

Leaving The Country After Divorce

Chapter 1401-1432

Chapter 1401

"When did you buy it?" questioned Roxanne with a slightly tense tone and trembling eyelashes. We didn't leave each other when we were in the mall, and I didn't see him buy a gift.

Lucian knitted his eyebrow and answered in a resigned tone, "When I brought my bags here earlier. I didn't expect you to get lost when I was delayed for a few minutes."

His lips curled into a wry smile when he recalled the rare dazed look on her face from earlier.

When he brought that up, she blushed and reflexively avoided his stare, inadvertently shifting her line of sight to the box on the seat.

Lucian coaxed, "Get in the car. It's getting late. If we don't set off now, it'll be night by the time we return home."

Nodding hesitantly, Roxanne stepped into the seat.

He entered the driver's seat and drove off.

Meanwhile, she put the white box on her knees instead of opening them.

He didn't urge her either.

After they left the parking lot, he asked, "Do you want to visit the nursing home first, or should we head straight back home?"

I know she's worried about the residents there, and we'll be heading in its direction anyway.

His question came as a surprise for Roxanne. She pondered for a moment and answered, "The nursing home first."

"Okay." Lucian then drove toward the destination.

Seeing how familiar he was with the path to the nursing home, she wondered, I don't remember telling him the address, yet he seems to know where to go... No, I shouldn't overthink it.

After the car was parked in front of the nursing home, Roxanne stepped into the building. She saw the doctors were still busying about, but she could tell from their expressions that the rest of the residents were in good condition.

Still, she approached a few doctors and asked them about the situation. It wasn't until she had confirmation the residents were doing fine that she relaxed.

Before she left, she came across a few of the residents she examined yesterday.

They were worried when they saw Jack wasn't with her. "Why didn't you visit with Dr. Damaris today, Dr. Jarvis? Did you two have a fight?"

Roxanne was bidding the other residents goodbye with a smile when she heard that. Her grin froze before she turned around and explained resignedly to the old woman speaking to her. "You have misunderstood our relationship, granny. Dr. Damaris and I are just colleagues..."

Just as she ended her sentence, she felt the person behind her stepping closer to her.

She didn't mind since it wasn't the first time they stood so intimately with each other.

Moments later, she saw the realization in the residents' eyes.

"Ah, it does seem like we've misunderstood your relationship with Dr. Damaris, Dr. Jarvis. This is your boyfriend, right?" The old woman swiftly corrected herself and inspected Lucion briefly. "Hmm, he's tall and handsome. I think he's a good fit for you, Dr. Jarvis."

Roxanne opened her mouth, intending to offer some clarification.

However, when she thought about the things that happened between her and Lucion, she didn't have it in her to deny that statement.

The edges of Lucion's mouth curved upward. He behaved gentlemanly with no intention of denying it, too.

The old woman stared at Roxanne curiously. "Is he a doctor too?"

"He's not," Roxanne replied rigidly.

In response, the old woman shook her head and remarked sincerely, "Then he's a little lacking compared to Dr. Damaris. I don't think you two have much to talk about since you two are not in the same profession..."

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Chapter 1402

Roxanne could feel the temperature around Lucian dropping rapidly, so she interrupted the old lady. "I'm just here to check up on you all's condition. Since all of you are doing fine, I'll be going home now. I'll visit if I have the time in the future."

The residents knew her home was in Horington after chatting with her yesterday. Thus, they urged the couple to leave right away to avoid driving at night.

Roxanne didn't feel relieved even after leaving the nursing home because Lucian was still visibly bothered by the old lady's words.

Resignedly, she comforted, "Uhm... Don't take that granny's words to heart, Lucian. There really isn't anything between Mr. Damaris and me."

He glanced at her. "Do you converse with him often?"

"It's just medical stuff. That's all," clarified Roxanne seriously. I only got to know Jack because we're in the same field. Aside from matters related to medicine, there isn't anything else for us to talk about, so there's no way I'll have feelings for him.

When Lucian heard that, his expression returned to normal.

When the two of them returned to the car, she still placed the box on her thighs instead of opening it.

“What aren’t you opening it? Do you not like it?” He started the engine and glanced at her through the rearview mirror.

Shaking her head, she replied, “No, I just want to open it after we return.”

She was too embarrassed to open his gift in front of him, especially when she didn’t know what he had bought.

Disappointment flashed past his eyes when he heard that, though he didn’t force her.

By the time they arrive in Horington, the sky had turned dark.

Lucian sent Roxanne straight back to the mansion.

The children were playing around with Linda in the living room.

Upon hearing the sound of a car, they scampered to the entrance.

“Mommy! Daddy!” Estella immediately clung to Roxanne’s leg and looked at her.

Grinning, Roxanne patted the girl’s head. “Did you miss me?”

Estella nodded and replied cutely, “I missed you a lot! Aunt Linda told us she was going to video call you just earlier.”

The boys stood behind their sister obediently while gazing at their parents.

Since their sister was hogging their mother, they could only approach their father.

However, they still weren’t too used to doing that kind of stuff, so they carefully stared at him instead.

Lucian grinned and strolled toward the boys as though he could read their minds.

“Your mommy bought a lot of gifts for you two. Come and help me unload them from the car.” He patted them before turning to the trunk and opening it.

The boys were already happy their father patted them, so when they saw a trunk full of gifts before them, they were downright ecstatic. Obediently, they went to him and lent him a hand.

Lucian carried the bags out of the trunk while they transported them into the mansion like they were porters.

When Roxanne witnessed that scene and saw how enthusiastic the boys were, she was amused.

Chapter 1403

While the boys were enjoying themselves, they were moving pretty slowly.

Thus, after Roxanne watched them for a while, she also helped out.

Soon, everything in the vehicle was carried into the mansion.

Meanwhile, Estella climbed into the car to assist the boys. When she left, she spotted the white box on the passenger seat.

Intrigued, she brought the box out of the car and asked, "What's this, Mommy?"

Everyone turned to the girl when they heard that.

Upon eyeing the box, Roxanne subconsciously glanced at Lucian.

He just stood at the side nonchalantly as though that box had nothing to do with him.

Since the adults didn't tell Estella she couldn't touch it, and she didn't receive a reply from Roxanne, she opened it out of curiosity.

It was then Roxanne saw what was inside in the box.

"It's so pretty!" Estella stood on her toes and lifted her hand to let her mother see the object taken from the box. "Is this Daddy's gift for you, Mommy?"

In response, Roxanne lowered her eyes and saw a platinum necklace embedded with a glittering diamond in the girl's palm. It looked simple yet exquisite.

The boys sauntered closer to their mother with intrigue when they heard what their sister said.

Upon seeing it was a necklace, the boys exchanged glances and encouraged, "You should help Mommy put it on, Mr. Farwell! I bet Mommy will look good with it!"

Roxanne took a step back reflexively and turned to Lucian with a troubled look. I'm already embarrassed that Essie opened the gift in front of him, yet now the children are urging him to put it on for me...

“Daddy!” After trotting to her father’s side, Estella lifted the necklace and stared at him with anticipation.

Lucian lowered his head, patted the girl, grabbed the necklace, and approached Roxanne.

Even though Roxanne wanted to step away, she didn’t feel like it would be a good idea to do so in front of the children.

Thus, she could only watch him arrive in front of her.

The children surrounded their parents and peered at them with excitement.

Lucian grinned. “Since they’re eager to watch me put this on you, let’s just get it over with, all right?”

Why is he saying it like he’s forcing himself to do it? Resignedly, she shifted her sight toward the children and met their bright eyes.

Of course, she knew they wouldn’t stop egging her about it if she didn’t play along. Therefore, she lowered her head, revealing her fair, slender neck.

As Lucian took one step closer to her, his leather shoes entered her field of view. Then his refreshing yet mature scent rushed into her nose.

Roxanne panicked when she felt an occasional, tingly sensation on her neck. It was caused by his sleeve brushing on her neck.

Moments later, he stepped back while she felt the cold necklace around her neck.

She sighed inwardly, adjusted her expression, and slowly lifted her head.

Unbeknownst to her, the children saw her expression when she bent her head down.

Just as Roxanne raised her head, she heard Benny asking, “Were you blushing earlier, Mommy?”

Chapter 1404

Upon hearing Benny’s words, Roxanne felt embarrassed again after having just regained her composure.

Echoing through her ear, Lucian’s deep voice carried a hint of amusement. “Take a look. Do you like it? I wasn’t really sure what to buy and the sales attendant recommended me another design. However, I think this one suits you better.”

Roxanne seized upon the opportunity to avert her gaze from his.

Turning around, she checked the rearview mirror to see how she looked.

She was greeted by the sight of a platinum necklace circling her neck. Hanging between her collarbones was a minimalistic round pendant that was covered with crushed diamonds. Sitting right in the center, it made her look as if her collarbones were sparkling. It was a sight that bedazzled her.

Lucian, who had somehow walked up behind her, asked anxiously, "Do you like it?"

Upon regaining her senses, Roxanne turned around and smile. "It's beautiful. I love it, Mr. Far—"

She almost addressed him as Mr. Farwell out of habit, but the thought of their currently ambiguous relationship made her change her mind. "Thank you. I appreciate it very much."

As what she almost called him by didn't escape his notice, Lucian's gaze darkened although he refrained from commenting.

Meanwhile, the children surrounded Roxanne and gasped in awe.

"Mommy, you're gorgeous!"

"The necklace really suits you. In fact, it looks even more beautiful on you!"

"Mr. Farwell has a sharp eye indeed!"

The praise they showered on her caused Roxanne to blush. Trying hard to hide her emotions, she looked down at the children and smiled. "You haven't opened the presents I bought you, have you? Let's go inside and do it."

Elated by the mention of presents, the children followed Roxanne into the mansion.

After the children settled down on the sofa to open their presents, jubilant cheers echoed in the living room from time to time.

When she saw how happy the children looked, Roxanne beamed with satisfaction.

At that moment, a warm and familial atmosphere filled the living room.

Standing by the side and watching Roxanne interacting happily with the children while wearing the necklace he gave her, Lucian couldn't help but imagine it to be a proposal ring that Roxanne was wearing on her finger.

I wonder how long does Roxanne want me to wait...

Just as he was lost in his thoughts, the children's voices suddenly rang out beside his ear.

"Daddy, look! I'm wearing the same outfit as Archie and Benny!"

Estella's voice brimmed with excitement.

When Lucian looked down, he noticed all three of them were wearing the T-shirts and shorts Roxanne bought them.

She had chosen vibrant colors on purpose so that both boys and girls would look equally good in them.

Dressed in the same outfits, the children looked up at Lucian.

In that instant, he suddenly felt as if all three of them resembled each other.

Nonetheless, the feeling quickly dissipated when they turned their attention away.

"Daddy, help us take a picture!"

Only Estella maintained her gaze as she tugged at his sleeve. "I want to take a picture!"

When Lucian raised Estella, he seldom took pictures of her. Hence, the only pictures at home were mostly taken by Sonya when she visited.

However, ever since Estella began to spend time with Roxanne, the latter's habit of taking pictures rubbed off on her. Thus, she would often wish to have her picture taken for the sake of memory.

Since it was a simple task, Lucian had no reason to refuse. Whipping out his phone, he did his duty as the cameraman.

Chapter 1405

Before they knew it, darkness took over the sky.

After acting as a driver and mover for the day and giving Roxanne a gift, Lucian naturally stayed back for dinner.

Once they had their fill, he played with the children for a while before taking his leave.

"It's getting late, so I'll be going home now. Essie—"

Before he could even finish, Essie declined, "I want to stay with Mommy!"

Lucian threw her a glance before continuing, "I'll leave Essie with you for the next two days. Tell me if you can't manage, and I'll come and pick the children up."

Archie and Benny's eyes lit up when they heard Lucian's words.

Given how smart they were, they caught the most important part of his sentence—he considered them his children.

Even though they couldn't address him as "Daddy" yet, he had already seen them as his own.

Both of them were ecstatic when the fact dawned upon them.

As for Estella, she was filled with delight upon receiving permission to stay with her mother.

Stroking Estella's face gently, Roxanne agreed with a smile. "She'll be in good hands."

Lucian flashed a smile. "I know."

Even if Roxanne didn't do anything in particular, Estella would be happy just staying by her side.

With that, Lucian drove back to the manor after leaving Roxanne's home.

The moment he stepped in, he was greeted by the glum-looking Sonya sitting on the couch.

"What are you doing here?"

With an equally solemn expression, Lucian took a seat in the armchair beside his mother.

Sonya's brows knitted at her son's question. "Why can't I drop by? What's wrong with me wanting to visit my granddaughter?"

Lucian gave her the side-eye while maintaining his frosty expression. "Essie's not here. She's with her mom."

His voice made it sound like he and Roxanne were a married couple who happened to be separated by distance.

The frown on Sonya's face deepened.

"I was the one who painstakingly raised Essie, while that woman abandoned her after giving birth. She should be thanking me for allowing Essie to acknowledge her instead. Don't you think it's unfair to me to let Essie stay with her and allow her to enjoy the fruits of my labor?"

From Sonya's perspective, Roxanne had no hand in bringing Estella up into a healthy and obedient girl.

That woman wasn't around when Essie needed her the most, so why is she acting all noble now?

Lucian furrowed his brows. "Roxanne is Essie's birth mother. Besides, what happened back then was a misunderstanding. I'm sure you heard of it too. Roxanne had thought that Essie was dead."

Sonya snorted in response. "Nobody knows if she's telling the truth. Back then, she left without saying a word. I wouldn't be surprised if she does anything terrible now."

Upon hearing his mother's words, there was a hint of disbelief as Lucian stared at her.

Sonya changed her tact reluctantly, cognizant that she had upset her son.

"I was the one who raised Essie, so how can I not miss my granddaughter? By leaving her with Roxanne, what am I to do when I miss her?"

Lucian replied in annoyance, "After spending so much time with Essie throughout the years, what's the big deal about not seeing her for a few days? Now that her condition has improved, she needs Roxanne by her side. Also, you not seeing her will allow her emotions to stabilize."

Chapter 1406

"What are you trying to say?"

Sonya was outraged by her son's ridicule.

"Roxanne might be Essie's birth mother, but I'm her biological grandmother too! How will my visit agitate her? Yes, I realize that I used the wrong method in educating Essie previously, but I have apologized for it and promised not to behave that way again!"

Lucian pinched his forehead as his frustration with his mother began to grow. "I'm glad you know that you're responsible for what has become of your relationship with Essie."

Even though Lucian didn't know what his mother did for Estella to resent her so much, he had learned his lesson from what happened with Aubree.

In fact, details weren't important. What truly mattered was Estella's will.

Thus, Lucian would keep those Estella resented away from her until she was willing to forgive them.

With nothing to counter Lucian with, Sonya felt her exasperation grow. "No matter what, I'll never hurt Essie!"

Lucian agreed with a nod. "I know, but you're still not patient enough. Besides, if you're really concerned about her, you should understand what her true needs are."

Sonya obviously knew what they were.

That little girl can't help but stick to Roxanne like glue now.

That was the exact reason she was upset.

When something suddenly occurred to her, she suppressed the anger in her heart.

"Since you don't want me to interfere with Essie's life, let's talk about the Pearson family."

Lucian's face turned grim at the mention of the Pearson family. "What about them?"

Wearing an awkward expression, Sonya spoke in a dissatisfied tone. "Aren't you being too harsh on the Pearson family? Both our families go back a long way, while Old Mr. Pearson is still your benefactor in the end. Is it really necessary to drive them into a corner when teaching them a lesson is enough?"

Lucian replied firmly, "They brought this upon themselves."

Sonya frowned. "It's true that they have made a mistake, but by being so ruthless against them, it sends out the wrong signal to the other families. Who will dare work with us after this? Now that you have canceled the engagement with Aubree, she won't be able to harm Essie anymore. That alone should be enough!"

At the back of her mind, Sonya was still planning to turn Aubree into an obedient puppet of hers.

Aubree aside, no other family will dare allow their daughter to marry into our family once they see how vindictive our family can be.

The more Sonya thought about it, the more worried she became. Hence, the main purpose of her visit was to discuss the issue with Lucian.

However, Lucian's expression drastically changed when his mother pleaded for mercy on behalf of the Pearson family. "Before they harmed Essie, they should have considered the consequences of crossing me. Besides, I don't think the lesson I have thought them comes close to being enough."

Even Sonya couldn't help but shudder in the face of Lucian's rage.

Despite that, she was adamant in her persuasion. "Don't forget that Aubree had waited for you many years and her feelings for you are true. She just chose the wrong way—"

Before she could finish, Lucian cut her off. "Don't ever mention that wicked woman in front of me. If this is all you want to talk about today, you can leave now. I'm tired and need to rest."

With that, Lucian headed upstairs without giving Sonya the opportunity to respond.

His reaction rendered Sonya speechless.

Chapter 1407

That night, Jonathan could barely sleep after receiving a message from Lucian.

At daybreak the next morning, Jonathan strode into the Farwell residence.

"Mr. Queen," Catalina greeted him upon his arrival.

Jonathan nodded in acknowledgment. "Where's Lucian?"

"He went up to his study after breakfast."

Jonathan then ended his conversation with Catalina and headed up.

There was no way he could rest until he clarified with Lucian what the message from the night before meant.

Just as he was about to knock, the door opened from the inside.

"What are you doing here?"

Lucian gave his guest a placid look before inviting him into the study.

Jonathan almost choked on himself.

Why is he even asking me that? I obviously want to know what he is trying to convey with the message last night. It's one thing for me to do his bidding all the time, but

what's with throwing a hot potato in my direction out of nowhere? Because of him, I hardly slept a wink!

"Lucian, aren't you being unreasonable?"

The exasperated Jonathan took his seat opposite Lucian. "Why did you have to drag me into this mess with the Pearson family? Although everyone is kicking them while they're down, wouldn't it be inappropriate for the Queen family to join in?"

Before Lucian's engagement with Aubree was canceled, the Farwell, Pearson, and Queen families enjoyed a close relationship.

Now that the two families had fallen out, it wouldn't look good on the Queen family if they were to take over Pearson Group.

Jonathan had to take the interest of the Queen family into account although he disagreed with Aubree's actions.

Cocking his brow, Lucian couldn't believe his ears. "What's wrong? You're not the one engaged to her. Don't tell me that you secretly harbor feelings for her?"

Jonathan was triggered by his friend's words. "Me? Interest in her? Oh, please!"

The last thing I want is to be anywhere near her.

Lucian frowned in response. "So, what's the problem? The Queen family has always been close to the Farwell family. Now that we have cast aside the Pearson family, you'll have to make your stand public sooner or later."

Seeing the truth in Lucian's words, Jonathan wrinkled his brows without retorting.

Lucian added, "Furthermore, Queen Group and Pearson Group are both involved in the medical industry. It's only natural the former takes over the latter. It's also a brilliant opportunity for Queen Group to expand."

Jonathan couldn't deny that every word of Lucian's struck a chord with him.

The wavering look in his eyes grew increasingly obvious.

Weighing the consequences was the main reason he was unable to sleep.

Even though taking over the Pearson family business was detrimental to Queen Group's reputation, it was nothing compared to the company's expansion that resulted.

Furthermore, it was as Lucian had said, the relationship between the Queen family and the Pearson family was established on the account of the Farwell family.

Now that the Farwells and Pearsons had fallen out, there was no reason for the Queen family to maintain that relationship.

Holding that thought, Jonathan made his decision. "I understand. Leave it to me."

Now that he thought about it, he realized there was no reason for his earlier hesitancy.

Lucian broke into a smile when he saw that Jonathan was convinced. "I have not forgotten all the help you have extended to me recently. The assets of the Pearson family will be my way of thanking you."

Chapter 1408

At Lucian's remark, Jonathan inwardly rolled his eyes. "I was the one who expended the effort to obtain them!"

That being said, the Pearson family doesn't have the capability to fight me, considering their current state. Basically, they're free resources!

Lucian merely regarded the man with an inscrutable look in his eyes.

Intimidated by his stare, Jonathan changed the subject and inquired about his relationship with Roxanne at present.

"How are things going with Roxanne? Don't tell me there's no progress even after you went on a trip with her?"

I'd been racking my brain to give him ideas for a long time. If there's really no progress, I truly feel sorry for Roxanne!

Speaking of the events that transpired in Jadeborough, Lucian inexorably recalled that passionate night there. His gaze darkened a shade.

Jonathan noticed the change in the man's expression. Alas, he couldn't tell what it meant and could only eye Lucian in puzzlement.

"Just answer the question. Don't grin so devilishly when I'm not Roxanne!"

No sooner had those words rang out than Lucian corralled his thoughts. His expression turned indifferent once more. "It's going pretty well, thanks to your idea."

That was considered his reply to the question earlier.

However, Jonathan remained unsatisfied and wanted to know the details. "What does that mean? What stage exactly have things progressed to?"

Based on his understanding of Lucian, merely holding hands would already be considered “pretty well” since the latter’s relationship with Roxanne was exceedingly tense previously.

Regretfully, Lucian merely smiled without saying anything.

Jonathan scrutinized him for a long moment while speculating soundlessly. Hmm, they must have made rapid progress. Otherwise, he wouldn’t be wearing such an expression.

Following that realization, gratification flooded him.

Yay! My backbreaking effort in giving him countless ideas hadn’t gone to waste!

As Lucian seeming had no plans of revealing anything further, he tacitly stopped harping on that line of question.

Subsequently, the two of them briefly discussed the Pearson family’s resources.

Although Jonathan had already decided to acquire those assets, he still had to be mindful of his boundaries.

When the discussion ended, Jonathan got up and left, heading directly to Queen Group.

That very afternoon, Pearson Group, which was already in a precarious state, suddenly took a turn for the worse.

Despite having sold off most of the shares in his hands, Samuel still had to clean up his own mess.

As Pearson Group’s share prices plummeted sharply, all shareholders started complaining incessantly. For that reason, Pearson Group had no choice but to lower the share prices repeatedly.

Unexpectedly, a few branch offices were requested to be delisted and liquidated due to the overly low share prices.

Consequently, Pearson Group was left with no other recourse but to sacrifice those few branch offices.

The other members of the Pearson family, whose interests were linked to those companies, were already resentful because of the trouble caused by Samuel and his family. In the face of their companies facing the threat of bankruptcy, they just about camped at the man’s house, demanding an explanation from him.

Hence, Samuel was swamped.

Even Aubree was forced to cooperate with her father to resolve the mess together despite her dissatisfaction with the current situation.

Unfortunately, nothing quite worked even after they had bustled around for a long time.

It was as though someone was pushing things along behind the scenes, for the speed at which Pearson Group was deteriorating was unbelievably fast.

In just a few days, almost all of the Pearson family's companies had been shut down. The handful that remained were also struggling badly while surviving on bank loans.

Alas, the person manipulating things secretly didn't even leave them that much hope.

Instead, he seemed determined on destroying the Pearson family entirely. Even the bank was no longer willing to give them any loans. Worse still, they were requested to repay their loans in the past.

However, the Pearson family was in no state to repay their loans right then.

The only recourse would be to declare bankruptcy.

At that point, Aubree felt as though her entire world had collapsed.

After all, she had been living a pampered life since young and had never experienced such hardship.

Chapter 1409

Aubree's desperation was shared by Samuel, who had been bustling around for several days.

Sonya's promise gave him hope, and he thought she would really succeed in convincing Lucian to spare the Pearson family this once.

Little did he expect that not only did Farwell Group's oppression of the Pearson Group persist, but it even intensified. In fact, it was so bad that the Pearson family was on the verge of bankruptcy.

His hard work in the past few days ended up in vain, resulting in his relatives knocking on his door and questioning him about it one after another.

In just a few days, most of his hair had turned gray.

At that very moment, Samuel was sitting at the desk in the study with a grim expression on his face. In front of him were a few staff members from the bank.

At the same time, a handful of asset transfer agreements were clearly laid out on the desk.

After the bank's staff member had reviewed one of the documents, he slid it over to Samuel. "Please sign here, Mr. Pearson."

Jolted out of his thoughts, Samuel swept his gaze over the asset he had acquired through blood, sweat, and tears. Such distress inundated him that his hands trembled, and his signature became shaky.

It went without saying that the bank's staff member showed no concern for his feelings. Seeing that the man had already signed the document, he started reviewing the next asset transfer agreement without hesitation.

At the side, Gina stood before the desk, her face as pale as a sheet. She initially wanted to comfort Samuel, but his dark expression had her ultimately swallow the words on the tip of her tongue. She didn't even dare breathe, going out and pouring him a glass of water.

Samuel was suppressing his wrath in the first place, so the sight of a glass of water appearing in his line of vision out of the blue promptly sparked his fury. Slamming his hand on the desk, he shot to his feet.

"I'm not in the mood to drink water! I've got nothing left, and I can't even catch my breath!"

As though to verify his claim, the voice of the bank's staff member drifted into the air on the heels of that. "Mr. Pearson, this house no longer belongs to you. The bank will be seizing this mansion tomorrow morning. Please move out on time so as not to affect our work."

Samuel was so livid that he trembled all over. "Scram! Get out of here!"

The bank's staff member knew that the Pearson family had already fallen and the man in front of him was nothing more than a paper tiger. Thus, he paid no mind to Samuel's fit of rage. "We have already contacted a moving company for you. Please move out as soon as possible. If you do not cooperate, we will be taking forceful measures."

The instant Samuel heard that, his face flushed bright red with fury.

The Pearson family has already fallen far from grace. If the bank were to employ forceful measures on top of that, I'd lose my dignity as well!

He inhaled deeply several times. Ultimately, he said nothing further, merely watching the bank's staff leave with a grave expression on his face.

“Are we really moving out, Samuel?”

When Gina and Samuel were the only ones left in the study, Gina gaped at the man incredulously.

Ever since she married into the Pearson family, they had been living there. She was already accustomed to the place, so she truly couldn't accept abruptly moving out and to an inferior environment at that.

Without warning, Samuel pounded his hand on the desk and snapped, “Why are you asking me that? You should go and ask your precious daughter! If it weren't for her, we would never have ended up in such straits!”

At his sudden outburst, Gina jumped in fright. She parted her lips slightly, but she dared not ask anything else.

After venting his anger, Samuel plopped down dejectedly, thinking he would likely have to spend the rest of his life in poverty. The more he dwelled upon it, the more furious he grew.

“Samuel!”

Gina was racking her brain for a way out of the predicament when she saw Samuel abruptly leaping to his feet after bringing his hand down on the desk, then striding toward the study door.

Upon seeing that, she hastily followed, afraid that he would do something impulsive again as before.

Chapter 1410

Meanwhile, Aubree was sitting in her bedroom with a gloomy expression on her face.

The Queen family! It turned out to be the Queen family!

While busy handling the mess in the past few days, she didn't forget to investigate the culprit sabotaging things behind the scenes.

Initially, she thought that it would be some other family who seized that opportunity to hit them while they were down.

Never had she imagined that it would be Jonathan.

She could surmise without even having to ponder upon the matter that it was definitely Lucian who instructed him to do so.

If he hadn't received an order from the latter, he wouldn't have had the guts to make a move rashly.

Ah, Lucian! I never expected him to be so ruthless to me that he's determined to push me to a dead end!

As she was fuming, her room door was suddenly pushed open.

Snapping back to her senses, Aubree snapped her eyes up and swung her gaze in the direction of the door.

Just when she had made out the person who barged in, a slap from Samuel sent her tumbling back onto the bed.

"Samuel!"

Gina had also been exhausted in the past few days because of the Pearson family's downfall. Coupled with the blow she suffered earlier upon learning that they would have to move out before tomorrow, she was pitifully weak in the legs.

By the time she finally arrived at Aubree's room, she was greeted by the sight of Samuel slapping their daughter.

Although Aubree had done something wrong, she was still Gina's flesh and blood. It was as though that slap from Samuel struck her squarely, for her heart abruptly clenched. In a flash, strength infused her legs, and she sprinted over to shield her daughter.

"Get out of my way! I'm going to teach this imbecile a lesson today!" Samuel snarled coldly.

"Calm down. Things are already set in stone anyway. Besides, Aubree hasn't had it easy either these few days. She's already trying her best to make amends for her mistakes." Gina sounded mournful.

When Samuel saw that she was still defending Aubree, his temper spiked further. He was so enraged that his temples throbbed violently. "Buzz off! Otherwise, I'm going to hit you as well!"

After bellowing that, he chastised furiously, "This is all on you for spoiling her! If you hadn't encouraged her, she wouldn't have ended up with such attitude today!"

Gina was both panicked and fearful, her lips quivering uncontrollably.

"Step aside, Mom," Aubree urged softly, gathering her wits about her at long last.

Then, she stepped out from behind her mother. Holding her head up high, she regarded her father with obstinacy etched across her features. "I did nothing wrong!"

Samuel lifted his hand and slapped her again. "Even now, you're still unrepentant? Are you only going to admit to your mistake after I personally send you to prison?"

Aubree cradled her cheek, madness brewing in her eyes.

I did nothing wrong! If I really did something wrong, that was merely loving Lucian too deeply at that time. He has absolutely no regard for me! I hate him!

Noticing that both women were utterly unremorseful, Samuel was so incensed that he almost burst a blood vessel. He calmed himself for some time before he finally managed to suppress his wrath forcibly. "Get up and pack your things!"

When Aubree heard that, she lifted her eyes and looked at her father in puzzlement.

In turn, Samuel glared at her sharply. "The Pearson family has gone bankrupt! On top of that, this house is no longer ours! It'll be seized tomorrow, and we've got to get out of here quickly!"

Bankrupt?

Despite knowing ages ago that they would have to face that fact sooner or later, Aubree still found it hard to believe upon hearing it from her father with her own ears.

How could that be? How could it come to pass so quickly? Worse still, we don't even have a house in the end! I've got nothing left!

"From now on, you'd better behave! If you were to create trouble again, we might not even be able to come out of it alive!"

Worried that he would really go off the deep end and pummel the two women to death if he continued to stay in the room, Samuel spun on his heel and left after saying that.

Chapter 1411

For the first time in her life, panic swamped Aubree. She turned to her mother for confirmation.

"Was Dad telling me the truth earlier, Mom? We're really moving out?"

Gina was likewise exceedingly reluctant to move out. Unfortunately, she had no other choice but to face reality. She nodded with a grim expression on her face. "Yeah. Very soon, we won't be able to live here anymore."

After saying that, she urged earnestly, "Listen to your father, Aubree. Don't do anything foolish again. Now that the Pearson family has ended up in such straits, we wouldn't be able to help you even if we wanted to do so if something were to happen to you!"

In the past, others might give the Pearson family some respect because of the Farwell family.

At present, however, things had soured between the Farwell and Pearson families. In fact, the Farwell family went just short of announcing that they were the ones who brought the Pearson family down.

Therefore, no one would care about the Pearson family anymore, let alone when the Pearson family had no money then.

Aubree stared at Gina blankly for a few seconds before lifting her eyes and sweeping a gaze over the room that had belonged to her since childhood. In a heartbeat, tears streamed down her face.

"What gives? Why is it that we're even losing our house, yet that b*tch still gets to live in the lap of luxury?"

Hearing her daughter's grievance, Gina panicked. "Calm down, Aubree!"

Regretfully, her words fell on deaf ears. Aubree got to her feet and pushed her mother out of the room.

Subsequently, the door was slammed shut in Gina's face with a bang.

No matter how much Gina pounded on the tightly-closed room door, she received no response from inside. Thus, she could only wait anxiously outside.

Lifting a hand, Aubree wiped her tears dry. She then took out her phone and called Frieda.

At the Queen residence, Frieda was aware of her brother's actions in the past few days.

For that reason, she had been worrying herself sick recently.

She was afraid that with her brother targeting Aubree and bringing about the Pearson family's downfall, Aubree wouldn't sit back and do nothing.

To make matters even worse, the latter would likely take it out on her.

Alas, it was precisely the matter she dreaded most that came to pass.

Just as Frieda was fretting that Aubree might seek her out, she received a phone call from the latter.

Glancing at the caller ID, she was beyond reluctant to answer the call. But in the end, she still took it.

Aubree had lost her mind then. As such, Frieda couldn't guarantee that she wouldn't accidentally trigger Aubree, resulting in the woman telling Lucian about her being Aubree's accomplice.

Verily, she didn't dare risk it.

"Aubree..." she answered the call carefully, sounding a touch servile.

On the other end of the phone, Aubree's voice was slightly hoarse, but the fury within it was still distinctly audible. "Come over to the Pearson residence right this instant!"

At that demand, guilt showed on Frieda's face, and her voice turned conflicted. "Um... my brother is watching me like a hawk, forbidding me from going out. Let's just talk on the phone if there's anything!"

Naturally, Aubree was no fool and knew that the woman had been avoiding her these days.

However, Frieda was the only resource available to her right then.

"You can't go out, but I can! Aren't you afraid that I'll seek Lucian out and tell him about everything you did? The Queen family is making money hand over fist now and is even on closer terms with Farwell Group than before. But if Lucian were to learn that you were my accomplice, say, would he still give a fig about past affections? And would the Queen family become the next Pearson family?"

Aubree's voice was laced with threat.

At once, Frieda's heart lurched. She didn't dare give any more excuses. "I'll think of a way to evade my brother's notice as much as possible. Stay calm, Aubree. I'll be there right away!"

Still, Aubree wasn't satisfied. "If you don't arrive within half an hour, look for me at Farwell Group instead!"

Having said that, she hung up directly.

Chapter 1412

Frieda was ridden with regret as she stared at the phone screen.

If I knew Aubree would end up like this, I would have never listened to her!

Despite her regret, it was too late.

Frieda stood up slowly while holding her phone. Before leaving, she retrieved a bank card from the drawer out of caution.

“Where are you going?”

As soon as she left the bedroom, she immediately saw her brother, who had come out of the study.

Jonathan’s scrutinizing gaze was filled with suspicion.

Frieda plastered on a smile. “It’s nothing. I have stayed at home for too long, so I decided to go out.”

Jonathan didn’t give her the opportunity to lie, instead asking directly, “Are you going to meet Aubree?”

Frieda’s expression changed drastically as she didn’t expect her brother to see through her so quickly.

“You’re not allowed to go! You’re staying at home instead!”

Not only was Jonathan aware of Lucian’s prejudice against Aubree, but he also knew about Frieda’s relationship with Aubree.

As a result, he had to make sure Frieda had nothing to do with Aubree right now, or the Queen family would be implicated if Lucian were enraged.

Guilt filled Frieda’s heart, but she pretended to be calm and appeal to his emotions.

“Jonathan, Aubree has been my friend for so long. I can’t just leave her when her family is at their lowest. We, girls, aren’t like you guys. We can’t just cut off ties with our friends immediately even if our families have conflicts with each other—”

Before she could finish her words, Jonathan interrupted her, somewhat upset, “What’s your relationship with her? You should stay away from this kind of woman!”

Frieda bit her lips and looked at Jonathan pitifully. “I’m just going to take a look! It’s not like I can do anything to alleviate the Pearson family’s situation even if I want to.”

It was the truth.

Even if Lucian personally helped the Pearson family, he would need to inject tons of money in to see any signs of improvement.

Other than this, it was impossible for the family to recover from this situation.

Frieda glanced at her watch. It was getting closer to the time Aubree had arranged for them to meet. She attempted to persuade Jonathan. "Don't worry. You already know I'm not a courageous person! Even if she asks for my help, I won't dare to do anything. I only assisted her the last time because I assumed she would become a part of the Farwell family. I wouldn't do anything dumb now that I know it's impossible."

Jonathan was a rather indulgent brother.

Knowing what she said was the truth, he hesitated for a few seconds before he agreed.

"You can go and meet her, but you have to understand that you will bear all the consequences if you get bewitched by her and do something dumb. I'll not save you!"

Jonathan would naturally choose the Queen family over Frieda!

Frieda's heart trembled, and she suddenly felt slightly nervous about meeting Aubree.

For a split second, she thought about explaining everything to Jonathan.

However, Frieda suppressed the urge when she thought about the Pearson family's situation. She gave an obedient nod.

"I understand! I'm not dumb, so you don't have to worry!"

Jonathan nodded. As he watched his sister leave, he felt slightly worried.

He knew that Frieda was not a dumb person, so he didn't understand why she would still try to meet Aubree when she knew about the relationship between the Pearsons and the Farwells.

Is Frieda hiding something from me?

Chapter 1413

After leaving the Queen residence, Frieda drove to the Pearson residence immediately.

She saw the movers' vehicles outside the Pearson residence when she was walking toward the entrance.

Even though she knew that the Pearson family was in a difficult situation and targeted by many parties, she didn't realize it was to this extent.

When she recalled Aubree's tone in the phone call earlier, realization dawned upon her.

No wonder Aubree didn't contact me these few days but suddenly called me today. She's desperate.

Upon realizing that, Frieda was overwhelmed with emotions.

If she went up now, it wouldn't end up well for her as Aubree would only vent her anger on her.

Back then, the Pearson family rose to prominence with the Farwell family's assistance.

No one would have been able to predict that the family would fall from grace now!

If this fate befalls the Queen family...

Frieda couldn't help but shiver upon that thought.

No! I can't be in cahoots with Aubree anymore! Who knows what she will make me do to offend the Farwell family in the future?

Upon thinking that, her expression stiffened when she walked into the Pearson residence.

"Frieda, are you here for Aubree?"

Gina's eyes lit up when she saw Frieda and said gladly, "Help me talk some sense into her. Tell her to be rational and accept our fate."

Frieda smiled stiffly. "I will."

With that, she made her way upstairs without casting a second glance at Gina.

She heard a thud when she was right in front of Aubree's room.

Frieda shuddered in fear and paused in her tracks. She only knocked on the door after the room fell silent.

"Come in!" Aubree's voice was a touch hoarse.

Frieda gripped her bag tightly and opened the door.

She was greeted by a messy scene. Every movable item in the room was ruined and thrown to the ground.

Aubree was still trying to smash a vase.

"Aubree, you—"

Frieda felt tense as she looked at Aubree warily. She didn't dare to move from her spot near the door.

Aubree glared at her with hatred. "These are all my belongings! If I can't bring them away, I'll destroy them! I will not give these things to someone else!"

With that, she smashed the vase on the ground. It immediately shattered into pieces.

Frieda immediately took a few steps back to avoid being cut by the pieces.

It was evident from Aubree's appearance that she had just cried. Her eyes were still slightly red, her eyelashes were glistening with tears, and her hair, which had always been exquisitely styled, was slightly messy.

Also, Frieda immediately noticed the slap mark on Aubree's face.

Her brows furrowed, as she couldn't bear to see Aubree in this state.

Even though she had seen how cruel Aubree could be, they had been friends for many years. Frieda's hatred and fear of her dissipated seeing Aubree in such a wretched state.

"Aubree, calm down. Since it has come down to this, you won't be able to change anything, even if you're angry. You will only hurt yourself."

She tried to comfort Aubree and calm the latter down.

However, as soon as she finished speaking, a ceramic ornament flew straight at her!

Frieda's heart almost stopped as she barely managed to avoid it with her reflexes.

The ornament collided with the wall before rolling to her feet.

Chapter 1414

Frieda glanced at the chipped ornament beside her with lingering fear in her heart.

If I hadn't avoided the ornament in time, it would've struck my head, and I would've been lying on the ground by now!

"Shut up! Don't think I don't know that your family is behind this!" Aubree screamed hysterically. "You escaped unscathed, but the Queen family gobbled up my family's properties, and I bet it won't end there. So, don't you dare say those insincere remarks to me!"

Startled by her outburst, Frieda could not maintain a pleasant attitude anymore. "You know I don't have a say in the decisions my family makes. It's pointless to blame me for my brother's actions!"

Speaking of which, I wouldn't have been kicked out of the management level of Queen Group if I hadn't helped Aubree target Roxanne!

At that thought, a wave of regret washed over Frieda.

Aubree's expression turned icy in an instant. Madness brewed in her eyes as she demanded, "I can't watch my family reach its end just like this! I want you to go home and figure out a way to make the Queen family cough out everything they took from us!"

Disbelief crossed Frieda's face when she heard the other woman's peremptory request. "My words carry no weight in Queen Group now, and there's no way Jonathan will listen to me. I can't do that!"

"You must do it! If you don't, I'll tell Lucian that you gave me the bacterium I fed Essie!" Aubree cut her off coldly.

Frieda's expression changed abruptly.

After witnessing the difficult circumstances of the Pearson family, she deeply regretted her decision to assist Aubree back then. At the same time, she was afraid that the latter might expose her misdeeds for real.

A long while later, Frieda forced herself to soften her voice. "Please don't be like this, Aubree. I'm still a part of the Queen family, so I'll be able to assist you if you need any help. However, if I get kicked out of the Queen family, I won't be able to help you in the future."

She then retrieved the bank card she had prepared beforehand and laid it on the bed. "There's one hundred thousand in this account. Use it to rent a good place. If you need more money, just let me know. I'm here to help you."

Aubree lowered her head to glance at the card before directing her gaze toward Frieda again. All of a sudden, her lips curled into a mocking smile. "One hundred thousand? Do you take me as a beggar?"

Frieda had a troubled look on her face. With her brows furrowed, she replied, "I wish I could give you more, but I can't access any funds from Queen Group. Jonathan and my grandpa are the ones who provide me with money to spend. If I withdraw a large amount at once, they will inquire about my expenses, and if they find out that I gave the money to you..."

If that were to happen, Aubree might not be able to receive any more funds. Worse yet, there was a risk that Frieda's prior actions would be revealed.

After all, Frieda had personally obtained the bacterium that infected Estella from the Queen family's research institute.

Should someone look into that matter, they would easily discover her involvement in it.

At that point, Aubree was shaking with rage.

One hundred thousand would not have meant anything to her in the past.

Much to her chagrin, however, she could not even fork out ten thousand then.

"Take the money first. We'll talk about the rest later." Frieda hastened to persuade Aubree as soon as she noticed that the latter seemed to be wavering.

After a long silence, Aubree clenched her teeth and turned away from Frieda. "Scram! Just because the Pearson family has fallen from grace doesn't mean you can be rid of me. Remember, I have dirt on you, so you still need to listen to me!"

Since her engagement with Lucian was called off, Aubree did not bother putting on an act anymore; she did not even try to mask her desire to use Frieda to achieve her goals.

Knowing that she had to placate Aubree first, Frieda gritted her teeth silently and flashed the latter an ugly smile. "I know. Don't worry," she assured her.

Chapter 1415

With that, the two women were considered to have completely fallen out with each other.

When Frieda stepped out of the Pearson residence, the smile on her face instantly vanished as a wave of regret and fury washed over her.

If I knew this would happen, I wouldn't have gotten close to Aubree! Her family is now destitute, yet she refuses to let me go!

Her expression remained grim throughout the journey back to the Queen residence.

Worried about Frieda, Jonathan had been waiting for her in the living room.

His heart sank when he noticed the expression on her face as she entered the living room. "What happened? Did you and Aubree have a fight?"

If I'm not mistaken, Aubree and Frieda have always been on good terms with each other. Since Frieda went over to check on Aubree, they shouldn't have fought. Or could my suspicion be right? Are they hiding something from me?

That thought weighed heavily on his heart, and he fixed Frieda with a penetrating gaze.

Frieda's long-suppressed rage finally erupted after she heard her brother's words of concern.

"It's all your fault! We have been friends with the Pearsons for a long time, yet just as they landed in trouble, we pounced on them like hungry strays to get their assets for ourselves. If you were Aubree, wouldn't you be upset?"

Jonathan knitted his brows. "You know nothing! Relationships have no place in the corporate world. Besides, the Pearsons were also unable to hold onto their assets. If we didn't make a move, someone else would have done so!"

Her eyes widened. "Then just—"

Before she could say they should give someone else that chance, he interjected sternly, "Shut up! This concerns Queen Group, and I've already discussed it with the shareholders. There were no objections, and it was also an order from Lucian. Do you think we are more closely associated with the Farwell family or the Pearson family?"

Frieda's pupils shrank at the mention of Lucian. A sense of fear overtook her, and her rage dissipated.

Jonathan stared at her fixedly for some time. Upon noticing that she stopped retorting him, he coaxed, "Don't meet with the Pearsons anymore. Consider that you did your very best as Aubree's friend with today's final visit. You must have no more dealings with them from now on. It would be best to forget about them and move on."

An ugly scowl crept up Frieda's face.

Of course, I want to do that as well, but Aubree will never let me off so easily.

Her hesitation did not go unnoticed by Jonathan, whose countenance darkened. "You must be aware that Aubree can never become Mrs. Farwell. What she did is now widely known in Horington. If you don't sever your connections with her, it will damage the reputation of the Queen family!"

Frieda trembled imperceptibly.

Her biggest fear was that the Queen family would be affected.

I dread to imagine the state I'll end up in if my family becomes destitute. But how can I be rid of Aubree?

Despite how hard she racked her brain for a solution, not a single one came to mind. At that point, she wanted nothing more than to confess her past deeds.

However, she was afraid Jonathan would kick her out of the Queen family before Lucian could take action against her.

"The only person who can be the lady of the Farwell family is Roxanne, and there will be plenty of occasions where we have to socialize with her in the future," Jonathan uttered.

Something else occurred to him, and he advised, "I remember you used to treat Dr. Jarvis rather rudely. You'd better find a chance to apologize to her lest it affects our future dealings with her."

His words struck a chord with Frieda. She seemed to think making amends with Roxanne was a good idea.

Though she did not like Roxanne, at the very least, the latter was much more amicable than Lucian.

I can ask Roxanne to intercede on my behalf!

Harboring that thought in mind, Frieda feigned obedience and nodded in agreement.

Chapter 1416

Jonathan could tell that something was wrong with his sister's emotions.

He pondered for a long while before saying, "Tell me when you decide to visit Dr. Jarvis. I'll accompany you."

Having taken the hint, Frieda felt much more confident, and her expression became brighter.

Jonathan had a stern look on his face as he continued sternly, "If you've offended her previously, seize the chance to give her a proper apology. Dr. Jarvis isn't petty, so she'll forgive you if you admit to your mistakes, not to mention I'll be present as well."

She nodded obediently in response, but inwardly, her mind was racing with various thoughts.

While Jonathan made it sound like a simple task, I'm not convinced that Roxanne will be so forgiving. If she discovers that I indirectly harmed her children by supplying the

bacterium to Aubree, I'm not sure if she will still be willing to forgive me. Perhaps I should gauge her reaction gradually before confessing to the crime.

"All right. You should go upstairs and get some rest. Let me know when you've made up your mind, and I'll inform Dr. Jarvis," Jonathan voiced.

Afterward, he sighed and dismissed Frieda with a wave.

He thought that his efforts were in vain again, but to his surprise, she volunteered, "Jonathan, I was wrong. Please ask Dr. Jarvis when she is free so that I can apologize to her at the earliest opportunity."

A hint of astonishment flashed across Jonathan's eyes. Why did she change her mind today?

Frieda touched her nose and added, "I was too set in my ways previously. As you've said, Dr. Jarvis will get married to Lucian one day. If I'm on bad terms with her, it won't bode well for our family's future."

At the end of her utterances, she flashed a charming smile at her brother. "Would it be possible for me to rejoin Queen Group once Dr. Jarvis and I have reconciled?" she inquired.

Jonathan scrutinized her for several seconds but did not notice anything odd in her expression.

Thus, he agreed right away. "After you apologize to Dr. Jarvis, and she agrees to forgive you, you can return to the company. Remember not to do anything foolish in the future."

The reason he and Alfred terminated Frieda's employment at Queen Group was that they felt her actions had impacted the reputation of the Queen family. At the same time, they were concerned that she would remain obstinate and fail to recognize the offense she might cause to Farwell Group.

If Roxanne agreed to forgive Frieda's past deeds, the Queen family would recover its reputation.

Hearing his answer, Frieda heaved a sigh of relief inwardly.

As long as I get to return to Queen Group, I can still appease Aubree if she asks me for more money.

After she decided to offer an apology as soon as possible, Jonathan wasted no time in giving Roxanne a call.

Roxanne was recently busy with work at the research institute.

Motivated by the newfound knowledge that Estella was the child whom she thought had passed away during childbirth, she decided to remain in Chanaea and pursue her career there so that she could be with the little girl.

To achieve her goal, she had been working overtime to obtain new projects in an attempt to help the research institute make a name for itself in Chanaea.

As a result, she did not have time to pay attention to any external disputes.

When Jonathan called her, she was busy developing new medications with the researchers at the research institute.

Following Colby's arrest, the responsibilities she carried in the research institute became greater.

In fact, Roxanne was so swamped with work that she had to find time to answer Jonathan's call.

Over the phone, Jonathan merely told her he wanted to talk to her about something. As the Queen family was closely related to the research institute, she agreed to squeeze an afternoon meeting into her busy schedule.

They ended the call after agreeing to a time and location.

Chapter 1417

At noon the next day, Jonathan brought Frieda shopping. They bought a bunch of gifts before driving to the restaurant where they were supposed to meet Roxanne.

The restaurant was near the research institute. Due to the closeness of both locations, Roxanne thought she could head back to do some more work if their meeting ended early.

Something in the research institute held her up, so Jonathan and Frieda were already waiting in the private room by the time she arrived.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Jarvis. Did I interrupt your work?"

Despite addressing Roxanne by her name in front of Lucian, Jonathan was mindful of his behavior and addressed her politely when she was present.

Roxanne offered him a polite smile. Her gaze then landed on Frieda, and confusion crossed her eyes.

If I'm not mistaken, Frieda never liked me. So why is she here today?

Considering how busy she was handling various projects at the research institute, Roxanne did not want to be involved in any trouble.

Jonathan rose to his feet and pulled out the chair for her like the gentleman he was. "Frieda recognized the error of her ways, so she asked for my help to schedule a meeting with you. She wants to apologize to you personally."

As he spoke, he swept his gaze across his sister.

Frieda obediently got to her feet while wearing a sincere smile. "Dr. Jarvis, I was too immature in the past. Because Aubree and I..."

There, she paused before continuing, "Aubree and I are good friends, so when I saw how close you were to Lucian, I immediately harbored prejudices against you. I now realize I was in the wrong. Hopefully, you won't hold it against me."

Frieda implied that her horrible attitude toward Roxanne in the past was entirely due to Aubree's influence.

With that mere sentence, she had put the blame on Aubree.

Roxanne understood the implicit message in Frieda's words and felt slightly uncomfortable.

She could not bring herself to accept her apology.

Naturally, Jonathan also realized what Frieda meant. His expression turned grim as he chided, "Frieda!"

Frieda's expression grew increasingly sincere as she retrieved a gift she had bought earlier.

"I've realized my mistakes now. You're the only one Lucian has ever loved. Roxanne, I was foolish in the past, so could you please forgive me? Since Jonathan and Lucian are best friends, I would like to be your bestie, too!" she exclaimed.

While speaking, she offered the gift to Roxanne.

With those words, she had put Roxanne on the spot, making it difficult for the latter to refuse without seeming unkind.

At that moment, Frieda was fairly confident that she would win Roxanne's forgiveness.

I've humbled myself this much, so there's no way Roxanne will refuse to forgive me!

To her surprise, the other woman fell silent momentarily before pushing the gift back to her. "I am willing to forgive your previous attitude toward me, but it's too early for us to become besties. We're not that close to each other."

Roxanne flashed a polite and distant smile at Frieda, then continued, "You can address me as 'Dr. Jarvis' just like Mr. Queen does. We can start by being friends."

As a matter of fact, she had only agreed to be friends with Frieda out of respect for Jonathan.

Taken aback by her rejection, Frieda stiffened.

Meanwhile, Jonathan felt she had already gotten off to a good start by successfully having Roxanne agree to forgive her.

He chuckled, trying to lighten the mood. "Dr. Jarvis is right. Why don't you start by being friends? Anyhow, you'll have plenty of opportunities to get to know each other better. Whether or not you become besties is something that only time can tell."

Roxanne looked at him, the smile on her face becoming much more relaxed.

From the day she met Jonathan, she discovered he always behaved toward others with the utmost propriety, never once making things difficult for the other party.

Chapter 1418

Despite her reluctance, Frieda had no choice but to go with the flow.

Her priority then was to win Roxanne's forgiveness so that she could rejoin Queen Group.

"Okay, then."

Beaming at Roxanne, she pushed the gift back to her. "I bought this for you. It isn't expensive. Please accept them as a token of my sincerity."

Jonathan chimed in, "Yes, Frieda put in a lot of effort to pick this gift. Dr. Jarvis, do accept it. If you don't, she won't believe that you've forgiven her."

Roxanne glanced at the present and noticed it was indeed an affordable purse.

It was only then that she extended her arm and took it. "Thanks for the gift. This meal is on me," she offered, nodding at them.

Jonathan readily accepted her offer.

During lunch, the trio chatted about the collaboration between Queen Group and the research institute.

Knowing that his best friend had set his mind on Roxanne and that they were in a committed relationship, Jonathan decided to deepen his involvement with the research institute.

Naturally, Roxanne was more than delighted to have that happen.

That meal was an enjoyable event for them both, save for Frieda.

Nevertheless, she finally got to return to Queen Group. Her wish had come true.

After lunch, Roxanne returned to the research institute to work while Jonathan brought Frieda to Queen Group. With that, they went their separate ways.

Even though Jonathan had agreed to let his sister rejoin the company, he still had some reservations. As a result, he merely gave her a title instead of entrusting her with critical decision-making responsibilities.

Frieda dared not ask for more. She was fine with anything as long as she would get paid.

At the same time, Aubree and her family were busy moving out of their mansion.

Due to their financial constraints, it was impossible for them to reside in the city any longer. Their only option was to secure a dilapidated mansion in the suburbs to call home temporarily by using the one hundred thousand that Frieda had given Aubree.

The mansion had been unoccupied for several years, and though it had furniture, everything was coated in a thick layer of dust.

However, they could not afford to hire a cleaner and had to clean up the mansion themselves.

It took them a whole day to finish the first round of cleaning.

Gina took on the majority of the cleaning duties. As soon as they finished, she collapsed onto the couch in a state of exhaustion and lamented, "This is terrible. In comparison to our former home, this place is uninhabitable..."

Upon hearing her comment, Samuel roared, "Stop dreaming! We don't have a home anymore. Even this house is just a cheap rental!"

He then glared at his daughter with displeasure. "You're nothing but trouble!"

Aubree lowered her head to mask the suppressed, crazed look in her eyes.

Roxanne and Lucian! I despise both of you! Why is all of this happening to me? I've lived a life of comfort all these years, but now I'm suddenly banished to hell.

Suddenly, Gina recalled something and grabbed Samuel's sleeves. "Let's ask the Queen family for help; we can ask Frieda to help us. She's good friends with Aubree. Since she even paid a visit to Aubree yesterday, she'll surely help us! Besides, we've been on good terms with the Queen family for years—"

Before she could finish her utterances, Samuel interjected harshly, "The Queen family is the reason why we are in this state."

Anger coursed through his veins as he glared at his wife and daughter. Foolish women! I can't believe they had no idea who did this to us. How dare they suggest that we ask the culprits for help?

Hearing the revelation, Gina dropped to the ground in shock.

Chapter 1419

I can't believe the Queen family is the culprit! I... I assume that with our friendship of years, even if they refuse to help us, at the very least, they won't hit us when we're down. Yet, they are the reason we ended up in such a state! If that's the case, why did Frieda come to our house yesterday? Did she come to shed crocodile tears?

Gina glared at her daughter resentfully. "You knew about it, didn't you?"

Aubree's involvement in the company's affairs meant that she must have known who the culprit was, yet she still permitted Frieda to visit her, much to Gina's bafflement.

If I knew the Queen family was behind this, I wouldn't have allowed Frieda to enter our house!

Aubree's eyes had also turned red. "So what if I did know? It was the Farwells' order! Lucian drove us into a corner all because of that b*tch!"

I refuse to give up just yet! Even if I end up in hell, I'll drag that b*tch down with me!

Her words made Gina feel as though the world was crumbling around her.

She could not believe Lucian was so ruthless as to disregard the past bond between the two families.

It means that we've utterly offended the Farwell family and can never make a comeback! I can never return to my previous luxurious life anymore!

When that realization occurred to Gina, she fainted.

“Mom!”

Fear crossed Aubree’s eyes at the sight of her mother collapsing to the ground. “We need to go to the hospital now!” she exclaimed, dashing toward Gina.

Samuel’s face was as black as thunder. “No way! She just fainted from an emotional shock. Don’t forget that we’re strapped for cash. There’s no need to send her to the hospital just because of a minor illness!”

He then pushed Aubree away with a swing of his arm, picked Gina up, and brought her upstairs.

Aubree glared at his retreating figure, madness continuously manifesting in her eyes.

Mom is sick, but she can’t even go to the hospital! I refuse to lead such a life!

Overtaken by the extreme rage, she phoned Frieda, who had just rejoined the company with Jonathan’s approval.

Frieda was content with being able to return to the company, even though her apology to Roxanne the previous day did not go as expected.

She was leisurely playing games on her phone in her own office when Aubree’s name suddenly popped up on the screen.

Her hand trembled, and she nearly tossed her phone.

I knew I wouldn’t be able to be rid of Aubree easily, but I had no idea she would contact me again this fast! What does she want this time? Money? Or is she going to order me to do something evil again?

At the thought of those possibilities, Frieda’s hands shook nonstop as she answered the call.

Yet, to avoid infuriating Aubree, she had to feign nonchalance. “Aubree? What’s the matter?”

Aubree gritted her teeth and demanded, “Give me five million!”

That caused Frieda to spring to her feet in shock. “Five million?”

I’ve just rejoined Queen Group, so I have no means to get that sum for her. But I can’t afford to offend her for now...

Carefully, Frieda asked, "When do you want the five million?"

"Today! As fast as possible!" Aubree replied in an icy voice.

At that moment, she was extremely insecure after seeing Gina faint before her eyes.

Not only was she desperate for money, but she also wanted an astronomical sum.

As of then, Frieda was her ATM.

Chapter 1420

Frieda could not help but shudder again.

She was not like Aubree. Aubree had a say over the Pearson family's matters. To her, several tens of millions were nothing.

But in Frieda's situation, she had zero authority in the Queen family. The money she spent was allowance given to her by the elders.

Given how extravagant she was with her money, she had only a few million in her hand.

If I gave Aubree five million in one go, I wouldn't have much left for myself, would I?

"I don't have that much money, Aubree. You should know about my situation." Frieda tried to bargain her way out cautiously.

An ugly scowl showed up on Aubree's face. "Then how much do you have?"

Frieda mulled over it for a moment. "Two million. Can't go any higher..."

I won't have enough to spend if I give her more than two million. Now that I've just rejoined Queen Group, I can't possibly lay my hands on the company's money yet. Besides, Jonathan will surely get suspicious if I use the money now.

On the other end of the line, Aubree's breathing turned rough. "Give me two million today first. Make up for the rest of the five million after that!"

Relief washed over Frieda when she heard those words. Through the phone, her tone remained sincere. "I will. Don't worry, Aubree. As long as I'm in the Queen family, I won't let you live a tough life!"

Satisfied with the response, Aubree snorted coldly and hung up after letting Frieda know the address.

The darkened phone screen reflected Frieda's vicious expression.

What a bloodsucker!

Of course, Frieda dared not waste any time as she was also worried that Aubree might do something drastic if she was desperate.

That afternoon, she grabbed her bank card and hurried to the suburban mansion.

As soon as she entered, she was utterly shocked by the environment in the house.

If Aubree wasn't sitting on the couch, Frieda would have wondered if the place was even fit for humans to stay in.

No wonder Aubree sounded so mad over the phone.

"Have you eaten, Aubree? We can head out and eat something if you haven't."

Frieda recomposed herself and walked up to Aubree with a smile. Instead of sitting down, she stood by the side and fixed her eyes on the latter.

Only then did Aubree notice Frieda's existence. Lifting her gaze, she coldly instructed, "Put the money down and get lost."

More than happy to leave the place as soon as possible, Frieda placed the money on the coffee table and turned to leave.

However, just as she turned around, Aubree stopped her. "Have you come up with a solution yet?"

Frieda froze for several seconds before she registered what Aubree was talking about.

A few days ago, Aubree had asked her to think of a way to help the Pearson family get out of their predicament.

Nevertheless, the one behind everything was the Farwell family. Based on Frieda's capabilities alone, there was no way she could go against that family.

Troubled and exasperated, Frieda whipped her head around. "Aubree, I really don't have a way..."

"You useless piece of trash!" Aubree furiously got up from the couch and was about to say something more when a sharp voice suddenly rang out from upstairs.

"The nerve of you to come here!"

Gina, who had just woken up from her unconscious state, trembled with fury when she saw Frieda in the house.

Behind her, Samuel also wore an ashen expression.

Frieda was briefly taken aback but still habitually greeted the two of them, “Mr. and Mrs. Pearson...”

“Get out! We don’t know you! Don’t you ever dare appear in our house again!”

Gina scrambled down the stairs, stormed up to Frieda, and jostled her in an attempt to chase her out of the house.

Taking note of the two elders’ expressions, Frieda felt sorry for them. “That was Jonathan’s instruction. There was nothing I could do—”

Gina cut her off and screamed, “You guys are of the same family! You’re just as guilty as him! Get lost! I don’t want to see you Queens ever again!”

Chapter 1421

As Frieda was chased out of the house while wearing a reluctant expression, she was, in truth, rejoicing inwardly.

If I get thrown out by Aubree’s parents today, I can use that as an excuse to break all ties with Aubree. That’ll be wonderful!

Unfortunately, that was all wishful thinking on her part. Before long, Aubree went up to Gina and held her back.

“Mom, please don’t be like this. Frieda is unlike the rest of the Queen family. She’s my best friend. Look, she even gave us money!”

Aubree viciously shot daggers at Frieda before trying to gently coax her mother into forgiving Frieda.

Without a doubt, she hated the Queen family too.

Nevertheless, she knew she could not cut off contact with Frieda just yet because the latter was still of value to her.

Seeing Aubree standing up for Frieda, the emotionally unstable Gina turned to the former and berated, “Why are you still defending her? Have you forgotten how we ended up in this predicament?”

Aubree’s expression changed drastically. “I didn’t forget. But that’s exactly why we can’t chase Frieda away!”

With that, she forcefully dragged Gina back into the living room.

Before heading in, Aubree shot Frieda a look, signaling her to leave immediately.

Frieda's expression was gloomy as things did not turn out the way she wanted. She then spun on her heel and left.

Back inside the mansion, Gina felt such an immense surge of anger and despair that she could not formulate her thoughts into words. All she could do was bawl her eyes out, tears streaming continuously down her face.

It went without saying that Aubree was feeling inexplicably frustrated as well. She merely glanced at her mother and headed upstairs without giving any explanation.

The mansion, which was already dilapidated, instantly descended into a state of despair.

Meanwhile, Roxanne received a call from Jack again after busying herself with work for several days.

"Ms. Jarvis, do you remember the new drug that I mentioned earlier? The one I'm planning to research and develop?"

Jack's cheerful voice sounded from the other end of the line.

Roxanne, who was too overwhelmed by work, only recalled that they had previously talked about that subject after hearing Jack's reminder.

"Do you need my help?" She left the research area and found a quiet spot to take the call.

Collaborating with the Damaris family will greatly benefit the development of our research institute in Chanaea.

Jack hummed an acknowledgment and added, "It'd be wonderful if we could work together. I firmly believe that your research institute is my ideal business partner."

Needless to say, Roxanne would not let the opportunity slide. "It's my honor to continue working with the Damaris family."

Jack chuckled faintly when he heard her response. "We'll talk more when we meet. There are still some details that we need to discuss."

Roxanne agreed at once.

The two also decided on the time and venue of their meet-up before hanging up.

The moment the call ended, she received another call. This time, it was from Lucian.

Roxanne answered it without hesitation.

“Have you been very busy the past few days? Essie says that you’re hardly at home.”

The two rarely met since their return from Jadeborough.

Lucian went over to visit the kids several times, but Roxanne was always not around and would leave them in Linda’s care.

Only after hearing Lucian’s voice did Roxanne realize they had not met each other for quite some time.

On top of that, the time she spent with the kids had also dwindled lately.

A guilty look flitted across Roxanne’s eyes as that realization dawned upon her. “It’s all right. The research institute has got more projects recently, so we’re busier than usual. But it’ll get better soon.”

Lucian furrowed his brows slightly. “No matter how busy work is at the research institute, you shouldn’t overwork yourself. Don’t forget that the kids are still waiting for you at home.”

Having heard what the man said, Roxanne could not help but feel amused.

This man is more of a workaholic than I am. Yet he’s reminding me not to overwork myself?

However, at the same time, she also felt a warm current flowing through her heart.

Chapter 1422

Lucian had mentioned visiting Roxanne in the past few days, but she rejected him by saying she had work to do.

When he heard Estella mention that Roxanne was rarely home, he finally realized how hard she had been working recently.

“Are you free tomorrow at noon? Let’s have lunch together,” Lucian suggested.

He was determined to let Roxanne get some rest.

Roxanne fell silent for a few moments when she heard the time he mentioned before replying apologetically, “Sorry, I’m not free.”

Lucian frowned. “Why? Is there work that you have to complete?”

Roxanne scratched her nose sheepishly. "I've promised to meet up with Mr. Damaris for lunch tomorrow to discuss a project."

Jack Damaris?

Lucian's expression instantly darkened.

We've hardly been in contact these few days, and yet she's been contacting him?

What the elderlies from the nursing home said echoed in Lucian's mind once again.

After all, he and Roxanne did not work in the same industry. Plus, the woman was a workaholic, causing their quality time together to minimize.

Lucian felt threatened when he realized that.

Taking note of the man's silence, Roxanne softened her tone and explained, "I want to stay in Chanaea and be with Essie. Hence, I was thinking of expanding the research institute. A collaboration with the Damaris family would be of great help to the development of our research institute."

Naturally, Lucian would not stop her from expanding her career.

Although he was unhappy when he heard her say that, he had no choice but to relent. "All right. I'll invite you to lunch another day then. I hope you won't keep rejecting me."

Roxanne was surprised, for she did not expect him to give in that easily. Momentarily stunned, she agreed with a smile

After ending the call with Roxanne, Lucian called the three children and asked them for a favor.

The children were quick to agree.

The next morning, Roxanne saw the three children sitting on the couch when she went downstairs.

She was understandably surprised when she saw them. "What's wrong?"

Recently, she had been getting up earlier than usual to go to work, and the children would usually only wake up and bid her goodbye when she was about to leave.

I wonder why they woke up so early today.

The three kids flashed her adorable smiles. "Mommy, will you be busy today too?"

Roxanne patted their heads apologetically and said, "Sorry for not spending enough time with you these days. Let's all go out and have fun after I finish work."

The children nodded.

Estella, on the other hand, stared at Roxanne's neck with wide eyes.

Roxanne couldn't help frowning in confusion and reached up to touch her bare neck when she met Estella's gaze. "Essie, is there something on my neck?"

Pouting, Estella replied unhappily, "Mommy, why aren't you wearing the necklace?"

Roxanne was taken aback by the little girl's question. She then quickly returned to her senses and understood that Estella was referring to the necklace that Lucian gifted her.

"It's not convenient for me to wear jewelry when I work," she patiently explained to Estella.

However, the girl was stubborn. "Mommy, is it because you don't like that necklace?"

Roxanne subconsciously shook her head.

"Then it's because you don't like Daddy!" Estella pouted in aggrievement and lowered her head pitifully. "Mommy, please don't hate Daddy..."

Roxanne was utterly confused as she stared at Estella.

I've explained everything to her, but she doesn't seem to understand.

Since she was in a hurry to leave and didn't have the time to comfort Estella, she had no choice but to give in and went upstairs to wear the necklace.

A smile crept onto Estella's face when she saw Roxanne wear the necklace.

Chapter 1423

The reason Roxanne did not wear the necklace was that it was indeed inconvenient.

When she arrived at the research institute, she took off the necklace and kept it in the pocket of her jacket.

After bustling around for the entire morning, Jack suddenly called during lunchtime, telling her something cropped up. He asked if they could meet at night instead.

Roxanne did not think too much about it and agreed.

When evening came, Roxanne exited the research institute to find Jack waiting for her by the entrance.

"I'm so sorry. Something happened at the company this afternoon, and I couldn't leave," Jack apologized as soon as he saw her.

Unbothered, Roxanne smiled. "That's okay. Work is more important. Are we still going to the restaurant we reserved yesterday? You go ahead. I'll follow behind."

With that, she turned and made her way toward her car.

The look in Jack's eyes turned gloomy as he watched her approach her car without hesitation. He said nothing and got into his own car.

Both cars drove off from the research institute.

The restaurant was nearby the research institute, and the two of them arrived within ten minutes.

Jack had already reserved them a table near the window.

Roxanne took off her jacket, and in the process, the necklace fell out of the pocket and landed right beside Jack's feet.

Jack picked it up and glanced at it before shifting his gaze to the person before him. His words seemed to insinuate a deeper meaning as he commented, "This necklace doesn't seem like your style."

Roxanne was taken aback.

Indeed, if she were to buy a necklace for herself, she would not have purchased such a lavish design.

However, she didn't see a need to explain to Jack where the necklace came from.

As such, she merely grinned and did not reply.

However, judging from her expression, Jack could already tell who gave her the necklace. His lips curled into a wry smile before he handed the necklace to her.

"This necklace attracts too much attention. As people in the medical field, we like to keep a low profile. No wonder you would leave it in your pocket instead of wearing it."

Sensing that he was implying something, she stared at the person before her, puzzled.

Jack did not comment more on it as he changed the topic to the new drug they were about to develop. “Most of the medicinal herbs we’re using to develop the new drug are planted by the Damaris family. My grandpa also hopes we’ll use the Damaris family’s raw materials as the main ingredient as well.”

Roxanne’s focus was immediately diverted when they began talking business. She nodded in agreement and said, “That way, we can ensure better quality, too.”

She was a little worried after finishing her sentence. “But if our research institute will be in charge of the drug’s research and development, the supply of raw materials...”

I’m afraid the Damaris family would demand a hefty price for the raw materials.

Jack replied matter-of-factly, “The institute will only be responsible for the research and development. As for the medicinal herbs, we’ll provide sufficient supplies.”

Roxanne breathed a sigh of relief when she heard that.

After that, their discussion about the new drug became smoother.

Roxanne had to admit that as the leading family within the traditional medicine field, the Damaris family’s research in this area was indeed much more advanced as compared to the market.

Many of their ideas and concepts coincided with Roxanne’s.

The topic of the conversation between Roxanne and Jack gradually extended from the new drug’s research and development to the entire traditional medicine market.

Before they knew it, it was already late.

The two of them finally stopped chatting when Roxanne’s phone rang.

Benny was the one who called, asking when Roxanne would be returning home.

Roxanne quickly apologized to the boy and explained her situation. She then bid Jack goodbye before she got up and left.

Jack fumed in silence as he watched Roxanne’s retreating figure.

Even though she didn’t say anything, I could already guess that Lucian was the one who gave her that necklace! I can’t believe she’s taking it everywhere she goes. Just what in the world is she thinking?

Chapter 1424

It was already past nine at night when Roxanne reached home.

As she got out of the car, she felt anxious and guilty for leaving the children alone at home.

Hence, she hurried into the mansion, but as soon as she entered, she was greeted with the lively sounds of the children playing with each other and running around.

Roxanne stopped in her tracks and looked inside the living room, surprised.

Initially, she thought Madilyn had come over, but Lucian was sitting on the couch instead.

As if sensing her presence, the man turned around to look.

When their gazes met, Roxanne's shock intensified. "What are you doing here?"

Didn't we agree on meeting some other day?

Upon noticing her return, the children stopped playing and gathered around her, yearning for affection.

"Mommy, you came home so late! Daddy's been waiting for a long time!"

Roxanne ruffled the children's hair, but her gaze was still locked on Lucian.

Lucian sat on the couch, crossing his legs. The button on his collar was undone, and he seemed relaxed and comfortable.

Roxanne felt a strange but wonderful sensation surge within her heart when she thought of how he played with the children while looking like that.

Lucian got up from the couch and made his way toward her. His gaze swept past her neck.

His expression darkened when he noticed her bare neck. "Didn't you say your appointment was at noon?"

In the face of Lucian's gaze, Roxanne felt inexplicably culpable although she hadn't done anything wrong. "Mr. Damaris had something important this afternoon, so we had to change the time at the last minute."

Dissatisfaction flashed across Lucian's face when he heard that. "Is that how the Damaris family does their business? How can they change the appointment time just because they want to? If they're this casual when it comes to work, who would collaborate with them in the future?"

Roxanne did not know how to respond. She could only grin and change the topic nonchalantly. "Did you guys have dinner?"

Benny piped up, "We did! But I think Mr. Farwell hasn't eaten yet."

Linda had prepared dinner for the children before she left.

Lucian arrived while the children were eating, seemingly planning to freeload dinner.

Upon hearing that, Roxanne turned to look at Lucian for confirmation.

Lucian scrunched his eyebrows in tacit vindication.

Roxanne frowned and said with a sigh, "Why didn't you call me earlier?"

She patted the children's heads as a gesture for them to make way. Subsequently, she washed her hands before preparing food in the kitchen.

Verily, Lucian had lost his appetite after finding out that she and Jack had been out eating dinner until late at night.

He initially wanted to reject her offer of making dinner for him, but when he saw her getting busy in the kitchen for his sake, he swallowed his words.

Roxanne made some simple pasta.

Earlier, she had been engrossed in her conversation with Jack regarding medicine and did not eat much.

Since I'm preparing food for Lucian, I might as well make some for myself.

The children approached and demanded to have some when they smelled the pasta's delicious aroma. Roxanne could only scoop some pasta for each of them, too.

The sight of the family of five sitting around the dining table enjoying pasta at almost ten at night made for a heartwarming scene.

Only then did Roxanne remember to ask Lucian, "Why did you suddenly come over? Is there something wrong?"

Lucian glanced at her and replied, "I'm here to see Essie."

Roxanne nodded in understanding.

In the next second, Lucian spoke again. "Plus, I said I'll take responsibility. Since you haven't given me an answer, I can only take more extreme measures and court you a little more persistently."

Chapter 1425

Roxanne's ears turned red at the thought of what he was referring to when he mentioned the word "responsibility." Guiltily, she glanced at the children.

The children were in sync as they pretended not to hear the conversation and savored the food.

Roxanne heaved a sigh of relief and glared at Lucian, embarrassed. "I need more time to think about it!"

Lucian shrugged before flashing her a smile. "Then I'll just have to pursue you more persistently."

The children rejoiced inwardly when they heard their parents' conversation.

I wonder if Mommy has realized that her attitude toward Daddy has completely changed. With their fast progression, we'll become a real family very soon!

It was late after they finished dinner. Lucian did not stay much longer either. He said his goodbyes and left.

The smile on Lucian's face slowly disappeared and was replaced with an annoyed expression the moment he stepped out of Roxanne's place.

While eating, Roxanne had briefly told him about the collaboration between her research institute and the Damaris family.

The woman was all smiles as she told him about it, but he felt bitter.

Jack is obviously coveting my woman. But, just like what the elderlies had said, we're not working in the same industry. Even if I wanted to do something, I don't know how.

The more he thought about it, the more frustrated he got.

Therefore, he decided to pull over by the side of the road and took out his phone to call Jonathan.

Jonathan had just fallen asleep when his phone rang and woke him up.

Glancing at the caller ID, he noticed it was from Lucian and involuntarily recalled what had happened previously.

The last time Lucian had called him this late at night was to get him to take down Pearson Group, which cost him a good night's sleep.

I wonder what is it this time.

Jonathan was reluctant to pick up the call, but he was also afraid that Lucian would show up at his door. In the end, he had no choice but to bite the bullet and groggily answered the phone.

"Lucian, what's up?"

Jonathan could hear Lucian's deep voice and a few honks on the other end of the line. "I want to acquire the medicine company operating under the Damaris family. Do you know how I can do that?"

Jonathan froze. He was immediately snapped out of his groggy state before answering, "Is Farwell Group preparing to enter the medical industry?"

One thought popped into his mind. If Farwell Group ventures into the medical industry, won't Queen Group's status in the industry fall again?

Moments later, he realized the key point of Lucian's words.

He wants to take over the Damaris family's medical company!

Wide awake, he sat up in bed, his mind racing with various thoughts.

"Don't tell me you're doing this because of Roxanne. You're jealous of Jack, and in a fit of anger, you want to—"

Lucian interrupted his guess with displeasure, "Well? Do you have any ideas? Farwell Group doesn't have much experience in the medical industry, but the Damaris family has a highly established foundation, so I can only ask you for advice."

According to Roxanne, the Damaris family provides the medicinal herbs they need for the new drug. Roxanne will interact less with Jack if I acquire the medicinal herbs company under the Damaris family. In the future, I can provide her the medicinal herbs whenever she needs them. That way, we'll get to interact more with each other.

Judging from Jonathan's understanding of Lucian, he knew that his guess was correct although Lucian did not answer his question directly.

Naturally, he wanted to help his friend, but there was nothing he could do.

"It's as you said. The Damaris family's influence is highly established in the medical field. To be honest, I've also tried to acquire their company. However, no matter what I

did, they refused to sell me the company. I've even tried raising the price five times higher and tried befriending them, but they just won't let go."

Chapter 1426

The medicinal herb company owned by the Damaris family was mainly run by their own people, leaving outsiders nothing but envy.

Lucian went silent after hearing that.

However, that piqued Jonathan's interest. "Why? Is Roxanne working with the Damaris family again? Do you need my help with anything?"

Lucian managed to detect the hint of derision in his voice and snickered. "Go on and acquire the Damaris family's medicinal herbs company if you'd really like to help."

Jonathan rubbed his nose sheepishly and said, "Well, anything but that."

"Then there's nothing you can do. Bye."

Lucian hung up the call right after that.

Jonathan's face was full of reproach as he watched his phone screen go dark.

That was the second time Lucian had woken him up in the middle of the night and hung up after dropping a bomb on him.

It had taken him considerable effort to finally drift off to sleep.

Great. It looks like I won't be able to sleep at all tonight, either!

Jonathan lay back down in bed, scrolling through his phone as he attempted to fall asleep.

However, a trending post on social media immediately caught his attention.

The post read: Breaking news! Roxanne Jarvis, the ex-wife of Lucian Farwell, was spotted secretly meeting up with the eldest son of the Damaris family!

Jonathan initially thought his eyes were playing tricks on him as he crawled out of bed. He stared at the post for a few more seconds to confirm what he had read before he finally believed what he was seeing. Then, he clicked on the post to find out more.

There were several pictures posted in the thread. In the photos, Roxanne and Jack were sitting face to face at a table by the window of a restaurant, chatting and enjoying each other's company.

There were even a few angles that captured the gleam in Roxanne's eyes.

Even Jonathan couldn't help speculating about Roxanne and Jonathan's relationship at the sight of the photos. Then, he read the comments on the post.

Netizen A: Roxanne Jarvis? Didn't she just get back together with Mr. Farwell?

Netizen B: She didn't clarify the rumors regarding her and Mr. Damaris back then. Now, it seems like there really is something between them!

Netizen C: I guess this is the perk of being a pretty girl. She can get two handsome, wealthy men falling head over heels for her at the same time!

The comment section was full of slanderous remarks about Roxanne and speculations about her relationship with Jack and Lucian.

Jonathan grew increasingly alarmed as he continued reading the comments.

No wonder Lucian asked me that question just now.

If it were another family, they would have collapsed like the Pearsons or the Hightowers.

I have to say, Lucian has met a formidable opponent this time. I wonder what Roxanne thinks, though.

Sleep eluded Jonathan after he saw the post, and he immediately sent Lucian the link to the post.

Meanwhile, Lucian just got back to the Farwell residence.

Confused upon seeing the link Jonathan sent him, he asked: What's this?

Jonathan replied: Just click the link. Otherwise, you're going to regret it tomorrow morning.

Lucian furrowed his brow when he read Jonathan's reply. He clicked on the link while washing up.

The title of the post made him stop brushing his teeth abruptly.

Following that, his face sank when he saw the photos inside the thread.

He had to admit that both Jack and Roxanne were excellent doctors, and he believed Roxanne when she told him that they only met up to talk about medicine. However, he had never imagined that Roxanne would be so happy while she was with Jack.

She had never smiled at him like how she did with Jack.

Grabbing a towel, he wiped his face dry and walked out of the bathroom before sitting on his bed, scrolling through the comment section with a solemn look on his face.

His face turned dark as thunder as he read the myriad of speculations about Roxanne's relationship with Jack.

Chapter 1427

Cayden was fast asleep in his bed when a phone call roused him. He glanced at his phone and noticed that it was a call from Lucian.

He immediately sprung up from bed and took a few seconds to regain his senses before taking the call. "Mr. Farwell."

Lucian's cold voice rang out. "Contact the Public Relations Department and order them to publicize my relationship with Roxanne. I want everyone to know about us!"

Shocked by Lucian's order, Cayden was wide awake.

What happened? Why does Mr. Farwell suddenly want to publicize his relationship with Mrs. Farwell? And in the middle of the night, no less?

In a shaky voice, Cayden uttered, "Mr. Farwell, Mrs. Farwell's two children's identities are unverified. I'm afraid that public opinion is not going to go easy on Mrs. Farwell and the Farwell family if you publicize the relationship."

Lucian's face turned grim on the other end of the phone when he thought about Roxanne's two children.

He knew he had Archie and Benny to thank for the current stage of his and Roxanne's relationship.

If their biological father didn't turn up, he wouldn't mind treating the two boys as his own.

Besides, they were about the same age as Estella.

With that thought in mind, Lucian told Cayden, "Validate their identities, then."

Dumbstruck, he asked, "Are you saying..."

"From today onward, they're the Farwell boys whom Roxanne took away when we got divorced back then," Lucian stated plainly.

His tone was flat and impassive as if he was talking about something inconsequential.

However, Cayden was flabbergasted.

He was aware of Lucian's feelings for Roxanne, but he never thought that Lucian would go so far as to acknowledge her children and even claim them as his own.

What in the world happened?

Before Cayden could respond, Lucian's voice sounded again.

"I want everyone to be informed about this by tomorrow morning!"

He hung up right after.

Cayden was caught in a dilemma as he watched his phone screen go dark.

Do I really have to wake everyone in the Public Relations Department right now? In the middle of the night?

Then again, it didn't seem like he had any other choice.

Cayden called the person in charge of the Public Relations Department first before checking his social media. He wanted to search for the rumors spreading online about Lucian and Roxanne.

To his surprise, Roxanne's name popped up right after he opened his social media.

After checking the trending posts, he finally understood why Lucian had ordered him to do such a thing.

That was the second time Roxanne was entangled in such a widespread scandal with Jack ever since her return.

Moreover, the public opinion on the internet was very much against Roxanne.

Cayden finally understood that Lucian was mainly trying to protect Roxanne.

Then again, he reckoned that Lucian might have the intention to do so a long time ago.

Upon realizing Lucian's aim, Cayden started to act more proactively.

The next morning, the public opinion on the internet did a one-eighty.

Farwell Group issued a statement in the middle of the night, stating clearly that Roxanne was the mother of the Farwell family's daughter. Besides, her two children were also born alongside Estella. However, out of consideration of the little girl's health

issues, Roxanne decided to let the girl stay with the Farwell family and take care of the two boys alone.

The internet was abuzz with heated discussions following the statement.

One netizen commented: The two boys are Lucian Farwell's! No wonder Roxanne brought them back to the country!

Another commented: As expected, she's the legitimate wife. For Lucian Farewell to issue an official statement on behalf of the Farewell Group, looks like they're announcing their relationship to the public for real this time!

Chapter 1428

Soon, some recalled Roxanne's previous scandal after reading the statement.

One comment read: So what happened between Mr. Farwell and Aubree Pearson?

Another read: Isn't that obvious? Aubree is the homewrecker. She was the one who faked the rumors so Roxanne would give up on Mr. Farwell!

One netizen replied: But what about Roxanne and Jack? They had been involved in two scandals. Besides, they seem to be on good terms.

Another comment read: Isn't that obvious? They are both capable doctors. Besides, the recent medical consultations were all initiated by the Damaris family. It's normal for them to be on good terms!

Many online users expressed their disapproval of Aubree, while the rest offered their support and blessing to Roxanne and Lucian.

Now that Roxanne and Jack's relationship was clarified, everyone thought Roxanne and Lucian were the perfect couple.

One comment read: I heard that Roxanne had participated in various medical consultations recently. A while ago, someone ran into her at the nursing home in Jadeborough. Mr. Farwell was with her, too!

Another read: Really? Oh, Roxanne is such a kind and pretty angel. No wonder Mr. Farwell adores her!

One netizen commented: Oh, I believe in love again! They must live happily ever after!

The netizens' opinions were divided.

Roxanne and Lucian became the epitome of a perfect relationship for many, while Aubree, who used to be admired for her loving bond with Lucian, faced harsh criticism after her true colors were revealed.

It was only after reading the announcement that Jack realized he and Roxanne were secretly photographed yesterday.

After reading the comments praising Roxanne and Lucian's relationship, he threw his phone to the ground in a fit of rage.

I can't believe I didn't discover the perfect opportunity and ended up letting Lucian beat me to it. If I knew what happened last night, I would have used it to my advantage and manipulated public opinion to sow discord between Lucian and Roxanne! At the same time, I'll also be able to win Roxanne's heart!

Alas, it was too late now. Lucian had released the news to the public, and there was no way to turn back the clock.

Jealousy filled Jack's heart as he read the one-sided comments online, and a crazy idea soon popped up in his mind.

Even if Roxanne ended up choosing Lucian, I can figure out a way to make her stay by my side! They'd better not drive me up the wall!

Meanwhile, the boys discovered Roxanne and Jack's scandal online once it went viral. They also saw how the netizens criticized her.

Enraged, they stayed up all night, determined to stand up for Roxanne against the online haters.

At dawn, they were struggling to keep their eyes open yet still furious at the baseless speculations that had been made by those netizens about Roxanne.

Benny balled his hands into fists and asked, "Should I hack into the website and delete this post?"

I can then ban Mommy's name online so they won't be able to discuss her anymore. That way, Mommy won't be able to see the degrading comments. No one can criticize her online anymore!

Archie's expression was grim. "If you do that, people will only think Mommy is hiding out of guilt."

Hearing that, Benny harrumphed angrily and furrowed his brows to figure out another solution.

They were feeling helpless when they suddenly saw the notice released by Farwell Group.

Chapter 1429

Jonathan couldn't get a good night's sleep after reading the discussion online.

The following morning, as soon as he woke up, he grabbed his phone to check the public's reaction.

He nearly fell out of bed after reading the statement released by Farwell Group.

Am I dreaming? I've been aware for a long time that Essie is Roxanne's daughter, but what did I just read? Could it be true that the boys were born at the same time as Essie? It appears that they are the same age, and it would not be far-fetched to suggest that they were born together. Why didn't Lucian tell me anything? If this is true, why would Lucian have to work so hard to pursue her when they could just be together as a rightful family?

Jonathan was confused.

I won't be able to focus on work if I don't get answers.

With that thought in mind, he quickly washed up and drove straight to Farwell Group.

I must get answers from Lucian himself! If Lucian and Roxanne are indeed the parents of the boys, I am more than happy to present them with a generous monetary gift to commemorate the occasion. However, if that is not the case, Lucian is a lovesick fool. He accepted the boys as his own even though he isn't their biological father. This is highly commendable.

Soon, his car rolled to a stop before Farwell Group.

Jonathan hopped out of his car and strode into the building.

He stepped into the elevator and happened to bump into Cayden, who had just left the PR department.

Cayden's face appeared weary, with dark circles beneath his eyes indicating a lack of sleep. Despite his exhaustion, he managed to muster a polite smile as he greeted, "Mr. Queen."

Jonathan was busy thinking about the discussion online, so he merely gave Cayden an absent-minded nod. However, a thought occurred to him, and he spun around to give Cayden a perplexed look.

“What’s with that statement that your company released last night?”

Lucian obviously didn’t release that statement personally, so it could only be Cayden.

A wave of misery washed over Cayden when he heard the statement being mentioned.

He shook his head and said, “You should ask Mr. Farwell. I was just carrying out his orders.”

Jonathan wasn’t the only one who was curious, for the employees in the PR department kept asking the same questions last night.

Cayden could only tell them he had no idea.

Fortunately, Jonathan didn’t make things difficult for him and patted his shoulder in recognition of his hard work. “Thank you for your effort.”

Cayden exhaled a sigh of relief. “I was just doing my job.”

They had only exchanged a few words when the elevator arrived at the top floor.

Jonathan waited outside for Cayden to report his arrival before he headed into Lucian’s office.

Inside, he saw Lucian seated behind his desk, his face unreadable. It was almost as if the heated debates and controversy that had been raging online had nothing to do with him.

After he walked in, Lucian spared him a look and asked calmly, “Why are you here?”

Jonathan strode over to him and plunked himself down on the chair in front of the desk. “How dare you ask me that question? I want to know if the statement Farwell Group released last night was true. Are the boys yours?”

After asking that question, he stared at Lucian unblinkingly.

Lucian remained unfazed. “What do you think?”

Jonathan was baffled by his indifferent reaction. Carefully, he replied, “I don’t think so.”

“They aren’t mine,” Lucian answered at the same time.

Chapter 1430

Jonathan’s jaw dropped open in disbelief.

If they aren't his, why does he look so calm in comparison to me, who is freaking out?

"What are you thinking?" He shot Lucian an incredulous look. "If you want to help Roxanne by stopping the haters online, then you can just publicize your relationship with her and issue warning letters through your lawyer. Why would you do this?"

If it was revealed that the CEO of Farwell Group had claimed to be the biological father of his ex-wife's children even though they were not his, no one would believe it. It sounded pretty ridiculous, but that was exactly what Lucian did.

"If I only did that, the netizens will still assume the worst about the boys' father." Displeasure flashed across Lucian's eyes as he explained, "The kids are innocent. If she's willing to marry me, it will only be a matter of time before the boys become mine, too."

Lucian knew very well that the last thing Roxanne wanted was to drag the kids into her mess, so he was more than willing to solve the trouble for her.

He meant what he said.

The only way to stop the public from making malicious assumptions about Roxanne was to clarify the boys' background.

Hearing that, Jonathan finally concluded that his friend was indeed a lovesick fool.

It looks like we've underestimated him. Lucian doesn't fall in love easily, but when he falls in love with someone, he'll do anything for her! Wait...

Jonathan soon realized something. "Who is the father of the boys? He has never revealed himself. If he were to come across this statement..."

Lucian had made himself pretty clear through that statement. If the boys' father discovers it, he might use the secret to threaten Farwell Group. What should we do if that happens?

A vicious look appeared in Lucian's eyes when the man was mentioned.

He knew Jonathan's unease, for he had the same concern before releasing that statement.

However, that concern paled in significance compared to Roxanne being the recipient of malicious comments.

If the boys' biological father dared to show himself, Lucian would take the chance to make him regret abandoning Roxanne and the boys.

A sense of murderous intent hung in the air around Lucian as he contemplated the matter.

Jonathan shuddered in fear as he stared at Lucian.

In an icy voice, Lucian declared, "No matter who he is, I won't let him harm my family. I'll make him regret abandoning them!"

Jonathan grew worried. "What if Roxanne regrets it?"

He didn't make it clear what she would regret, yet they both were aware of what it was.

Roxanne had two boys with that man, so they could still have feelings for each other.

If Roxanne regretted her decision and chose to return to that man...

A chill ran down Jonathan's spine when he considered that possibility.

The temperature surrounding Lucian dropped to a freezing point, but he refused to dwell on that matter. "Perhaps he's already dead."

Otherwise, why hasn't he made an appearance all this while? Furthermore, Roxanne appears to be hesitant when it comes to discussing him.

Compared to the possibility that Roxanne would return to that man, Lucian would rather believe that he was dead.

Jonathan was taken aback by the sight of the dark look on his friend's face, but he didn't say anything.

This matter was complicated, so he knew Lucian must've considered everything carefully before coming to a final decision.

Anything else he said would only serve to add more to Lucian's plate.

Chapter 1431

Archie and Benny had barely finished reading the discussion online when Estella arrived at their door, leaving them no time to even shout for joy.

"Archie, Benny, Ms. Linda is here to give us a ride to school!" she yelled as she rapped firmly on the door to get their attention.

Estella might be staying with them, but Roxanne worked long hours recently, which meant that the little girl didn't get to see her after waking up in the morning.

Thus, Estella was dependent on the boys for companionship, eagerly looking forward to seeing them every morning.

This morning, however, the boys were still upstairs even after Linda arrived. Hence, Estella graciously offered to go up there and fetch them.

When Archie and Benny heard Estella's voice, they quickly closed the laptop, but they were unable to restrain the grins that were spreading across their faces.

"Why are you grinning?" Estella was confused, but that didn't stop her from grinning along with them.

Benny patted her head like an adult and replied secretively, "I won't tell you! You'll find out soon, anyway."

I can't believe Daddy released a statement saying we're his children! Does that mean we don't have to keep our identities a secret from him soon?

With that thought in mind, Benny turned to look at Archie expectantly.

Archie was well aware of what Benny was thinking. Despite the broad smile on his face, he wasn't as naive as Benny and was certain about his guess.

It looks like we're right to change our minds about Daddy. He loves Mommy dearly! I can't believe he did that to protect Mommy.

Linda drove the kids to the kindergarten.

During break time, Benny dragged Archie to the restroom to avoid Estella.

The two boys whispered in the male restroom.

"Archie, how did Daddy find out about our identities?" Benny asked innocently.

He assumed Lucian published that statement because the latter had discovered the truth about their identities.

However, after asking that question, he realized that Archie didn't seem happy as he was. Rather, Archie seemed annoyed.

Benny was baffled.

Looking at his brother's foolishly innocent demeanor, Archie responded, "Daddy doesn't know that we're his children yet."

Benny furrowed his brows. "Seriously? But it must be Daddy who released that statement! If he doesn't know, then why did he say that?"

Archie told him solemnly, "Because of Mommy!"

Benny tilted his head in confusion.

"If he doesn't explain our identities, the netizens will assume Mommy had us with another man. They will then insult her."

Archie was indeed Lucian's biological son, for he understood his father's intentions like the back of his hand. "By acknowledging us as his own, Daddy is making sure that Mommy will not be subjected to the malicious words of the online community. He is doing so to protect us all from any possible hurtful remarks."

Benny listened with his eyes wide open.

It was not until he listened to the explanation given by Archie that he finally understood the situation.

He's right. Only we, Mommy, and Aunt Madilyn know that we're Daddy's sons. If none of us say anything, Daddy will never find out. Daddy only did that to protect Mommy.

Even so, the boys were satisfied.

At least we can be sure that Daddy loves Mommy sincerely. They will end up together one day! I wonder if Mommy had seen the statement...

Estella, on the other hand, was confused to see the boys beaming all day.

Chapter 1432

The boys were exhilarated for nearly the whole day after seeing the announcement in the morning.

When night fell, Roxanne had just stepped into the house when Archie and Benny flung themselves at her in excitement. "Mommy!"

She was slightly perplexed by their gleeful demeanor. "What's going on? Did something nice happen in the kindergarten?"

As soon as she ended her sentence, she glanced at Estella and was puzzled. If something did happen in the kindergarten, why isn't Essie acting the same way as them?

Upon detecting his mother's confusion, Archie said, "Didn't you see the news on the internet?"

That confounded Roxanne even further. What news on the internet?

Excitedly, Benny added, "Mr. Farwell claimed that we're his children, just like Essie!"

Did I hear that right? Lucian said Archie and Benny are his children? How's that possible? Roxanne was stunned.

He could tell his mother was befuddled, so he grabbed the laptop, clicked on a public forum, and showed it to her.

Farwell Group's announcement was still trending at the top of the website.

Roxanne clicked on the announcement and read its content.

When she finished perusing the announcement, she widened her eyes in shock. Lucian really did say that!

"Are we really Mr. Farwell's children, Mommy?" Benny feigned innocence as he stared at his mother, pretending he had no clue about his background.

If Mommy says yes, then we'll be able to call him "Daddy" in the future!

The little boy was over the moon at the thought of that possibility.

Roxanne looked away, avoiding her son's gaze. "There's a reason for him to say that."

She was indirectly answering in the negative.

Disappointment surfaced in Benny's eyes as he asked, "If that's not the case, why did he say that?"

Her line of sight landed on the screen again. After seeing that announcement and the netizens' comments, I'm absolutely certain Lucian doesn't know the boys' actual background. Otherwise, he would've demanded an explanation from me, which he didn't. I have a pretty good guess as to why he said that, though. He just wanted to protect my reputation after seeing unsavory remarks about me. Still, I'm shocked he's willing to do this for my sake.

Roxanne had to admit that when Benny asked her that question, she felt the urge to reveal the whole truth to him. However, this matter had stayed hidden as a secret for so many years that she was afraid to tell him the truth. She didn't know if the boys would blame her when they learned the truth. Also, she had no idea whether Lucian would reprimand her for selfishly keeping this a secret all these years.

“Okay then.” Since his mother didn’t want to talk about the matter, Benny sensibly changed the topic instead of pressing on. “Mr. Farwell’s saying that because he wants to help you, right?”

A wide, innocent smile returned to his face.

When Roxanne met his eyes, she nodded while wearing a complicated expression, for she couldn’t bear to disappoint the boy by shaking her head in denial again.

His smile grew even more sincere. “Mr. Farwell treats you well, Mommy! It will be so nice if he’s our daddy. You should accept his proposal, Mommy!”