

## Chapter 412 Mark, I Don't Want You Anymore

Gazing at Cecilia's troubled expression, Mark battled with his rising frustration.

"Do you view me that way? Am I just someone who wants intimacy from you in your eyes?"

"Didn't you assume that?" Cecilia shouted in her heart.

She felt a wave of discomfort, her throat ached. She looked away in a sulk.

"I'm heading back to my room."

Cecilia shifted a bit, and Mark's hand instantly rested on her shoulder.

Mark's gaze grew intense. He muttered in a hoarse tone, "Rest here. I'm going to check on Edwin."

Cecilia felt extremely downhearted.

Edwin arrived with a big smile, but his joy turned to disappointment when he spotted Mark holding another child. Edwin was taken aback and didn't dare to inquire while she struggled to find the right words to clarify the situation.

Mark was away for around thirty minutes before he returned.

Cecilia was lost in thought, perched on the edge of the bed.

Mark observed her quietly for some time, then positioned himself near the heater without uttering a word.

The room was filled with an eerie silence.

This bedroom held their most cherished sweet memories.



When Cecilia's eyes were getting teary, Mark's phone chimed. He gazed at the phone and eventually picked it up. His tone was very gentle and loving. "Laura?"

It was that lovely girl whose parents were Cathy and Paul. Mark and Laura had a brief conversation over the phone.

Then, Cathy grabbed the phone and whispered, "Laura's running a fever. Mark, could you help find a reputable doctor for her?"

Mark's brow creased. Why would Laura suddenly become feverish?

Cathy spoke gently. "Could you come over for a bit? Laura likes you deeply and wishes for your company."

Without hesitation, Mark responded, "I'll arrange for a doctor to see her."

Mark then made a call to a doctor.

All this time, Cecilia observed with a detached gaze.

Once Mark finished the call, she questioned him calmly, "Mark, do you plan to look after them forever? It's not your duty, and that child is not yours."

Approaching her, Mark's hand brushed Cecilia's hair tenderly.

He hushed his voice, saying, "However, that child belongs to Paul. Due to my self-centered desires back then..."

Cecilia's eyes grew wide.

"Mark, you shouldn't let personal feelings interfere with business!"

Mark implored Cecilia to stay composed.

Cecilia inhaled deeply and remarked, "You're the one who can't stay composed. Mark, who is it that weighs on your conscience? Paul, the child, or Cathy? Are you merely using that child as an excuse to let Cathy stay in Czanch, and what's your plan? Will you use the visits to the child to establish an ambiguous relationship with Cathy and create a separate family outside of our marriage?"



Cecilia's unkind words left Mark somewhat irritated.

"I have never considered such a thing."

"Fine. I believe you."

Cecilia continued softly, "Could you refrain from getting involved in Cathy's affairs from now on? Mark, I'm not as remarkable as Rena, who can wait for someone for so many years and endure so much pain. Mark, I'm impatient, and I don't want to wait. If you can't manage it, then we... We're done."

The words pained Cecilia deeply as she spoke them.

Mark was the one Cecilia had given her heart to for so many years.

All she asked was simple, yet if he couldn't meet this request, she would let him go.

Mark's hands formed into tight balls.

His usually kind expression turned stormy, yet he kept his anger in check.

"Just give me some time to sort it out."

Cecilia was about to respond when his phone interrupted with its ring.

Mark's brow creased in annoyance, but he took the call.

Cathy's voice came through, explaining that Laura was struck with severe pneumonia, her temperature soaring to 40 degrees, causing convulsions.

Mark unbuttoned his shirt and spoke in a hushed tone. "I'll be right there."

After the call, Mark said softly to Cecilia, "I'll head there to check on her."

Cecilia faced him with a serene expression.

She questioned him, "The child belongs to Cathy. Doesn't that child have her grandparents? Mark, why do you have to meddle in her affairs?"

Cecilia's heart wasn't vast enough for such generosity.

Being generous would only bring her pain in the end.

After a quiet moment, Mark admitted, "I owe Paul a big one."

He changed his shirt and assured Cecilia to rest, promising to take her and Edwin back to Duefron tomorrow morning.

Cecilia turned away from him, saying nothing.

Despite her silence, Mark departed. Soon after, the sound of the car engine echoed from the yard.

Tears rolled down Cecilia's face. She wept quietly.

But she had grown beyond her innocence. She wouldn't permit herself to weep for an extended period.

Restlessness kept her awake.

She rose and dressed in a coat.

The chill of early spring crept into the night, carrying with it a light sprinkle of rain.

She paused by the window, peering at the glow of street lamps piercing the darkness.

Cecilia lingered in that spot for quite a while.

She didn't dwell on anything. Her mind was blank. Later, she made her way to the living room.

A bronze flower-shaped frame adorned the cabinet.

The picture displayed Edwin, Mark, and her.

Edwin rested his hand on Mark's shoulder, both beaming with reserved affection.

Cecilia felt a burning sensation in her eyes.

She quickly flipped the frame face down, unable to look at it any longer...



Later, she packed up her belongings, resolving to return to Duefron with Edwin by dawn. Midday obligations awaited her at work with appointments she had pleaded to delay until then, and she couldn't afford to miss them.

Mark reached the hospital during the late hours of the night.

Laura was undergoing surgery.

Cathy, frail and anxious, lingered outside the operating room. Upon seeing Mark, she uttered with uncertainty, "Will Laura pull through?"

Mark paid no attention to Cathy.

Now, a medical supervisor approached Mark to brief him on the situation.

The medical supervisor explained that the child had developed severe pneumonia due to a cold and advised the parents to be more attentive to the child's well-being in the future.

Mark's eyes met Cathy's only after he had completed his conversation with the medical supervisor.

With an unconcerned demeanor, Mark suggested, "You could leave Laura in the care of Paul's parents. That way, you can embark on a fresh journey to build a new family."

Cathy's gaze held Mark in silence.

"A new family?" Lifting her injured hand, she asked, "Mark, be honest. Who would want a woman with a broken hand? Would you want me?"

Mark recognized the inevitability of this confrontation.

The weariness from Cathy's constant presence was wearing on him.

Resting against the wall, he lit a cigarette, his voice a murmur, "No, I wouldn't want you. It's not about your broken hand. It's about me not having feelings for you anymore."

Cathy's eyes held a burning anger.

Why? Cathy believed she and Mark were a great fit, but he didn't share



the same feelings.

Nevertheless, she had Laura, and that was something.

Cathy stopped arguing with Mark and instead waited silently, resembling worried parents. The doctor mistook Cathy for Mark's wife and addressed her as Mrs. Evans when he emerged from the operating room.

"The little one's out of danger. You must watch over her carefully in the future. We can't allow this issue to happen again, especially since the child is still so young."

Mark offered his gratitude to the doctor.

Now, the nurse escorted Laura straight to the VIP ward. Mark was about to visit Laura, and Cathy spoke slowly. "Mark, see how others believe we make a great pair."

Mark's gaze was icy and frigid.

He smirked, saying, "Cathy, you haven't erased the memory of your fractured palm, have you?"

Cathy certainly hadn't let that memory fade.

For the sake of Cecilia, Mark intentionally harmed Cathy's hand, causing her to remain unforgiving.

Thankfully, Cathy had Laura. With this child, Mark would be shadowed by remorse.

Mark made his way to Laura's room.

Laura was two years older than Edwin, bearing a resemblance to Paul.

Laura stirred awake at the crack of dawn.

Her eyes widened, and with a voice as soft as a kitten's purr, she gazed at Mark and uttered, "Uncle Mark."

Mark caressed her hair. In a soft and comforting tone, he assured her, "You're safe. Laura, you'll feel much better after some rest."

Laura dutifully shut her eyes. Her countenance remained tranquil and beautiful.

After Mark had another brief conversation with the doctor, his phone rang. The call came from the landline at his house.

Mark guessed it was Zoey calling to give him an earful.

Mark planned to explain once he got home, so he didn't answer the call.

When he glanced at Laura again, he discovered that she had drifted off to sleep, and all her vital signs were within the normal range.

Mark rose to his feet.

Cathy was lingering at the doorway, lost in thought.

In a subdued tone, Mark suggested, "The Thomas family is wealthy. It might be beneficial for Laura to live with Paul's parents. Take some time to ponder it."

Cathy's lips curled into a slight smile. She knew he wanted her to head to Tashkao.

Mark's sole concern was for Laura. He and Cathy were not acquaintances. Without uttering a word, he drove back home.

Upon his arrival, Cecilia and Edwin were nowhere to be found.

The servant informed, "Sir, your son has developed appendicitis and has been taken to the hospital."

Mark was left in astonishment.

Without delay, he dialed Cecilia's phone number. Once she answered, he inquired with a raspy voice, "Which hospital is he in?"

Mark expected Cecilia to burst into tears and engage in a heated argument with him.

But Cecilia, in a composed manner, shared the location and then abruptly ended the call.

She didn't utter another word.

Mark felt a wave of frustration engulfing him. At that moment, he was at a loss for words, unsure how to explain things to Cecilia. Regardless of his reasons, they couldn't alter the fact that she was left alone to deal with Edwin's illness.

Mark hurriedly made his way to the hospital.

Peter had reached the hospital ahead of him. Drenched in sweat, Peter approached as Mark arrived.

"At last, you're here."

Mark's complexion was ghostly as he paced toward the operating room...

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Cecilia lingered in the hallway.

The lighting was dim, and she bowed her head, making it difficult to discern her expression.

Zoey stood to one side, leaning on a cane.

Mark approached and greeted, "Mom."

Zoey sneered, "Well, here's the father of the kid in the operating room."

Mark said with bitterness, "Please, no sarcasm right now. How is Edwin doing?"

Zoey didn't respond to Mark's inquiry.

With a gentle and composed tone, Cecilia said, "Edwin is undergoing a minor surgery. However, he felt anxious and repeatedly inquired if his father had returned for him."

Then, Cecilia directed her gaze at Mark.

There was a chill of aloofness in her beautiful eyes, tinged with a shadow of disappointment.



Mark stepped closer, resting his hand on her slender shoulder.

Cecilia brushed his hand off without a word.

She sat beside Zoey and remained quiet, steadfastly avoiding conversation with Mark.

Mark was left feeling awkward.

Even though Peter knew Mark was somewhat at fault at this time, the heavy air prompted him to attempt to brighten the mood. He smiled and said, "Bet you've skipped breakfast, right? I'll grab us something to eat."

Mark had lost his appetite.

He requested Peter purchase some milk and pancakes, which were Cecilia's favorites.

Peter had to venture a few blocks away to purchase them and bring them back.

Cecilia didn't touch the food.

She shook her head and murmured, "I'm not hungry."

She had spent the entire night without sleep, and no matter how lovely her face was, it now showed signs of exhaustion. Moreover, she wasn't as youthful and fresh as a young girl. She fixed her slightly weary eyes on the operating room door, consumed by concerns for Edwin.

Mark sensed a growing rift between him and Cecilia.

He knew she loved him.

Yet, when Edwin's needs came to the forefront, his presence dimmed in importance in her eyes.

Mark experienced a profound sense of emptiness.

He urged in a gentle tone, "At least have some."

Since Zoey was present, Cecilia refrained from making a scene here. But she didn't give Mark a warm glance.

Confronted with this argument with Mark, Cecilia addresses it with a cold, direct approach.

Mark dried his face and quietly positioned himself against the wall across them.

The surgery Edwin underwent was minor and non-invasive.

The procedure was brief, taking less than an hour. Such surgeries, though small, could still strain the body. Edwin looked pale as he was wheeled out.

Edwin was an attractive boy.

Upon spotting Mark, tears welled up in his big eyes, and he affectionately called Mark, "Daddy."

A pang of guilt struck Mark. He leaned down, planting a gentle kiss on Edwin, and with a rough voice, inquired, "Are you in pain?"

Edwin initially denied feeling any pain.

Then, he appeared to recall something, pressing his lips together in silence.

Mark, feeling a sting of hurt, caressed Edwin's hair and murmured, "Rest your eyes and sleep well. Daddy's right here."

Edwin obediently shut his eyes.

Due to Mark's unique status, the hospital had thoughtfully arranged the finest ward, one as clean as a suite in a hotel.

Mark worried Zoey might not handle it well, so he suggested she head home first. "You can head back and get some rest. When Edwin awakens, I'll arrange for the driver to fetch you."

Zoey was perceptive. Recognizing the strained relationship between Mark and Cecilia, she agreed to leave and purposely created space for them.

After a few moments, Zoey left.

The doctor and the nurse completed their ward visit and departed. As for Peter, he remained in the adjacent small meeting room, hesitant to disrupt them.

A delicate tension filled the air.

Cecilia, with a warm cloth, tenderly cleaned Edwin's face.

She sat motionless, lost in thought.

Mark crouched before Cecilia, gently taking her hand, whispering, "Cecilia, we need to talk."

"What's there to talk about?"

Her voice sounded flat.

Mark murmured, "I'm trying to convince Cathy to let the Thomas family raise the child. After that..."

Cecilia offered a subtle smile.

She glanced down, speaking with sorrow. "Mark, can't you understand her intentions? She wants you. How could she possibly hand over the child to someone else? Sure, you have to try to convince her, but why must I be the one to wait for you to sort things out? Cathy will always find new excuses. There won't be an end. The child needs education. The child falls ill. The child feels unhappy. One call to you and you're summoned up to her side."

Mark was lost in thought.

Cecilia gently turned away, her voice even softer, "I'm not interested in talking about this. What I want is the end of this whole thing."

Mark's gaze fell on her hopeless expression.

Deliberately, he uttered while holding her hand, "I won't see that child anymore once she's discharged from the hospital."

But such a vow wouldn't bring Cecilia joy.

She pulled her hand away, reaching for her phone to dial her agent.

Just yesterday, she had vowed not to postpone her work. She had pleaded relentlessly with her agent until she was granted permission to visit Czanch. However, now she found herself unable to keep that promise.

Cecilia whispered while holding her phone.

Her manner was exceedingly humble and courteous.

Mark stood at the doorway, watching her in silence. Strands of her hair framed her pale face, and her shirt dress was in disarray, untouched in her haste.

After ending the call, Cecilia faced Mark again.

His gaze had grown profound.

Cecilia sidestepped him, but his hand darted out, clasping hers.

There was a noticeable difference in strength between men and women.

When Mark pulled her, she was compelled to lean into his embrace, burying her face in his shoulder.

His scent, tinged with a trace of perfume, enveloped her.

Cecilia speculated that it might be due to his contact with Cathy.

The scent was unmistakable, prompting Cecilia to murmur, "Let me go. You reek of her presence."

Mark was left in a state of shock.

He held on yet whispered close to her ear, "There's nothing between her and me. I feel sorry for Laura. That's all."

"Is that why you weren't there for your son during his operation?"

Cecilia shoved him off.

Mark reached for her again, but she lifted her hand sternly, saying, "Mark! Stop this right now."

She cast a cold gaze in his direction.

Mark gradually stood upright, his desire to speak held back by an inability to find the right words.

Their first intense fight unfolded.

Mark had his hands full elsewhere, yet concerns for Cecilia's exhaustion lingered, so he asked a nurse to watch Edwin. Once things were in order, he said softly, "Rest on the couch. I'll return as soon as I can."

Cecilia felt nothing.

Mark's throat worked as he tried to speak, then he finally departed.

Inside the car.

Peter's tense nerves finally eased, and he spoke candidly. "I know I am in no position to comment. But may I know why you still took care of that child? I had already advised against it. I believe Cecilia is quite displeased with this situation."

Sitting in the back, Mark's hands were tight balls of tension.

He didn't intend to be concerned about Laura, but she was a lively little girl.

He was unsure about how Cathy would treat Laura if he didn't give Laura his attention.

Right at that instant, Cathy called him once more.

Mark felt irked.

He passed the phone to Peter without a second thought, and Peter quickly grasped the situation. Soon after, Peter took the call, explaining, "It so happens that Mr. Evans' son is ill. He's tied up and can't attend to other things right now. Miss Wilson, have you considered asking Paul's family for assistance? They are more than willing to help you with childcare."

Cathy's response was icy. "He put you up to this, right?"

Peter offered an awkward grin.

The line went dead as Cathy disconnected.

Peter gestured with the phone toward Mark, grumbling, "Cathy's got quite the nerve, doesn't she?"

Mark adjusted his shirt and pondered briefly before instructing, "Ship off the DNA report to the Thomas family and secure a trustworthy lawyer to assist them with the case and to retrieve the custody of Laura."

Peter's face lit up with a grin. "That's the way to go."