

Chapter 487 Mark Discovered The Truth

It was Christmas, and the house was bustling with a multitude of people, yet an oddly eerie atmosphere hung in the air.

Vanessa also found it quite dull.

As she left, Edwin walked her to her car.

Despite the late hour, the pristine snow illuminated the world with an intense brilliance, enabling them to see each other's faces clearly.

Edwin was not wearing a coat.

He sported a white shirt beneath a stylish dark blue cashmere sweater, appearing both handsome and debonair.

Vanessa leaned against the car door, her smile faint. "Aren't you going to drive me home, Edwin?"

Edwin retrieved a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, lighting one as the red tip glowed in the night. Vanessa, comprehending his unspoken message, chose not to press the issue further.

Such was the nature of business!

Nevertheless, she hadn't anticipated Edwin being so uncompromising.

She couldn't help but harbor a trace of resentment. "Even as a business partner, don't you think your attitude is a bit too cold?"

Edwin slowly exhaled a ring of smoke.

He spoke with indifference, saying, "Perhaps it's because I'm the client, and you're the contractor."

Vanessa, not quite ready to drop the matter. "Am I not attractive enough? Not outstanding enough? In your heart, where do I fall short compared to her?" Vanessa pressed.

"You're pretty and excellent. There's no need for comparisons."

Vanessa was beginning to feel somewhat irritated.

"Edwin, are you so unwilling to even consider comparing me to her? Can't you even humor me a bit?"

Edwin stubbed out his cigarette, offering a faint smile. "We are business partners, Vanessa," he reminded her. "I don't want to mislead your emotions. As for our engagement, you might want to reconsider it," Edwin replied.

Vanessa bit her lip and climbed into the car.

The vehicle accelerated into the night, skidding slightly as it passed through the gate.

Edwin lingered for a moment before eventually returning to the hall.

Inside, the servants were busy cleaning up the table, while Peter and Lina, already clad in their coats, were ready to leave.

Edwin retrieved his coat and said, "Allow me to give you a ride."

Lina, far from desiring his company, was relieved to be rid of the nuisance. She couldn't let him linger any longer, so she said with a smile, "It's okay. Peter can drive. And Edwin, I'm not scolding you, but you should be more considerate toward your girlfriend. Allowing a girl to drive home alone in this snowy weather... Aren't you afraid your father will reprimand you later?"

Edwin clearly grasped her subtle suggestion.

Cecilia, unaware of the situation, also joined in with a few words of reproach.

Only Mark observed his son with a profound and thoughtful gaze.

After a brief pause, Mark rose to accompany Peter and his wife outside. He exchanged a few words with them before returning. He then gestured toward Edwin. "Come with me upstairs."

With his hands in his pockets, Edwin followed his father upstairs.

Witnessing her husband's stern expression, Cecilia couldn't resist remarking, "Don't be too harsh!"

Mark paid no heed to her words. It was unusual for him not to listen to her.

He slowly ascended the stairs. Edwin trailed behind, but he felt his sleeve being gently tugged.

In hushed tones, Cecilia murmured, "Your father appears quite upset. It might be wise not to confront him directly."

Edwin offered a comforting pat on his mother's hand before proceeding upstairs.

Upstairs in the second-floor study, Mark was seated on the sofa, his expression bearing a solemn weight.

Edwin entered the room silently, brewing a cup of tea, and then approached his father, offering a gentle remedy. "Dad, perhaps this will help sober you up."

Mark chuckled lightly, remarking, "I haven't drunk that much."

He ignited a cigarette and took a deep drag.

"Let's talk about you. Lina seemed rather peculiar in her behavior toward you today," he observed. "Did you perhaps unintentionally offend her? And why did you choose to offer Peter and Lina a ride rather than your girlfriend?" he inquired.

While he spoke, Mark couldn't contain his frustration and forcefully knocked over the ashtray nearby.

The shattering sound reverberated through the room.

Cecilia, alarmed by the noise from downstairs, grew concerned and approached the door, gently asking, "Mark, what's the matter? Please talk it out calmly."

Mark's voice carried a hint of tension as he replied, "It's nothing, don't worry. Go get some rest."

On serious matters, Cecilia found herself in a complex blend of fear and obedience towards her husband.

She complied and left.

Mark's gaze shifted from the door to his son. Edwin, seemingly unruffled, was calmly tidying up the shattered pieces on the floor. His nonchalance seemed to further aggravate his father's frustration.

Mark let out a frustrated, almost bitter laugh, demanding, "Well, what do

you have to say for yourself? You're usually quite eloquent. Cat got your tongue?"

Edwin cautiously steered away from the core issue, explaining, "Vanessa and I don't share any romantic feelings."

"Haha! Just business partners, right?"

Mark scoffed with a hint of sarcasm. "Impressive acting skill, young man! And what about Peter and Lina? You're not usually this attentive!"

Mark's hands trembled noticeably as he lit another cigarette, the tension in the room thickening.

Edwin completed cleaning up the shards and wiped his hands with a tissue, maintaining his composure as he explained, "Uncle Peter is growing old. I simply had his well-being in mind."

Mark's eyes narrowed, a sneer crossing his face.

"That excuse might work on your mother, but it won't fool me. You're too young to think you can outsmart me, Edwin!" Mark retorted, his doubt unshaken.

He took a couple of harsh drags from his cigarette, and then finally broached the real issue, his voice low and grave.

"Alright, then, let's hear it! What's the truth about your relationship with Laura?"

Edwin's jaw clenched.

Edwin remained silent, neither confirming nor denying the issue.

Mark, overwhelmed by anger and a need to release his frustration, found himself without an outlet for his emotions. He pointed accusingly at his son, unable to find words in his overwhelming fury.

Edwin, still silent, offered a cup of tea.

Although Mark felt an intense urge to lash out, he managed to control himself, deciding against any dramatic actions that might alarm Cecilia.

In a subdued tone, Mark pressed further, his voice tinged with insistence, "Tell me what happened."

Edwin gazed downward.

After a moment of silence, Edwin spoke in a hushed tone. "It was what it was, but we've gone our separate ways now."

Mark remained silent.

He smoked in contemplation until the cigarette was nearly extinguished, and then forcefully crushed it out. Pointing at his son, he struggled to contain himself before finally uttering, "You scoundrel!"

Being a perceptive man, he didn't require all the particulars to discern the essence of the situation.

In a solemn tone, Edwin offered simple but heartfelt words. "I'm sorry."

Mark didn't respond. Instead, he stood up and walked out, pausing at the door, his unfinished sentence hanging in the air. "You... are not allowed to leave the house!"

Cecilia hurriedly approached once more, concern etched across her face.

Mark made his way down the stairs, donning his coat and signaling his intention to go out. He decided to go for a drive.

Cecilia, clearly concerned, said, "Wouldn't it be better to have Chris drive you?"

Considering the uncomfortable situation with his son, Mark preferred not to let others know and insisted on driving himself.

He patted his coat in reassurance and replied, "I'll be fine."

As snow continued to fall outside, Mark stepped into the wintry night, the glow from the doorway casting a faint light on his frame.

His silhouette stood upright, though strands of gray were beginning to appear in his hair.

Unable to prevent him from leaving, Cecilia was overcome with a sense of desolation. Turning to Edwin, she inquired with a heavy heart, "Is your father involved with someone else? In this weather, he's rushing out so urgently!"

Edwin's face remained devoid of emotion, concealing whatever thoughts were swirling beneath the surface.

Mark drove for a full hour.

He parked his car beneath a modest apartment building, the engine's hum fading into the quiet of the winter night.

Peter and Lina had their own place elsewhere, but this particular apartment belonged to Laura. It was late, and he couldn't be certain if she was awake or already asleep.

Stepping out of the car, he held a small bag of pastries, a gesture of thoughtfulness for his visit.

Peter had occasionally shared Laura's preferences in casual conversations, and Mark had made an effort to remember them.

Standing outside her door, Mark knocked softly.

Laura, spotting him through the peephole, felt a mixture of surprise and anxiety before opening the door to greet him.

Their gazes met in a wordless exchange.

After a pause, Mark spoke, a faint hint of humor in his tone. "Don't you recognize your Uncle Mark? Aren't you going to invite me in?"

Laura was dressed in pink loungewear adorned with a small bear print, a casual choice that reflected the late hour.

The color choice and her petite stature made Laura appear to be in her early twenties, with a youthful and fresh demeanor.

Her eyes were slightly red. She opened the door wider to allow Mark inside. After stepping in, Mark removed his coat and glanced around the room, taking in the surroundings.

The decor was pleasantly arranged, and the room appeared immaculately clean and orderly.

The room was adequately heated, creating a warm and cozy atmosphere that added to the overall comfort.

Laura poured him a cup of coffee, her tone carrying a hint of apology as she mentioned that it was the only thing she could offer, given her lack of culinary skills. Mark accepted the coffee and responded with a touch of meaning. "Cecilia isn't much of a cook either."

Laura gazed at him, her eyes still slightly red.

Mark chose not to dwell on the topic further. Instead, he opened the box

of pastries he brought and encouraged her to eat them.

It was her favorite food.

Laura's lips quivered.

Though Mark didn't explicitly mention it, Laura sensed that he had discovered her past connection with Edwin. As she nibbled on a piece of the pastry, she spoke in a soft tone. "Uncle Mark, there's no longer any relationship between us. I won't ruin anything. I won't meet with him again. You can rest assured of that."

A profound sense of sorrow settled in Mark's heart.

Mark couldn't help but feel that he had failed in his promise to protect and care for her.

He couldn't deny that Laura had grown and flourished under Peter's guardianship.

She had not only thrived but had also developed remarkable talents.

Despite her success and talent, the presence of Edwin had clearly caused Laura significant distress.

Even in this moment, she was going out of her way to assure Mark that she wouldn't be a source of trouble or complications.

Mark didn't reply.

Instead, he offered her a cookie and spoke gently. "It's not about that, Laura. Uncle Mark simply wanted to visit you."

Laura accepted the cookie and took a bite.

Then, she began to cry, her emotions finally spilling over.

No one could understand her feelings, no one.

The beginning of her relationship with Edwin had been wrong, and its conclusion had been nothing short of absurd. Even if they had shared an understanding of their feelings, circumstances had never allowed it to progress any further.

Laura silently wept, and Mark remained by her side quietly.

The paternal affection she had yearned for in her childhood, Mark could only provide in a limited capacity now, and he did so with all the sincerity

he could muster.

Laura didn't cry for long.

She soon regained her composure and spoke in a subdued tone. "I'm okay. In fact, I have a new boyfriend now, my agent, and he's really good to me."

Mark found it difficult to put his own feelings into words.

Ironically, on one hand, there was his own son, and on the other, the young girl to whom he owed so much.

All he could manage to say was, "That's good," and then he tenderly ran his fingers through her glossy black hair.

She was pretty and petite, a type that Mark had never envisioned his brutish son being attracted to. It suddenly made sense why there had never been any genuine connection with Vanessa.

It seemed that Edwin's taste had been inherited from his father.

Outside, the snow continued to fall heavily, but within the confines of the apartment, warmth enveloped them.

As time passed, the issue was never raised again, and Mark chose not to broach the topic of compensation, realizing that it would be undignified and hurtful for Laura.

He simply kept her company, giving Laura the support and fatherly affection she had yearned for throughout her life.

When Mark left, it was nearly dawn.

Laura saw him downstairs. As Mark was getting into his car, he couldn't resist turning back and saying in a hushed tone, "Bring your boyfriend to meet me sometime. When you've decided to tie the knot, I'll take care of your dowry."

Laura nodded with a faint smile.

Outside, the winter cold had taken its toll, leaving Laura with a pale complexion and a red nose.

Mark urged her to go back upstairs, but Laura insisted on watching Mark's car until it disappeared before returning indoors.

Once back in her apartment, she made herself a cup of coffee and finished all the pastries Mark had brought.

After that, she felt too full to sleep.

Sitting on the sofa, she turned on the TV.

The room was warm, and right in front of her was the cup Mark had used.

Suddenly, Laura began to see things in a more positive light. She felt that everything wasn't as bleak as it had seemed. She wanted to find a boyfriend and live a life...

Mark drove back home through the heavy snowfall.

As he stepped into the villa, Mark's hair and coat were dusted with snowflakes. Edwin, waiting at the door, approached him and asked in a hushed tone, "Did you go to see her?"

Mark sneered, his frustration evident. "You dare to ask that question?"

Edwin pressed further, "What did she say?"

Mark removed his coat and strolled into the hall, tossing it nonchalantly onto the sofa.

Still wearing a sneer, he replied, "She told me she's with someone else now. You better stay away from her! Since it's over, you're not to contact her again," Mark warned sternly. "If your mother discovers this, I'll make sure you regret it."

Edwin lowered his gaze.

Mark raised his voice, demanding, "Did you hear me?"

Edwin smiled faintly and responded, "Didn't you mention she has a boyfriend now? So how could I possibly approach her?"

Mark let out a soft hum and remarked, "Well, I can't speak for you, can I? I really underestimated you before, but now it seems you're capable of any shameless act."

Having expressed his disappointment, Mark slowly ascended the stairs.

Edwin lingered in the living room for a moment before eventually returning to his own bedroom.

In the quiet of the night, sleep remained elusive for Edwin.

After all this time, he often found himself reminiscing about the days he

She walked out, leaning on the door with a smile. "I knew it!"

Within the confines of his office, Edwin found himself briefly lost in thought.

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In the blink of an eye, Tuesday arrived.

After finishing work, Edwin changed into a meticulously crafted three-piece suit.

Edwin appeared handsome and impeccably groomed, his complexion enhancing his overall appearance.

The young and talented Edwin had always been a magnet for attention wherever he went. Despite rumors swirling about his relationship with Miss Smith, they hadn't officially announced their engagement, had they?

A multitude of women eagerly awaited an opportunity to capture Edwin's attention.

Vanessa took a seat next to Edwin, dressed in a stunning and gracefully designed white gown, radiating elegance and beauty.

With a smile, Vanessa remarked, "Finding a moment to see you is quite a challenge these days."

Edwin, casually flipping through the invitation in his hand, asked with a hint of indifference, "Vanessa, aren't you exhausted?"

Vanessa's smile faltered.

After a brief pause, Vanessa mustered a strained smile and replied, "I'm not sure what you're getting at."

Edwin chose to be straightforward. "When you proposed a partnership, I accepted it. So, I was hoping to collaborate with an excellent business partner, not a woman who seems resentful and constantly complains. We should avoid emotional entanglements, don't you think?"

"And what about sex? Don't you have needs?"

Vanessa blurted out, feeling her cheeks redden.

Edwin maintained his composure and replied, "At the moment, I have no such needs. If you feel compelled, you're free to seek companionship

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"Edwin, you bastard!"

Edwin leaned closer to Vanessa, creating an illusion of intimacy, but in reality, he was whispering something cruel into her ear. "Actually, it's a good thing that you realize what kind of person I am sooner rather than later."

Vanessa was furious.

However, out of the corner of her eye, Vanessa noticed Laura and Dylan approaching them.

In a sudden move, Vanessa wrapped her arms around Edwin's neck and planted a swift kiss on his cheek. Her initial intention had been to kiss his lips, but she held back, fearing that it might enrage Edwin completely.

Edwin was about to voice his displeasure when he noticed Laura approaching.

She was wearing a smoky grey dress.

Laura's attire featured a wide neckline that gracefully exposed her delicate neck, and her slim waist could easily be cradled with just one hand.

Her black hair was elegantly swept up, adorned with a magnolia flower.

Edwin found himself momentarily captivated by Laura's presence, thinking that she embodied the verse from a poem, "raven hair flowing like silk."

Dylan looked around. "Our seats are over here!"

Coincidentally seated right beside Edwin, Laura finally noticed him, her complexion turning pale.

Dylan placed an arm around Laura's waist and offered Edwin a forced smile. "It's been a while, Mr. Evans! You're here with your girlfriend, I see. We'll be relying on your strong support for Laura's designs later."

Edwin's gaze fell on Dylan's hand around Laura's waist.

His eyes narrowed slightly as he responded in a measured tone, "Certainly."