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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2099 - 2100

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“Um, Caiden...” Joan approached him.

“You two can sleep in the tent. I’ll stay out here.”

Caiden’s statement surprised Joan. She never thought he would say something like that.

“Mom, are we really leaving Caiden outside?” Lucius asked Joan.

Indeed, in the wild, there would be an awful lot of bugs. Even if Joan really wanted to get some sleep, she doubted the bugs would let her. Joan was a little concerned about Caiden, but she threw her worries out the window at the thought of Larry. Caiden would just have to put up with the long night.

“Very well then.” Joan glanced at the man, her guilty conscience getting in the way of her judgment.

Caiden knew that would happen, but instead of waiting for her to say it, it would be better if he brought it up himself. It might even give her a good impression of him.

“Mom, why don’t we let Caiden get in the tent too? It’s going to be windy and cold at night, with mosquitoes and other bugs,” Lucius was practically pleading.

Children had a lot less to consider. Lucius simply did not want Caiden to get hurt or stung because of him, or he would feel guilty. He did not think about the stuff that happened between adults.

Joan looked from Lucius to Caiden. Conflict was eating her up inside.

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“Lucius, he’s not your father. He can’t sleep with us.” Joan stroked his head.

But he attended the field trip in Dad’s place, didn’t he? The boy had a displeased look on his face.

“But Mom, I don’t want anything to happen to Caiden because of this.” Lucius lowered his head.

Joan did not like seeing Lucius like that. Perhaps, she could call Larry and inform him about things, so that if news about it got out, at least he was kept in the loop. And so, Joan fished out her phone and called Larry.

Unfortunately, Larry’s phone remained unreachable.

Joan was beyond infuriated.

It’s been a whole day, Larry! What is up with you? Does this family even mean anything to you? Fury flashed across her gaze.

“Fine, Caiden. Get in here,” Joan called out to him.

She was probably so upset about it that she commanded without much hesitation. When Caiden, who was still lingering outside, heard Joan, he obviously wanted to know what made her change her mind, while a mischievous grin crept up his lips.

“What is it?” Caiden said, almost a whisper.

Joan recalled how rude she had been a while ago and intended to apologize to Caiden when Lucius beat her to it.

“Caiden, Mom says you can come into the tent. Come on, hurry up,” said the boy.

Joan was rendered speechless and resigned by her son’s urgency.

Whatever. It’s just one night. Lucius will be sleeping between us anyway. Nothing’s going to happen.

“Joan, are you sure about this?” Caiden exercised caution in his query.

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Of course he would confirm with Joan first, though he would not do anything impermissible. Some relationships should be pursued slowly and gently, especially when the other party was a married woman like Joan.

“Yes,” Joan replied in a callous tone.

She sounded somewhat unwilling. Caiden could make out that much. But since she had given her consent, that meant there was still hope for him. He believed that hard work would eventually be rewarded, even if he would not be able to reap the rewards directly. But he was willing to wait until Joan could stand by his side.

Caiden entered the tent.

It was not very large, just enough to fit three people. As expected, Lucius would sleep in the center, while Joan and Caiden would sleep on either side of the kid. It seemed fair.

The three of them lay down to rest for the night, but their eyes remained open without a hint of drowsiness.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2100

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Joan lay on her side, her mind occupied by thoughts about Larry. Lucius lay flat, thinking about either Delilah or Larry. As for Caiden, he thought only of Joan’s pretty face. All three of them had their own worries but were reluctant to voice them out.

“Mom, where do you think Dad is right now?” asked Lucius suddenly.

Joan froze for a second, turned over to face the boy, and regarded him solemnly.

“Dad has a lot of things to settle in the company, so he can’t join us on the field trip, but he swears he won’t miss the next one.” Joan held Lucius’s hand, her expression a sincere one.

Is that right? But Mom isn’t even sure whether Dad will come or not, or when he’ll show up. Dad hasn’t been answering her calls either. So how does Mom know that Dad is busy at work? Lucius’ eyes dimmed as he kept his thoughts to himself.

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“Lucius, I’d like you to know that it’s your father who asked me to come,” Caiden spoke. Lucius’ eyes lit up.

“Is that true, Caiden? Do you know where Dad is?” Lucius turned over and asked him excitedly.

Of course that was all a lie. Caiden just did not want to upset the kid. He could tell that Joan adored Lucius very much.

Joan was surprised to hear him say that. She could not understand why Caiden would cover for her.

Under normal circumstances, it would take a lot of courage to attend a family event on behalf of another person’s spouse or parent. Not only had Caiden assumed the role, he welcomed it with delight. He even helped smooth over Larry’s absence.

“Of course it is, Lucius. Your father has several big projects coming up, so he’s much busier than usual. So, please don’t blame him, alright?” Caiden said as he pinched Lucius on the cheek.

Lucius was overjoyed to hear that.

So Dad didn’t really forget. Something came up and he couldn’t make it, so he asked Caiden to take his place.

“Mom, did you hear that? Dad didn’t forget about today!” Lucius gently tugged at Joan’s arm.

It was all quite awkward for Joan, but she forced a smile.

“Alright, Lucius. Let’s get some sleep. It’s getting late. We have plenty to do tomorrow,” Joan coaxed her child.

“Okay. Goodnight, Mom. Goodnight, Caiden.” Very soon, Lucius closed his eyes.

Caiden glanced at Joan on the other side, a swell of emotions surging within him. But Joan did not notice that. She pulled the covers over Lucius before turning her back away.

Joan, when will you notice my feelings for you? Caiden sighed.

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Joan caught that sigh, and was quickly overcome with guilt.

The next day, the sun rose early. Perhaps everyone had been too exhausted from the previous day's events, so no one got up on time.

In the tent, Lucius still lay at the center, but sometime in the middle of the night his body had slid to a lower position, while above him Joan and Caiden faced each other as they slept on, albeit no sign of intimacy whatsoever.

"Um, Mom, time to wake up," Lucius called her, his eyes barely open.

Roused by the child's voice, the adults slowly opened their eyes, only to realize that they were apparently laying less than one centimeter apart from each other.

"Joan, I'm sorry about that." Caiden rolled over and sat up.

"It's nothing," Joan muttered.

When they exited the tent, there were already a few others moving about.

Soon, the rest of the campers awoke one after another.

"Oh, morning, Mr. Caiden. Where did you sleep last night?" One of the students' parents approached him.

Joan stood off at the side, appearing rather awkward.

Why's she asking such a stupid question? It shouldn't matter where Caiden slept last night. Who cares if he spent the night inside or outside the tent? It's totally a non-issue!

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