

ABANDONED 931

Chapter 931 Cute Essie

By the time they finished setting up, there was still some time until noon. Hence, Roxanne brought the kids to a place nearby to play. She had prepared many toys for them, especially for Estella.

Since Roxanne did not know what toys Estella liked to play with outdoors, she simply gathered some toys and brought them along. Before leaving the tents, the children each took their favorite toy out.

Archie and Benny each chose a water gun and a camera, while Estella picked a drawing board after much contemplation. Roxanne could not help but chuckle when she saw the children's toy of choice. After that, she led them away from the campsite.

The further they walked, the more types of flowers and plants they saw. It was all thanks to Roxanne's influence that the children paid special attention to the plants in the wild.

Along the way, they would ask her about the names and uses of the flowers. Even the cameras they brought along turned out handy.

Since many plants in the world had medicinal uses, it was only natural that Roxanne was familiar with them. Thus, she answered each of their questions patiently.

Estella, however, was clearly quieter than the boys. Instead of asking questions, she followed behind them and drew on her drawing board in silence.

When Roxanne noticed Estella's unusual silence, she thought the latter was feeling awkward. Hence, Roxanne stopped in her tracks and asked, "Are you having fun, Essie? can take you back to the tent if you're feeling tired."

The boys, too, cast her concerned gazes, thinking she was being silent because she was not used to such settings.

To their surprise, Estella showed them her drawing board the moment Roxanne finished her sentence.

Estella's brushstrokes were rather childish, but the drawing was recognizable. They were the plants Roxanne explained earlier. " think it's fun!" Estella said, her eyes gleaming.

She loved the plants, and she was impressed with how Roxanne knew all of them.

Roxanne was relieved to see Estella so happy. Giving the latter a pat on the head, she then brought the children to sit on the grass.

They were surrounded by a field of flowers.

While Roxanne introduced the flowers to Archie and Benny, she casually picked some, occasionally glancing at Estella. Soon, a delicate wreath was formed.

However, Estella was too focused on drawing that she did not notice Roxanne's actions.

The boys, on the other hand, were stunned by the wreath in Roxanne's hand.

Although she had made one for them when they were abroad, the flowers there were not as pretty as the ones they currently saw. Thus, the wreath Roxanne had just made was exceptionally pretty.

Before they could even gasp, Roxanne placed her finger to her lips to hush them.

Seeing that, the boys sealed their lips and grinned as they watched Roxanne place the wreath on Estella's head.

"Ah!" It frightened Estella, for she thought something had fallen on her head.

When she returned to her senses, she saw Roxanne and the boys staring at her, which confused her even more.

Estella was dressed in a white dress and had two braids, each resting on her shoulders. Coupled with her cute features and the wreath, she looked like a little fairy that had popped out of a storybook, especially since she was gazing at them innocently.

Seeing how cute she was, Archie hurriedly took out his camera and snapped a picture.

When Estella saw that, a bewildered expression spread across her face, and she carefully touched the top of her head.

Chapter 932 Essie Is Pretty

“What is...” Estella carefully placed the wreath in her hand and shot Roxanne a delighted look. Smiling, Roxanne patted Estella’s head and said, “It looks a little funny because haven’t made one in a long time.”

In response, Estella shook her head fervently. “I love it!” As if to prove how much she loved it, Estella placed it gently in front of her and began drawing it.

Seeing that, Roxanne and the boys scooted over curiously, only to be shocked by Estella’s drawing, which was slowly becoming complete.

Her previous drawing of the plants was rather decent, though her brushstrokes were a little childish. However, her drawing of the wreath was unbelievable. In fact, it almost looked real. “Essie, you’re amazing!” Benny breathed.

Roxanne, too, smiled and nodded in agreement. By the time Estella was done with the drawing, Benny could not help but ask, “Essie, have you taken art classes before?”

However, Estella shook her head in confusion. The look of surprise in Benny's eyes only intensified. However, Roxanne suddenly thought of something, and her heart went out to the little girl.

Maybe her artistic skills have something to do with her autism. All autistic children always have some kind of surprising talent. With that thought in mind, Roxanne patted Estella's head while feeling sorry for the latter.

Unaware of what was on Roxanne's mind, Estella innocently showed the woman her drawing. "I'll keep it well!"

The flower wreath would not last, but she could take good care of the drawing.

Roxanne's heart softened when she saw Estella still wearing the shell bracelet she gifted her back then. "I'll help you preserve the wreath when we get back."

Upon hearing that, Estella looked up at Roxanne with surprise.

Roxanne merely smiled. There were many chemicals in the research institute that could be used to preserve plants. When Estella saw the smile on Roxanne's face, she grinned wider.

Archie hurriedly took out his camera and took a picture of the duo.

Noticing that, Roxanne extended her hand, gesturing for Archie to show her the picture.

Hence, Archie obediently placed the camera in her hand.

Roxanne lowered her gaze to look at the picture, and Estella scooted over as well.

"Essie!" shrieked Estelle excitedly when she saw her face in the picture.

Roxanne's gaze softened when she saw the picture of Estella. "You're really pretty, Essie."

The praise made Estella smile wider.

After sitting there for some time, Roxanne brought the children further.

When they exited the car earlier, Roxanne realized the field nearby had a type of rare medicinal herb. Therefore, she decided to bring them there to play while she looked for the herb.

The three children walked ahead of her, skipping happily along the way.

Meanwhile, Estella had stopped drawing. She carefully placed the wreath on her head and marched ahead, paying attention to the ground where she stepped.

She, too, wanted to find some pretty flowers to make a wreath for Roxanne. Suddenly, Estella found something. She squatted and called out to Roxanne, "Ms. Jarvis, what flower is this?" Hearing Estella calling out to her, Roxanne strode over and looked in the same direction. Immediately, her eyes lit up.

Just as Estella was about to pluck it, Roxanne hurriedly held the former's hand. "This is a valuable medicinal herb. I've been looking for it for some time. Thanks to you, Essie, finally found it!"

Chapter 933 A Harmonious Atmosphere

Estella was confused, but she still smiled innocently, for she knew Roxanne was praising her. The former then retracted her hand obediently.

Subsequently, Roxanne took out the tools she had prepared and carefully scooped out the yellow flower along with its roots.

Estella cocked her head to one side, confused by what she saw. "For medicinal herbs like this, we need to preserve their roots as well," Roxanne explained patiently.

Hearing that, the girl nodded even though she did not understand Roxanne's words completely. Now that Estella knew Roxanne was looking for that kind of flower, the former quickly got up and scoured the area.

It did not take long for Estella to find a huge area of it, so Roxanne collected a few more to be preserved. Soon, noon arrived. The children were clearly hungry because their pace had slowed.

Noting that, Roxanne brought them back to the tent to prepare food for them. She had woken up early that morning to prepare a various selection of food for the children.

The sight of the children feasting on the plates of food she prepared made her beam. "Essie, this is for you," said Benny while taking out some sweets from his bag.

Estella smiled from ear to ear as she accepted the sweets. "Thank you, Benny." Similarly, Archie retrieved some snacks from his bag and piled them in front of Estella.

What on earth was Daddy even thinking? He only prepared tools but no food for Essie. Good thing we thought ahead and prepared some for her.

Realizing the children were going to be full from the snacks, Roxanne hurriedly stopped them, saying, "Slow down on the snacks. I'm making barbeque for you kids."

As soon as the children heard the word "barbeque," they immediately put down their snacks and fixed their gazes on the grilling rack Roxanne was holding.

The way they gaped at the food as if they were close to drooling amused Roxanne.

However, the boys quickly snapped out of it and went over to help her.

Meanwhile, Estella did not know what to do, so she obeyed the boys' orders and washed the vegetables.

Soon, the ingredients were ready, and Roxanne began grilling them.

Adelicious aroma instantly permeated the air.

The children's eyes looked as if they were sparkling as they sat around Roxanne and waited for the food to be ready. Noting their anticipation, Roxanne quickened her movements in order to not let the children wait too long.

Not long after, a plate of mutton skewers was served.

Archie and Benny immediately reached out and gave one to Estella.

Accepting the skewer, Estella darted her eyes from the aromatic mutton skewer to Roxanne, who was still grilling food for them. "Ms. Jarvis!" Estella called out, bringing the skewer to Roxanne's lips and gazing at the latter with sparkling eyes.

Roxanne's heart melted when she saw the skewer suddenly appear in front of her. "Thank you, Essie."

Only after Estella had finished feeding Roxanne did she take another skewer from the boys, devouring it.

The atmosphere was harmonious as the four chatted and joked with each other.

Meanwhile, a black car slowly pulled up on the road a distance away from the field.

Sitting in it was a furious Aubree, who watched the interactions between the four through the window.

Any stranger would think they're a family if they see this. That b*tch, Roxanne! How dare she says she has no intentions of going back to the Farwell family? That's impossible. If that's true, why is Roxanne treating Essie so well when she doesn't know who her biological mother is?

Chapter 934 What She Was Capable Of

Looking at the figures, Aubree narrowed her eyes as she subconsciously tightened her grip around the vial she'd gotten from the man. Meanwhile, Roxanne remained oblivious of Aubree's presence.

Just after lunch, the afternoon sun bathed the land in its warm light. The kids didn't feel sleepy at all. Quite the opposite, they felt hot due to the rising temperature.

Roxanne scanned her surroundings before bringing them toward the waterfall, where the group was instantly greeted by a pleasantly cool breeze. Even Roxanne couldn't help but let out a satisfied sigh.

"Ah!" All of a sudden, Estella ran and hid behind the woman's back. Roxanne lowered her head, confused. All she could see was Archie and Benny, both barefooted in the stream, splashing water toward the little girl.

When they noticed Estella was hiding behind their mother, the two little boys instantly stopped what they were doing, feeling a tad guilty over their actions.

Roxanne had observed the topography earlier. Although they were at a waterfall, the flow of the water—which only reached the boy's calves—was slow.

Since the kids knew how to swim, she wasn't too concerned about an accident happening. For that reason, Roxanne didn't say anything else and merely directed Estella to stand next to her.

"You're doomed for splashing water on Essie!" She then squatted down and began splashing water at the two boys.

Seeing that their mother wasn't angry, they regained their enthusiasm and began to play. Estella was soon influenced by them and participated in the fun.

Alas, Roxanne's energy was limited. After playing with them for a while, she retreated to the side and watched over the kids while taking pictures of them.

The atmosphere was lively and cheerful. Estella had a smile on her face the entire time, and the children's tinkling laughter echoed throughout the waterfall.

The sound of it made Roxanne smile as well. Over on the road, Aubree had been hiding in wait all the while.

Seeing that they weren't going to return to the tent anytime soon, she got out of her car and inched closer toward the tent, being extremely careful not to make any noise.

As soon as she got to the tent, she caught sight of a couple of cups that were on the ground. Roxanne had prepared them for the children so they could drink out of them.

The children had felt thirsty during the barbecue, so they had filled their cups with water. At the moment, there was still some leftover in the cups. A menacing glint flashed across Aubree's eyes when she saw that.

She glanced toward the waterfall, and upon noticing no one was paying attention to her, she took a deep breath and shifted her gaze toward the vial in her hand.

A moment later, Aubree made up her mind and opened the vial in one swift move. She then poured all of its contents into the cups.

In a matter of minutes, she completed what she came here to do.

The water resembled its original appearance, and besides herself, Aubree was confident that no one else would know that it had been tampered with.

Her gaze was icy as she glanced at the happy group.

This time, she was determined to let them know what she was capable of.

Once that was done, Aubree quietly left the tent and returned to her car. However, she didn't drive off right away, for she wanted to see Roxanne and the little brats drink the water.

Several flashes of light went off in the woods after Aubree got into her car.

The private detective had been taking pictures of her from the moment she stepped out of her car and went toward the tent. As such, all of her actions were captured on camera.

After that, the private detective examined all of the pictures that were taken.

The corner of his lips curled up into a smile when he confirmed that all of his pictures were crystal clear.

With these pictures as a bargaining chip, he needn't worry that Aubree would try to get out of paying him.

Chapter 935 Enjoying Themselves To The Fullest

Aubree quickly grew impatient as the group of four didn't return to their tent even after a long while. She whipped out her phone and sent the private detective a message: Where are you?

Logically, he should have arrived before her, but Aubree hadn't noticed anyone else around when she scanned her surroundings earlier.

Where on earth did he go? What a useless man! She furrowed her brows in dismay. Seconds later, her phone screen lit up with a response from the private detective: Look up.

The puzzled woman lifted her head and noticed that the leaves of a nearby tree appeared to be rustling. In the next second, she caught sight of a camera flash.

Aubree frowned in displeasure and lowered her head as she typed a reply: Keep a close eye on them! Take pictures if anything strange happens and send them to me.

The private detective assented without hesitation. After that, Aubree cast one last glance in the direction of Roxanne and her kids before slowly driving away.

If it was possible, she'd love to see Roxanne and her kids writhing in pain with her own eyes, but alas, the place she was at was not inconspicuous enough.

There was a chance she might be discovered if she continued to stay there, and if that happened, she'd end up losing more than she gained.

Thankfully, Aubree had hired the private detective, who would later capture the family's suffering for her.

Just imagining how Roxanne and the children would feel after drinking the water was enough to spark a sense of elation within Aubree.

She had someone procure a new bacterium so that she could teach Roxanne a lesson.

It was a newly discovered bacteria, so there was no cure for it yet.

That didn't matter to Aubree, for she wanted nothing more than to see them dead.

Unfortunately, the bacteria would only bring them extreme pain and wasn't capable of killing them.

Although it wasn't enough for Aubree to quell her hatred, it could still bring about a great deal of suffering for Roxanne and her family.

"I'd like to see how you'll be able to save them this time!"

An insidious glint flashed across Aubree's eyes.

As long as she drinks that water, that wretched woman will have trouble saving herself!

Meanwhile, Roxanne remained oblivious to what Aubree had done, and the children were still enjoying themselves to the fullest. In the beginning, Archie and Benny were in cahoots with one another and stood against their sister, splashing her with water.

After Roxanne left, the boy's alliance didn't last long, and they ended up splitting up. The children formed three factions and drenched each other in water with little regard for who they were up against.

Some of the water got on Roxanne, bringing about a cooling sensation when it hit her skin.

It was rare to see the children indulging themselves in fun, so she said nothing and allowed them to play to their hearts' content. Influenced by the boys, Estella carefully inched her way toward the stream, wanting to get in the water as well.

Upon seeing this, Archie and Benny instantly stopped what they were doing and walked toward their sister. They each held out a hand, wanting to hold her steady.

Unexpectedly, they were hit in the face by a wave of water.

The boys couldn't react in time, and the wave sent them slipping and falling into the stream.

However, it didn't take long for them to get back on their feet since they knew how to swim.

Roxanne thought the boys would be frightened after the stumble, so she got up to go to them.

To her surprise, she heard the children's laughter in the next second.

Archie and Benny couldn't help laughing at how pathetic the other looked, and an amused Estella was bent over laughing as well.

However, the sudden wave instilled some worry in the boys' hearts, and they decided against letting their sister join them in the water.

They then stopped playing with water and squatted down to look for pebbles instead. From time to time, they tried to catch some fish with their hands.

Despite feeling disappointed, Estella didn't let it bother her as she enjoyed herself more than anything. The obedient little girl knelt by the shore and watched as the boys attempted to fish with their hands.

Chapter 936 A Hint Of Hesitation

Seeing that the children were drenched in sweat, Roxanne chose an opportune time to call out to them, "You guys are sweating all over. Come and take a rest, or you might catch a cold."

By then, the children had played to their heart's content, so they obediently got out of the water upon hearing the woman's words. Benny had a fish in his hand, which he reluctantly released into the water before he left.

As for Estella, she gathered all of the pebbles the boys had given her in her skirt, protecting the pile of stones as she walked toward Roxanne.

Noticing how the little girl was struggling, Roxanne stepped forward to help her. Estella's footsteps became lighter when some of the weight of the pebbles were taken off of her.

When they reached the shore, Roxanne took the towels she had prepared earlier and gently wiped down the children's bodies.

The three children wrapped themselves in their respective towels and returned to their tent, where Estella laid the pebbles out to dry.

The boys had specially picked some colorful and nicely-shaped pebbles that looked extremely beautiful when the sun's rays bounced off of them.

Hence, Estella simply couldn't turn her eyes away.

Roxanne patted the little girl's head and got up to get their cups.

"You guys must be thirsty after all that fun. Here, have some water."

As she spoke, she gave the children their respective cups, and they drank their water obediently. "Mommy." Archie took a sip of the water and thought it tasted odd.

Upon hearing her son's voice, Roxanne turned around and cast him a puzzled glance.

Archie got up and walked toward her with the cup in his hands, gesturing for her to look at the water. Naturally, nothing seemed off to the naked eye.

The situation brought a frown to Roxanne's face. "What's wrong?"

Archie's expression mirrored his mother's as he looked over at Benny and Estella.

Is it just me, or does the water taste weird? But Benny and Estella seem to think it's fine. Suspicious, he brought the cup to his nose and took a few sniffs.

The water didn't smell odd either.

Roxanne was baffled by her son's actions and asked again, "Is there something wrong with the water?" The little boy nodded hesitantly and sounded uncertain as he explained, "I feel like it tastes weird." Hearing that, Roxanne turned to look at the other two children, who shook their heads in confusion.

"Archie, maybe you think it's weird because you had some spring water earlier," said Benny. He was practically oozing with smugness.

When they fell into the stream earlier, he had witnessed his brother being so startled he swallowed a mouthful of spring water as a result.

Archie couldn't help but blush when he was exposed, but the rosiness in his cheeks disappeared just as quickly as it appeared. On the other hand, not knowing that something like that had happened, Roxanne looked at the children amusedly.

Archie brought the cup to his mouth and took another sip of water.

After which, he proceeded to spit it out.

It still didn't taste right to him.

When she saw this, suspicion arose within Roxanne. She took over the cup and had a sip of water herself. Over the years, she had developed a keen sense of taste in order to discern between medicinal herbs. Thus, one small sip was sufficient for her to instantly notice that the water tasted off.

In fact, it tasted rather familiar.

Roxanne felt her heart drop to the pit of her stomach, and she quickly looked over at the other children. Benny and Estella were still drinking their water, having not found anything odd with it.

Afraid that she might have made an error in judgment and not wanting to needlessly scare the children, Roxanne didn't say anything else and merely stood up quietly.

She scanned her surroundings but didn't find signs of anyone else having been there.

At that, a hint of hesitation flickered in her eyes.

Chapter 937 My Tummy Hurts

"Mommy, did this cup get contaminated?" Archie inquired in puzzlement. Hearing her son's voice, Roxanne snapped back to her senses and flashed him a reassuring smile. "No, something must've fallen in it. I'll get you another cup of water."

She caressed the boy's head and got up to toss the water. After that, she refilled the cup. However, Archie refused to drink anything. Regardless if something fell in it or something was wrong with the water, the boy was traumatized.

As such, Roxanne didn't pressure him but passed him a bottle of mineral water from her bag instead. Only then was Archie willing to gulp down the water.

Meanwhile, Benny and Estella had already finished their water. Their eyes were fixed on the pebbles that the latter had laid out on the ground.

Roxanne didn't interrupt the two and only instructed her oldest son, "Archie, take care of Benny and Estella. I'll go pick some medicinal herbs."

Since it was still early, she wanted to take advantage of the daylight to gather more herbs.

Archie bobbed his head in response.

After watching his mother walk into the distance, he squatted down and joined the two little ones in observing the pebbles. All of a sudden, Estella furrowed her brows and clutched her stomach, groaning.

Ahint of worry glinted in Archie's eyes as he looked at the little girl. "What's wrong? Are you tired?"

Estella looked delicate, and it wouldn't be surprising if this was the first time she'd been so active.

However, she shook her head as her frown deepened. "My tummy hurts..."

Archie couldn't help but worry about her well-being after hearing that. "I'll go get Mommy!" he declared.

It doesn't matter if something happens to Benny or me, but Essie's so weak and delicate. If she gets sick, wouldn't know what to do.

Getting to his feet, he was about to go look for his mother at the place where they found the medicinal herbs when Estella tugged at the hem of his pants.

Puzzled, he lowered his head.

“ must’ve laughed too hard earlier,” said the girl.

She didn’t want Roxanne to worry, so she endured the pain in her stomach and forced herself to smile.

Even so, Archie wasn’t entirely convinced by her.

She seems to be in extreme pain...

“Don't worry. I'll be fine in a bit,” she reassured him again, determined not to put a damper on Roxanne’s and the boys’ mood. Upon hearing that, Archie pondered for a while before resuming a squatting position.

At the same time, Benny also experienced the same symptoms as Estella.

He, too, suddenly developed a stomachache, but he chalked it up to catching a cold and endured the pain in silence.

When he heard that Estella was having a stomachache, he cast her a look of concern, but it didn’t take long for the pain in his stomach to grow even more intense.

Benny was about to tell his older brother about it when he noticed the water stains next to Estella’s feet. He then looked up and realized that the little girl was secretly crying.

“What's wrong, Essie?”

Concerned about her well-being, Benny endured his discomfort and leaned toward Estella.

Estella couldn't hold back anymore and gazed up at the boy with teary eyes. "My tummy hurts so much..."

Sniffing remorsefully, she went on, "It's all my fault. Ms. Jarvis, Archie, and you could've enjoyed the day, but I'm in so much pain."

Benny wanted to console her, but all of a sudden, he felt a sharp pang of pain that rendered him unable to speak.

Upon noticing that the two of them had collapsed to the ground, Archie ran over frantically. His voice was laced with panic and worry as he called out to them, "Benny, Essie!"

Chapter 938 Has Something Happened

Benny and Estella were suffering from stomachaches so bad that they could not pay Archie any heed at all. Estella was crying loudly to herself, oblivious to anything else.

Benny wanted to soothe her, but when he opened his lips to speak, he could only moan in pain. Gritting his teeth, he tried to restrain his groans and suppress his tears.

have to be brave for Mommy! can't fail her over a little pain! The situation made Archie anxious, and he wanted to go and get Roxanne.

He recalled that the herbs were not far from where they were. should be able to return quickly! As he was about to leave, he caught sight of Estella rolling in pain on the ground.

She was in so much pain that she did not care in which direction she was straying. As she writhed wildly on the ground, she slowly got further and further away from the tent.

Archie paused in his steps and, with some difficulty, pushed Estella back to the tent. He knew that he could not go far with Benny and Estella in such a state.

After some contemplation, Archie brought his wrist up to his face and pressed a few buttons on his watch. At that moment, Roxanne was focused on foraging for herbs.

She had initially just planned to take the children camping and had not expected to stumble across such a pleasant surprise. Thus, Roxanne was elated to find the patch of herbs.

As she was gathering the herbs, her phone rang.

Roxanne paused in her foraging and fished out her phone while wondering who could be calling her at that moment.

When she saw the caller's name on the screen, her expression shifted uneasily. She immediately stood up and turned to look in the direction of the tent.

It was Archie calling her.

Did something bad happen to them?

With the phone pressed to her ear, Roxanne quickly picked up the basket of herbs and hurried back to the campsite. "Archie, what's wrong? What happened?"

Archie's voice was full of anxiety. "Mommy, come back quickly—"

However, before he could finish his sentence, a sound could be heard from his end of the line, interrupting him. After a few seconds of confusion, the line was cut.

Roxanne pulled the phone away from her ear and stared at it with a frown. Her heart grew heavier and heavier as each second ticked by. She quickened her pace toward the tent.

As soon as the tent came into her view, she caught sight of Benny and Estella rolling on the ground, clutching their stomachs in pain.

Archie knelt by his siblings, looking worried as he tried to stop them from rolling too far from the campsite. "What's wrong?" Roxanne immediately rushed to their side and bent over to check their temperature and breathing.

Archie's eyes were bloodshot with anxiety and panic. "Benny and Essie suddenly had a stomachache! Mommy, take a look at them, quick! They're in a lot of pain!"

He had initially wanted to go and get Roxanne from the herb patch himself.

However, when he saw how much pain his siblings were in, he had not dared to leave them alone. With no other choice, he had resorted to calling Roxanne instead.

Roxanne nodded reassuringly. "Don't worry! I'll make sure they're okay."

She leaned over Estella and tried to gently pry her little hands away to feel her stomach.

However, the little girl seemed to be in excruciating pain. Her little arms were wrapped around her stomach tightly. Roxanne could not move her arms away no matter how firmly she tugged at them.

"Essie, let me have a look at your stomach," Roxanne begged in distress.

Estella looked up at Roxanne with big, tearful eyes and whimpered, "Ms. Jarvis, it hurts so much..." Ever since Roxanne arrived, Estella had kept her head buried in her chest.

Now that the little girl had lifted her head and Roxanne could see her face, Roxanne felt her heart crack. Estella's face was drained of all color. Oh, she must be in so much pain!

Without wasting any more time, Roxanne turned to examine Benny.

Benny was also in immense pain, but the little boy was handling it bravely. He cradled his stomach without even a whimper.

Chapter 939 The Water

When he saw that Roxanne wanted to have a look at his stomach, Benny removed his arms without a fuss. Roxanne caressed Benny's forehead. Her eyes were filled with distress.

However, after examining the two children, Roxanne still could not arrive at a diagnosis. As time passed, the children's pain became increasingly severe.

Roxanne felt immensely helpless and powerless at that moment. She blamed herself for having brought the children out to camp but failing to watch over them properly.

Her guilt and distress were plainly written all over her face. Archie noticed his mother's mood and approached her quietly. "Mommy."

His voice pulled Roxanne out of her reverie, and she forced herself to calm down. Then, she said, "I brought a medical kit with us. Can you go get it from the tent and bring it here?"

The children were in excruciating pain, and yet, Roxanne had not managed to locate the cause of it. At that moment, she could only do her best to ease their symptoms.

I'll give them some pain medication first! can't go wrong with that! Archie reappeared in a few minutes with the medical kit, which he placed on the ground next to Roxanne.

Roxanne shook several painkiller pills into the palm of her hand. She fed one to each of the two sick children and sat back to wait for it to take effect.

"How are you two feeling?"

She could only think of two possibilities for the cause of their sudden illness. One was that the kids had overexerted themselves while playing and caught a cold. The other was that they were somehow infected by a bacterium out here in the wilderness.

However, this did not explain how Archie had somehow escaped the same fate.

In fact, Archie was not exhibiting any symptoms at all.

Archie frowned and patted his stomach. "My tummy hurts a bit, but only a little bit."

As he spoke, he gestured at Roxanne with his hands, showing her that he really was not in much pain. Suspicion flitted across Roxanne's face. Her eyes drifted to Benny and Estella again.

It had been five minutes since she had administered the painkiller. However, the two children showed no signs of any relief from the pain.

Estella was in so much pain that she had ceased writhing about. She was curled against the edge of the tent as a sheen of cold sweat covered her small face.

Seeing the children's pain, Roxanne was so distressed that she could hardly breathe.

"Mommy..." Archie called out suddenly.

Roxanne's heart clenched as she turned to look at him.

With his brows tightly pulled together, Archie looked solemn. "I think know why Benny and Essie are sick!" "What is it?" Roxanne's expression shifted into one of hope.

She thought that he wanted to tell her what they had been up to while she was gone.

To her surprise, Archie ran into the tent and returned holding their water cups instead.

Roxanne watched in bewilderment as Archie sniffed the insides of the cups.

As he had expected, the cups had a strange smell— the same smell that he had tasted in the water earlier.

Although his siblings had drank all the water in the cups, the strange smell remained.

Archie thrust the cups under Roxanne’s nose. “Mommy, take a sniff.”

Roxanne knew what he wanted her to do.

She leaned in and inhaled deeply. When the scent hit her nostrils, her complexion turned pale.

Although she was reluctant to admit it, the facts were very different from what she had speculated earlier.

All three of the water cups had the same strange smell.

“Maybe my stomach isn’t hurting so much because only had one sip of the water,” Archie said speculatively.

He had just swallowed the first sip of the water when he sensed that something was wrong, so he had spat out the second mouthful immediately.

However, Benny and Estella had finished all the water in their cups.

If the source of their stomachache was indeed the water, then it made sense that Benny and Estella would be suffering worse than Archie.

Roxanne was convinced by Archie’s sound reasoning.

Chapter 940 Painkillers

Early on, Archie mentioned that there was something wrong with his water, and Roxanne had indeed detected a faint smell that usually occurred only when a certain type of bacteria was mixed with water.

However, the problem was that it was a type of bacteria that only survived under laboratory conditions. The fact that it was found in the wilderness meant that someone must have intentionally placed it there.

As such, the first thing Roxanne did was to check if there was anyone else around. However, she had a clear view of the entire field. Apart from them, there was no one else.

Due to that, Roxanne assumed it was a coincidence that the water had such a smell and not because the bacteria were actually present.

Little did she expect that someone had added the bacteria to the kids' water. Roxanne's heart clenched when she thought about the symptoms one would experience after ingesting the bacteria.

"Mommy, it hurts so much..." Benny muttered, grabbing his mother's hand. He had finally caved in, unable to hold on any longer. The boy held Roxanne's hand briefly before letting it go as he was so weak from the pain that he barely had any strength left.

Roxanne was heartbroken when she saw Benny's hand falling to the ground. She picked up the boy's hand and stroked it gently while mumbling, "Don't worry. Everything will be fine. I will cure you guys soon."

The woman had come across patients who were infected with the same bacteria during clinical trials. She had seen adults tossing and turning in bed due to the unbearable pain, and some had even passed out.

The pain was hard to bear even for fully-grown adults, not to mention two young kids.

At the thought of the suffering the children were going through at that moment, Roxanne felt so anguished that she could hardly breathe.

Noticing that his mother was starting to panic, Archie reached out and held the woman's other hand. "Mommy, should we feed Benny and Essie some medicine?"

Even though the boy was still young, he was extremely mature and sensible for his age.

Archie was also experiencing discomfort in his stomach, but he still found it bearable.

Although he was worried about his siblings, he knew that being anxious would not help.

Given that his mother was already very distressed, if he started panicking as well, no one would be calm enough to keep the situation under control.

With her son's reminder, Roxanne regained her composure and started rummaging through the medical kit. She remembered that there was no cure for that species of bacteria in modern medicine. Hence, they could only rely on traditional medicine.

Nevertheless, modern medicine could help to alleviate their pain temporarily. It was just that very strong painkillers had to be administered, and such painkillers were usually not found in standard first-aid kits.

After all, if one was in so much pain that they had to take those painkillers, it would be absolutely necessary for them to go to the hospital.

After searching for a while, Roxanne was still unable to find what she was looking for and had no choice but to give up finding it.

Meanwhile, Benny and Estella were still rolling on the ground in pain. Estella was crying silently with her lips pressed together.

Despite being in so much pain, she was still thinking about others and feeling worried that her discomfort would affect the others' camping experience.

Roxanne's heart clenched when she noticed how hard the little girl was trying to endure. Even her fingers were trembling. "Archie, can you handle the herbs for me please?" Archie agreed without hesitation.

The boy had spent most of his time by Roxanne's side while growing up, and more than half the time, he was with her in the research institute.

As such, he was very familiar with the handling of traditional medicinal herbs. After washing the herbs, Archie removed the damaged leaves, only leaving the healthy leaves and the dark green stem.

Roxanne removed two leaves from the stem and picked up some of the common medicinal herbs from her medical kit before she headed into the tent to look for something else.