

When Her “Death” Couldn’t Break Him Chapter 411

Chapter 411 I Am Not Nicholas

The expression on Nathaniel’s face didn’t soften much, even as the moments passed. In an attempt to break the awkward silence between them, Cecilia asked. “Weren’t you supposed to be at work today?”

Nathaniel’s already handsome face darkened further, his displeasure clearly growing. He hadn’t even left the house that day—what work was he supposed to be doing?

“There was no need to work today,” he replied curtly.

“All right then, make sure you get some rest,” Cecilia said as she began to rise from her seat.

But Nathaniel quickly stepped in front of her, blocking her path. “Is that all you have to say?” he asked, his tone more demanding than before.

Cecilia’s mind drifted back to the events of the previous night. She sighed and said, “Enough, I have work to do now.”

As she turned to leave the room, Nathaniel suddenly pulled her back into his embrace, holding her firmly against him. His Adam’s apple bobbed slightly as he spoke in a low, intense voice, “Cecilia, you need to remember—I’m not Nicholas, and I could never become someone like him.”

Startled by his words, Cecilia looked up at him, her eyes wide with surprise. “Did you remember something?”

“No,” he replied, his hand falling onto her face. He began to caress her skin gently, as if trying to imprint the sensation in his memory. “I don’t like it when you mistake me for someone else.”

Cecilia averted her gaze, trying to deflect the intensity of his words. “I didn’t mean to... it was just a slip of the tongue,” she murmured.

“Is that so? It better be,” Nathaniel responded, his voice carrying a clear edge.

Before Cecilia could fully process his sudden harshness, Nathaniel’s phone rang, breaking the tension. While he was occupied with the call, Cecilia quickly took the opportunity to slip out of his arms and left the room.

She immediately headed to the music room, shutting the door behind her to focus on

composing. Meanwhile, Nathaniel's heart felt oddly hollow as he answered his phone, his mood. clearly soured.

"What's the matter?" he asked curtly.

"Mr. Rainsworth, there's been some suspicious activity around your residence recently," the bodyguard reported. "Today, we managed to catch one of them. After some pressure, he confessed that he was sent by Mdm. Elena."

Nathaniel's eyes narrowed slightly, his mind already racing. "Did he say what he was supposed to do?"

"It seemed like he was there to keep an eye on a child."

On a child... Only Jon is around now. Why is she so focused on watching his every move?

After a moment of contemplation, Nathaniel gave a decisive order to the person on the other end. of the line, "Take him back to the Rainsworth residence."

"Understood."

At the Rainsworth residence, a wounded man was roughly thrown in front of Elena, disrupting her as she arranged a bouquet. She glanced at the scene unfolding before her, a flicker of coldness flashing in her eyes.

"Were we found out already? Did you manage to get the hair I asked for?" she inquired, her tone sharp.

The injured man shook his head in fear. "I didn't get the chance yet."

"You're utterly useless," Elena snapped, tossing the scissors she had been holding onto the ground. in frustration.

The man trembled under her gaze. "Mr. Nathaniel wanted me to inform you not to send anyone. over there again, or else... or else..."

"Or else what?" Elena demanded, her expression turning icy.

"Or he'll

whisper.

turn his back on his own family," the man stammered, his voice barely above a

Elena's face darkened instantly. "Get out," she ordered, her voice cold as ice.

Once everyone had left, a sense of unease crept over her. After the last time she had seen Cecilia, and the child, Elena had been discreetly having people keep an eye on Cecilia's residence.

She had recently discovered that Jonathan had been staying with Cecilia for several consecutive days, only to move in with Vivian shortly afterward. This piqued her curiosity even further.

Initially, she had intended to investigate whether Jonathan and Cecilia were blood-related, but she had been unable to collect either of their hair or blood samples to confirm her suspicions.

"Mrs. Rainsworth, there's no need to distress yourself," the secretary suggested, trying to calm her down. "Now that Mr. Nicholas is in charge of the company, perhaps we could consider bringing back Mr. Nathaniel and Ms. Smith to live with us. In time, certain truths will inevitably come to light."

"I've always wanted to bring Nathaniel back, but he's unwilling." Elena sighed, her voice heavy with frustration. "And Cecilia... she's not as easy to handle as she used to be."

After speaking, another thought crossed her mind. "Who would have thought that Cassandra took the melody from last time? I wonder how her blind date with Nicholas went?"

biological mother, Queenie, seemed like a suitable match for her son.

"Mr. Nicholas said it's fine, everything is up to your arrangement," the secretary replied, trying to reassure her.

Elena let out a slight sigh of relief. "If only Nathaniel were as obedient as Nicholas, I wouldn't have to worry so much."

"Mr. Nathaniel will come to understand your hardships eventually," the secretary offered.

"Hopefully so," Elena said, her tone softening a bit. "We still need to find a solution for the situation with Jonathan."

"Yes."

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Chapter 412 Invitation To The Engagement Party

At the Orion Corporation, Nicholas had just instructed someone to escort Cassandra away. His assistant, Jocelyn, approached him with a displeased expression.

“Mr. Nicholas, are you really going to get engaged to her?” Jocelyn asked, her concern evident.

Jocelyn knew that despite Cassandra’s impressive resume, her overly arrogant and opportunistic nature made her unsuitable for Nicholas.

Nicholas took a sip of warm water, his gentle eyes revealing no hint of his true emotions. “I’m at that age now; it’s time for me to get married.”

At his age, some people already had children attending preschool.

“But getting married just for the sake of it... that’s just too-

Before she could finish, Nicholas interrupted her, “Get back to work.”

Seeing that he was in no mood to discuss it further, Jocelyn could only leave, her eyes brimming with unshed tears.

The engagement invitations were sent out swiftly, and naturally, one was also delivered to Nathaniel.

When Nathaniel received the invitation, he was in the middle of work. Mason informed him of Nicholas’s engagement to Cassandra, and Nathaniel leaned back in his chair, falling silent.

“Should we consider declining it?” Mason suggested cautiously, sensing that Nathaniel didn’t particularly care for his younger brother.

“No, I’ll attend,” Nathaniel replied, his tone neutral.

Nathaniel still remembered the incident a few days ago when Cecilia had mistakenly called him by Nicholas’ name. He was curious to see how Cecilia would react to Nicholas’s engagement this time.

When Nathaniel returned home, he handed the invitation to Cecilia. This is an invitation for Nicholas and Cassandra’s engagement party. He is my younger brother, after all, and I’ve agreed to attend.”

Cecilia hadn’t expected the news, and for reasons she couldn’t quite explain, it felt like a stone had been thrown into the depths of her heart. It wasn’t that she felt sorrow, but it was all so sudden.

“Why are you giving it to me?” she asked.

“We’re married, so naturally, you should attend with me,” Nathaniel explained.

Instinctively, Cecilia was about to refuse, but before she could, Martha spoke up from the side. "As his sister-in-law, it's customary for you to attend."

Cecilia was slightly taken aback. Since when did Martha start siding with Nathaniel?

"All right then, should we prepare some gifts?" Cecilia asked, deciding to go along with it.

Nathaniel was surprised by how readily she agreed. When it came to buying gifts, he said, "I'll take care of it."

"You can't see, so how are you going to buy anything? It's better if Ceci goes with you," Martha interjected.

Cecilia found Martha's behavior rather strange, but since the elderly woman had already spoken, she could only nod in agreement. "All right, we'll go buy some gifts tomorrow to bring to the engagement party."

"Okay." Nathaniel's lips unconsciously curled into a small smile, and his heart swelled with gratitude toward Martha.

He wasn't sure why Martha had suddenly decided to help him. Just a few days ago, she had been openly expressing her disdain for him and the doctor he had brought in.

"Martha," Cecilia offered, "let me take you back to your room for some rest. The living room is quite drafty."

Cecilia wanted to discreetly ask Martha what was going on. Martha allowed her to guide her back. Once they reached the room, Cecilia immediately shut the door behind them.

"Why did you suddenly start defending Nathaniel?" Cecilia asked, her voice filled with curiosity.

Martha feigned surprise. "I wasn't defending him, just reminding you of proper etiquette. Event though we may not be as wealthy as the Rainsworth family, we shouldn't forget our manners."

"Is that really all there is to it?" Cecilia asked, somewhat incredulous.

"Of course," Martha replied, her face serious.

Cecilia decided not to press further. She took Martha's wrinkled hand in hers. "In a couple of days, I've arranged for a foreign specialist to examine you. I've heard that anyone treated by him. can live to be a hundred years old."

Ever since she returned, Cecilia had been incredibly busy, juggling multiple tasks while discreetly arranging for specialists in geriatric care to visit.

No matter what, she didn't want to lose Martha. This time, she had finally managed to invite a renowned team of experts from abroad.

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Chapter 413 She Owes You Nothing

“Silly girl, no doctor is that miraculous,” Martha said with a gentle smile, knowing full well that Cecilia was only joking. She patted Cecilia's hand softly, adding, “I don't want to live too long. As people age, they can become burdensome. I've lived a full life up until now.”

Cecilia's eyes filled with unshed tears, but she forced herself to hold them back, refusing to let them fall. “Don't say that,” Cecilia replied, her voice firm. “You still have to watch Jon and Eli grow up, see them get married, and become a great-grandmother.”

Martha, moved by Cecilia's words, allowed herself a brief moment of hope. She certainly wanted to live long enough to see all of those things, but deep down, she knew her body wouldn't hold up much longer.

She had lived for a long time and had the blessing of a child who was like a daughter to her. In many ways, she was content. Yet, the thought of leaving Cecilia alone weighed heavily on her heart.

A few days earlier, Martha had begun to suspect that Nathaniel had regained some of his memories. She also realized that he was not financially destitute and, more importantly, she noticed his genuine desire to stay by Cecilia's side.

Though she spent most of her time confined to her room, she was aware that the foreign specialists had been brought in thanks to Nathaniel's assistance. She had noticed other subtle changes in him as well, and it was becoming clear that Nathaniel had truly transformed.

“All right, I'll live well and wait to see them get married,” Martha finally agreed, her voice filled with a mix of determination and resignation.

“Good,” Cecilia nodded, feeling a little more reassured. “I'll have the specialist come over the day after tomorrow to take a look at you.”

“All right.”

After making sure Martha was comfortably asleep, Cecilia let out a sigh of relief. She left the room quietly, her heart still heavy, and went outside to seek the counsel of the specialist.

As soon as she left, there was a knock on Martha's door. Martha opened her eyes slowly and called out, "Come in."

Nathaniel walked in, his expression somber and serious. "Thank you," he said, his voice carrying an unusual sincerity.

It was rare for him to genuinely thank anyone.

Martha, however, didn't return his gratitude with a warm smile. "Don't thank me just yet. I'm not doing this for you."

She could tell that Cecilia still had feelings for Nathaniel, and she had noticed that Nathaniel had indeed changed. That was why she had decided to intervene.

"I understand," Nathaniel assured her, nodding slightly. "I promise I will treat her well."

Martha looked at him carefully, her eyes full of uncertainty. She wasn't sure whether to believe him or not. "If I were alive, I'd keep a close eye on you. But if I were to pass away, I could only hope that you'd live with a clear conscience; knowing that Ceci owes you nothing."

Nathaniel knew that words alone wouldn't prove his sincerity. He had long decided to show his intentions toward Cecilia through his actions. However, he also knew that to truly protect Cecilia, and ensure her happiness, he would need to eliminate some of the obstacles that stood in his way.

The following morning, Cecilia set out with Nathaniel to shop for gifts. Now that Jonathan was staying with Vivian, she no longer had to worry about bringing food for him.

Though she couldn't help but wonder whether Vivian's decision to bring Jonathan along had upset Roland.

"What kind of gift should we get for an occasion like this?" Cecilia asked as they walked.

In the past, Nathaniel never had to worry about selecting gifts himself. Mason or his secretary, always took care of the arrangements. "Hold on a moment, let me check," Nathaniel said, stepping aside before dialing Mason's number.

Cecilia, standing a short distance away, overheard him asking Mason for advice on what kind of gift to buy. She couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed. Even though

Nathaniel had lost his memory and was no longer the powerful Mr. Rainsworth, he still carried himself with the confidence of a leader.

Mason promptly sent over a list of recommended gifts, all of which were carefully selected and only needed to be purchased according to the list.

“If I had known we’d be buying so much, I would have asked Sven to come along and help carry everything.” Cecilia remarked, glancing at the long list.

The mention of Sven made Nathaniel feel a pang of jealousy. Without thinking, he immediately said, “I’ll take care of it.”

Cecilia was somewhat taken aback by his response.

Nathaniel carrying things?

In the past, his hands had been considered extraordinarily precious. He rarely even carried his own phone, let alone gifts.

“If you’re willing to do it, that’s fine with me,” Cecilia said.

She began to study the list of gifts, considering Mason’s suggestions. As the sister-in-law, it was her duty not only to present a gift to Nicholas but also to his bride-to-be. The items they were selecting were worth well over a million, and they would be delivered directly to their home.

As they entered the store to make the purchase, Nathaniel drew quite a bit of attention from those around them.

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Chapter 414 Unwanted Attention

Some people in the store couldn’t help but notice Nathaniel’s strikingly handsome face, and they began to whisper among themselves.

“Being attractive is always a plus. Even if you lose your sight, there will still be people willing to take care of you.”

“How do you know he was being kept by a woman? I think that woman is quite attractive too.”

“True. Maybe it’s the woman being taken care of by the man? Even a blind man would want that, right?”

The small group of ladies shopping nearby carefully discussed their speculations among themselves.

Nathaniel distinctly heard their conversation, and being repeatedly referred to as a “blind man” made the atmosphere around him feel suffocating.

“I’m stepping outside for a moment,” Nathaniel said to Cecilia, his voice tense.

“Do you need my help?” Cecilia asked.

“No need,” he replied curtly.

Nathaniel cautiously ventured out of the store, remembering the way well enough, though he was mindful of the possibility of bumping into someone.

The female staff at the store, smitten by his looks, immediately rushed forward to assist him. “Sir,” she asked with a bright smile, “where would you like to go? May I escort you?”

But the smile on her face vanished within seconds as Nathaniel abruptly pushed her away, his voice deep and stern. “Get lost.”

The staff was startled by his harshness and recoiled, losing her balance and falling to the ground.

The store fell silent as everyone around them turned to look. Cecilia noticed the commotion and cast a glance in their direction. She hadn’t seen Nathaniel lose his temper in a long time. This was the first time since he had lost his memory that he had shown such anger.

Cecilia quickly stepped forward and helped the fallen woman to her feet. “I’m sorry,” she apologized on his behalf. “He doesn’t like being touched by strangers.”

The staff, still shaken by Nathaniel’s intensity, took a moment to regain her regain her composure. “It’s all right,” she finally said, though her voice was unsteady.

Cecilia then reached out and grasped Nathaniel’s arm firmly. “What’s wrong with you? Can’t you express yourself properly? Why did you push that girl?” she asked, her voice firm but gentle.

Nathaniel felt particularly uncomfortable where the woman had grabbed his arm earlier. Hearing Cecilia’s scolding only made him feel worse. “I didn’t push her,” he clarified, “I just pulled her hand away.”

“Could you try to be a bit more gentlemanly, please?” Cecilia asked, lowering her voice.

Nathaniel reluctantly muttered, "Fine."

Was I not gentlemanly earlier?

Once they stepped outside the store, Nathaniel immediately took off his coat and casually tossed it into a nearby trash can. Afterward, he made a phone call.

Not long after, the group of women who had been gossiping about Nathaniel were "politely" escorted out by the store manager.

Busy with selecting gifts, Cecilia didn't notice the minor incident that had just occurred. When she was ready to pay after making her selections, the manager approached her respectfully. "Mr. Rainsworth has already taken care of the bill. I will personally ensure your items are delivered to your home later."

Cecilia glanced over at Nathaniel, who was sitting in the nearby rest area, and couldn't help but wonder where on earth he had gotten so much money.

She walked over to him and asked, "Aren't you supposed to be broke?"

Nathaniel had already thought of his response. "How could I possibly let you pay for my engagement gifts?"

brother's

"The money I had was saved privately in the past," he continued. "It's just a drop in the bucket for me."

After hearing his explanation, Cecilia didn't say much more. The two of them spent the entire day shopping, finally managing to buy everything they needed. On the way back home, they caught a taxi. As the driver navigated through the streets, Cecilia, exhausted, leaned her head against the window.

"Nathaniel, remember this—you owe me a favor," Cecilia said, her voice tired but determined. She no longer wanted her efforts to go unnoticed. She wanted her actions to be acknowledged, to be reciprocated.

Nathaniel gently lifted his hand and pulled her into his embrace. "Mhm, I'll remember that."

Outside the window, heavy snow began to fall again. Too tired to care, Cecilia simply let him hold her. Nathaniel held her softly in his arms, his mood lifted. However, he couldn't see her face, so he had no idea what kind of expression Cecilia was wearing, or what emotions she was feeling at that moment.

“It’s almost the New Year,” Cecilia said casually, her voice trailing off. “Why choose now for an engagement?”

Nathaniel tightened his hold on her slightly. “They might get married soon after their engagement.”

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Chapter 415 Why Did You Tell Me You Were Nathaniel Cassandra?

Cecilia’s body stiffened momentarily at the mention of the name.

Nathaniel held her close, immediately sensing the shift in her demeanor. “What’s wrong?” he asked, his concern evident.

Cecilia shook her head, trying to brush off her unease. “It’s nothing,” she replied, but Nathaniel wasn’t convinced, and his earlier good mood began to dissipate.

“If you don’t want to go to the engagement, I can attend alone,” Nathaniel offered.

“Martha said it herself—after all, I am his sister-in-law. It’s only right that I attend his engagement party,” Cecilia replied, her voice steady.

Hearing Cecilia acknowledge her role as his sister-in-law caused a small sense of relief to settle in Nathaniel’s heart. The heaviness he had felt just moments ago began to ease. When they returned home, Cecilia collapsed onto the couch, exhausted from the day’s events. She had barely settled. when her phone rang.

Cecilia answered it, not expecting much, but the voice on the other end was all too familiar. “Ceci, it’s me, Nicholas,” the voice said, and Cecilia’s heart immediately tightened.

Though they had met before, their conversations had always been brief, constrained by their respective statuses.

“Is there something you need?” Cecilia asked, her mind racing with questions she wanted to ask but found herself unable to voice.

“Can we talk in person?” Nicholas asked. He had tried to see Cecilia several times, but she had always turned him down. This phone call was his last attempt to reach her.

He wasn’t sure if Cecilia would agree to meet, but recalling how he had often helped her in their childhood, Cecilia felt it would be too cold to refuse. “All right,” she finally agreed.

“Turn right when you leave the house. Walk about two hundred meters, and you’ll find me waiting for you,” Nicholas said, looking out toward the place where Cecilia lived, not far from where he was parked.

Cecilia hadn’t expected him to be so close already. After hanging up the phone, she grabbed a jacket and headed out the door, making sure to stay quiet so as not to disturb Nathaniel, who was busy in his study, completely unaware of her departure.

She could hardly believe Nicholas had the audacity to show up here.

Pulling on her coat and picking up an umbrella, Cecilia stepped out into the heavy snowfall. The world outside was a vast, white expanse, muffling the sounds of the city.

She hadn’t walked far when she spotted a sleek black Maybach, parked discreetly beside a modest dwelling. Cecilia stopped in her tracks, hesitant to move forward.

A short distance away, the car door swung open, and Nicholas stepped out. He was clad in a black coat, and despite the falling snow, he had no umbrella. He walked toward Cecilia with a determined stride.

He had driven himself here today, having decided that if she refused to meet him, he would simply return and find another way to see her. Cecilia slowed her pace, her gaze fixed on Nicholas’ familiar face. She was momentarily entranced by how much he resembled Nathaniel.

As Nicholas approached, Cecilia felt an unexpected warmth welling up in her eyes. Before she could speak, Nicholas smiled and broke the silence. “Don’t you recognize me?”

In that instant, memories from the past rushed back to her. The Nathaniel she remembered from her childhood was now standing before her, and it sent a pang of pain through her heart.

“I... Of course, I recognize you,” Cecilia stammered, her voice trembling with anxiety.

To be honest, she had been reluctant to seek out Nicholas for clarification. It wasn’t just because she was now married with children; she was also nervous and afraid of what she might learn.

“Why did you refuse to see me before? Even when we were back in our hometown, you wouldn’t call out to me,” Nicholas asked softly, his voice filled with a quiet hurt.

Cecilia couldn’t meet his gaze. She lowered her head and murmured, “I’m sorry.” She didn’t notice the slight reddening at the corners of Nicholas’ eyes.

"It's cold outside. Shall we talk in the car?" Nicholas suggested, his voice gentle, like the warm sun breaking through a winter's day.

Cecilia nodded. "All right." She followed Nicholas into the car, where the warmth from the heater enveloped her, making the atmosphere inside feel surprisingly cozy.

Cecilia couldn't resist asking the question that had been on her mind, "Can I ask why you told me before that you were Nathaniel?"

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Chapter 416 I Am Sorry

Nicholas finally heard the question he had been anticipating. His lips barely moved as he spoke. "Ceci, you visited the Rainsworth family when you were very young. Have you ever heard about them having twins?"

Cecilia shook her head.

If she had known that Nathaniel had a twin brother, she would have questioned whether she had mistaken the man she loved. But throughout her childhood, whenever her parents took her to Tudela to visit the Rainsworth family, no one had ever mentioned that Nathaniel was a twin.

Nicholas explained, "From the moment I was born, I suffered from a severe condition. I was extremely sensitive to the cold, terrified of sunlight, and spent most of my early years confined to an intensive care unit. My family even feared at one point that I might not survive. Because of this, my existence was kept a secret from the outside world."

He continued, "Later, when my health improved slightly, I returned to the Rainsworth family. But I was still incredibly weak, and I had very little interaction with the outside world. The only person I connected with... was you."

Nicholas' voice softened as he recalled those memories. "The reason I initially told you I was my elder brother, Nathaniel, was because I was afraid you'd reject me due to my illness. Secondly, the Rainsworth family didn't want anyone seen as weak or useless to be exposed to the public."

Cecilia listened in silence, finally understanding the complexities of his situation.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly, her voice tinged with regret. "I was unaware of all this. It wasn't that I deliberately avoided seeing you, or pretended not to recognize you. I was simply at a loss for how to face you, what to say when I encountered you."

"I've never forgotten how you helped me when we were young. Those memories are still clear in my mind," Cecilia added, her eyes welling with tears that she could no longer hold back.. sons that had driven her:

Suddenly, she felt an overwhelming guilt. The very from Nicholas, the one who had once loved her so deeply, now weighed heavily on her heart. Nicholas reached out to wipe her tears away, but Cecilia instinctively flinched and turned her face away. His hand froze in mid-air.

-Do you remember the promise we made when we were younger?" Nicholas asked, his voice. steady but filled with emotion.

Cecilia looked up at him.

"Do you remember promising to marry me when I returned?" Nicholas continued, emphasizing each word with care.

Cecilia's body stiffened, her complexion paling as the memory resurfaced. Back then, she had been injured while trying to save him. He had held her tightly and whispered, "Wait for me. When I return, we'll get married."

The scars from that incident still marked Cecilia's back, a constant reminder of the promise she had made. It was because of those words that she had unhesitatingly chosen to marry Nathaniel. But in the end, it had all been a misunderstanding.

"I'm already married, you know," Cecilia said, her voice strained. She clenched her hands tightly, her fingertips digging into her palms. "And besides, you're engaged now. We should just forget about our previous agreement."

Nicholas' throat tightened at her words. "If you're willing, I'll call off the engagement immediately," he offered, his intentions clear.

Nicholas had agreed to marry Cassandra for two reasons—one, to please Elena, and two, to gauge Cecilia's reaction. Now, he was pushing Cecilia to make a choice.

But Cecilia didn't hesitate. She shook her head and replied, "I'm sorry."

Even if she divorced Nathaniel, she couldn't imagine marrying Nicholas. She wasn't the same Cecilia she had been before. Now, she had Elliot and Jonathan, as well as the child growing in her belly. She felt unworthy of the present Nicholas.

Nicholas hadn't expected her rejection to be so swift and decisive. He couldn't accept it. "Ceci, is there something holding you back?" he asked, his voice laced with desperation.

“I’ll handle my brother’s affairs,” Nicholas continued. “I’ll ensure he divorces you, and I’ll arrange for someone to take care of him in the future.”

But Cecilia remained indifferent, her heart heavy with sorrow. Nicholas gave a bitter smile, realizing he was losing her.

“If it weren’t for him,” Nicholas whispered, “the man you should have married would have been me.”

Had Nicholas returned earlier, during the first three years of her marriage to Nathaniel, Cecilia might have agreed to be with him without hesitation. But now, everything had changed.

All Cecilia could do was apologize again, “I’m sorry.”

She reached for the car door, ready to leave, but before she could step out, Nicholas pulled her into his arms, holding her tightly against him.

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Chapter 417 A Family

Startled by Nicholas’ sudden embrace, Cecilia stiffened, her body going rigid. She hurriedly wriggled out of his arms, her heart racing. “I’m already married,” she managed to say, her voice tinged with both confusion and determination.

The confusion in her eyes was unmistakable, and her resistance was all too clear to Nicholas. His throat tightened as he processed her words, and after what felt like an eternity, he slowly withdrew his hand, his eyes clouded with a deep sadness. “Can we still be friends in the future?” he asked quietly, his voice barely above a whisper.

Cecilia, still shaken by the encounter, looked at him with a softness that had been absent earlier. “Mmm, we’re not just friends now, Nicholas. We’re also family,” she replied gently. “I’ll attend your engagement party.”

Nicholas nodded, trying to muster a smile despite the heaviness in his heart. “I’ll see you there.”

“If there’s nothing else, I’ll take my leave now,” Cecilia said.

She turned and began her walk back through the snow-covered streets. Nicholas stood by his car, watching her retreating figure as it gradually faded into the white expanse. It felt as though she was being swallowed by the vast, endless snow, slipping further away from him with each step.

Meanwhile, back in Tudela, Jocelyn waited for Nicholas' return to the company. But as the hours passed with no sign of him, she began to worry. It was unlike him to disappear without a word, and for the first time, she found herself completely unaware of his whereabouts. Unable to shake the feeling that something was wrong, she dialed his number.

"Mr. Nicholas, where are you now?" Jocelyn asked, her voice laced with concern.

Nicholas, who had just settled back into his car, replied with a weary tone, "I'm out handling some affairs. I won't be returning to the office today."

"But there's a dinner meeting tonight-

"Turn it down," Nicholas interrupted.

Jocelyn had been by Nicholas' side for over a decade. She knew him well enough to sense that something was off. "Mr. Nicholas, if there's anything troubling you, please don't keep it to yourself. You can confide in me—I promise I won't tell anyone else," she assured him, her voice filled with genuine concern.

Nicholas allowed himself a brief, self-mocking smile before gently reassuring her, "You're overthinking it, Jocelyn. I'm fine. Just focus on your work."

With that, he ended the call, but not before a fit of coughing overtook him. Though his ailment was mostly cured, its lingering effects still haunted him, and he never knew when it might resurface.

That day, Nicholas didn't drive home as usual. Instead, he parked his car at a spot where he could see Cecilia's residence from afar. He remained there for the longest time, watching her house in silence, lost in thought.

Meanwhile, Cecilia returned home, her mind a whirlwind of emotions. As soon as she stepped through the door, the enticing aroma of food greeted her, wafting in from the kitchen.

Nathaniel emerged from the kitchen, wiping his hands on a towel. "Where did you go?" he asked.

"Just went for a stroll," Cecilia replied, the lie slipping out before she could stop it.

Nathaniel didn't press further. "Dinner's ready," he simply said.

"Okay," Cecilia responded, walking over to the dining table. It was laden with all her favorite dishes, a spread that took her by surprise.

Martha had also come down early, eager to join them. “Ceci, come and eat. He had someone prepare this meal for you—it’s all your favorite dishes,” Martha said warmly, nodding toward Nathaniel.

Cecilia smiled and nodded. “Okay.”

The three of them sat down together to share the meal, and for a moment, it felt like they were a real family. Martha, unable to contain her emotions, spoke up. “I’ve always dreamed of the day when we could all sit down and enjoy a meal together as a family. I never thought that dream would finally come true.”

A family.

Cecilia hadn’t expected Martha to truly accept Nathaniel as part of their family, yet here they were.

Nathaniel, seizing the moment, spoke up, “Aren’t you seeing the doctor tomorrow, Martha? I’ve arranged for someone to bring some medical equipment over.”

“That’s wonderful, you’re always so thoughtful,” Martha praised, her voice filled with genuine gratitude.

Cecilia watched their interaction, feeling a mix of emotions she couldn’t quite put into words.

“By the way,” Martha continued, “how has Jon been doing at Vivian’s place lately? And how’s Eli at the hospital? My health hasn’t been the best recently, so I haven’t had the chance to visit them.”

Cecilia realized with a pang of guilt that she had been so caught up in the day’s events that she had forgotten to check in on the kids. “I forgot,” she admitted. “I’ll give them a call after we eat.”

“All right.”

After dinner, Cecilia made her first call to Vivian. Over the past few days, she had heard that Jonathan was doing well, but she couldn’t help but worry if anything had gone wrong.

The call took a while to connect. When Jonathan finally answered, his voice was hushed, as if trying not to be overheard. “Mommy, do you need something? Ms. Kennedy is getting scolded by “Grandpa?” Cecilia echoed, completely bewildered.

Jonathan quickly clarified, “It’s Ms. Kennedy’s dad. She brought me back to her place.”

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Chapter 418 I Cannot Bear To Throw You Out

Cecilia felt a sudden rush of concern. She could faintly hear the enraged voice of Vivian's father, Roland, shouting in the background: "Who's the father of that child? I'll kill him!!" The sounds of vases shattering and furniture being thrown around followed his furious outburst.

Jonathan heard the commotion too and quickly said, "Mommy, I can't talk right now. I need to check on Ms. Kennedy. I'll make sure Grandpa doesn't hit her."

Cecilia could barely respond before the line went dead. "Okay," she murmured, though Jonathan had already hung up.

Back at Vivian's home, Jonathan stepped out of the room and made his way to the living room, where the scene was chaotic. Vivian was sprawled nonchalantly on the couch, seemingly immune to her father's wrath, while Roland was storming around, knocking over vases and throwing objects in his frustration. Despite his anger, he was careful not to actually harm his daughter.

"Dad, please stop asking." Vivian said with a yawn, clearly unfazed by the commotion. "I don't even know who the child's father is. It was just a fleeting encounter in a sea of people. So, please, stop pushing me toward Zachary, and don't arrange any more blind dates for me. No rich heir is going to accept a woman with a child."

Roland was stunned. He hadn't expected her to genuinely have no idea who the father of her child was. The revelation left him feeling humiliated, as if he had lost all face.

"Y-You never learn from the good, only the bad! You've embarrassed me completely—where do I even put my face? I swear, I'm going to beat you senseless today!" he shouted, raising his hand as if to strike Vivian.

"Do you truly not know who the father of that child is? If you don't know, I'll throw that kid out!" he threatened, his hand poised in the air.

Just as Roland was about to bring his hand down, Jonathan stepped forward, grabbing onto the hem of his coat. "Grandpa, please don't hit Mommy. If you're angry, take it out on me instead," Jonathan pleaded, puffing out his chest with utmost seriousness.

Roland looked down at the small child who wasn't even as tall as his leg, yet carried himself with a sense of responsibility far beyond his years. The sight melted his heart completely.

"Sweetie," Roland said, his voice suddenly gentle, "go back to your room. I'm not hitting your mom; I'm just... patting her shoulder." He hesitated, then gave Vivian a rather firm pat on the shoulder.

Vivian rolled her eyes in disbelief. She had never imagined that her typically stern father would show such tenderness toward Jonathan. The sight was so sweet it almost made her sick.

Grandpa, are you still going to send me away?" Jonathan asked, his large eyes fixed on Roland.

Roland could hardly bear the thought of parting with such a well-behaved child. "Silly boy," he said, his tone filled with affection, "you must have misunderstood. I wasn't talking about you—I was talking about that stray cat outside. You're my treasure. Even I throw your mom out, I wouldn't bear to do the same to you.

Jonathan had never experienced this kind of affection from his grandfather before. Looking at Roland's kind expression, warmth filled his heart. "Grandpa, I'll definitely take good care of you when I grow up," he promised.

"All right, I'll wait for you to grow up. Let's go inside—it's too cold out here. In a few days, I'll buy you a very big room, so you won't have to suffer outside with your mom. I will take care of you, Sweetie," Roland said as he led Jonathan inside. "Tomorrow, let's take you shopping for clothes, shoes, and toys, okay?"

Vivian watched as her father led Jonathan away, and for the first time, she felt a wave of fear.

What if Dad finds out that Jon isn't really his grandson? Would he still be this kind? Nevermind. I'll deal with it when the time comes.

She quickly called Cecilia back, reassuring her that everything was fine.

Relieved, Cecilia proceeded to call Elliot.

At that moment, Elliot had just lain down but hadn't fallen asleep yet. When he saw that it was Cecilia calling, his eyes lit up. "Mommy, why didn't you come to see me today? Are you still mad at me?" Elliot asked, his voice small and worried.

After his secret visit to the Rainsworth Manor last time, it was the first time he had seen Cecilia truly angry, and it had genuinely frightened him.

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Chapter 419 Bite Me

Listening to Elliot's voice, Cecilia noticed that it lacked the usual playful tone and was instead filled with caution. She quickly reassured him, "I was really busy today and completely forgot to call you. I'm so sorry, Sweetie. Can I come see you tomorrow?"

Upon hearing her words, Elliot couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief. "It's all right, Mommy. You should focus on your work. I'm doing just fine in the hospital, so you don't need to go through the trouble of coming here."

In the past, Elliot would have insisted on Cecilia coming over to keep him company right away. Now, he was as considerate as Jonathan, and that realization brought a sharp pang to Cecilia's heart. She quietly resolved to visit Elliot the next day, determined to make it up to him.

After chatting for a while, Cecilia reluctantly ended the call. She lay down on the couch, trying to relax, but her thoughts were still on her children.

Suddenly, a tall figure appeared before her, blocking the light and casting a shadow over her. Cecilia furrowed her brows slightly as she opened her eyes, only to find Nathaniel standing nearby. She wasn't sure how long he had been there.

"Is something wrong?" Cecilia asked, puzzled by his sudden presence.

"Before dinner, did you really just go for a walk?" Nathaniel asked, his tone serious.

Cecilia hesitated but eventually responded, "Yes. What's wrong with that?"

"It's nothing," Nathaniel replied, though his expression suggested otherwise.

He remained silent for a moment longer before turning and leaving the room. As soon as he was out of sight, he immediately made a call, instructing his bodyguard to review the surveillance footage around the house.

As he suspected, all the surveillance cameras in the vicinity had mysteriously malfunctioned that day.

"Check the footage from farther away," Nathaniel ordered,

"Understood," came the response.

Before long, Nathaniel received a report with all the vehicle information his bodyguards had managed to gather. Most of the cars belonged to locals, and their owners' information was quickly revealed. One car, however, stood out—it belonged to Rainsworth Group.

Nathaniel specifically instructed his subordinates to investigate this car further. When the surveillance footage was finally retrieved, Nathaniel had Mason play it back. To his dismay, the video showed Nicholas sitting inside the car.

Mason, unaware of the details, watched in confusion. He only knew that the footage involved Nicholas, but nothing more.

After viewing the footage, Nathaniel didn't say a word. He simply hung up the phone, his mind racing with thoughts.

Meanwhile, Cecilia had already taken a bath and was preparing to go to bed. When she opened the door to her bedroom, she was surprised to find Nathaniel sitting inside, waiting for her.

"What were you doing in my room?"

"Getting ready to sleep, of course," Nathaniel replied nonchalantly as he began to undress.

Cecilia's face flushed red with embarrassment. "Leave," she demanded, "and put your clothes back on!"

But Nathaniel ignored her protests. After undressing, he calmly lay down on the bed. "I'm not used to sleeping in clothes. Hope you don't mind," he said, his tone completely unbothered.

Cecilia hadn't expected him to be so brazen. Frustrated, she tried to pull the blanket away from him. "Get out! Get out!" she exclaimed, her voice rising in frustration.

With a swift motion, Nathaniel extended his arm and pulled her into his embrace. He held her close, his voice firm. "From now on, we'll sleep together."

"No! Let go, or I'll..." Cecilia paused, struggling to find a suitable threat, "I'll bite you."

Bite me?

Nathaniel's voice lowered, becoming a bit hoarse. "Go ahead."

Cecilia had never encountered someone so audacious before. Without hesitation, she bit down on his shoulder. She didn't bite too hard, but it should have been painful. Nathaniel let out a stifled grunt, but instead of letting her go, he held her even tighter.

"Ceci, do you really despise me that much?" he asked, his voice carrying a hint of vulnerability.

Cecilia was taken aback by his question. "Haven't we already discussed this?" she replied, her voice wavering. "I'm only staying with you out of obligation, not because I want to live as your wife."

"I never agreed to that," Nathaniel responded calmly.

"Why can't you keep your word?" Cecilia suddenly grew upset, her voice rising slightly in frustration.

Just then, the familiar voice of Martha echoed from the doorway. "Ceci, is everything all right in there?"

Cecilia was about to respond, but Nathaniel spoke up first. "It's fine, Martha. You should get some rest."

Hearing Nathaniel's deep voice, Martha wasn't particularly surprised. "All right, you two should get some sleep as well," she said before walking away.

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Chapter 420 I Thought He Changed

Cecilia couldn't be bothered to argue further. Annoyed, she yanked the blanket around herself, leaving Nathaniel to lie quietly beside her.

"If you're going to stay here, then just sleep like this," she grumbled.

After turning off the light, it didn't take long for Cecilia to fall asleep, her exhaustion finally catching up with her. Nathaniel, however, remained awake, listening to her even breathing. Gently, he pulled her closer into his arms, savoring the warmth of her presence.

The next morning, when Cecilia woke up, she found herself nestled against Nathaniel's firm chest. She slowly opened her eyes, and as she tilted her head back, she found herself staring directly into Nathaniel's handsome face.

Panicked, Cecilia quickly extricated herself from his embrace, careful not to wake him. She immediately threw on her coat and hurried out of bed.

As soon as she opened the bedroom door, she saw that Martha was already awake, sitting in the living room. Martha noticed her and smiled kindly. "Come here, Ceci," she called out, "I'd like to have a word with you."

Cecilia felt a bit embarrassed, certain that Martha had understood the situation. Nevertheless, she followed Martha to her room, ready to explain herself. Once they were seated, Cecilia quickly said, "He was the one who insisted on staying last night. We didn't... do anything."

Martha chuckled softly. "Ceci, there's no need to explain anything to me, this old woman," she said gently. "I just want you to know that whatever decision you make, I will always stand by your side."

Cecilia nodded, grateful for Martha's understanding.

Martha hesitated for a moment before adding, "I've noticed that Nathaniel has truly changed. It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to be with him. The older generation always says that it's best for couples to stay together, especially when you have a child."

Cecilia listened in silence, unsure of how to respond. Finally, she simply said, "I'll think about it. Don't worry. The doctor will be here soon. You should rest a bit more before they arrive."

"All right," Martha agreed.

After their conversation, Cecilia left the room to contact the doctor. Once she finished making the necessary arrangements, Nathaniel came downstairs, fully dressed.

"Ceci," he greeted her casually.

Cecilia, still feeling awkward about the previous night, chose not to engage with him. She intentionally ignored him, pretending to be busy.

Nathaniel noticed her cold demeanor and frowned slightly, his handsome face taking on a serious expression. He assumed that Cecilia had left the room because of him, so he returned to

When Her "Death Couldn't Break Him

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Only then did Cecilia relax and go to freshen up.

Before long, the sound of the doorbell echoed through the house. Assuming it was the doctor, Cecilia immediately went to open the door. To her surprise, it was Vivian standing there, carrying a bag and looking around restlessly.

"Vivian, what are you doing here?" Cecilia asked, perplexed. "Where's Jon?"

"Last night, my dad kicked me out. Jon is probably accompanying him on a tour of our family's company right now," Vivian replied with a shrug.

Roland had quickly grown fond of Jonathan, even going so far as to call him his treasure. He had planned to write the boy into his will, intending to leave all his assets to Jonathan when he passed away.

After explaining the situation, Vivian looked around the house and quietly asked, "Where's Nathaniel?"

She was curious about the former CEO, who was now blind. She wondered what he looked like now.

Cecilia turned and gestured toward the direction of Nathaniel's room. "He's in his room," she said.

"I'll go check." Vivian set down her bag and, as if about to see a rare animal, made her way toward Nathaniel's room.

Before she could even knock, the door swung open, and a tall man stepped out. "Do we have any visitors?" Nathaniel asked.

Vivian, standing just a few feet away, observed him carefully. Despite his blindness, there was nothing unusual about his eyes. She couldn't help but feel a mix of pity and satisfaction. It was indeed retribution at its finest—such a sc*mbag of a man, now blind.

Before Cecilia could respond, Vivian spoke up. "Hello, I'm Vivian, Cecilia's childhood best friend. Do you remember me? You once escorted me to the police station."

Nathaniel's expression remained unchanged as he replied, "I don't remember."

Vivian's face fell, feeling a bit choked up by his cold response.

How could his attitude still be so terrible? Didn't Martha say he had changed?