanting to get a clearer view of the fireworks display.

Estella was too short. The horde of onlookers clouded her field of vision when she gazed up.

Lucian glanced downward at Estella before slightly bending down his body. Then, he carried her in his arm and placed her on his shoulder.

Estella's eyes shone as she appreciated the beauty of the fireworks in the sky.

Meanwhile, Archie was unable to see the fireworks too. A hint of disappointment flashed across his eyes when he saw Estella sitting on Lucian's shoulder.

If Daddy had not abandoned Mommy and us, perhaps Benny and I could also sit on his shoulder...

Roxanne sensed Archie's dejection. She scanned her surroundings with a troubled look on her face. "Archie, can you not see the fireworks?"

Although Archie was crestfallen, he shook his head sensibly. "I can see some of it. It's all right, Mommy."

Roxanne was reminded of the anticipatory look on Archie's petite face when he heard about the fireworks display in the afternoon. At the sight of his thoughtful and acquiescent demeanor at that moment, she could not help feeling pangs of heartache and guilt.

If it weren't for my selfish decision, perhaps Archie and Benny would live a more blissful life

now.

Archie sensed Roxanne's remorse. He grabbed her hand and comforted her, "We'll come here again and watch the fireworks next time. I'm very happy that we can find Benny this time."

With that, he curved his lips and beamed at his mother as if to prove that he was truly fine.

Roxanne's feelings of guilt intensified.

"Come here. I'll carry you." Lucian's deep voice sounded from atop.



Archie subconsciously gazed up and met Lucian's eyes, which were brimming with tenderness.

Seeing that, Archie hesitated and turned to look at Roxanne to ask for her opinion.

Roxanne frowned and scrupled for a few moments before taking a step back to make way for Lucian.  
"Thank you, Mr. Farwell."

She had caused Archie and Benny to be left out from indulging in fatherly affection for so many years. Although they had yet to realize their relationship with Lucian, Roxanne could not bring herself to deprive Archie and Benny of the opportunity to enjoy paternal love anymore.

Archie's eyes gleamed when he saw his mother agreeing. Still, he hesitated when he looked at Lucian.

Archie knew Roxanne did not fancy Lucian, so he could not shake off the feeling that he was betraying his mother if he allowed Lucian to carry him.

"If you don't hurry up, the fireworks display will end soon," Lucian reminded with his brows raised after taking in Archie's ambivalence.

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Roxanne gave her son a reassuring look. "Let Mr. Farwell lift you so you can see the fireworks."

Upon hearing that, Archie finally stretch out his hand in Lucian's direction.

With one hand supporting Estella, who was sitting on one side of his shoulder, Lucian leaned sideways slightly and placed Archie on the other side of his shoulder effortlessly

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That was the first time Archie had sat in such a high position. A look of pleasant surprise spread across his face as he gazed down and noticed a sea of heads covered in black hair. He looked up again at the night sky when the sound of fireworks exploding rang beside his ears.

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The brilliant lights of the fireworks seemed exceptionally mesmerizing when viewed from the reflections in the kids' eyes.

Roxanne stood carefully beside Lucian while gazing up at the night sky. Nevertheless, she constantly glanced at Archie and Estella from the corner of her eye, fearing they might fall from Lucian's shoulders. Fortunately, both of them were safe until the end of the fireworks show.

Archie felt slightly reluctant to get down afterward because that was the first time he had sat on his father's shoulder. However, he did not reveal his emotions. Instead, he submissively allowed Lucian to put him down on the floor and thanked the latter politely, "Thank you, Mr. Farwell."

Lucian merely nodded in response without saying a word.

The crowd was still immersed in the romantic atmosphere of the fireworks show.

Suddenly, the band onstage went silent.

Roxanne had been keeping an eye on Benny's whereabouts, so she had instantaneously noticed the changes on the stage and shifted her gaze in that direction.

She saw Benny stepping out from behind the drum set and standing in the middle of the stage while holding a microphone.

As if to help Benny, the guitarist casually plucked the strings on his guitar to attract everyone's attention to the stage.

"Ahem. Everyone, please listen to this little boy. He has a favor to ask from all of you." The lead singer cleared his voice and requested for the audience to hear Benny out.

Hearing that, Roxanne and the others could already guess what Benny was about to say.

Staring at his solemn expression onstage, Roxanne felt contented and even teared up a little,

"Hello, everyone. My name is Benny." The little boy's childish voice magnified and resonated throughout the venue as he spoke into the microphone.

Benny did not appear nervous or afraid despite facing the huge crowd.

"I came here to watch the fireworks show with my mommy and brother, but I

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accidentally got lost because there were too many people just now. If anyone sees someone looking for a child, please help me inform my mommy that I'm here. My mommy is very pretty, so it will be easy to identify her!"

Benny contemplated briefly after saying that. Then, he added, "Perhaps there will be an uncle searching for me too. Everyone can also tell him that I'm here. He's distinguishable too because he is very tall and handsome. There are also two children around my age beside them."

Roxanne was amused by Benny's description of them.

Even Lucian wore a faint smile as he listened to Benny's speech.

Perhaps the four of them were too eye-catching. Soon, people were turning their heads in Roxanne, Lucian, and the two kids' direction.

Benny also noticed them, and when he spotted Roxanne, he held the microphone and called out in excitement, "Mommy!"

The crowd made way for Roxanne and the others to reach Benny's side.

"Mommy!"

Benny jogged over happily with the microphone in his hand when he saw Roxanne.

She bent down while beaming and pulled Benny into her embrace. "You scared me, Benny. Luckily, you're so smart."

Benny gently patted his mother's back and said, "I'm sorry, Mommy. But don't worry about me because I'm very smart. I will not follow the bad guys."

When Benny realized he had gotten lost just now, he had immediately run toward the band, following the music, because he thought he would be safer there. He had planned on borrowing the microphone from the band to find Roxanne.

Fortunately, the band members were kind and friendly. After they had been made aware of Benny's situation, they had agreed to his request with alacrity.

Benny turned on his heels and sensibly expressed his gratitude to the band members. "Thank you all."

They responded with a smile. "You're welcome. We're glad as long as you are safely reunited with your family."

The band members even added a friendly reminder to Roxanne, "Your son is very gifted in music. If you can afford it, we suggest you send him to a music academy to receive proper lessons." Roxanne grinned in agreement.

"I'm sorry, Benny," Archie apologized to his brother when the crowd shifted their attention away from them. "It was my fault for not holding your hand tightly enough that you got lost in the crowd."

Benny gazed at his brother and said casually, "It wasn't your fault, Archie; it's too crowded here. Besides, I wasn't lost, and it was fun playing the drums, anyway!"

Archie frowned for several seconds before nodding slowly. "I will hold your hand tightly next time," he promised, "and never allow something like this to happen again."

Benny nodded vigorously as he squeezed his brother's hand.

Estella came over to join the fun. "Me too! I'll hold both your hands!"

The little girl clutched Benny's hand as she spoke.

Touched to see the three children walking hand in hand with similarly solemn expressions, Roxanne smiled gratefully. "Come, Benny," she said gently. "Thank Mr. Farwell." Benny appeared to be surprised by her words.

"Mr. Farwell was the one who found you," Roxanne said.

The boy glanced up at the man before him.

As Lucian was standing with his back against the moonlight, Benny could not see his expression at that moment.

Nevertheless, the boy obeyed his mother by expressing his gratitude. "Thank you, Mr. Farwell."

Lucian nodded noncommittally. "No problem. You were clever enough to wait here."

The boy was taken aback by his father's compliment. He stroked his nose awkwardly.

The crowd on the beach thinned out after the fireworks show,

Despite Roxanne's reservations, she took the children for a walk at the beach, considering that they might be still fearful.

The weather was lovely, and the water was placid. As the children wanted to go to the beach, Roxanne let go of their hands and allowed them to run toward the shore while

she waited on the side.

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"Archie..." Benny looked at Estella, who was beside him cautiously. "Was it really Mr. Farwell who found me?"

Archie nodded. "Mommy was panicking earlier. She was about to take Essie and me to look for you when Mr. Farwell stopped her and went to look on his own."

Benny glanced at Lucian, who was standing not far away, with a complicated mix of emotions within him.

"It was fortunate that Mr. Farwell found you in time. Otherwise, Mommy would have really cried." Archie's heart twinged with guilt when he thought about how anxious Roxanne had been.

Because of that, the boy had to thank his father despite not liking him.

Benny was full of regret when he learned that Roxanne had been on the verge of tears. "Did I not thank Mr. Farwell enough earlier?"

As he was unaware of the situation, he had only thanked him because his mother had told him to. Looking back on it now, he felt a little guilty.

Although he did not like his father, he thought he should thank him properly for doing their mother such a big favor.

Archie smiled at his brother, who still looked dejected. "Mommy will thank him for you." He glanced toward the two adults. "Besides, Mr. Farwell would probably want Mommy to thank him." Deep in thoughts, the two boys gazed at their parents.

Estella, on the other hand, was busy amusing herself.

Roxanne did not know what the children were thinking. Seeing that it was getting late, she called out to the children, "Are you done playing? It's getting late, and we should head back. We'll come back tomorrow!"

The children ran toward them, while Benny ran straight toward Roxanne, who noticed that the child's expression was odd.



"What's the matter?" she asked as she leaned over to pull him into her arms.

"I'm sorry, Mommy," the boy answered glumly. "I will remember to stay by your side next time and not wander off."

Roxanne was confused.

They were doing fine when they were out playing earlier. Why is he mentioning this all of a sudden?

Roxanne caressed the boy's head lovingly upon noticing his solemn expression. "I know," she said tenderly. "Thank you, Darling. I will do a better job protecting you as well."

"I will protect Benny, too!" Archie chirped.

Roxanne pulled the two boys in for a hug.

Meanwhile, Estella, who was standing forlornly on her own, looked a little crestfallen as she watched the two boys in Roxanne's arms.

The scene did not go unnoticed by Lucian.

He watched as his daughter stood pitifully at the side, and a strange feeling welled up within him

Although he understood that Roxanne was comforting the boys because she had been shaken by the events earlier, he nevertheless wondered how Roxanne would feel if she knew that Estella was also her child and that she had neglected the girl on more than one occasion.

Lucian scowled at the irony of that thought and reached out to Estella.

Gazing enviously at the two boys, the girl took her father's hand.

"It's getting late," Lucian said in a low voice. "We should head back."

His words roused Roxanne from her reverie. She slowly let go of the two boys, stood up, and led them to follow Lucian.

## Chapter 550

Roxanne was about to bring the two boys up upon arriving back at the hotel when she felt a pair of resentful eyes on her back.

Frowning, Roxanne glanced behind her and saw Estella hesitantly shuffling after her three paces behind

The child stopped in her tracks when she noticed her quarry had turned her head. Her little face was alight with anticipation.

Not far away, Lucian pretended not to see them as he busied himself with pouring a glass of water from the bar.

Roxanne walked toward the child. "Do you want to sleep with me, Essie?"

The child nodded vigorously before asking cautiously, "Is that okay?"

Roxanne's heart softened at the child's tentativeness. "Go ask your Daddy," she said softly as she gazed at the man in the vicinity. "If he says yes, I'll take you upstairs."

The child's eyes brightened. She strode to Lucian's side with her stubby legs, but the man ignored the child's approach.

Knowing that her father would agree, Estella tugged the hem of his shirt fearlessly. "Can I sleep with Ms. Jarvis, Daddy?"

It was only then that Lucian lowered his gaze to look at his daughter before looking at Roxanne, who was standing nearby. "Okay," he said with a slight frown, "but don't give Ms. Jarvis any trouble." The child nodded obediently before sprinting back to Roxanne with a wide grin. "Daddy said yes!"

Roxanne returned the smile as she caressed the child's head, then said to Lucian, "I'll take Essie upstairs, then."

The man nodded casually. "If she's beginning to feel like a handful, Ms. Jarvis, you can send her back to me any time.

Roxanne was taken aback. She wondered why the man was acting so distant all of a sudden.

Upon regaining her composure, she said, "Don't worry, Mr. Farwell. Essie will be in good hands."

Lucian did not respond further. Instead, he turned to open a bottle of wine and

poured himself a glass. Roxanne gazed at the man's back, confused. "We'll be heading up, then. Good night. Mr. Farwell."

Lucian grunted in response.

Roxanne said nothing as she took the children upstairs.

After an entire day's worth of excitement and running on the beach for hours, the children were so sweaty that Roxanne bathed them all.

"Ms. Jarvis, will you still be picking the boys up in the future?" asked Estella suddenly during her bath.

Roxanne's hands froze. She could almost guess the child's intentions and was, at the moment, at a loss for words.

After a long silence, Roxanne answered evasively, "I will go if work permits."

Estella pursed her lips and gave Roxanne a piercing gaze as though she could see through the deception. The corners of her eyes drooped sadly. Roxanne's heart ached when she took in the child's disappointed look, but she was determined to stand by her word.

Fortunately, Estella said no more throughout the rest of her bath, and Roxanne heaved a sigh of relief.

Roxanne was tucking the children in after their baths when Estella spoke. "I want to hear a bedtime story, Ms. Jarvis."

Roxanne agreed without hesitation, as she felt guilty. "All right, I'll tell you one."

"I want to hear the story of Sleeping Beauty."