

Chapter 416 Rena's Consolation

Cecilia replied with a nod.

She then added, "It's set in May. Mark has been swamped lately."

Rena's response came with a cheerful grin.

Mark's company was in Duefron. Yet, his vast network in the northwest meant he often traveled there for work. Even in Duefron, he frequently drank and engaged in social activities.

Cecilia didn't complain.

She even once pointed out that with his connections, securing a more relaxed job would be a piece of cake.

However, Mark dismissed the idea. To him, it smacked of early retirement.

He minded their age gap, which led him to indulge in their intimate moments until midnight that day.

Cecilia pondered what to say next yet opted for silence.

Observing her hesitation, Rena queried, "Is something troubling you?"

Playing with a small garment in her hands, Cecilia confessed in a low tone, "Rena, I somehow feel the things between me and Mark have changed. I'm sure my love for him persists, as does his for me, but... There's a sense of disbelief surrounding this joy."

Rena expressed her understanding of Cecilia's feelings.

In reality, her past life was certainly no better than Cecilia's. Cecilia was

certain about Mark's affection for her.

However, back then, Waylen's heart harbored another woman. The relationship between Rena and Waylen had endured numerous fights and challenges.

Rena gently hugged Cecilia, saying, "You will find the proper way to get along with him over the days."

Cecilia's spirits lifted at her words.

Noticing Cecilia's earlier distress, Rena summoned Vera to join them for a meal. The three engaged in lively conversation.

Vera brought up the topic of Aline who had been executed.

Rena was taken aback for quite some time, then mustered a strained grin. "I invited you over to cheer things up, yet we've drifted to such a heavy topic."

Vera shrugged off the gravity. "Isn't it something to be happy about?"

Rena, still smiling, agreed, "Yes, you've got a point."

After wiping her mouth with a napkin, Vera retrieved a velvet box from her purse and handed it to Cecilia.

"A gift for your upcoming wedding! Roscoe had been overseas for a work assignment. He picked it up for you."

Cecilia lifted the lid of the box. Inside was a necklace adorned with pearls and a pink diamond, radiating opulence. She felt it was too expensive to take it.

Vera gave Cecilia's hand a reassuring pat and insisted, "Please accept it. I treat you as my little sister just like Rena does."

Seeing Cecilia's hesitation, Rena urged, "It's okay. Take it. Over the years, she had received tens of millions in bonuses from my music center. It appears she had only invested around one million back then."

Vera jested, "Oh, what a good memory you have!"

Then, Cecilia accepted the gift with assurance.

After the meal, they indulged in a bit of shopping. Later, Waylen arrived to fetch Rena.

A sleek black Maybach pulled up to the curb.

Waylen swung open the door and stepped out of the car.

During the early spring, he sported a white sweater and khaki casual pants, which gave him a youthful and handsome appearance.

Vera teased, "Rena, does having such a good-looking husband ever concern you? You see, lots of girls are staring at him."

Rena gazed at Waylen.

He was heading in her direction. Numerous young girls sneakily admired him with sidelong glances.

Rena responded with a faint smile, "Of course it does. But I can't keep him by my side all the time."

Moreover, she couldn't keep a man by her side unless he was willing to do so.

Waylen had to be a responsible father now, managing the kids and handling daily life tasks. On top of that, he had to juggle work at two companies. Rena doubted he had the energy and time to have any mistresses.

In a twinkling of an eye, Waylen appeared in front of Rena.

Holding Rena close in a warm embrace, he glanced at Cecilia from the corner of his eye and asked, "Would you like a ride back home?"

Cecilia whispered her decline, "No, I'll drive myself."

Acknowledging Vera with a nod, Waylen departed with Rena.

As soon as their car was out of sight, Vera turned to Cecilia and sighed

slightly, saying, "Waylen is becoming more handsome. Rena was the only one who could win him over! I can still recall how he used to be such an aloof guy back in those days!"

Cecilia complained, "He was quite the mischievous rascal!"

In a low voice, she continued, "He'd already fallen in love with Rena and tricked me into thinking she was Tyrone's girlfriend. Otherwise, I wouldn't have..."

Suddenly, Harold crossed her mind, and she was momentarily taken aback.

Vera gently touched Cecilia's shoulder and consoled her, "Let the past stay in the past! He's no longer here. We must move forward."

Cecilia managed a smile.

Vera gave her cheek a playful pinch and remarked, "You're such a young and charming one!"

Cecilia's cheeks flushed at her words.

Just then, Mark's call came through.

Cecilia answered the phone and asked softly, "Will you make it back home today?"

Despite lacking a marriage certificate, Mark resided in a villa in Duefron with Cecilia, making their lives akin to that of a typical married couple.

Cecilia had thought about inviting Zoey over since Mark was still advancing his career in these years.

Mark had just wrapped up a business meeting on his end.

His suit in tow, he took the lead, with Peter and two additional assistants trailing behind.

Mark spoke in a hushed tone. "I will come back. But it may be a little late."

Cecilia gave a confirming nod. She planned to have a conversation with

Mark about inviting Zoey over once he returned. Zoey was left alone at home while Mark took care of business in Duefron. Even with several servants with Zoey, Cecilia felt it would be better if Zoey could enjoy their company here.

With that, she ended the call.

Vera teased with a grin, "You seem to grow up a lot."

Cecilia's cheeks warmed with a shy flush.

After Mark disconnected the call, when he lifted his gaze, he spotted someone he hadn't anticipated. It was Cathy.

Cathy approached in a bit of disarray, like a flustered mouse.

Instinctively, Peter stepped forward and addressed her with a steady composure, "Miss Wilson!"

Cathy, with a mix of begging and urgency, called out, "Mark! I need to speak with you."

Mark had an inkling of the topic she was inching toward. Glancing at his watch, he responded with cool detachment, "Cathy, the moment you used Laura as a pawn and intentionally caused her pneumonia, you forfeited your right as her mother. Perhaps you've never held affection for her since you were pregnant."

Cathy's complexion lost its color.

In a futile attempt, she reached for Mark's hand but failed.

The man who once cherished her now regarded her as a mere acquaintance. She couldn't accept it.

With a faint smile, Cathy challenged him, "Mark, do you really want to drive me into a corner? I've lost my career, my family, and much more. And now my child as well?"

Avoiding a confrontation with her, Mark gave her one last warning, "If you've got a moral compass, you shouldn't have hurt that kid!"

With that, Mark departed with his companions.

Cathy called out to his retreating figure, "Mark! She's my child!"

Mark came to a halt.

Then he said quietly, "She is not! She's Paul's child, and she is quite unlike you."

Laura's innocent gaze held no cunning plots within.

Children embodied purity, and Laura shouldn't be swayed by Cathy.

Mark walked away decisively, leaving Cathy alone, her smile tinged with self-mockery.

She chuckled at her hopeful imagination. Even a child could not keep Mark by her side.

Mark boarded his private jet, and his mood soured.

Peter was the kindest and most thoughtful of them all. Pouring a glass of red wine, he passed it to Mark, seated beside him, and grinned, remarking, "Cathy picked her path. She can't blame anyone else."

Cathy stirred up so much trouble that her family couldn't welcome her anymore, believing she had disgraced them. It could be said that the people around her had distanced themselves from her.

Mark didn't sip the wine, declining with a charming gesture, straightening his shirt. "Peter, she wasn't always this way. Once, she was reasonable and kind."

He seemed to drift into his world of thoughts.

"Love can sometimes make people lose their way."

Peter knew how to cheer Mark up and quickly responded, "That's not always the case! Take Cecilia, for example. Her love for you is deep, yet she doesn't compromise her values. Her career thrives. She's your ideal one."

Mark gave him a look.

Peter felt puzzled and asked, "Did I say something incorrect?"

Mark grinned and said, "No. It's just I've thought about something the wrong way all the time."

Mark had long believed that women like Cathy and Miss Holt embodied independence. However, Peter's words made him realize he was wrong on that.

Cecilia was the epitome of the self-reliant woman he had always admired.

Perhaps she lived comfortably with only modest goals.

Still, considering her origins in the Fowler family, how could anyone expect her to be ordinary?

Her love had its boundaries.

The thought of Cecilia made Mark's heart flutter. He was eager to reunite with her.

Peter had a knack for reading Mark's mind. After guessing what was on Mark's mind, he refrained from adding more words.

By nine o'clock in the evening, the private jet touched down.

An hour and a half later, Mark was back at the villa.

In the hallway, there was just a single wall lamp still lit.

Surrounded by the gentle, golden light, he sensed the warmth of home. A sweet home with Cecilia and Edwin.

Mark removed his coat and gazed around the villa adorned with decorations from a while ago, and his heart warmed with nostalgia.

He made his way upstairs and headed straight to the child's bedroom.

Edwin had dozed off. While sleeping, he remained perfectly still, lying on his side with his small body snugly wrapped under the quilt.

Only half of his soft face was visible. His brown hair had a shiny, vibrant color.

Mark perched on the bed's edge, loosened his shirt and leaned down to plant a kiss.

Edwin remained asleep, but he murmured something in his dream.

Mark watched over him tenderly for some time.

At last, he carefully tucked Edwin in and returned to his bedroom, where Cecilia was still engrossed in her tasks.

Perched on the couch in her white robe, Cecilia was absorbed in a script.

Her slightly wet hair was draped down, and a fresh scent emanated from her.

She had just stepped out of a shower.

Mark eased the door shut, speaking softly. "It's late. Are you still going over your lines?"

Cecilia lifted her gaze to him.

Delight flickered in her eyes, but she kept it subtle, not wanting to reveal too much.

Leaning against the doorframe, Mark undid the buttons on his shirt and grumbled, "I'm completely worn out!"

He had a talent for handling relationships with women.

Revealing vulnerability would often evoke women's sympathy, and Cecilia, at the very least, felt a bit concerned.

However, she remained seated and refused to get up.

Mark sat beside her, wearing a gentle smile, and affectionately ruffled her hair.

"How did your day out shopping go?"

Cecilia shared some information about Rena with him, and without overthinking, she remarked, "Once Elva is born, Waylen and Rena will have two little girls."

Yet, they had no daughters of their own.

Despite his fatigue, Mark's smile remained. He reclined against the sofa, too weary to move much.

Nevertheless, he drew her into his embrace.

He took her hand, sliding it inside his shirt to feel the warmth of his skin.

Cecilia pulled back her hand.

"I'm not kidding!"

With a tender grin, Mark said, "Don't we already have a little girl at home?" As he said this, he playfully tugged at her long hair.

Cecilia got the hint.

She blushed a bit, realizing her youthful days were now behind her.

"Do you feel embarrassed?"

After a little break, Mark became energetic and was itching to dive into some intimate moments.

Cecilia playfully nudged his arm and exclaimed, "I've got a big newsflash for you!"

Mark released her hand.

He rose from his seat, leisurely undoing his belt, almost as if preparing for a shower. "What's the matter?"

Cecilia lifted her gaze toward him.

He shed his garments without hesitation, appearing just like his usual self.

She genuinely admired his audacious charm.

Nearly undressed, Mark cast a glance her way and teased, "Feeling tempted? Didn't you say you have something to tell me?"

Cecilia reclined and feigned focus on her script.

A moment later, she blurted out, slightly annoyed, "What do you say inviting Zoey over to live with us?"

Mark had already walked toward the bathroom, and his response drifted from within.

"Zoey's not fond of going out. She's content with her life in Czanch! Yet, she adores you and Edwin. Maybe she will agree to come over if you invite her with enough enthusiasm."

Cecilia kept quiet.

Upon exiting the bathroom, Mark noticed Cecilia lost in thought.

He settled across from her, inquiring, "What's on your mind? Did I upset you?"

Observing his presence, Cecilia stared at him. She wanted to keep Zoey company.

Mark stroked her hair tenderly and whispered, "What's going through your head? How could I leave her alone? She'll stay there alone for now. We will take Edwin back to Czanch in a few years. By that time, you're not allowed to get teary with homesickness."

He spoke with a soft and caring tone.

Cecilia appreciated the way Mark comforted her.

She murmured, "I won't if you treat me well."

Mark drew her close.

Tonight, he was overflowing with passion. Despite knowing he might not last, he couldn't hold back his desire, kissing her until her body nearly melted from his affection.

This intense lovemaking swept them off their feet.

It wasn't until midnight that Mark stirred from his slumber.

His phone buzzed, and it was a call from Laura.

In the darkness, he gazed at the screen quietly for a few seconds before finally hitting the mute button.

The light flickered on and off.

Sleep eluded him, so he tenderly embraced Cecilia, nuzzling his face against her graceful neck.

Cecilia's eyes fluttered open.

She sensed Mark's melancholy.

She knew he liked Laura dearly. She mused that if Laura hadn't been Cathy's daughter, they might have welcomed Laura with open arms, raising her up as Rena did with Leonel.

But Laura was Cathy's daughter. She could not bring herself to embrace Laura as her own.

Cecilia had something to say, but Mark silenced her with a gentle finger on her lips.

He prevented her from speaking.

He drew Cecilia in his arms and whispered, "Let's sleep."

Cecilia came to a standstill.

As the night wore on, Mark believed she had dozed off, so he silently got up, leaving his phone behind.

He reached for a pack of cigarettes on the bedside table. As he stepped outside, a cool breeze swept into the bedroom, leaving a touch of chill behind.

Cecilia's cheek rested against the white sheet.

She drew near, blinked her eyes open, wide awake, unable to return to sleep.

She couldn't resist the urge to rise from bed.

She ventured through the darkness wearing her thin pajamas until she eventually located Mark in the study.

A faint spotlight cast a gentle glow on him, resembling a comforting embrace amid the dimly lit night.

Bathed in the soft light, he smoked in silence. His handsome face wore a slight frown as if his thoughts were clouded with sadness.

It was rare for Cecilia to see Mark in such a state.

No matter how challenging the task, he had a knack for effortlessly resolving it.

She cast her gaze downward and drifted into quiet contemplation.

Mark would find contentment if Laura had a bright future but deep regret if her path ahead turned gloomy. Not tending to the sole heir of Paul would weigh heavily on Mark.

Right now, Mark became aware of Cecilia's presence.

His eyes locked onto hers with feelings too deep to decipher, and Cecilia replied with a smile.

Her smile held more sorrow than tears.

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A phone was in her hand.

She said, "Here's your phone."

Then she swiftly passed him the phone and hurriedly departed as if she feared having second thoughts.



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