

ABANDONED 61

Chapter 61

After watching Lucian's car depart, Roxanne brought Archie and Benny back to the mansion.

She squatted down and gave them a serious look. The two boys, too, looked at her as they knew their mother wanted to talk to them.

"Archie, Benny, listen carefully. Don't ever tell anyone about our family again-especially the fact that you don't have a daddy!" Roxanne felt her head throbbing when she recalled the incident earlier.

Thank God I managed to put a stop to their conversation. Given Lucian's intelligence, the things the kids said would have aroused his suspicion.

Archie and Benny looked perplexed. "Why not? It's a fact that we didn't have a daddy!"

Roxanne's head pounded even more intensely when she heard their reply.

I can't be telling these boys the real reason, can I? How can I tell them I'm afraid their biological father will come looking for them?

After a short pause, Roxanne made up a story. "Because bad guys like kids who don't have fathers.

They know mothers are not strong enough to protect their children. What if they snatch you away?"

The two geniuses exchanged glances. They thought the explanation was lame but decided to play along. "Okay, Mommy."

Roxanne sighed with relief. She got up, took her bag, and brought them to the research institute.

Meanwhile, after leaving Roxanne's house, Estella was still sulking though she was not crying anymore. Throughout the drive back, she pouted and looked at the view outside the window as if Lucian was not around.

Feeling helpless, Lucian sighed and said in a deep voice, "Still mad at Daddy? I'm sorry, Essie. It's all Daddy's fault. I shouldn't stop you from making friends, but you can't simply run away from home all the time. Communicate with Daddy if you have a problem."

Estella tilted her head to look at him. Instead of looking out the window again, she lowered her head and stared at her tiny feet.

Lucian sighed again. He reached out his hand and gently stroked her head. "Instead of writing, you should try to speak. Writing might not accurately convey your emotions and can sometimes cause misunderstanding."

Estella shook her head and brushed his hand off. She hugged her notebook even more tightly and

refused to put it aside.

Upon seeing his daughter's reaction, Lucian frowned and fell silent.

All the years, everyone assumed Estella was a mute, and Lucian had never bothered to explain to the public.

The little girl was not mute. In fact, she had learned to speak much earlier than peers her age.

However, Estella was later diagnosed with autism, and she gradually stopped talking to anyone. That was why she preferred to write down her thoughts on paper.

Even when she was with Lucian, she refused to speak.

As years went by, Lucian learned to accept Estella for who she was. But deep in his heart, he still wished to hear his daughter speak again.

The two boys said she doesn't have many friends in kindergarten. I guess it's because she doesn't want to talk to anyone.

Both of them stayed silent for the rest of their journey.

Even after they had arrived at the manor, Estella got out of the car and walked in front.

Lucian walked behind and entered the mansion right after her.

“You’re finally home!”

Lucian was a little bewildered when he heard his mother’s voice the moment he stepped into the house.

He glanced at the living hall and saw his parents standing next to Aubree. They were all surrounding

Estella, wearing joyful expressions on their faces.

Chapter 62

“Dad, Mom, what are you doing here?” Lucian frowned and asked.

Sonya whined while inspecting her granddaughter, “I had to drag your dad over because I was so

worried when I heard my baby girl went missing this morning. And why didn’t you tell me?”

Lucian did not know how to answer her.

“Essie, come. Tell Grandma where have you been?” Sonya was relieved that Estella came home in one

piece. She hugged the girl and said, “How could you run away from home just like that? You’re still a

little girl. Grandma is so worried about you. Don’t do this again anymore, okay?”

Aubree echoed, “You can always talk to me if you’re upset. Don’t just run out of the house without

telling us! Grandpa and Grandma were so worried about you. So was I! Had you not come home, I would have gone out to look for you!”

Estella did not react much to Sonya’s hug and Aubree’s question, a frigid expression on her face.

Knowing that this kind of atmosphere would make Estella uncomfortable, Lucian walked up to Sonya and took over the child. “Essie was just around the neighborhood. She’s a smart girl, so you don’t need to worry about her.”

Estella flung her arms around Lucian’s neck and buried her head into the crook of his neck.

Sonya’s heart ached for her granddaughter. She turned around and complained to Lucian, “You must have neglected Essie because you’re always busy with work! She wouldn’t have felt lonely had you married someone who could take good care of her. She wouldn’t have run away if someone was here to look after her!”

Upon hearing that, Lucian knitted his brows. He knew Sonya was trying to press him to marry again.

He immediately promised, “From now on, I’ll try to stay home to accompany her during weekends. I didn’t plan to go out today either, but an emergency cropped up, and I had to make a trip to the office.”

Sonya knew he was trying to play dumb. Instead of beating around the bush, she asked directly, “I

don't want to play mind games with you anymore. When do you plan on marrying Aubree? She waited for you for six years, and you expect her to wait for another six years? Don't you feel bad for her?"

Aubree held onto Sonya's arm and looked at Lucian with a faint smile as if she was anticipating a positive answer from him.

That was why she invited Sonya and Elias over today,

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He'll have no choice but to talk about our wedding since his parents are here.

Yet, the answer Lucian gave shattered her dream.

"Mom, I've been busy lately, and you saw what happened to Essie. She has been quite emotional these days, often running away from home. Now is just not the right time for me to think about marriage."

Sonya looked up at Lucian with a scowl and advised him, "All the more reason for you to tie the knot with Aubree! Isn't it better if she can help you take care of Essie? She has always regarded Essie as her own,"

“Mom!” Lucian interrupted Sonya in a deep voice and reiterated, “I said this is not the right time, and I’ll always put Essie’s first before making any decision, so stop giving me pressure!”

Aubree’s expression turned grim when she noticed the annoyance on his face. She stepped in to defuse the tension, saying, “It’s all right, Mrs. Farwell. I can wait. I believe Essie would one day accept me. We’ll give her more time.”

Touched by Aubree’s remark, Sonya gently patted her hand to console her. What a gentle, affectionate child. I don’t understand why Lucian refused to marry her right away.

Estella overheard their conversation and grimaced. I don’t want this evil woman to be my mommy!

Chapter 63

At noon both Elias and Sonya stayed at the manor for lunch. Aubree also made up an excuse and stayed.

At the dining table, she put on an attentive act. Not only did she take soup and food for the couple every so often, but she even helped Estella peel prawns that she didn’t eat much herself.

“Here, I remember that you love eating prawns, so I peeled them especially for you, Essie.”

Aubree slid the plate of prawns she had peeled to Estella.

Estella merely lifted her head and glanced at it. Then, she dipped her head again and continued eating the food in her bowl as though she didn't see anything.

Aubree's hand was still on the plate, and the smile on her face stiffened slightly.

Some time passed, but still, Estella didn't touch that plate of prawns at all.

"Essie, why are you not eating the prawns Ms. Pearson peeled especially for you. Besides, you didn't even thank her," Sonya chided.

Estella turned a deaf ear to it and continued eating.

Upon seeing that, Sonya frowned slightly, and her voice turned significantly harsher as she said, "Such behavior is exceedingly rude, Essie."

Still, Estella lifted her head, her eyes brimming with obstinacy.

I just don't want to eat anything from this evil woman!

Beside her, Aubree hurriedly acted considerate and sensible when she saw that Sonya was standing up for her. "Don't be angry, Mrs. Farwell. Perhaps Essie isn't eating the prawns because she's already full. Besides, she's emotionally unstable in the first place. You'll frighten her."

"What a considerate girl! I'll rest easy with you taking care of her in the future," Sonya lauded in

gratification.

Aubree cautiously shifted her gaze to Lucian with a somewhat forced smile on her face.

Likewise, Sonya looked at her son, but her eyes were filled with recrimination.

As Lucian met their gazes, his expression tensed, and he said to Aubree in a clipped voice, "Essie

doesn't eat food from outsiders. You don't need to try anymore."

When Aubree heard that, a flash of hurt flittered across her face, and she sheepishly took the plate of

prawns back.

Sonya wanted to smooth over their relationship upon seeing that Aubree was hurt. She turned and

chastised her son, "This is all on you for pampering her."

Lucian remained indifferent. "Children should have some safety awareness in the first place. At

the very least, she won't simply eat food from strangers when she's outside."

Sonya wanted to speak further, but Elias beside her gave a cough and seconded. "Lucian is right Essie

likes to wander around these few days. No one can afford to take responsibility if she eats something

she shouldn't be eating outside."

Only then did Sonya relent.

After lunch, Lucian still had work to handle, so he asked them about their plans.

Regarding her granddaughter lovingly, Sonya remarked, "It's been a long while since I last brought

Essie out to shop. Essie, I'll bring you out to buy some beautiful dresses!"

Although she was dissatisfied with her son's marriage, she still loved her granddaughter from the

depths of her heart. Considering that her son was a man and would inevitably be negligent in that

aspect, she would always bring Estella out to buy things favored by little girls every time she visited.

Estella was just about to agree when Aubree came over. "I'll go with you, Mrs. Farwell. I can also see

what Essie likes."

"Sure!" Sonya agreed with a smile.

Having said that, she reached out to take Estella's hand, only to grasp empty air.

Estella shook her head at her grandmother before writing in her notebook: I don't want to go out today.

I want to practice writing at home.

I don't want to be with this evil woman!

Sonya didn't force the issue.

Elias led his granddaughter to the couch for a seat. "Here, I'll teach you. Tell me what word you'd like to practice today."

Recalling the names of the two boys she glimpsed written on their books when she was in kindergarten, Estella wrote "Archie" and "Benny" in her notebook.

At that, puzzlement inundated Elias. "Why do you suddenly want to practice writing these two words?"

After all, those two words weren't common nouns, and he couldn't think of any special meaning to them.

Shaking her head, Estella tugged at her grandfather's sleeve, imploring him to teach her.

Chapter 64

Elise didn't pursue the matter further. Since Estella wanted to learn those two words, he decided to teach her.

They both had the housekeeper bring a pencil and paper, then started practicing writing at the dining table in the dining room,

Seeing that his father was taking care of Estella, Lucian excused himself and went upstairs to his study.

Meanwhile, Aubree was seething.

She could tell that Estella was evidently trying to keep her distance from her. The latter had been turning her down in front of the Farwells.

If this continues, Mr. and Mrs. Farwell will definitely notice something amiss! No, I've got to find an opportunity and teach that brat a lesson so that she'll behave!

Because of Estella's sudden visit, it was almost ten o'clock when Roxanne arrived at the research institute with Archie and Benny.

After settling them in her office, she started working without delay.

The data Colby proposed hadn't been processed, so he sought her out right away upon learning that she had arrived.

The two of them proceeded to devote themselves wholly to work.

It wasn't until it was time to get off work in the evening that they came to a conclusion at long last.

Stretching, Roxanne caught sight of her two sons who were studying something or other on their laptops. "Archie, Benny, we can go home now," she called out gently.

Hearing that, Archie and Benny lifted their eyes from behind the laptops and nodded docilely. They put

the laptops down and got up from the couch.

Colby glanced at the time before suggesting with a smile, "It's just dinner time now. You've done me a great favor today, so how about me treating you and the kids to a meal?"

Roxanne was stunned for a moment. She turned to her sons to seek their opinions.

Archie and Benny exchanged a look, understanding dawning upon both of them.

Well, it's clear as day that Mr. Galloway wants to pursue Mommy.

Having observed the man for a day, they felt that Colby was indeed very much outstanding. In terms of career, at the very least, he had common topics with Roxanne. On top of that, his looks were also passable.

For some inexplicable reason, however, only their father's countenance flashed across their minds whenever they imagined a man with their mother.

How strange. We've never seen Mommy and Daddy standing side by side, but we instinctively feel that Daddy is the only one who's worthy of standing by Mommy's side. Therefore, it's best that we keep a distance from Mr. Galloway!

"Thank you, Mr. Galloway, but my mommy already has a date tonight. So, it's okay," Archie declined

politely.

Colby looked at Roxanne in mystification.

Throughout the day, he hadn't heard her mentioning about a date that night.

Roxanne swept a gaze over Archie and Benny. While she couldn't fathom why they lied, she still went along with them. "I have a dinner date with my best friend tonight. I'll take a rain check."

At that, Colby flashed her a warm smile. "I'm all muddled from work that I forgot to ask whether you have plans later. In that case, I'll head off first."

After saying that, he bid Archie and Benny farewell before spinning on his heel and leaving.

When they left the research institute, Roxanne eyed Archie and Benny questioningly with her brows slightly furrowed. "Why did you lie earlier? Do you not like Mr. Galloway?"

In response, Archie and Benny shook their heads solemnly. "We were helping you turn a suitor down."

Roxanne was torn between exasperation and amusement at the sight of their earnest expressions.

"Regardless of the reason, you can't simply lie in the future."

The two boys nodded obediently.

Benny leaned close to her with a grin. "We feel that Mr. Galloway is indeed pretty good, but you can still choose for a bit, Mommy. There's no need to rush. Archie and I aren't in a hurry to have a daddy anyway."

Roxanne inexorably burst into giggles. "Choose? Do you think it's the same as choosing groceries at the supermarket?"

Chapter 65

Roxanne wasn't familiar with the restaurants nearby, so she asked Madilyn to recommend her a place and brought Archie and Benny there directly.

As they were eating, she received a text from Jonathan that read: Is treatment needed tonight, Dr. Jarvis?

Only then did Roxanne remember that she didn't explain the treatment process to him. She replied: Old Mr. Queen is still a little weak, so treatment can't be conducted so frequently. He has already undergone treatment twice consecutively. Let him rest for a day. I'll come over tomorrow. Sorry, I forgot to tell you about it.

In no time, Jonathan texted back: Okay. I'll be waiting for you anytime.

When Archie and Benny noticed that their mother was texting during dinner, they asked curiously, “Is something the matter, Mommy?”

Smiling, Roxanne took some food for them both. “No, the patient the other day was asking me if I’m going over.”

Upon hearing that, the two boys nodded sensibly. “You’ve worked hard, so eat more, Mommy.”

Roxanne’s heart melted at the sight of their attentiveness.

Dinner was a delightful affair.

After they finished eating, Roxanne brought Archie and Benny to the counter to settle the bill.

No sooner had she reached the counter than she spotted two people heading toward them.

Holding each other’s arms intimately, Aubree and Frieda walked into the restaurant while chatting and laughing.

Unbidden, Roxanne slowed her pace and scanned her surroundings, wishing to head into the crowd to avoid them both as they had always been hostile toward her.

Aubree had a long-standing grudge against her. In fact, the woman had even joined forces with all the medicinal herb suppliers in Horington to boycott her research institute.

Frieda, on the other hand, merely looked down upon her medical skills and mocked her time and again.

Judging from the look of things, they clearly had a close relationship.

Roxanne had no doubt that Frieda would team up with Aubree to revile her.

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In normal circumstances, she might have ignored their presence and walk right past them.

But with Archie and Benny tagging along right then, she didn't want to have a row with them in front of her sons.

Just when she was about to take a detour with Archie and Benny, Frieda's mocking voice sounded from afar.

"Hey, what a coincidence, Dr. Jarvis! Are you also here for dinner?"

Roxanne's brows creased slightly, but she planned to ignore her.

Alas, the two boys thought that she didn't hear it and tugged on her sleeve. "Someone is calling you,

Mommy.

Left with no other choice, Roxanne could only halt in her tracks. She turned around and met Frieda's

gaze calmly. "Indeed, it's very much a coincidence. But I've already finished eating, so I'll leave you both to it. Please excuse me."

After saying that, she proceeded to lead Archie and Benny past them to pay the bill.

Frowning, Aubree asked Frieda, "You two are acquainted?"

In response, Frieda nodded. Sweeping a gaze over the trio who had almost reached them, she declared in a disdainful voice, "Don't say that. I'm too lowly to be acquainted with Dr. Jarvis when her medical skills are so superb. So many people are helpless in the face of my grandfather's illness, but she only jabbed a few needles into him before he regained consciousness. My brother now holds her in high regard, so much so that her status is far higher than mine."

As soon as Aubree heard that, her expression changed imperceptibly. "What did you just say? Why did you all hire her to treat Old Mr. Queen?"

"We didn't do so. She was the one who came knocking on our door. As for the reason, I reckon she took an interest in my family's medicinal herbs. After all, my brother signed a contract with her the instant my grandfather regained consciousness," Frieda sneered.

When she finished saying that, she shot a hateful glare at Roxanne. "She doesn't even know her place.

My brother merely mentioned it in passing, and she agreed right away. The contract is now signed, so she'll be dead if anything happens to my grandfather!"

Chapter 66

When Aubree heard Frieda's answer, a mixture of emotions brewed in her eyes.

Having been turned down by Lucian previously and suddenly learning that Roxanne had returned to the country, she didn't dare wait anymore. In the past few days, she had been doing everything possible to have an identity linking her to the man.

Early that morning, she had purposely asked Elias and Sonya to persuade Lucian. She had thought he would listen to his parents and change his mind, yet again she had hit a brick wall and even had to put up with Estella for the entire day.

With the couple there, she didn't dare throw a tantrum either.

Enraged at the end of the day, she had asked Frieda out to shop in a bid to dissipate her anger.

However, never had she expected to hear such news.

Countless renowned doctors were helpless in the face of Old Mr. Queen's condition, yet Roxanne managed to cure him. That aside, Jonathan even signed a contract with her, promising to supply

medicinal herbs to the research institute at half the price! In that case, haven't my efforts of urging the

medicinal herbs suppliers in Horington to boycott her research institute been in vain?

At that line of thought, Aubree's gaze turned chilly. "Didn't I arrange for a medical team to treat Old Mr.

Queen? Were they not effective? Why was she allowed to take over his treatment?"

While saying that, she glanced at the woman who was meters away from her with fury blazing within

her.

I've gone to such lengths, but she still managed to find a medicinal herb supplier in Horington! She

must have laughed at me behind my back!

Frieda was startled for a moment before she hesitantly replied, "It's not that. The medical team you

arranged was unquestionably effective, but she came knocking on our door and convinced my brother.

Besides, Grandpa's condition has indeed improved following her treatment. For that reason, my brother

has decided that she'd be in charge henceforth."

With things having come to this, nothing I say will be of use.

Aubree snorted inwardly, but her expression remained as courteous as ever. She said to Roxanne, "I

didn't know that you even have such capabilities, Ms. Jarvis, that even a professional medical team can't compare to you alone."

Swiping a finger across the screen of her phone, Roxanne retorted indifferently, "There are many more things you don't know. Why, are you still planning to sabotage me further after learning that I signed a contract with the Queen family?"

Aubree's gaze abruptly darkened. Despite that, she sounded very much innocent when she said, "What did you mean by that? I'm thankful that you cured Old Mr. Queen, so how could I possibly sabotage you?"

Not in the mood to play along with her, Roxanne answered directly, "I'm sure you know full well what I meant by that. Also, I don't care if you still want to sabotage me further."

Aubree's face darkened frightfully. She didn't reply immediately.

Beside her, Frieda cautiously interjected upon seeing the two of them at each other's throats. "Aubree, are you both... acquainted?"

At that, Aubree sneered and no longer masked her hostility toward Roxanne. "Not only are we acquainted, but you can also say that fate binds us together tightly."

After saying that, she turned to Roxanne and drawled provocatively, "Don't you agree, Ms. Jarvis?"

Roxanne had just finished paying when she heard that. Lifting her eyes, she swept her gaze over the two women in front of her. "I'm afraid I don't dare agree with that, Ms. Pearson. I'm not really that close with you, so please don't make such a statement again in the future. It troubles me a lot."

Aubree's expression stiffened, and rage blazed in her eyes.

"It's getting late. Hurry up and go into the restaurant. I'll leave you both to enjoy your meal."

Roxanne then inclined her head at them impassionately and walked past them with Archie and Benny, leaving the restaurant without a backward glance.

Chapter 67

Aubree and Frieda watched as Roxanne's figure disappeared from the door. Then, they went over to a window seat and sat down.

"Aubree. what exactly is your deal with that Dr. Jarvis? You seem to know each other, but your relationship isn't that great?" Frieda queried cautiously with her eyes pinned on the woman across from her.

Aubree was so livid that she had steam coming out of her ears. "How could our relationship be great?

Roxanne Jarvis is Lucian's ex-wife!"

If it weren't for her, my marriage to Lucian would've been a sure thing ages ago!

Shock flooded Frieda when she heard that. "She's Lucian's ex-wife?"

It was no secret within their circle that Lucian was once married six years ago, especially among them who grew up with him.

However, they had also thought that Aubree would be the man's future wife until he got married out of the blue.

His spouse had never appeared before them, and he had rarely mentioned her outside.

Hence, no one knew that woman's identity even after they divorced.

I never expected it to be her.

The scene whereby Lucian and Roxanne met that night played in Frieda's mind.

10

Back then, I naively found it strange that Lucian targeted that woman for no reason yet insisted that I apologize to her. It turns out that such is their relationship.

At that thought, she belatedly lamented, "No wonder Lucian defended her that day."

Sharply catching that remark, Aubree demanded coldly, "What are you saying? Lucian defended her?

What was that about?"

Recalling the events that night, Frieda wore an expression of sheer disgruntlement and promptly griped, "It was the night she came knocking on our door, requesting to treat Grandpa. I merely made a few skeptical remarks about her since she looks so young and no one knows whether she really has such capabilities, but both Lucian and Essie asked me to apologize to her!"

When Aubree heard that, her heart sank at once.

I went to great lengths to guard against her because I was afraid that Lucian would meet her and even did everything possible to have him change his mind and firm up our marriage. But little did I know that they had actually met without my knowledge! Worse still, Essie knows her and even spoke up for her.

Furthermore, judging from Lucian's character, the fact that he stood up for her means that he isn't averse to her!

Panic inexorably deluged Aubree.

No, this can't be happening. She appeared out of nowhere six years ago and snatched Lucian away

from me, but this time, I'll never allow her to mess up my plans again!

After leaving the restaurant, Roxanne got into the car with the two boys and headed home straight away.

Archie and Benny were still pondering about the incident earlier.

Although they couldn't find any fault with the two women's words, they could distinctly sense their hostility toward their mother and that their mother seemed to be mad as well.

The two of them exchanged a glance, both feeling rather vexed.

"Who were those two people earlier, Mommy?" Archie asked with a tense expression.

"One of them is a family member of my patient. The other one is probably... Essie's mother," Roxanne answered.

Right after she said that, a strange feeling inexplicably welled up within her.

Hearing that, Archie and Benny curled their lips in disdain.

Hmph! So it was because of that woman that Daddy abandoned Mommy and didn't want us anymore.

How could she compare to Mommy?

Chapter 68

Archie and Benny proceeded to compare Aubree with Roxanne from head to toe. In the end, they felt that she was all too far beneath their mother.

Daddy actually abandoned Mommy for that woman? How blind of him!

After inwardly disdaining him for a while, Archie suddenly remembered the conversation in the restaurant earlier. He leaned close to Roxanne and inquired, "Mommy, what did you mean when you said that the woman sabotaged you just now? Did she pick on you?"

Roxanne didn't want to involve her two sons in the mess, so she denied it casually, "It's nothing. It was just a work issue, and it has been resolved."

No sooner had she said that than Archie's determined voice rang out beside her ear.

"She did pick on you, then! What happened exactly? Hurry up and tell us, Mommy!" The boy's petite face was stretched taut, and he frowned in an adult-like manner.

"Didn't we promise each other that there can be no secrets between us, Mommy? You can't lie to us!"

Benny seconded.

Roxanne's brows knitted together in exasperation.

She had almost forgotten that Archie and Benny were different from other children. Their intelligence quotient was ridiculously high.

In the face of their interrogative gazes, Roxanne finally broke down and told them about Aubree teaming up with the medicinal herb suppliers in Horington to boycott their research institute.

Upon hearing that she actually picked on their mother, Archie and Benny were so furious that their hands balled into fists. "That woman is simply too evil!"

"Everything's fine now, so don't do anything rash," Roxanne urged.

Archie and Benny nodded docilely, but inwardly, they raged.

Once they were home, they seized the opportunity while Roxanne was bathing to sneak into the study.

Archie whispered something or other into his brother's ear mysteriously. In the next heartbeat, Benny's eyes lit up. He turned on his laptop, his fingers flying across the keyboard. Shortly after, he hacked into Pearson Group's system.

When Roxanne came out after her bath, Archie and Benny had already slipped into bed innocently.

They gazed at her with bright eyes, imploring her to tell them a bedtime story.

Early the next morning, Aubree was awakened by the ringing of her phone.

Displeasure was written all over her face.

Infuriated after learning that Lucian had met Roxanne last night, she had gone to bed very late.

Thus, she was furious about being awakened early in the morning then.

“What is it?” Her voice brimmed with impatience when she answered the call.

On the other end of the phone, Charles sounded exceedingly frantic. “Ms. Pearson, come to the office quickly! There’s a huge problem with the company’s system!”

The instant Aubree heard that, she jolted awake. Getting out of bed, she washed up for a bit before rushing to the office.

Only when she arrived at the office did she discover that the entire company’s system was down. All the employees were standing at the side with peculiar expressions on their faces, whereas those from the technical department were trying to fix things.

No one knew the origin of the virus, but no matter what method they employed, they couldn’t resolve it.

When Aubree turned up, all the employees at the side lowered their heads in unison as though concealing something.

Meanwhile, the employees from the technical department wore grim expressions.

“What’s going on? What use is the lot of you when you can’t resolve things even after so long?”

Aubree strode right over to the computers. As soon as she saw the picture on the screen, her face flushed bright red with fury.

Two cartoon characters were fighting on the screen.

Precisely speaking, one of them was pummeling the other.

The character taking a beating had Aubree’s name written on her face and the words “evil woman” printed clearly on her shirt.

Next to the character dishing out the beating was a speech bubble with the phrase, “Let’s pummel the evil woman!”

It was clear as day that the person behind the virus was targeting her.

Chapter 69

Aubre looked up and glanced around the area to find all the computer screens within her sight had the same image.

The sight made her tremble.

When the employees saw that she had seen the image on the screen, they tiptoed around her and did not even dare to breathe loudly.

Some who were curious to see Aubree's reaction immediately retracted their gazes after meeting her furious eyes.

Aubree swept a gaze across everyone. She then named a few people through gritted teeth and instructed Charles to dismiss them right away. After that, she returned and scolded the employees of the technical department, "Is this how you work? How could the company's system be simply hacked by someone? Besides, so much time has passed, yet none of you solved this. Did I spend this much money to hire all of you to humiliate the company like this? If you can't resolve this, then get lost!"

The employees had known how nasty Aubree's temper was and had prepared themselves mentally to be scolded by her.

Hence, they could only seethe in silence as she lashed out at them.

Right then, the manager of the technical department mustered his courage and stepped out to explain,

"Ms. Pearson, this virus is really powerful. It has to be created by a famous hacker, at the very least.

We... need more time to crack this.”

Aubree shot him a glare. “Settle this as fast as possible! Otherwise, you can pack your things and get lost with them!”

The manager hurriedly nodded in reply and urged his subordinates to get working.

All the employees were suffering.

Aubree’s face turned purple with rage as she stared at the two figures on the screen and silently clenched her fists.

How dare this person humiliate me? They’d better not let me find out who they are, or I’ll make their life

a living hell.

Early that morning, Roxanne was about to send Archie and Benny to school when she saw Benny walking out of the room while clutching his stomach.

Worried, Roxanne stepped forward to examine him. “What’s wrong?”

Benny’s face contorted in pain as he said, “Mommy, my stomach hurts. Can I not go to school today?”

As soon as he finished, Archie, too, walked out of the room and looked at Roxanne, saying, “Mommy,

my stomach's not feeling well, too."

Seeing that, Roxanne frowned. "Maybe both of you ate something bad last night. Go in and get some rest. I'll give your teacher a call."

Archie and Benny nodded.

When they saw Roxanne leave, their eyes glinted with mischief.

Roxanne was not the slightest bit suspicious of the boys.

After all, they had always been obedient children who never showed any signs of aversion toward kindergarten. Naturally, they would not pretend to be sick to avoid school.

After ending the call, Roxanne brought the boys some warm water and indigestion pills.

The children did everything they were told.

Roxanne had wanted to go to the research institute. However, she chose to work from home in the end since the children were unwell.

After settling Archie and Benny, Roxanne got up and went into the study.

When the boys heard the study door shut, they were instantly in high spirits and they no longer showed signs of exhaustion from earlier.

Benny switched on the laptop on his bed, smiling happily when he saw that his virus had not been cracked.

“That evil woman must be at the office at this time,” Archie said with certainty while looking at the time.

Benny snorted smugly. “Then she must’ve seen my animation. I bet she’s mad.”

The thought of the evil woman stomping her feet in anger gave them a rush of joy.

Chapter 70

“She’s got to pay the price for bullying Mommy.” Archie snorted coolly,

Benny nodded vehemently and started typing on the keyboard again.

Archie was confused. “What are you doing?”

Feeling excited, Benny explained, “Their technical team is too weak. My virus is so simple, yet they can’t crack it till now. In that case, I’ll increase the difficulty and make that evil woman angrier.”

Hearing that, Archie nodded to express his agreement. “It’s best if they can’t crack it. That way, more people will laugh at her. Let’s see if she still dares to bully Mommy in the future.”

With that, the boys poured their attention to the laptop.

Suddenly, a series of footsteps could be heard near the door.

Archie, who had sharp senses, heard the sounds outside and gave Benny a nudge.

Benny quickly finished coding and shoved the laptop to Archie.

When Roxanne entered the room, she saw Archie hugging the laptop and Benny sprawling on the bed, looking at the screen curiously.

“Aren’t you two feeling unwell? Why are you using the laptop instead of resting?” Roxanne frowned as she sat beside the boys. “Come here. Let me take a look at you again.”

Archie’s and Benny’s hearts tightened when they heard those words.

Mommy’s got incredible skills. If she examines us, we’ll definitely be exposed. Then, everything we did in secret will be exposed, too.

Roxanne reached out to hold Benny’s hand, but he avoided it.

“What’s wrong?” Roxanne gazed at him, perplexed.

Benny grabbed his wrist warily. Not knowing how to react, he turned to Archie for help.

Archie, on the other hand, was much calmer. He extended his hand toward Roxanne and said,

“Actually, I feel much better after having the medicine. But you can still check on us again if you’re

worried.”

Roxanne’s attention was successfully captured by him, and she proceeded to examine him. After

confirming there was nothing wrong with Archie’s body, she turned to look at Benny.

She remembered that Benny’s symptoms were more severe just now.

Having witnessed Archie’s method, Benny came to his senses and scuttled toward Roxanne with a

grin. “Mommy, I’m feeling much better, too! The medicine you gave us is really incredible! You’re the

best doctor in the world. Archie and I really admire you. We love you the most!”

Amused, Roxanne shook her head. After examining them and seeing that the boys were fine, she let

out a sigh of relief. At the same time, she felt that something was amiss.

“But I’m still not feeling well,” Benny said seriously.

Roxanne’s heart lurched when she heard that, and she studied him concernedly.

To her surprise, she heard the boy saying sweetly, “I need your hug to feel better.”

Right after he said that, a soft, chubby body pounced on her.

Roxanne brought him into her embrace with a smile, and the cloud of doubt above her head dissipated.

As she hugged Benny, she glanced at the laptop screen. “Archie, what are you doing there?”

When she was occupied with Benny, Archie had seized the opportunity to change the browser page.

Looking as if nothing had happened earlier, Archie met Roxanne's gaze. "I'm studying the trend of today's stocks. I invested in some foreign companies and earned some money."

"Archie earned over fifty million!" Benny looked prouder than Archie himself.

When Roxanne heard the amount, she could not help but feel astounded. "That much? Archie, you're incredible!"

Benny asked playfully, "What about me? What about me?"

Roxanne smiled. "Your computer skills are great, too. Both of you are incredible. I love you two so much!"

Then she planted a kiss on their foreheads.

The boys grinned innocently.