

ABANDONED 201

Chapter 201

Colby noticed that Roxanne was scrolling through her Twitter feed for a while and asked out of curiosity, "Are there any hot topics that are worth keeping up with?"

Hearing that, Roxanne gathered her thoughts and gave him a nonchalant smile. "Nothing much. I'm just looking at some gossip."

Based on her current relationship with Lucian, his news could only be taken as gossip.

Colby wanted to strike up a casual conversation with her and continued asking, "What is the gossip about? Did something happen to a celebrity recently?"

Roxanne didn't expect that he would probe further. She was momentarily stunned and answered vaguely, "It's not a celebrity. I forgot their names and just clicked on it casually."

Once she finished speaking, she then changed the topic as if nothing had happened and didn't wait for

Colby's reply. "The recent project is quite demanding, isn't it? I'm already feeling tired from it."

Colby raised his brows subtly and went along with her change in topic.

Roxanne got off work early that day, and as Colby sent her there, she reached the kindergarten just

when they were done for the day. Archie and Benny scrambled out of the doors.

At a glance, Roxanne immediately found Archie and Benny among the swarm of children and went over to bring them back.

In the crowd, Estella looked at her pitifully.

When Roxanne met her gaze, she felt a pang of inexplicable guilt in her heart.

However, when she recalled the news that she had just seen, she genuinely didn't want to face Lucian again.

Thus, she could only harden her heart and bend down to touch Estella's head, saying, "Essie, can you wait for Daddy with Ms. Ward? I sll have some things to do, so I have to go back quickly."

Once she finished her words, she didn't dare to look into Estella's eyes again. She hurriedly got up as if she was running away and brought Archie and Benny into Colby's car.

Archie and Benny sll had some impression of Colby, and they greeted him politely when they got into the car, "Hello, Mr. Galloway."

Colby gave them a warm smile. He started the car and slowly headed toward Roxanne's house.

As Archie and Benny sat in the back row, they looked at Colby's face through the rearview mirror and

fell into deep thought.

Previously, they thought that Lucian wasn't bad and made Roxanne choose again.

But now that Lucian was getting married to someone else, they thought that Colby wasn't bad too.

On the other hand, when Cayden saw the news, he recognized the woman in the photo at first glance.

After he saw the headlines, he immediately contacted Lucian.

"Mr. Farwell, this news... Do you want us to make a clarification on it?"

At that moment, Lucian was busy with his work. Hearing Cayden's words, he looked up at the phone that Cayden passed to him.

When he saw the contents on the screen, his brows furrowed slightly.

He didn't even realize that they had been photographed.

In the picture, the two of them indeed seemed like a loving couple.

When he saw the comments below it, Lucian bit his lower lip.

After not receiving a reply for some time, Cayden was puzzled and urged him, "Mr. Farwell?"

Lucian retracted his gaze from the phone and returned Cayden his phone indifferently. “There’s no need for that. Just leave it.”

If he made a clarification, it would inevitably drag Roxanne into the mess.

Recently, Roxanne had been wanting to cut all ties with him. Therefore, she certainly would not want to be involved in such a scandal.

Hearing that, Cayden hesitated for a moment before agreeing to it. Seeing that Lucian had no other orders after waiting for a while, he quietly retreated from the office,

When he heard the door to the office being gradually closed, Lucian paused his work, got up, and headed to the floor-to-ceiling window.

By then, Roxanne should have seen the news as well. However, he didn’t know how she would react to it.

Chapter 202

Seeing that it was almost the end of the day at the kindergarten, it was only then that Lucian gathered his thoughts and drove toward the kindergarten.

Based on Estella’s habit, he thought that he might even see Roxanne at the kindergarten,

When he reached the kindergarten, he realized that he wasn’t that late. However, Roxanne came From

earlier than him, and Archie and Benny had already left as well.

Estella had the habit of waiting with Archie and Benny for Lucian to fetch her. But now, she was all alone, holding onto Pippa's hand timidly.

"You're here, Mr. Farwell." As Pippa knew Estella's situation, she was very cautious when dealing with Estella.

Seeing that Lucian finally came, Pippa heaved a sigh of relief inwardly.

Lucian nodded and took Estella over from Pippa.

After they got into the car, Estella was still in low spirits.

Lucian frowned and couldn't help but ask, "Why are you alone today?"

Estella knew what he was trying to ask. She lowered her gaze, and there was a hint of grievance in her soft voice as she said, "Ms. Jarvis came to pick Archie and Benny up."

When he heard that, Lucian's gaze darkened slightly.

Although Roxanne wanted to distance herself from him, he knew that she always had a soft spot for Estella.

When Estella saw Roxanne, there would be no way that she would let the latter leave so easily as well.

Since the situation was out of the norm that day, the only reason for it would be that Roxanne saw the news.

So is she avoiding me because she saw the news?

Thinking of that, Lucian felt an inexplicable sense of displeasure deep down.

Throughout the entire journey, the atmosphere in the car was depressing:

Once they reached home, they saw that there was someone sitting in the living room. At that, Lucian couldn't help but furrow his brows slightly. "Mom, what are you doing here?"

After Sonya left the café in the afternoon, she initially wanted to find Lucian for a chat at his office. But after giving it some thought, she decided not to interrupt him at work and headed to the manor to wait for him to come back.

She waited for an entire afternoon but never had she expected that he would have such an attitude the moment he stepped in.

Sonya, who was initially displeased, became even more upset. "What's wrong? Do you mean that I can't come over? Do you wish that I don't ever come here again so that you can hide things from us

and marry Roxanne?”

Upon hearing that, Lucian’s expression turned dark, and he instructed Catalina, “Bring Essie upstairs.”

Noticing the tension building up between the two, Catalina didn’t dare to waste a single second and

hurriedly brought Estella upstairs.

However, Estella slowly trudged up the stairs. Just now, I think I heard Grandma mention Ms. Jarvis. Is Daddy going to marry Ms. Jarvis? But the news clearly said that Daddy was getting married to Ms. Pearson...

Estella was slightly puzzled, but she felt that if Lucian was going to marry Roxanne, it would be a

dream come true.

Meanwhile, Lucian remained expressionless as he sat down on the single couch opposite Sonya.

“What’s with the news today? Aren’t you going to explain it to me?” Sonya questioned him coldly as

she suppressed her anger.

As soon as she said that, she saw Lucian looking up and meeting her gaze coldly.

Their eyes met, and Sonya felt an oppressive aura surrounding her, causing her to restrain her rage.

There was a hint of mockery in Lucian’s voice as he refuted, “Did you not give me an explanation as to

why the news of my marriage with Aubree got out as well? Besides, you didn't even ask for my opinion."

He had always known that Sonya wanted him to be with Aubree. However, never would he expect that she would resort to such harsh means.

After the news of i got out, Lucian knew that he could no longer remain silent.

Sonya felt a lump in her throat, and her expression changed. Although she felt rather guilty deep down, she still replied stubbornly, "It has already been so many years since your marriage contract with Aubree. The two of you were going to be together sooner or later. I'm just announcing it for you ahead of time. Besides, you humiliated Aubree at Old Mr. Queen's birthday celebration previously, and we ought to make it up to her."

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Hearing Sonya's words, Lucian pursed his lips mockingly. "If I don't intend on doing so, then how do you plan on settling Aubree?"

A glint of shock flashed across Sonya's eyes before it soon turned into rage. "What are you saying?

How many years has Aubree waited for you? How much has she sacrificed for you? Now you're telling

me that you don't have such intentions? The marriage contract between our two families has been circulating for so many years. Have you ever thought of how others would view us if we call it off?"

Lucian coldly questioned her back, "Why do you think I haven't provided any response to this throughout the six years? I already told you that I don't need you to interfere in this. I will settle it myself!"

In other words, he was certain that he never intended on fulfilling the marriage contract with Aubree.

Having understood his intentions, Sonya's expression changed slightly.

She had heard the Pearson family mention this before that Lucian personally told Aubree about his decision.

Back then, she was full of doubts and thought that with Lucian's personality, he wouldn't let the marriage contract exist for so long if he didn't have the intentions of marrying Aubree.

But now, she was personally hearing those words from Lucian.

Sonya clenched the armrest of the couch tightly, her face turned dark. "If you don't plan on fulfilling the marriage contract with Aubree, then what are you planning to do? Are you going to marry Roxanne into our family again? I think you must have forgotten what she did back then!"

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At the mention of Roxanne, Lucian knitted his brows again but didn't respond.

"Back then, you would have been with Aubree long ago if it weren't for her! Our family wouldn't have been treated as such a joke as well! She left without saying goodbye, but leaving behind a divorce agreement, and even abandoned Estella, causing such a young child to be sent back to the country. She even turned our family upside down. I will never allow a woman like her to ever step foot into our family again!"

At the thought of Roxanne, Sonya felt her blood boil. She slammed the armrest on the couch forcefully.

"I don't care about what you think now. If you want to marry Aubree, fine. If you don't, then so be it!

Anyway, I've already spread the news of your marriage with Aubree. The Farwell family will never go back on our word. Your marriage with Aubree is set!"

With that, she didn't give Lucian the opportunity to refute and glanced at Estella's room upstairs, continuing in a softer tone, "After Aubree hit Essie last time, she hadn't had the chance to properly apologize to Essie. I'll arrange for them to spend more time with each other during this period to

improve their relationship. Essie has to accept Aubree as her mother eventually.”

Seeing how obstinate his mother was, Lucian furrowed his brows.

After all, it was his marriage, but they had already reached the stage of discussing the engagement ceremony before he could even give his opinions.

Sonya was even willing to forgive Aubree after her beloved granddaughter was hit.

He didn't know how much Aubree was involved in the whole fiesta.

Seeing that he remained silent, Sonya took it that he was agreeing to it, and her anger dissipated.

“Also, the woman in the picture on the news today is Roxanne, right?”

Lucian remained silent.

“I'll just take it that the news today was an accident. The news of your marriage with Aubree has already spread. I don't care what you think, but you'd better keep a distance from Roxanne. Be more mindful of how your actions can impact the two families.”

Seeming to remember something, Sonya frowned, adding, “And get that woman to keep to herself. I

don't wish for there to be a repeat of the news today! The woman in the picture can only be Aubree!”

Before Lucian had the chance to reply, Sonya got up and strode off.

Chapter 204

After sitting in the living room for a while, Lucian instructed Catalina to get Estella down for dinner.

Estella had been staying in her room obediently, thinking about what Sonya just said. She was full of anticipation as she fantasized about what it would be like if Roxanne became her mother.

During dinner, she couldn't help but ask, "Daddy, are you going to marry Ms. Jarvis?"

She then gazed at him expectantly.

Ever since Estella came back, she only said a few words every time although she spoke quite a lot with him. That was the first time that she said such a long sentence to him.

Lucian was taken aback before he realized what Estella was asking. As he thought about Estella's attitude toward Roxanne, he was curious and asked, "Do you like her?"

As expected, Estella nodded.

I like Ms. Jarvis the most!

When he saw the joy on Estella's face the moment she mentioned Roxanne, Lucian frowned slightly.

"What do you like about her?"

After all, Estella had only spent a pitifully little amount of time with Roxanne, but she seemed to be very

dependent on the latter. Besides, she seemed even closer to Roxanne than Lucian.

Lucian couldn't seem to think of an explanation for that and could only take it that it was because of their mother-daughter bond.

Estella hadn't thought of that question before. Now that Lucian asked her, she tilted her head and thought about it seriously.

After a pause, Estella counted on her fingers and answered seriously, "Ms. Jarvis is beautiful, gentle, cooks well and she is very nice to me..."

Listening to her response, Lucian was filled with mixed emotions as he asked, "But Ms. Jarvis still has her two sons. Do you want them to stay with us too?"

To that very day, Archie and Benny's existence still bothered Lucian.

Although they were obedient, and Lucian was very fond of them, he felt bad for them every time he

thought about how their father had heartlessly abandoned both the boys and their mother.

On the other hand, Estella simply wore an innocent expression, and her eyes sparkled. "Archie and

Benny are very nice to me, and I like them a lot too!"

I like Ms. Jarvis, and I also like Archie and Benny!

With that, she then remembered her initial question and looked at Lucian expectantly. "So, are you going to marry Ms. Jarvis, Daddy? I want Ms. Jarvis to be my mommy!"

If not, why would Daddy ask me so many questions about Ms. Jarvis?

As she thought about that, Estella became even more 'hopeful and thought that Roxanne was definitely going to be her mom.

But why is Daddy taking such a long time to answer me?

Estella's eyes were filled with confusion, and the anticipation in her heart died down slightly. "Daddy?" she cautiously urged him.

Lucian snapped back to his senses, and his gaze darkened as he avoided Estella's eyes. "No."

At least not for the time being

Refusing to give up, Estella frowned, and she recalled what Sonya previously said. "But Grandma said that—" That Daddy wanted to marry Ms. Jarvis.

Before Estella could finish her words, Lucian interrupted her in a low voice, "It was just a misunderstanding."

Lucian didn't wish to continue with the conversation and filled Estella's plate with food. "Let's eat. Rest early after you're done eating."

Estella got excited and talked so much previously just because she thought that Lucian was going to make Roxanne her mom.

But now that she heard his response, she lowered her gaze dejectedly and lost her appetite. She forced herself to finish the food on her plate before she jumped down from her chair and went back to her room without saying a word.

Upon seeing how dejected Estella seemed, Lucian knitted his brows and fell silent.

Chapter 205

On the other side. Roxanne brought the kids home. She was hesitating whether to invite Colby inside for a while.

Colby could see her hesitation. Being a gentleman, he smiled and said, "It's getting late and I should head back. See you tomorrow."

Roxanne sighed in relief. She didn't ask him to stay. Instead, she smiled and said her goodbyes.

After watching his car drive off, she held the hands of the two children and led them through to the

door.

Lysa had already prepared dinner. Seeing that they had returned, she served the food.

Roxanne treated Lysa like her family. During meals, she would eat at the table with them.

During their meal, Lysa smiled and asked, “Ms. Jarvis, have you seen the news today? You and Mr.

Farwell...”

Lysa came across the news in the afternoon earlier, The media had accidentally mistaken Roxanne for

Lucian’s fiancée. While she found it hilarious, she also felt like the two of them looked good together.

Just as she wanted to tease Roxanne, the latter interrupted her.

“It’s nothing but a misunderstanding, so just act like you saw nothing.”

Roxanne looked down when she spoke. At the same time, she served food for the two children.

Seeing that she didn’t want to talk about it, Lysa took the hint and said no more. She changed the topic

and started to tell stories about the children in kindergarten.

On the other hand, Archie and Benny were intrigued by her words. However, they did not show it. They

ate the food that and answered Lysa’s questions obediently.

They struggled to make it through dinner. That night, the two of them were not in their usual mood to

play Lego. Instead, they rushed back to their room.

Roxanne's heart could not help but sink slightly. She knew that the children were aware of the news.

Inside the room, Archie and Benny intuitively opened up their social media and searched for Lucian's name.

Soon enough, they saw the trending articles.

When they clicked on it, they saw two pictures that appeared in almost every article.

The two children did not need to zoom in to see that the woman in the pictures was their mother.

However, the titles of the articles stated that it was Lucian and his fiancée.

The two children were confused for a moment.

From what they knew, that man was supposed to marry someone else. Why would the news post pictures of Mommy and claim that she's his fiancée?

Regardless, even from their points of view, the pictures showed that Lucian treated their mother very well.

They thought back to the night that Roxanne had fallen sick, and how Lucian had cared for her. His

attitude back then was even better than what was shown in the photos.

Beneath the articles, all the comments praised how well Lucian treated Roxanne. There were also a lot of comments saying they looked very compatible.

The children were slowly wavering.

After reading through the articles, Archie and Benny could not help but carry their laptops and run to their mother for answers. “Mommy, are you getting together with Mr. Farwell?”

Roxanne took a look at the articles on the screen. She couldn’t help but frown.

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She was worried Archie and Benny would misunderstand. That was why she didn’t want Lysa to say too much during dinner. Unexpectedly, the two children decided to investigate the matter themselves.

Archie and Benny looked at Roxanne with their eyes wide.

“No. His fiancée is Aubree Pearson. You guys have met her. The news reports are wrong.” After a moment of silence, Roxanne forced herself to suppress her discomfort and give the two children an explanation.

Hearing that, Archie and Benny exchanged a glance with each other. Archie nodded his head obediently and said nothing more.

Meanwhile, Benny felt a slight pang of disappointment in his heart.

He thought that he was finally going to have a father.

Chapter 206

After Sonva had a talk with Lucian, she returned home. The first thing she did was call the Pearson residence.

After the news was released, Aubree refused to go into the office and hear all the employees gossip about how good Lucian looked with Roxanne in the photos. Thus, she decided to stay home for the next two days.

When Sonya called, Aubree was right next to Gina,

“I’ve already spoken to Lucian. Tell Aubree not to worry. This won’t happen again. Just rest easy and wait for the engagement!” said Sonya over the phone.

Gina glanced over at Aubree and gestured for her to answer.

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Aubree adjusted her mood. In a polite tone, she said, "Thank you, Mrs. Farwell."

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Hearing her voice, Sonya was stunned. Guilt washed over her heart when she thought about how

Lucian had mentioned he had no intention of fulfilling the marriage contract with her. "Aubree, I'm sorry you have to go through this."

Aubree's expression turned ugly. However, her words remained polite. "I'm fine, Mrs. Farwell. As long as I can be with Lucian, I am willing to bear with all these."

Sonya felt bad for her. "Don't worry. No matter what, I will only acknowledge you as my daughter-in-law. You can forget about the news yesterday. Everyone thinks the woman in the photo is you anyway, so no one will say anything."

Aubree responded with more thanks.

After some small talk, the call ended.

Aubree could finally let her heart down.

However, when she recalled how intimate Lucian and Roxanne looked in those two pictures, she couldn't help but feel her anger rise.

Previously, during Alfred's birthday celebration, Roxanne had already humiliated her once.

Now, she almost ruined Aubree's engagement.

It seems like I have to teach that b*tch a lesson. She needs to be put in her place!

After thinking about it all night, Aubree went to wait by the entrance of the kindergarten the next day.

She watched as Roxanne dropped Archie and Benny off. When she turned around to go back to her car, Aubree quickly followed behind her. She strode over and opened Roxanne's front passenger seat door.

Roxanne automatically assumed it was Lucian. She raised an eyebrow and looked over. When she saw who it was, her face turned solemn. "What do you think you're doing, Ms. Pearson?"

Aubree smirked. "Nothing. I just wanted to have a chat with you. Are you free now, Ms. Jarvis?"

Roxanne could already guess what she wanted to talk about. With a frown, she answered, "Sorry, but I'm busy. I don't have time to chat."

"You don't even know what I want to say, but you're in such a hurry to reject me. Could it be that you're

feeling guilty, Ms. Jarvis?" Aubree asked mockingly.

Hearing that, Roxanne's face stiffened. She turned to meet Aubree's eyes. "I have work in the morning, so I'll only be free at noon. Since you're the one who suggested a talk, you can pick a place. I'll be there."

The only reason she rejected Aubree was that she felt like she had already drawn a clear line with Lucian. She was not interested in being drawn into Aubree and Lucian's relationship again.

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However, considering the fact that Aubree had taken things that far, she would only get worse in the future.

Roxanne decided she might as well just clear things up now.

Seeing that she had agreed, Aubree no longer pestered her. She opened the car door and got down.

Watching her figure disappear from her line of sight, Roxanne suppressed the confusion in her heart.

She started the car and headed toward the research institute.

These two days were a critical period for the project she was handling. Thus, she was completely swamped with work the entire morning.

By the time she got done and took a look at her phone, she realized it wasn't long before it was time for her to meet Aubree at the designated time.

Roxanne did not delay. She quickly got into her car and set off.

Chapter 207 Despite her speedy driving,

Aubree was already sitting there waiting when she reached the café. "You're a very busy woman, Ms.

Jarvis. I have to wait such a long time just to meet you."

The moment they met, Aubree lashed out with a sarcastic comment. Roxanne sat down opposite her.

"My apologies. I was very busy this morning.

I am sorry you had to wait long, Ms. Pearson." Even after that, she could tell that Aubree still wanted to mock her further. Roxanne was not in the mood to waste more time with her.

"Ms. Pearson, as you can tell, I am quite a busy person. If you have anything to say, just get straight to the point. I still have to rush back to work."

Hearing that, Aubree swallowed her words.

She couldn't help but choke up as her expression turned cold.

"Don't you know what I want to say? My engagement with Lucian has been public news for a very long

time.

I doubt you haven't seen it!" Roxanne had already expected she would say something along those lines.

Her facial expression did not waver. "I have seen it. I wish you two lifelong happiness."

"Roxanne Jarvis!" When Aubree saw how chill Roxanne's attitude was, she couldn't help but retort,

"There's only the two of us here Why are you still putting on an act?

Since you already knew about my engagement with Lucian, how will you explain the news headlines yesterday?"

It was just as Roxanne had suspected. Disdain filled Roxanne's heart, but her face remained neutral.

"Shouldn't you be very happy to read yesterday's headlines?

Everyone is talking about how considerate Mr. Farwell is being toward his fiancée. Isn't that exactly

what you want?" Anyhow, she had no intention to step forward with the truth.

To an outsider's eye, the woman in the photo was Aubree. Aubree's face was still icy.

She clenched her fists in an attempt to soothe the anger in her heart.

She stared frostily at Roxanne and replied, "I don't need those two photos to prove how well Lucian treats me.

For the past six years, he has loved me only!

If it wasn't for you, the person who married him would have been me too!" Roxanne was indifferent to her words.

Aubree was telling the truth. Six years ago, Lucian himself had said that the only woman he intended to marry was Aubree. Roxanne still remembered that very clearly.

"Six years ago, you came in between Lucian and me. We missed out on so much time together because of you." Aubree's face tensed.

"Now, everyone in Horington knows about the engagement between Lucian and me.

Since you know about it, I hope you take better care of your reputation and stay away from him.

Six years ago, you were the other woman.

I hope you don't repeat that mistake. We are both women, but I feel ashamed for you!" Roxanne frowned.

"Instead of spending your time criticizing me, why don't you use that time on Mr. Farwell?" Six years

ago, it was her ignorance that made her fall for Lucian.

However, Lucian was the one who kept trying to get closer to her at the moment.

Seeing that she was still in denial, Aubree's tone lowered. "I am here to warn you out of kindness. Six

years ago, you might not have cared about your reputation.

Now, you have two children, so you should take them into consideration.

If they knew their mother was the third party in someone else's marriage, I wonder what they will think!"

Initially, Roxanne had intended to listen to what Aubree had to say.

She thought that maybe they could get past the conflict between them. However, she never expected

Aubree to bring Archie and Benny into the conversation.

Immediately, Roxanne's face turned sour. "Ms. Pearson, you can rest assured that I have no interest in

turning back.

However, I can't control how Mr. Farwell feels. I suggest you put more time and effort into pleasing Mr.

Farwell instead."

With that, Roxanne stood up to leave without giving Aubree a chance to answer.

Chapter 208 Roxanne left

The café at a much earlier time than she expected. After getting in the car, Roxanne gripped the steering wheel. For a long time, she didn't start the car.

Her mind was a complete mess. After being overseas for six years, she thought that she had gotten over her past. To her surprise, when Aubree brought it up to her, her mood was still affected. When she married Lucian six years ago, she did not even have any idea who Aubree was.

If she had... When she recalled how foolishly in love she was with Lucian back then, she mockingly bit her lower lip. There was a possibility she would have insisted on marrying him anyway.

However, the happiness she felt when she married Lucian was equalized to how miserable she felt when she left him.

Who would have thought that after a long time being married, they had only fulfilled their duties as husband and wife once after she drugged him. Not to mention, the next morning, she left with her heart broken.

Thinking back to it, Roxanne felt she was so pitiful and hideous back then. Even worse, six years had passed, and still, she was the thorn between Lucian and Aubree's relationship. She still remembered

how Lucian had sworn he wanted to marry Aubree.

Yet, for some reason, it had dragged on for six years. Their relationship remained stuck at the engagement stage.

The way he treated her was vastly different from six years ago. Roxanne was getting more confused about what went on in his mind. After being lost in her thoughts for a while in her car, Roxanne realized that time was running out. She slowly came back to reality, started her car, and headed for the research institute.

She arrived just in time for her to clock back into work. Just as she got out of her car, she ran into Colby. He had just returned from having lunch outside. "Dr. Jarvis, did you have a lunch appointment?"

Colby smiled and walked with her to the research facility.

Roxanne thought of her unpleasant experience earlier that afternoon. She shook her head. Colby looked at her for several seconds. After some hesitation, he asked, "You seem like you're in a bad mood. Did your lunch appointment not go well?" Roxanne couldn't help but feel taken aback.

She didn't think she would be so easy to read. When he saw how she looked a little surprised, Colby

knew he had guessed it right. With a chuckle, he changed the topic. "Since you're upset, why don't you head home earlier? I'll handle the project. You should take the time to relax."

Roxanne declined. "I can't let something small like this affect my work."

Hearing that, Colby glanced at her in confusion. Slowly, he said, "Dr. Jarvis, do you not trust me? All this while, everyone has seen how hard you've been working on this project.

Many employees were also forced to work overtime because of that. There's bound to be some complaints. Why don't you give everyone a day off today? You can use the time to readjust your mood.

I'm sure it'll help you become more efficient with work later on too." Roxanne couldn't argue with his reasoning. She was used to the tough working life overseas.

After coming back, she just assumed that everyone could be like her.

However, she forgot the fact that that was her first time working together with these employees.

For the past two days, their research progress had been slowing down. Thinking of that, Roxanne nodded at Colby appreciatively.

"Thank you for the reminder. Since that's the case, rest early today."

At noon, all the workers in the research institute got off work early. Roxanne headed straight to the

kindergarten to pick Archie and Benny up.

Because of her earlier conversation with Aubree, she had no idea how to face Estella. Hence, when she picked Archie and Benny up, she did not dare to look at Estella at all.

Instead, she left straight away.

Chapter 209

“Are you in a bad mood, Mommy?” Archie and Benny looked at her with concern.

Roxanne was taken aback. She thought she had hidden her emotions well in front of her kids, but they saw right through her ruse.

“Why did you ask?” she asked nonchalantly, glancing at them in the rearview mirror.

Archie’s face creased in bewilderment. “You ignored Essie just now. Did Mr. Farwell annoy you?”

The slightly unsettled feeling gnawed at the pit of her stomach at the mention of Lucian.

She must have been really close with him during that period of time for Archie to have misunderstood

Benny added, “Essie almost cried.”

Roxanne drew her brows together in a frown, and her heart wrenched as she could only imagine

Estella’s pitiable face without seeing it for herself.

She wished she could apologize to Estella.

Aubree's words further solidified her inclination to cut all ties with Lucian.

She didn't want to interfere with the kids' friendship, but she really wanted to limit her contact with Lucian.

Roxanne stole a casual peek at them and said, "Come out earlier after your classes end. I'll be busy for the time being, so Ms. Lane will pick you up."

Archie and Benny didn't get the desired answer and exchanged puzzled glances before nodding obediently.

The doorbell rang shortly after Roxanne led them inside the house. She froze before turning to answer the door.

Madilyn stood on the other side with a pinched expression. She opened her mouth, but she noticed

Archie and Benny inside, and the words caught in her throat.

"What is it?" Roxanne turned sideways to let her pass.

Madilyn sucked in a deep breath, holding on to her temper by the thinnest of threads. "I'll tell you in a

bit.”

Roxanne didn't press her for answers and invited her to stay for dinner.

Madilyn only began her rant when Archie and Benny had gone upstairs after dinner. “I saw the news yesterday. What was Lucian trying to do?”

Roxanne was caught off guard by the question and didn't know how to respond.

“He shouldn't have looked for you after deciding to marry Aubree!” Madilyn slapped her hand against the table. “I thought he had turned over a new leaf when he sought you out. I never expected to see the news.”

Madilyn had always known about Lucian and Aubree's betrothal, and she didn't mind when it was publicized the last time.

Roxanne and she lived next to each other, and she noticed that Lucian had been visiting Roxanne more frequently. She tried to find an excuse for him the last time when he and Aubree's betrothal was made public, thinking that he didn't mean it.

But yesterday's news had angered her greatly.

If Lucian wanted to treat Aubree well, why would he look for Roxanne then? He's such a scumbag.

Bitterness ate Roxanne's already troubled heart. "He was set to marry Aubree from the get-go. Don't overthink things."

Madilyn stared at her best friend in shock. The person who should be the most affected by the news is her, yet here I am, making her feel worse with my tirade.

She leashed her irritation and shot out of her seat, grabbing Roxanne's arm. "Come on, we're going out for drinks and won't be back until we're both drunk as a skunk. Forget all about those low-life men!"

Chapter 210

Roxanne was worried about leaving Archie and Benny at home, but Madilyn assured her that she had informed Lysa beforehand.

Soon, both ladies were standing outside the entrance of a bar, and Roxanne followed Madilyn impetuously

Madilyn was clearly a regular at the bar. As soon as they stepped in, an employee immediately greeted them and led them to a booth near the dance floor.

Pulsating music blared as well-dressed men and women gyrated on the dance floor. Roxanne found herself slowly letting loose in the electric atmosphere.

“Drinks are on me tonight. Let’s drink our fill!” Madilyn yelled in her ear.

Then, she ordered a bottle of alcohol worth ten thousand and poured a glass for Roxanne. “There are plenty more fishes in the sea. Let’s not get hung up on one!”

Roxanne accepted the glass and clinked it with Madilyn’s, tossing back her drink in one gulp.

Madilyn cracked a satisfied smile at Roxanne’s bold attitude.

She had drunk with Roxanne a few times when they were in university. Though Roxanne may look well-behaved, she could surely hold her liquor very well.

Madilyn had mentally prepared herself to throw in her lot with Roxanne tonight just to lift her spirits.

Roxanne downed a few more glasses, and she started to loosen up, putting the day’s problems on the back burner.

Madilyn wasn’t contented with only drinking, so she slammed her glass down on the table and seized Roxanne’s hand. “Let’s dance!”

Then, she dragged her to the dance floor without waiting for a response.

Their decision to come to a bar was a hasty one, so their outfits weren’t exactly appropriate while the women around them were dressed scantily.

However, their beautiful faces still attracted the gaze of other patrons.

Roxanne was wearing a long dress that reached her knees, baring her pale calves as she moved rhythmically to the music under the strobing lights. A hint of a smile pulled at her lips, and her eyes were downcast. Her body movements were erratic yet oddly mesmerizing.

Madilyn, on the other hand, was surveying the crowd as she danced, hoping to find a man better than Lucian for her best friend. Nonetheless, she was pushed to the middle of the dance floor in her engrossment and lost sight of Roxanne when she looked back.

Her expression froze, and she stopped dancing and checking out on men, frantically searching for Roxanne in the press of bodies on the dance floor.

“Are you looking for someone, beautiful?” a man asked flirtatiously.

“Get out of my way! I’m in the middle of a crisis.” She didn’t even spare him a glance.

Meanwhile, Roxanne immediately realized Madilyn was getting swallowed up by the crowd and called out her name twice, but her voice was drowned out by the deafening music, and she could only watch as her best friend disappeared before her eyes.

She wanted to go after Madilyn, but her gaze was riveted upon a couple kissing passionately, and she halted in her tracks.

She turned and went to their booth after a pause, figuring Madilyn would make her way back here once she realized they had been separated.

She wasn't keen on clubbing, to begin with, so it was a welcome respite for her.

A cheery voice spoke beside her a few minutes later. "Hello, can I buy you a drink, if you don't mind?"

The male voice was muffled by the cacophony of the bar, and Roxanne thought she had misheard him when she raised her gaze. Surprised crossed her face when she saw a polished man dressed in a casual shirt standing in front of her.

He was also taken aback when their eyes connected. Knowing she didn't quite catch what he said, he leaned in closer to repeat himself a little louder, "Can I buy you a drink? You're very beautiful and elegant. I wish to befriend you if that's possible."