

Chapter 331 To Protect Her, Mark Could Risk Losing...

In the soft embrace of the bedsheet, Cecilia's graceful figure remained concealed, adorned with marks left by Mark just moments ago.

Tears welled in Cecilia's eyes, flowing down her cheeks.

Her emotions were a blend of sorrow and fear, intertwining within her troubled heart.

After a prolonged silence, Mark shielded his swollen eyes and spoke up in hushed tones. "Leave after lunch. Don't return here. Listen, Cecilia, I no longer desire you."

With each passing moment, her sobs grew fainter, the pain numbing her spirit.

In that posture, she remained there for an extended period, slowly curling up once again.

She had no appetite, feeling too embarrassed to face anyone outside in such a situation.

Eventually, she mustered the strength to sit up and started dressing herself.

Though her hands trembled, she diligently put on her clothes, gradually getting out of bed.

Mark also rose from the bed.

Gently touching her elbow, he said with a hoarse voice, "Go have your lunch. Afterward, I'll arrange a car to take you to the airport."

In the next moment, she slapped his hand away.

Softly, Cecilia replied, "I'm fine. I can manage on my own."

Mark's hand froze in mid-air, hesitating for some time before finally lowering it. He wanted to say more but restrained himself.

It was for the best that she decided to leave.

What else could he do? Even if he saw her off, what difference would it make?

The air hung heavy with silence. Cecilia's hand gripped the doorknob firmly. In that instant, she knew all too well that after this parting, they would never be together again, and she would never call him Uncle Mark.

It was the end.

To him, she was merely another romantic affair, yet she had genuinely fallen in love with him.

Even so, Cecilia realized at this moment that she harbored no regrets.

The fact that he had loved her once was enough.


As Cecilia opened the door, she found Zoey standing outside.

With a warm smile, Zoey asked, "What's the matter? Why are you crying? Mark, Cecilia is much younger than you. You should have taken care of her. Why did you make her cry?"

Gently, Zoey took Cecilia's hand and invited her to join them for lunch.

Unable to resist the affectionate grasp of the kind old woman, Cecilia tearfully replied, "I'm going home."

Zoey glanced at her son for a few seconds before saying, "If you

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intend to leave, do so after lunch. Mark will send a car to take
you to the airport."

And so, the three of them shared a meal together.

An unusual silence enveloped the room.

Cecilia's tears continued to flow and Mark had no appetite. He
walked to the window, pulled out a cigarette and lit it.

When Cecilia finished her meal, Mark called the driver to take
her to the airport.

As the black limousine gradually departed, Mark stood there in
silent contemplation for a long time...

His heart ached.

Beside him, Zoey sobbed softly and murmured repeatedly, "You
finally found the right girl and wanted to settle down. Why did
you upset her so?"

In the midst of this situation, Zoey displayed astute insight,
realizing that her son was troubled and left with little choice.
Though she refrained from excessive interference, she couldn't
help but feel compassion for both her son and Cecilia. Her
curiosity sparked a desire to inquire further, yet eventually she
decided to hold back her questions.

Peter had arrived to pick up Mark.

The moment he entered the scene, he could sense the tension
and deduced what was unfolding.

His brow furrowed as he whispered to Mark, "Miss Wilson is in
the car. I came to pick you up. She insisted on going for a ride
and I couldn't refuse..."

Mark's expression changed slightly.

Cathy Wilson was Mark's junior in college, studying engineering

just like him.

Moreover, she held the place of being Mark's first love.

Following Mark's assumption of the project, Cathy also came into the picture. Encountering an old flame was an entirely different affair from meeting someone new. Mark swiftly investigated her background.

After graduating, Cathy had spent three years working abroad.

Although Mark was unaware of her exact history, he was convinced that she had been covertly sent by a foreign company.

A tremor passed through Mark's heart.

He was about to instruct Peter on something when Cathy arrived. Having had a relationship with Mark in the past and acquainted with Zoey, she presumed that her presence would bring joy to Zoey's heart.

However, Zoey knew well that her son's only concern was Cecilia, thus her enthusiasm was quite restrained.

Zoey didn't even offer Cathy a glass of water.

Nonetheless, Cathy seemed unperturbed by the lack of hospitality. In a soft voice, she addressed Mark, "Mr. Evans, my apologies for causing you trouble."

Mark was taken aback but he maintained his composure and nodded subtly.

He exchanged a glance with Peter.

Peter understood the unspoken message.

At this moment, Peter was on edge, full of admiration for Mark's ability to perceive everything and make prompt decisions in such circumstances...

Indeed, Cecilia must have been abducted.

And Cathy was the spy they had been looking for.

Fortunately, Mark had his men working in that foreign company. Without hesitation, Peter stepped outside and discreetly sent a message on his phone.

"Abduct Cathy Wilson."

Having dispatched the message, Peter returned with a smile, acting as if nothing had transpired. "Mr. Evans, Miss Wilson, it's time for us to leave."

Mark gave a slight nod.

Cathy entered the car with Mark.

Inside the car, the atmosphere was heavy and silence prevailed. Unseen, they engaged in a subtle competition of wills.

When the car halted at the technology center, Mark's phone rang. The number displayed was unfamiliar, and the voice on the other end had been disguised. "Hello, Mr. Evans."

Mark's grip on the phone tightened, turning his hand pale, yet his expression remained impassive as he responded with a smile, "What can I do for you?"

The caller chuckled.

Subsequently, the caller hung up but not before sending Mark a heart-wrenching photo.

It depicted Cecilia bound to a chair, her mouth taped shut, and beneath her feet was the Evans' family driver. They were situated in some place that looked like an abandoned warehouse.

Soon after, Mark's phone rang again.

"Mr. Evans, have you forgotten the tragic fate of Paul and his beautiful wife? Such a pity! Paul's stubbornness and failure to cherish his wife led to their demise."

Mark's grip on the phone tightened, his emotions held in check.

In a cold tone, he retorted, "You believe that kidnapping a girl would force me to reveal information? That's a fool's notion. Impossible."

With those words, Mark decisively ended the call.

On the other end of the line stood a tall and robust man, left in shock as he glanced at Cecilia.

According to Cathy, Cecilia was Mark's cherished lover. The man couldn't fathom how Mark appeared indifferent to whether Cecilia lived or died.

In the man's mind, a man of such high stature demonstrating ruthless indifference wasn't some big news.

Still, he doubted Mark could really be indifferent, and even harbored thoughts of harming Cecilia.

However, another individual intervened, cautioning, "Are you out of your mind? She belongs to the Fowler family."

Gritting his teeth, the man caught a chicken from outside, decapitated it, and placed the head in a plastic bag. "Send this to Mark."

Meanwhile, another subordinate took the phone and whispered, "There's an order from higher-ups. We are to kidnap Cathy Wilson, who happens to be Mark's first love. This will surely compel Mark to surrender the information."

Cathy?

The tall, strong man was taken aback. "Isn't she one of us own?"

The subordinate scratched his head and replied, "It's an order from higher-ups."

A sneer curled the man's lips as he said, "It seems Cathy thinks

we're fools. Turns out she also had an affair with Mark. Perhaps she's actually on his side!"

Without delay, the strong man instructed his subordinate to capture Cathy.

After issuing the command, he looked at Cecilia and vented his anger by kicking her. "Your lover is quite the character. He's surrounded by numerous women. Can he really handle all of them?"

Bound and bewildered, Cecilia listened to their words.

She had heard Mark's voice from the phone, "You believe that kidnapping a girl would force me to reveal information? That's a fool's notion. Impossible."

The importance of that information they were talking about was evident but did Mark genuinely not care about her?

He simply... hung up the phone.

And Cathy was also his lover?

The revelation left Cecilia so stunned that she forgot to shed tears...

Time passed.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, a group of men brought in a sack, from which emerged a captivating woman.

Her royal blue coat accentuated her grace, and her long dark hair was elegantly tied behind her head.

Her allure differed from Flora's coquettishness; instead, she exuded a more refined charm.

Cecilia stared at the woman, her lips trembling. It turned out that she was Mark's first love.

How many women did he have in his life?

In the beginning, Cathy feigned innocence but, when confronted with the menacing intentions of these rugged men, her anger flared, leading her to slap the strong man and exclaim, "Son of a bitch! Why did you capture me?"

That man held no timidity within him.

He retaliated with a slap that left Cathy's ears ringing.

Startled, she protested, "What are you doing?"

Undeterred, the man advanced and kicked her, stating, "What are we doing? Damn it! Why didn't you inform me that you had been with Mark? Had you revealed it earlier, we wouldn't have bothered to capture this girl. We could have just restrained you."

Cathy seethed with rage, gritting her teeth as she inquired, "Whose orders are these?"

"From higher-ups."

"Which higher-up?"

"Why the endless questions? Bind her up with that girl. Secure them both tightly. This woman is far more valuable than that girl."

The men laughed with an air of ambiguity...

Cathy understood Mark better than these individuals.

Gradually, she managed to calm herself, though her back was drenched in cold sweat.

The higher-up in question had to be Mark.

He had dispatched people to apprehend her, with the intention of rescuing her and Cecilia in the process while making it seem like Cecilia was not important to him at all...

The revelation nearly drove Cathy to cry out, yet she was all too

aware of Mark's methods.

While others might not comprehend the extent of Mark's cruelty, Cathy knew it all too well...

He had not only captured her but likely had control over her family as well.

If anything were to happen to Cecilia, he would inflict harm upon her family.

At that moment, Cathy felt consumed by jealousy...

Mark, as icy as ever, had never truly fallen in love with any woman. It was inconceivable for Cathy to believe that he had fallen for a young girl. Recalling their breakup, he had uttered these words, "Cathy, relationships are not meant for me."

She had challenged him over that statement.

Having attained a prominent position in a foreign company, she aspired to stand as high as him and make him rue his choice.

Yet now, he was willing to trade her life for that of his beloved.

Only Mark could orchestrate such a scheme.

As night settled in, Mark sat in his office, slightly leaning forward, his gaze fixed on the phone.

He was awaiting news.

Despite having been awake for over 24 hours, he did not so much as blink, his handsome visage marked by a profound sullenness.

Peter whispered softly, "You should rest for a while. I'll keep watch here."

Mark remained silent.

Peter couldn't help but worry. "Will Cathy..."

"She wouldn't dare."

Mark's actions had nearly pushed Cathy to the breaking point. As long as she wasn't utterly reckless, she wouldn't dare utter a word.

Peter nodded, waiting in quiet vigilance.

At nine o'clock in the evening, the phone rang again. It was the same voice. "Mr. Evans, your former flame, Cathy Wilson, is in our custody... Huh, you seem to be quite fortunate in love. The women around you are all remarkably beautiful."

Mark responded with a composed tone, "Don't harm her."

The man chuckled and brushed against Cathy, his voice dripping with sarcasm as he remarked, "If you wish to spare your first love from harm, you'll have to pay a price. Otherwise, who knows if she'll meet the same fate as Paul's wife."

In a low voice, Mark inquired, "Where are you? How do we proceed with the exchange?"

After concluding the call, the man crudely fondled Cathy multiple times.

Casting a disdainful gaze at Cecilia, he jeered, "It seems that Mark favors this woman more."

Cecilia stood stunned.

She couldn't believe it. She couldn't shake off the feeling that Mark had actually come here... for her.

Late at night, Mark arrived.

The driver parked the car outside, while the bodyguards and Peter remained in place. With the chip in hand, Mark entered the warehouse. The atmosphere choked him, the air thick with dust.

Mark scanned his surroundings.

His Cecilia was bound to a chair, tears welling in her eyes. She looked at him with unwavering trust.

Oh, naive girl.

Even at this moment, she still believed in him.

Mark's heart ached in a way he had never experienced before. Yet, he didn't focus on Cecilia; his concern was fixed on Cathy...

The strong man approached, brandishing a knife.

Six more individuals surrounded Mark, their eyes fierce like tigers.

Clad in black, Mark stood there, his presence both gentle and handsome, standing out amidst the hostile environment.

"Mr. Evans, what a romantic man you are!" the strong man mocked.

Gripping Cathy's hair, he flung her forward, sneering. "Let's get this over with."

Mark held a chip in his hand.

Speaking softly, he said, "All the information about the project."

The man was skeptical. Mark threw the chip to him and added, "You can inspect it first."

Instinctively, the man caught it.

However, it wasn't a chip at all; it was a small detonator. The moment he touched it, it exploded. Both the strong man and Cathy were blown back.

Everyone stood in shock.

Mark's cruelty left them astounded.

Cathy lay in a pool of blood, her hand severely injured. She gazed at Mark with sorrow, unable to believe he would do this to her.

Without hesitation, he had risked her life for the sake of his beloved woman.

Almost instantly, the bodyguards rushed in, accompanied by some policemen.

Mark maintained a composed gaze on Cecilia.

And Cecilia reciprocated the look.

In her heart, she believed Mark would come over, embrace her, and untie the ropes that bound her. Yet, instead, he walked to Cathy, knelt down, and cradled her in his arms. With tenderness, he uttered, "Cathy, I'll take you to the hospital immediately."

Cathy was on the verge of losing consciousness due to the pain, but she clung to her last breath.

Her gaze locked onto the man before her and she murmured, "Mark, you are so merciless."

Drawing near to Cathy's ear, Mark whispered, "You shouldn't have harmed her."


Cathy closed her eyes ever so slightly.

Defeated in love by the innocent Cecilia and outmaneuvered by Mark, Cathy realized he had long embedded his people within the company, far surpassing Paul in strategy.

Resignation etched on her face, she asked, "Why didn't you take the project at the beginning? Why giving it to Paul?"

Back then...

Mark's eyes lowered, bitterness consuming him as he recalled

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how he had yearned to offer a haven to the young girl.

Yet his actions indirectly led to the demise of Paul and his wife.

One of Cathy's hands lay broken, but it wasn't enough. Mark had to personally witness the project's success and personally integrate it into the aerospace industry... Only that would make Paul and his wife's death meaningful.

Emerging from the warehouse, Mark carried Cathy in his arms.

Following behind, Cecilia's tender voice called out, "Uncle Mark..."