

Chapter 417 A Dilemma

Mark grasped his phone, which remained on silent, its screen flashing incessantly.

Instead of immediately answering, he glanced towards the study's door, through which Cecilia had disappeared.

A lump formed in Mark's throat.

He then pressed the answer button and Laura's voice came through.

The young girl sounded a bit uneasy.

Mark lit a cigarette and held it delicately between his fingers. He asked softly, "It's late. Why aren't you asleep?"

Laura replied quietly, "I'm scared."

Mark felt a surge of sympathy for the child.

Cathy had given birth to Laura and entrusted her care to a babysitter.

Now, she found herself in an unfamiliar environment, a harsh situation for a child.

After offering some comforting words to Laura, Mark requested that she pass the phone to Paul's parents where he talked with them for a while.

Only then did Paul's parents learn that Laura was having trouble falling asleep at night.

They assured Mark that they would take good care of her.

As Laura bid Mark good night, a sense of sorrow weighed heavily on her. She had been deprived of a family's warmth since childhood and now couldn't often see Mark, who gave her comfort.

Mark hung up the phone, feeling a surge of mixed emotions.

But he knew that Cecilia felt even worse.

He extinguished his cigarette and returned to the bedroom.

Sure enough, Cecilia was still awake.

Her long, black hair cascaded over her shoulders like a waterfall, making her look striking as she leaned against the headboard.

Mark placed his phone on the nightstand.

He leaned in to kiss her tenderly on the lips, noting that they felt slightly dry.

He asked softly, "Don't you have work tomorrow morning? If you don't get some sleep, how will you manage during the day?"

Cecilia didn't resist, and instead, nestled closer to him, resting her head on his chest.

They stayed that way for a long time until his shirt became damp and uncomfortable.

Mark gently stroked her hair and then kissed her once more.

Cecilia trembled slightly.

Their kiss deepened, as if it was their souls connecting. In that moment, neither of them needed words to communicate.

The following morning, Cecilia awoke to find herself alone in bed.

She assumed Mark had already left for work.

When she descended the stairs, she was surprised to find Mark still at home.

He was dressed in a light brown sweater and dark coffee casual pants, exuding a gentle and elegant demeanor.

He was having breakfast with Edwin. When he saw Cecilia coming down, he flashed a warm smile and said, "Let's take Edwin to kindergarten together."

Cecilia took a seat and brushed her long hair back.

"I have a morning commercial shoot today," she replied.

Mark handed her a glass of warm milk and offered, "I'll drive you to the set later."

Cecilia took a sip of milk and regarded Mark.

She whispered, "You don't have to do this."

The previous night, she had given him the phone out of sympathy, not wanting him to feel guilty.

If Laura's presence didn't disrupt Cecilia and Edwin's life with Mark, she might have turned a blind eye to it. But she still couldn't accept any involvement with the girl.

Mark remained silent, gently stroking Cecilia's hair.

After breakfast, they dropped Edwin at kindergarten together.

It was a recent transition for Edwin, and he was ecstatic that both his parents were accompanying him to school.

Mark stood alongside Cecilia, watching their son enter the kindergarten.

They then got back into the car.

Mark didn't immediately start the engine. Instead, he turned to Cecilia and asked softly, "Do you have work this afternoon?"

Cecilia understood his implication.

He wanted to spend time with her.

She bit her lip and playfully replied, "Aren't you busy today?"

Mark's gaze held a depth of sincerity. "I am. But I also want to be with you."

Cecilia was still quite young, and her age warranted companionship. Moreover, Mark felt he owed her for the issue concerning Laura. He wanted to make amends.

Knowing his intentions, Cecilia, who deeply loved him, didn't resist and softly replied, "I'm free after two in the afternoon."

Mark leaned in to kiss her. "I'll take you to the amusement park."

Though Cecilia's heart swelled with sweetness, she pretended to be indifferent. "Amusement park? Really? I'm not a child anymore!"

Mark looked at her with his charming eyes, causing her to feel uneasy.

She asked, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"I like it when you call me Mark," he said in a hoarse voice.

Cecilia blushed and fastened her seatbelt. "Let's go. I'm running late."

With a grin, Mark started the engine.

When they arrived at the film set, Cecilia didn't hide her relationship with Mark.

She was open about it, even to her colleagues.

Everyone in the entertainment circle knew that Cecilia had a fiance and a son.

While many in the entertainment industry had heard of Mr. Evans, they were surprised to find out that he was so young.

The director came to greet Mark.

Having held a leadership position for an extended period, Mark's expertise in dealing with people shone through. He engaged in a brief conversation with the director, and soon the director displayed a

significant level of respect for him. Following some courteous exchanges, Mark made his exit.

By two in the afternoon, Cecilia had finished her work.

The assistant teased her about Mark coming to pick her up, knowing full well that he would.

Cecilia felt a warmth in her heart.

Mark's car was waiting outside. He briefly exchanged pleasantries with her colleagues before he led her to the car.

They had been together for many years, yet she was seldom treated this way.

She took his hand and asked softly, "Did you have enough money with you? I'm worried you don't."

Mark handed her his wallet and said, "Check it and see. If it's not enough, I'll get more."

Cecilia playfully replied, "You can make payments with your phone now. Who uses cash anymore? You're really getting old."

Mark replied, "But you still love me even if I'm old."

Cecilia blushed.

They arrived at an amusement park in the city. Since it wasn't a weekend, there weren't many people.

Cecilia was a bit clumsy at the games.

But Mark turned out to be quite skilled, managing to play for an extended period with just a few tokens.

She wrapped her arms around him and murmured, "This is unfair. You've never played these games before, have you? Why are you so good at this?"

Mark played the claw machine and won several plushies for her.

He touched her head and quipped, "Your job is to stay pretty, and I'll handle the rest."

In other words, he was suggesting that she was not very smart.

Cecilia pouted and nuzzled her face into his arms, behaving like a spoiled child.

"I'm not dumb.

I graduated from a prestigious Ivy League school and can speak four languages!"

During this time, Mark got a few more plushies.

With a mischievous tone, he asked, "So, Mrs. Evans, you're quite good, huh?"

He made a pun.

She understood his intended wordplay. While she recognized that she should have felt embarrassed or irritated, she didn't want to be upset when he referred to her as Mrs. Evans.

Mark glanced at her.

He could really read her like an open book. Her arm had been wrapped around his waist the whole time, and he vowed to spend more time with her whenever he had the opportunity.

The subsequent days passed peacefully.

Mark only sporadically talked to Laura on the phone.

His business continued to thrive.

Meanwhile, Cecilia was engrossed in her filming. Luckily, her work took place in the same city, allowing Mark to pick her up whenever he had free time. Their evenings were dedicated to private, intimate moments after tucking their son in.

Mark was lustful, and Cecilia was more than willing to oblige.

Almost every night, she would end up pleading for mercy.

Also, Mark, being cautious, ensured he used protection.

Obviously, he weren't ready for another baby just yet.

However, Cecilia believed that given Mark's age, if they intended to have another child, they should do so soon. On top of that, she thought a new baby might bring joy to their family, especially since Edwin desired a little sister.

Pressing his ear against his mother's belly to check if his little sister was already growing in there was kind of their morning routine now.

And Cecilia found it both amusing and endearing.

One morning, as Mark was shaving in the bathroom, Cecilia decided to share her thoughts with him. He asked, "You want a child?"

Mark wiped his face and joined her in the bedroom.

Dressed impeccably for a meeting scheduled later, he wore a gray shirt, trousers, and a matching tie chosen by Cecilia.

His cool and handsome appearance caught her attention.

Cecilia had a day off today.

She was browsing through a magazine while considering lingerie choices for the upcoming wedding.

The wedding dress was significant. But the smaller details of married life were also important, particularly for newlyweds seeking to spice things up. She savored the look in Mark's eyes when he held her.

Mark hadn't originally intended this.

But when he saw what Cecilia was reading, he couldn't resist.

He sat on the edge of the bed, lifting her pajamas to touch her belly.

Blushing, she asked, "What are you doing?"

Mark smiled. "I'm checking if you're pregnant."

With that, he activated a switch at the bedside.

Immediately, the curtain closed and the room darkened. He lifted the covers and held her beneath him.

Cecilia playfully pushed his shoulder and asked, "Aren't you supposed to attend a meeting?"

Mark raised his hand and checked his watch.

He still had time.

He continued to caress her. Cecilia was swept up in the moment and her face flushed. "I'm trying to tell you something serious."

Mark smiled.

He continued to tenderly stroke her belly and asked, "Edwin desires a little sister, doesn't he?"

Cecilia wrapped her arms around his neck with one hand and gently restrained him with the other. She didn't want him to go any further at the moment.

Blushing, she reached out to touch his handsome face, only to discover that his skin was also warm. Unable to contain her excitement, she whispered, "I want to have another baby. After completing this film, I intend to take a temporary break from filming. Additionally, we can bring Zoey here, which will provide Edwin with a companion to look after him."

Mark tenderly caressed her using the bridge of his nose.

Her pajamas fell to the floor.

There seemed to be a moment of hesitation, but Mark eventually

withdrew his hand from the drawer and embraced her body, kissing her more passionately than before.

Minutes later, their intimate encounter ended.

Mark curled up beside her, tenderly resting his hand on her belly.

Cecilia speculated that perhaps she would get pregnant this time.

She remained in his embrace, her heart still racing. She softly asked, "Aren't you going to the company now?"

Mark kissed her, dressed, and went to the bathroom to change his shirt.

She noticed some semen and her juices on his discarded shirt, which made her feel slightly embarrassed.

Mark returned with a new shirt and kissed her. "Have a good rest. And don't worry about Edwin. I'll pick him up."

Cecilia obediently nodded, raising her body to return his kiss. Her face flushed.

Mark whispered, "We'll have another round tonight when I return."

The atmosphere in the bedroom remained sweet even after he left.

Cecilia lovingly touched her belly.

It was still warm from Mark's touch.

She noted that they hadn't used any contraception during their earlier encounter, indicating his desire for a child.

Cecilia felt elated and rolled around on the bed. But her excitement was interrupted when her hand brushed against something hard.

She discovered Mark's phone on the bed.

Although she didn't intend to snoop, a message from Cathy appeared on the screen, catching her attention.

Mark's phone wasn't locked, and curiosity got the better of Cecilia.

She opened the message and found that over the past two weeks, Cathy had sent numerous messages, most of which were about Laura. Cathy's tone was gentle, but Mark had barely responded to any of them.

There was only one response from him last week.

"Laura is being well taken care of."

Cecilia's body tensed, and she felt a chill.

The simple message left her deeply troubled.

Mark and Cathy's relationship resembled that of divorced couples, connected through their shared responsibility for a child. The ironic part was that the child wasn't even Mark's.

Just as she was processing the message, Mark entered the room.

He saw her in a daze and noticed his phone in her hand.

Mark could sense what she had discovered. He approached and gently retrieved his phone, promptly deleting the message from Cathy. He affectionately rubbed Cecilia's head and offered reassuring words. "Don't dwell on it."

Cecilia lifted her head and softly asked, "Can't you just stay out of it?"

Mark had already fulfilled his duty by assisting the Thomas family in regaining custody of Laura. He had done enough, hadn't he?

Mark then blacklisted Cathy.

He kissed Cecilia. Despite her sadness, she wrapped her arms around his waist.

Mark assured her, "I won't concern myself with this matter anymore. If anything happens in the Thomas family, I'll have Peter handle it."

Cecilia comprehended the situation.

She was a reasonable person.

Despite the difficulty of accepting the situation, she recognized the need to process it on her own. Therefore, she chose not to disclose the matter to Waylen and Rena. Cecilia believed in her need to mature and not burden her brother and sister-in-law with every concern.

Cecilia's wedding to Mark was scheduled for early April.

It was to be held in Czanch in Evans Gardon.

Cecilia had a strong affinity for it.

The main bedroom in Evans Gardon, which belonged to Mark, held special significance for Cecilia.

The wedding was about to commence.

Both the Evans and Fowler families were influential. On that evening, the largest hotel in Czanch hosted a grand celebration with 100 tables to accommodate their relatives, friends, and business associates.

Earlier that day, Cecilia donned a white wedding dress.

She was already beautiful. But today, she looked even more stunning.

Rena was in her eighth month of pregnancy.

Despite her advanced pregnancy, she actively contributed to organizing the wedding, anxious that it wouldn't be flawless.

Cecilia helped Rena sit down.

Rena tenderly caressed Cecilia's hair and shared something in a gentle tone that deeply resonated with Cecilia.

Waylen came in.

He was attired in a classic three-piece black and white suit, exuding an air of maturity and handsomeness.

Cecilia exclaimed, "Waylen, you're going to outshine Mark in no time!"

Waylen playfully tapped Cecilia's head.

He smiled and scolded, "You're taking someone else over your brother already? I have to depend on this handsome face to captivate your sister-in-law. Don't drag me down."

His taunt caused Cecilia to flush.

Rena glared at her husband.

Waylen smiled faintly and stopped teasing Cecilia.

Suddenly, the butler came over and said, "Mr. Kyle Waston and Mr. Albert Waston from Heron are here to attend the wedding banquet. They would like to talk with Mrs. Fowler."

Rena didn't mind.

Thinking of Albert, Waylen snorted. "We sent them invitations?"

The butler replied, "Yes, we did."

Waylen accompanied Rena to see them since he was concerned about her.

Cecilia was left alone in the bridal suite. She felt bored and wanted to eat something.

Suddenly, her phone rang.

Though the number was strange, she recognized it as Cathy's.

Although Cecilia did not want to answer, part of her also wanted to know what this woman wanted.

Cecilia finally answered the call.

Surprisingly, Cathy wasn't arrogant. She was calm.

"You've won, Cecilia. I've suffered a severe defeat.

I can't come to terms with it.

I refuse to believe that Mark is so heartless that he won't answer my calls or see me. I bet that he still cares for Laura, even just a little. Cecilia... Laura is in my hand. If I were to cut her throat with a knife, she'd leave this world with me.

Do you think he will let it happen?"

Cecilia tightened her hold on her phone.

Cecilia found it hard to believe that Cathy would go to such extremes.

Even if Cathy didn't have strong feelings for Paul, Laura was her own flesh and blood, and the bond ran deep.

Cecilia whispered, "I don't believe you."

Cathy remained silent and eventually hung up the phone.

Cecilia was left in a state of shock. Shortly afterward, Mark entered the room, his gaze filled with tenderness.

He asked, "Who called you?"

Cecilia shook her head and softly replied, "An old friend of mine."

She couldn't believe that Cathy would resort to such extreme measures. She suspected that Cathy's intention was simply to disrupt the wedding. After some hesitation, Cecilia decided not to inform Mark about the call.

The wedding proceeded as planned, with a lively and grand atmosphere.

Alexis served as the flower girl, and Edwin took on the role of the ring bearer.

Both looked adorable and charming.

As the wedding march played, two individuals rushed in--Paul's parents.

They were visibly distressed.

"Mark, Cathy has taken Laura away!

She intends to do something drastic to her daughter. Cathy called us and claimed that she informed Miss Fowler, but... Mark, for Paul's sake, please save Laura. She is the last descendant of the Thomas family."

Paul's parents knelt before Cecilia, who turned pale.

Mark's gentle voice then reached Cecilia. "Did she contact you?"

Cecilia was taken aback, realizing that Mark was holding her partially responsible.