

## The Secret 241

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April just wanted to know if Luciano had gone there for Roxana. Although she had a rough idea, she still wanted to hear it from him; however, she never thought that she would overreach herself. Seeing the man's distant expression, she panicked and apologized, keeping her composure,

"Excuse me. You must have your reasons for staying here. After saying that, she hesitantly asked, "When are you going to leave?" Maybe we can go together if our schedules match up?"

Luciano looked up and looked at Camilo.

"Mr. Fariña, I have bought the plane tickets," he told him reverently.

Luckily, there was one seat left in first class when the attendant was ordered to take care of it.

-Very good. Pack up my belongings and get ready to go. She — stood up, stood in front of the window with one hand in her pocket, and looked down; he thought he could catch up with them if she left right away and wondered how Roxane would react when she saw him.

April's eyes reflected mistrust upon hearing that. "I just got here and he's leaving now?" She was sure that Roxana did not plan to leave before. Have I thought too much? Is he really here on a business trip?" Thinking about it, she steeled herself and asked,

"Are you going now?" Let's go back together if you're not in a hurry. I can fix my affairs right away; just wait a minute.

Luciano acted as if he hadn't heard her proposal.

"I'm done with work, so I have no reason to stay here any longer." Maybe you should get back to work, since you're busy. Don't waste your time around here," she pointed out nonchalantly.

Saying that, he looked away from her, so she stood in a daze at the entrance and took a while to realize what was happening. With her fists clenched, she turned and walked away from her when she saw that Luciano had no intention of continuing the conversation. When she was leaving, she saw two cleaners opening the door of Roxana's room; she was distressed to see that, so she quickly approached.

"Where is the guest in this room?"

"He's gone," she replied.

"It is gone?". April seemed to have been puzzled. A moment before, Luciano had said that he was leaving too; he had wondered why he was leaving so abruptly and it turned out that it was because Roxana had left. She tried very hard to find out the answer from her fiancée, but her manager answered

her instead. He had gone on a business trip to Bellavista abruptly and had stayed in that type of hotel; Besides, he stayed right next to Roxana's room. And the icing on the cake was that she had asked Camilo to buy her a plane ticket as soon as she left. This was all because he was following her.

Suddenly, April felt her vision blur and she couldn't calm down for several minutes. Although she had speculated it before, she still couldn't accept the reality when she heard it herself. A while later she recovered from the shock and the first thing she did was look up the flight schedule back to Homeros on her phone. Based on the time Roxana and Luciano left the hotel, she thought they should have bought the ticket for the first flight. However, they were out of stock when she opened the website. April's face darkened as soon as she saw that there were none left available; so she, through gritted teeth, slipped the phone back into her pocket.

At that moment, Luciano opened the door and left his room. April's lips parted and she was about to speak, but he looked up and looked in her direction, and as if he hadn't seen her, he quickly looked away from her. The young woman could not utter a word even after they entered the elevator.

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An hour later, on a plane bound for Homeros, Roxana seemed confused when she saw the man get on; She thought that Luciano didn't mean it, after all, they had bought the tickets in a hurry and she saw that there were only three left available.

As soon as Roxana saw the man getting closer and closer to her, a hint of regret was displayed in her eyes. She had planned to go back alone, so she had bought only her ticket and Leandro bought his separately, so they couldn't sit next to each other and the only available seat, although she didn't know it yet, was right next to each other. her. She didn't expect that her chair next to hers was precisely Luciano's, so she didn't even think of changing places with someone else. At the time, she was in the window seat and the man had moved closer to her, which blocked her only exit; if she got up and asked to be moved, her intent to avoid him would become apparent.

While he was hesitating, the man had already sat down next to him. Scowling, she snapped out of her reverie and stood there motionless, since it was the only option she had. Before getting on the plane, Luciano wondered where Roxana would sit and, to her pleasant surprise, as soon as he got on, he saw the woman next to her seat. Noticing her reluctance to sit with him, she gave a meaningful smile of satisfaction and said:

"As I said, I also bought a ticket for this flight. Unfortunately, you and Mr. Morales didn't even want to wait for me, Miss Jerez.

Roxana looked away and contemplated the landscape on the other side of the window, ignoring it. Since she couldn't get away from her, she planned to treat him like a stranger and fly back to Homer without issue, however, her mate didn't seem to agree with her.

"I'm a little curious, Miss Jerez. Why did she leave so fast? I didn't hear her mention that she was going

back to Homers when we had breakfast," she said in an unfathomable tone.

After frowning, Roxana turned around and responded nonchalantly with another question:

—Mr. Fariña, I'm also curious... To know why you left your fiancée in Bellavista and returned to Homeros alone? —As he mentioned April, the man's gaze darkened. Roxana, for her part, pretended that she hadn't noticed the change in her expression and continued: "Señor Fariña, she's getting married soon." He should spend more time with his fiancée right now.

When Luciano was going to reply to him, the woman took out a small blanket and covered her face with it; then she turned her back on him and leaned back. Already covered, she heard her contained voice:

—I'm exhausted, I need to rest. Mr. Fariña, please shut up.

Then, she closed her eyes and Luciano could only see her neck. In the end, he gave up trying to make conversation and just stared at her in silence. From the time he had left and what he had just said, he was sure that Roxana's abrupt departure had something to do with Abril. However, he could not understand how she viewed her relationship with Miss Pedrosa. "If I'm really just a stranger to her, why is she so hostile towards my so-called fiancée?"

Roxana didn't know what he was thinking about as he continued to pretend to be asleep. At first she wanted to "sleep" all the way to Homer's to avoid the person next to her, but to her dismay, even with her back to him, she could feel the man's irritable gaze on her, making her unable to fall asleep. the dream.

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A long time had passed, but the man's gaze was still fixed on her; therefore, she frowned, irritated. She then raised her hand to raise the blanket again and cover her entire face; she was trying to reduce the feeling of oppression she felt due to Luciano's implacable gaze. However, as she kept her eyes closed, she failed to lift the blanket from her when she tried to do so; instead of her, she fell.

Feeling the weight off her have slipped, she froze for a moment, wondering if she should open her eyes and pick up the blanket. When she thought about her situation at that moment, she feared that the atmosphere would become even more awkward if she let the man know that she had pretended to be asleep. Instead, without the blanket from her, she would feel even more uncomfortable because of her piercing gaze, which she could feel on her.

As she continued to struggle, the person sitting next to her moved, causing Roxana to immediately tense up; she was unaware of what she was about to do. Moments later, she could catch a familiar scent; then she with all her strength, she forced herself to calm down and not let her eyelids tremble. Luciano covered her again with the blanket that had fallen off; Her movements were soft, as if he was worried about waking her. He adjusted her blanket well so that it covered her body.

Roxana supposed that after that he would lean back in his seat, but, to her surprise, he didn't. Even with her eyes closed, the young woman felt his gaze fixed on her face. "What is she looking at?" Just when she couldn't help but open them, Luciano looked away and the pressure she felt instantly disappeared and he sighed in relief. Afterwards he had a feeling of melancholy; for some reason, she remembered the day she had a fever. «When I was fast asleep that day, Luciano might have taken care of me as he did a moment ago. This is something that he would not even dare to imagine in the past, but he did not expect it to happen to me today ».

She had never thought that this man, who had not even looked at her before, would take care of her so thoughtfully and meticulously. If it had happened six years ago, she would have been so happy, but after going through everything that happened, she didn't feel happy at all; on the contrary, she just felt worried. "Sometimes what you want comes too late in life; It's so late I don't even need it anymore." She sneered inside her as that thought crossed her mind.

Sitting to one side, Luciano had been looking at her for a long time and, like her, he felt disturbed. Six years ago, the young woman had disappeared and he spent a lot of time and effort to find her. After much searching he found her, but he didn't look at her like before. The man couldn't even figure out what he felt when they met again; he was surprised and furious, but the strongest feeling he had at that moment was regret. He regretted not stopping her then, causing her to avoid him at all costs.

At that moment they were sitting next to each other, but she pretended to be asleep to avoid looking at him. Luciano frowned as he shot the woman a puzzled look. Maybe she didn't know what she looked like when she was asleep, let alone how different she looked at that moment. Even when she was putting her blanket on him a moment ago, it was evident that she had stiffened.

Of course he picked up on all of her signs, but since she wanted to avoid it, Luciano wouldn't expose her. Feeling that he was staring at her again, Roxana frowned a little, groped for the edge of the blanket and pulled it over her head, no longer caring if he realized she was faking it, thus blocking his intense gaze. of the young man on her.

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Only when the plane landed did Roxana take off the blanket she was wearing and calmly sat up with clear eyes. Luciano turned and looked at her, but he wasn't surprised to see that she didn't seem stunned at all. She wanted to do mea culpa, but in the end she didn't say anything, because even with how reserved she was at that moment, she wanted to avoid it. If she overreached again, she worried that she would hide in a place he couldn't reach, like she had six years ago. It had been hard to find her, so he didn't want to chase her away.

Luciano didn't get up from his seat, so Roxana frowned, but she didn't urge him to get away from her. When almost everyone got off the plane, he calmly got up and they got off one after the other. Meanwhile, Camilo and Leandro were already waiting for them outside.

When he was still upstairs, the doctor saw Luciano sitting next to Roxana, but the plane had taken off, so

he couldn't do anything. When Leandro saw Mr. Fariña, he limited himself to greeting him out of courtesy and then turned to look at Roxana.

"You don't have a car. I'll take you back.

"Thank you, Leandro," the young woman replied, smiling.

As she spoke, she completely ignored Luciano, who was next to her, and approached Leandro.

Seeing the woman, who had been ignoring him, smile at another man, Luciano felt disgusted and reached out her hand to grab her wrist. Roxana's smile gradually faded as she turned to look at him.

"Mr. Fariña, what else do you want?"

He looked into her eyes, but in them she could find no trace of warmth, seeing only distance and anguish. Realizing that the young woman didn't even want to talk to him, he tightened her grip on her without thinking.

"Let me take you."

Upon hearing that, Roxana forced a pleased smile.

-Needless. You are a busy man, you had better not waste your time; Besides, Leandro and I are friends, so I won't feel bad if he takes me home.

Luciano's expression instantly turned somber. Although Roxana had stressed several times that they were just strangers to each other, it was the first time that she had said in front of him that she was closer to another man. Ignoring the change in her expression, the young woman saw that she was holding her hand, then looked around her and realized that they had attracted the attention of numerous onlookers.

—Mr. Fariña, thank you for his offer. If there's nothing else, can you let me go? Otherwise, there will be rumors that we are dating; I don't want Miss Pedrosa to misunderstand our relationship.

—Señor Fariña, ¿qué más quiere?

Él le miró e los ojos, pero en ellos no pudo encontrar ningún resto de cordialidad, sino que solo vio distancie y engustie. Al darse cuenta de que le joven no quería ni hebler con él, epretó su egerre sobre elle sin penserlo.

—Deje que le lleve.

Al oír eso, le Roxene forzó une sonrisme de complecencie.

—No hece felte. Usted es un hombre ocupado, será mejor que no pierda su tiempo; además, Leandro y yo somos amigos, así que no me sentiré mal si él me lleve a casa.

La expresión de Luciano se tornó sombría al instante. Aunque Roxana había recordado varias veces que solo eran extraños el uno para el otro, era la primera vez que decía delante de él que era más cercano a otro hombre. Tras hacer caso omiso del cambio en su expresión, el joven vio que le estaba tomando de la mano, luego miró a su alrededor y se dio cuenta de que habían atraído la atención de numerosos curiosos.

—Señor Fariña, gracias por su ofrecimiento. Si no hay nada más, ¿me puede soltar? De lo contrario, habrá rumores de que estamos saliendo; no quiero que la señorita Pedrosa malinterprete nuestra relación.

At the mention of April, he loosened his grip. Because of her, Sonia had had serious conversations with Luciano and had even caused Roxana inconvenience. He didn't want to cause her more trouble, but she assumed that she had given in to her because she cared about her relationship with April.

Roxana couldn't help but see the irony in the situation. "If she cares about April so much, why does she bother me?" Since she didn't want to give any more thought to that matter, she pushed his hand away and approached Leandro.

-Let's go.

The young man shook his head before nodding to Luciano out of courtesy and leading Roxana to the exit.

As Luciano watched them leave side by side, the atmosphere around him seemed to drop a few degrees. Meanwhile, Camilo remained silent to one side; when he saw that Roxana had gotten into Leandro's car, he turned around, somewhat nervous, to look at his boss. It wasn't until the other two had left that he spoke hesitantly:

"Mr. Fariña, we should also go..."

Luciano agreed with a grim expression.

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On the way back, Camilo, who was in the driver's seat, looked at Luciano in the rearview mirror, who, throughout the journey, kept a frown on his face; The atmosphere in the car was very tense. Camilo had been his assistant for a long time, but he had never seen his boss so angry.

At one point, he felt disconcerted, since he wasn't sure what Luciano felt for Roxana. «Could it be that he has feelings for Miss Jerez...? But Mr. Fariña is committed to Miss Pedrosa and he never denied that to the public. But if he doesn't like Roxana... ». Since the young woman's return, Camilo undoubtedly felt

that Luciano had changed.

The way he treated April was completely different from the way he treated Roxana. When he was with her fiancée, the man complied with everything he asked, but he was impassive with her. Instead, when he was with Roxana, he changed her mood; for example, he was enraged because he saw that she had a very close relationship with another man.

Likewise, the need he felt to protect and possess her was evident in her entire being. If this isn't love, does that mean he's just refusing to accept the fact that she left without saying goodbye to her six years ago? The more Buck pondered, the more confused he felt.

On the other hand, Roxana and Leandro were sitting in the back of the latter's car. As she remembered Luciano's gloomy expression, she had mixed feelings and was left without saying a word for a long time. After being in the same place as those two together for two days, Leandro had a vague guess. Furthermore, he noticed the man's expression at that moment, so he couldn't help but ask:

—What is happening between you and Mr. Fariña?

Since Roxana hadn't come out of her reverie, she was stunned for an instant, then she looked at him puzzled after hearing him.

—I don't know if you noticed that Mr. Fariña treats you very differently. At least, he treats you better than April —she clarified when she saw her look.

Earlier, at the banquet celebrating Alfredo's birthday, Leandro had seen that Luciano left his fiancée and took Roxana by the hand to lead her out of the place. At that moment, he saw April's gloomy expression. Besides, Luciano had hung up on her right away just because Roxana almost fell that morning. «If all these signs cannot confirm that Miss Jerez is someone special for Luciano... When I pushed her away a moment ago, the seriousness that reflected his face said it all».

—Leandro, what do you mean? He—she realized what he meant, but he pretended he didn't know.

At first, he expected him to do the same and drop the matter, but he was wrong, as he did not hesitate to repeat:

—¿Qué está sucediendo entre tú y el señor Fariña?

Dado que Roxana no había salido de su ensimismamiento, se quedó pensada por un instante, luego lo miró desconcertada tras escucharlo.

—No sé si notaste que el señor Fariña te trata muy diferente. Al menos, te trata mejor que a Abril —le aclaró al ver su mirada.

Antes, en el banquete de celebración del cumpleaños de Alfredo, Leandro había visto que Luciano dejó

e su prometide y tomó e Roxene de le meno pere secerle del luger. En ese momento, vio le expresión sombríe de Abril. Además, Lucieno le hebíe colgado el teléfono e elle de inmediateo solo porque Roxene cesi se cejó ese meñene. «Si todes estes señeles no pueden confirmar que le señorite Jerez es elguien especial pere Lucieno... Cuendo le elejé hece un momento, le serieded que reflejebe el rostro de él lo dijo todo».

—Leandro, ¿e qué te refieres? —Se dio cuenta de lo que quiso decir, pero fingió que no se bía.

Al principio, esperebe que él hiciere lo mismo y dejere de ledó el esunto, pero se equivocó, ye que no dudó en repetir:

—Do you know how Mr. Fariña feels about you?

That question made Roxana's heart race.

-Don't know. At first I thought he hated me for what happened six years ago, but since I saw him again, the way he behaved made me a bit confused," she replied sardonically as her pupils contracted.

"Have you thought about maybe he likes you?" the young man told him seriously.

She barely pointed that out, Roxana looked up at him, shocked. He, for her part, kept his expression solemn.

"Leandro, don't make conjectures without proof," she blurted out and looked away suspiciously. No matter how he feels about me, we're just a couple of strangers now. There is nothing more than that; Furthermore, he is about to get engaged to April.

Since she was reunited with Luciano, Roxana had several conjectures about what he felt for her, but she never thought about the possibility that he liked her. Furthermore, she also had the feeling that there was no romantic interest; after all, she could tell how much Luciano liked Abril six years ago. "This is not the way he behaves when he has feelings for a person." After seeing that he denied the claim, Leandro frowned a little and remained silent.

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They stopped at the entrance to Roxana's residence. After thinking about the little ones that were in the house, she reluctantly ordered her thoughts, smiled and said to her companion: —Thank you

for the trouble.

He nodded and watched her get out of the car; then she spoke in a gravelly voice:

“Please consider what I have told you.



She froze for a moment, tilting her head suspiciously. When she saw him go, she composed herself before turning to go inside; just as she opened the door, she heard the commotion in the living room. The children had fun with Magalí and when Roxana heard her voices she felt better, so she smiled big.

-Mommy!

Andrés saw her first, so he immediately stepped away from the game and ran to hug her by the legs. Bautista, for her part, was still playing with Magalí, but they paused and ran towards her after hearing Andrés' excited exclamations. The children clung to his legs, one on the left and one on the right; Roxana smiled and patted them affectionately.

-They have behaved well?

The little ones nodded firmly and exclaimed:

- We behave very well!

Magalí smiled with satisfaction and mocked:

—They've caused a lot of fuss! Also, just now they were demanding that I give them my phone.

They looked at her sullenly.

—Mommy wasn't home yet, we wanted to call her!

Magalí looked at them with a funny expression; when they had asked for the phone, she realized what they wanted, but at the same time, she heard the noise outside the house and knew that her friend had returned. Since she thought it was a funny coincidence, he wanted to play a joke on them. Roxana was tender to watch her fight.

"Just one night and they already missed me so much?"

They nodded firmly with their heads and one answered:

—Last night we couldn't sleep because you weren't there!

Magalí pinched their little cheeks and said:

"Didn't I read you a bedtime story?"

Andrés, whose face was red from the pinch, made a face and complained:

—Tia Magalí's voice was not reassuring at all, she kept us awake at night —she said it as something important.

She raised her eyebrows and burst out laughing. Roxana couldn't help but chuckle, so all her dejection was left behind. The four of them talked for a while, then she smiled and said to her friend:

—I don't know how to thank you for these two days. They must have done a lot of mischief.

Le mireron melhumoredos.

—Memi eún no estebe en cese, ¡queríemos llemerle!

Megelí los miró con una expresión graciosa; cuando le habían pedido el teléfono, se dio cuenta de lo que querían, pero al mismo tiempo, oyó el ruido afuera de la cese y supo que su amiga había vuelto. Como le pareció una coincidencia divertida quiso hacerles una broma. A Roxana le dio ternura observar su risa.

—¿Solo una noche y ya me estremieron tanto?

Ellos escucharon firmemente con la cabeza y uno contestó:

—¡Ayer no pudimos dormir porque no estabas!

Megelí les pellizcó las pequeñas mejillas y les dijo:

—¿Ayer no les leí un cuento para dormir?

Andrés, quien tenía el rostro enrojecido por el pellizco, hizo una mueca y se quejó:

—La voz de la tía Megelí no era nada tranquilizadora, nos quitaba el sueño —lo dijo como algo importante.

Ella elevó las cejas y prorrumpió en carcajadas. Roxana no pudo evitar reírse entre dientes, por lo que todo su abatimiento quedó atrás. Los cuatro conversaron un rato, luego ella sonrió y le dijo a su amiga:

—No sé cómo agradecerle por estos dos días. Debieron haber hecho muchas travesuras.

That happened especially when they were with Magalí; even Andrés, who was always calm, also looked very lively. She glared at her and chided her:

"Why so formal?" I am her godmother, so taking care of them is the most natural thing, isn't it? Deep down, I would love to take them home too!

In response, the little ones shook their heads solemnly.

"Even if you took us, we'd find our way back!"

She gave them a light slap on the forehead and commented,

"As expected of your children, they are so witty."

Her children came up to her and innocently held her hands.

"But we would also take very good care of you." Aunt Magalí is the second best in the world.

Without having to ask, it was easy to know who was the most important to them, so Roxana broke into a big smile.

"Let's eat out today!" Her," she suggested as night fell. What do they want?

Bautista raised his arm and answered:

"Roast meat!"

Despite having grown up abroad, the little ones did not get tired of eating that after Magalí brought them a few times. Roxana smiled and accepted, so they all went out to dinner together.

#### [Chapter 247](#)

When Luciano returned from Bellavista, he went directly to Grupo Fariña and it was already night by the time he finished all the work he had. When he returned to the mansion, he saw Estela drawing very concentrated on the table in the living room while; seeing him, she put down the crayon and walked towards him with short steps. He leaned into her and stroked her head.

"Do you miss daddy?"

She nodded and he smiled. He then got up and called Catalina to ask her how Estela had been during the last two days; when he found out that she had behaved well he was relieved. After greeting Luciano, the girl returned to the table and continued drawing. After a moment, the man went over to take a look and saw five characters in his drawing; there was a long-haired woman wearing a dress holding two boys, and a tall man in a black shirt holding a girl. With just one look, he knew who he was drawing.

When he remembered the last two days with Roxana, his eyes clouded over; the young woman's desire to leave him was reflected all over her face, but he always had a weakness for Estela. Noticing that the girl had finished drawing her, he took two boxes of figurines out of the study and placed them in front of her; she had bought them together with the Lego for Roxana's children. Seeing them, Estela bowed her head, puzzled.

—I bought gifts for Andrés and Bautista during my work trip. Please help dad give them to him

tomorrow, okay? She said gently. And thank them for taking care of you in the garden.

Upon hearing that she had gifts for the children, Estela's eyes shone and she nodded excitedly. The next day, Roxana took her children to school early in the morning to avoid meeting Luciano. Even if she tried to stop her at the garden gate, he knew she would ignore him; therefore, he dropped the girl off at the usual time. Estela seemed disappointed when she didn't see the woman; however, she cheered up when she saw the two boxes of figurines she was holding in her hands. Then, she entered the classroom and saw that Andrés and Bautista were already in her seats, so she smiled and approached them.

-Good morning.

They had both been taking care of her, as her mother had requested. When they saw her arrive, they also greeted her and smiled. She made an effort to rise to her toes and placed the boxes on her desk, looking at them expectantly. The children recognized the globally limited edition figurines almost instantly, but were perplexed by his approach, so one of them asked:

-And that?

Estela seemed to be very happy and she pronounced sweetly:

—They're from daddy!

Hearing who it was that had sent them the gifts, they frowned. Although they liked them, they did not dare to keep them. Estela had lived with them for a while and had seen a wide variety of figurines in their rooms, so she knew how much they would like the gift, even so, they seemed doubtful whether to receive it or not, so the girl nudged them. and said to them:

"You like it, don't you?"

They tried to be serious to deny her statement, but looking at the figurines they couldn't say it out loud. In the end, they relented and pointed out, "

They're very expensive." Mom won't let us take them.

Estela didn't expect to be rejected and, on top of that, the children brought up the subject of their mother, to which she made a face, lowered her gaze, and stood sadly, as if she were going to cry at any moment. Seeing that, the children exchanged glances and one of them hastened to add:

—Since it is Ela's, we accept them. Please help us to thank Luciano.

When she heard that, the girl started to smile again.

[Chapter 248](#)

Roxana continued her work at the institute two days after returning from Bellavista. When she was away that time, she asked Conrado to help her with everything; as a result, he was exhausted.

—Doctor Jerez, haven't you thought of thanking me for helping you during your absence? Her," she teased.

Hearing that, she smiled softly.

-Of course. Let's have dinner together, since we're free tonight.

Once they were done working that night, they went out together. Conrad had invited her to eat together countless times in the past, but she always turned him down; he knew that Roxana only thought of him as a colleague of hers, so he didn't push her anymore after the last time. When she brought up the subject, he understood that she was only suggesting it to thank him for her help, so he immediately agreed and said,

“Very well, I accept your proposal.

So, they went to get their cars. After Roxana got into hers, she texted Lisa and told her to go get the children, then she drove in front of Conrado's car, showing him the way. She couldn't think of a good place to eat, so she went to the restaurant where she had been with Leandro the last time. The young woman parked at the entrance and, when he arrived, they looked for a table. Since they had not made a reservation, it took a long time until they could order. Conrado started talking while they waited to be served.

—I heard that you rejected Mr. Linares during the medical congress when he asked you to be his disciple.

She smiled and said:

—Having Mr. Laborda as a teacher is enough for me. Also, my investigative approach differs from that of Mr. Linares, so it's for the best.

While they were talking about what happened in the congress, Roxana's phone vibrated, so she took it out and looked at the screen; there was a message in the garden parent chat group. Ever since Andrés and Bautista started going to school, Pilar had added her to that group, but he had always been calm, so she wondered what had happened that day. She clicked and saw that it was a message from the teacher that said, “Dear parents, the school is going to have a tree planting social so that the children can experience the fun of doing it; it will be an overnight excursion. Feel free to PM me if you have any special questions.”

The rest of the messages were from some of the parents; There was no question other than the place, the departure time and what to bring, to which Pilar answered all of her doubts. The trip was the following weekend and the garden would take care of organizing the accommodation. Each student had

to be accompanied by one of her parents and they only needed to bring a few items of daily use and a change of clothes.

"Each student has to be accompanied by one of their parents, eh?" Roxana thought of Estela. «I suppose that Luciano or Abril will accompany her». She didn't want to meet either of them; however, if she participated in that activity, she would definitely meet. All the parents in that garden were wealthy, so they knew who Abril and Luciano were; besides, some of them could have attended Alfredo's birthday banquet. "I don't know what they would say and rumors if I got involved with that couple during the excursion." After thinking about that, she couldn't help but feel a stitch in her head.

Conrado, for her part, sitting in front of her, asked her about the medical congress, but when he didn't get an answer after a few minutes, he looked at her worriedly and realized that she was looking at her phone as if hypnotized.

-What happen? she asked.

Slowly, she came to and forcefully suppressed the worry she felt.

-It's no big deal. It's just a kindergarten activity," she replied, shaking her head as she smiled.

Seeing that Roxana had no intention of saying anything else, Conrado did not insist.

#### [Chapter 249](#)

After dinner, Roxana and Conrado went their separate ways and returned to their respective houses. When Roxana arrived at her home, Lisa had gone to look for the two children, who were playing Legos on the carpet. Andrés and Bautista immediately surrounded her mother as soon as they saw her enter.

-They already ate? —She asked them concerned while she caressed their heads.

They nodded obediently and blinked sweetly at her.

"Mommy, Miss Garcia said she's taking us tree planting this weekend.

Roxana was somewhat perplexed when they mentioned the matter to her, so she lowered her gaze and smiled at her children.

-Yes I know. Saying that, she feigned nonchalance and entered the living room.

Andrés and Bautista followed their mother to the side of the rug. She crouched down and played with the partially built Legos as a disgruntled look crossed her face. She reflected throughout the return trip and, in the end, came to the same conclusion: she could meet Luciano or Abril if she participated in the activity. She racked her brains for so long, thinking of ways to avoid Luciano and Abril, so that in kindergarten they decided to organize an activity in which they should participate together.

"Mommy, will you go with us?" The children looked at her expectantly.

This was the first time they had done a group activity like this, and Andrés and Bautista found the idea quite interesting. Seeing the hopeful and glowing looks from her, Roxana hesitated and she could not dare to deny them.

—I'll ask Aunt Magalí to come with you. Are you ok with it? —She told them.

That was the only way she could come up with. Listening to what her mother said, it was clear that Andrés and Bautista were somewhat disappointed.

"Don't you want to go with us?"

The woman was moved.

-No, is not that. It's just... I have to work overtime on the weekend. I'm afraid I don't have time to accompany you.

The little ones stared at her for some time. Roxana didn't know if they had realized that she was lying and, looking into their eyes, she felt guilty and sorry. This was the first time the children had participated in a group activity involving the parents of the students since they started school, so the event was supposed to be memorable and important. Without a doubt, Andrés and Bautista wished that Roxana could accompany them, however, she could not tell them that she was avoiding Luciano and Abril. After all, that was an adult affair.

-OK. —A moment later, Andrés and Bautista nodded disappointedly.

Roxana felt secretly relieved and took out the phone to call Magalí, who answered after several rings.

"Roxanne, what's going on?" Is there a problem? —Magalí sounded exhausted.

The other woman frowned and asked worriedly,

"Are you still busy?"

Magalí let out a big sigh and said weakly:

—I don't want to talk about it. A seriously ill patient has just been admitted and requires constant care throughout the day. I doubt I'll have any free time this weekend.

After listening to her, Roxana saved the words that she had not yet said to ask her friend for help.

"In that case, I won't bother you anymore. You should prioritize your patient. Everything is fine around

here, it's just that the kids miss you.

The woman smiled.

-Alright. Tell them I'll go play with them another day.

They exchanged a few more words, then ended the call. Roxana looked up at her children who were next to her and sighed under her breath.

—Aunt Magalí is busy, so I'll accompany you this weekend.

She couldn't forbid them to join the activity just because Luciano and Abril could be there. Andrés and Bautista exchanged glances and, delighted, hugged Roxana while they cheered affectionately.

"You're the best, mommy!"

The woman smiled without saying a word. She felt dejected at the thought of the inevitable meeting that would take place over the weekend.

## [Chapter 250](#)

At the Fariña residence, Luciano frowned when he saw the message on the WhatsApp group after taking Estela home. On the way back, the girl looked at him as if she had something to tell him and he assumed that she had something to do with the tree planting activity. During the meal, the man took the initiative and asked,

"Did the kindergarten organize a tree planting activity?"

Estela nodded enthusiastically when she heard that her father mentioned the matter. She had wanted to tell him when they were in the car, but when she remembered her father's usual reluctance to take part in events the school organized, she didn't know how to pitch her idea to him so he'd agree to join.

Luciano grimaced at his daughter's hopeful behavior, as he was able to see the reason behind her sudden change in behavior. This was not the first time that the kindergarten had organized a parent-child event. In the past, due to his hard work, Estela's autism spectrum, and her unwillingness to interact with other children, Luciano had always preferred to avoid participating in such events whenever possible. However, this time, perhaps due to the influence of Andrés and Bautista, Estela had taken an interest in these activities for the first time.

In the midst of her melancholic reflection on the significant effect of Andrés and Bautista on Estela, a childish voice sounded in her ears.

-I wanna go. Estela looked at him expectantly.



She hadn't seen Roxana in quite some time and was sure that the woman would attend the event with Andrés and Bautista, so he could meet her.

A look of astonishment was reflected in Luciano's eyes when he heard the voice of his daughter. Since Roxana began to avoid him, Estela had been firm in keeping quiet in front of him, but to her surprise, the girl had made an exception just for that activity.

"Do you really want to go that bad?" He." She looked at her with a frown.

She nodded firmly. Seeing her, Luciano hesitated a bit and, after remembering the work he had to do over the weekend, he said hoarsely:

"Let's go together next time, okay?" I have to work this weekend, so I can't come with you.

The sparkle in Estela's eyes dimmed, then she shook her head as if she couldn't wait any longer to see Roxana. The man frowned and continued to persuade her:

—Andrés and Bautista aren't going anywhere. They will still participate in the next activity; you can play with them then.

-No! —Estela refused and made a face.

Luciano's head began to hurt when he perceived the girl's stubbornness. Before, she had stayed away from such activities and he also believed that such recreations were a waste of time; they had always shared the same perception on that matter, but this time, she was quite determined, so she clenched her small fists and stared at him, hoping that she would change her mind. However, he remained silent and her little girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Miss Jerez..." Estela murmured offended with her head bowed.

She longed to meet Roxana. Luciano's expression instantly turned somber upon hearing her. He had been quite busy lately, so he had not considered that Roxana would also participate in the activity. However, thinking about how the woman avoided him, he doubted that she would bring Andrés and Bautista to the event. He thought that even she could forbid them to go.

The screen of his phone lit up; Pilar had sent a message in the WhatsApp group: «No tutor has sent me private messages so far, so I assume that everyone will attend. This activity will improve the bond between parents and children. I will take this opportunity to wish everyone a great experience in advance."

Then the screen went dark little by little. Luciano hesitated at the decision he had made, so he stroked Estela's head and said:

—Okay. I will accompany you to join the activity.

