

Chapter 451 I Missed You The Most In Those Years

Standing by the bathroom door, Mark observed Cecilia in silence.

It was already late at night.

Beneath the subdued lighting, her profile appeared gentle, her tears crystal clear.

He could easily read what was on her mind. She was concerned about him.

Mark stared at her for a long while, yet she remained immersed in her own thoughts.

He approached her, gently retrieved the medicine bottle from her grasp, and softly explained, "These were prescribed when I was discharged from the hospital. Some of the medications aren't readily available in the country. I don't take all of these daily. Just one or two types occasionally."

Cecilia met his gaze.

Tears still streamed on her cheeks.

Mark cradled her in his embrace, guiding her face to rest against his chest as he tenderly caressed her cheek.

Cecilia slowly wrapped her arms around his waist.

Her fingers trembled.

In a raspy voice, Mark asked, "Are you worried about me?"

She remained enveloped in his arms, then, with a quivering voice, she confessed, "Mark, I was terribly frightened back then."

That was all she uttered.

She felt too self-conscious to articulate anything more.

She had cherished her love for him through countless years, yet she couldn't be as carefree as she once was in her youth.

Mark tenderly stroked her hair.

He didn't push her. He simply held her in his arms like that.

Perhaps it was only at that moment, as they cautiously drew nearer to each other, that they truly found solace.

It was then that they could be assured it wasn't a mere dream.

Cecilia stopped crying.

As she grew mature, she didn't wish to display weakness in his presence.

How could Mark not understand her? To him, she remained a mere child, and even when she feigned composure, he could discern her true feelings in an instant.

Mark carefully carried her to the bed.

He cocooned her within the blanket, akin to a caterpillar in its snug chrysalis.

Cecilia was unwilling to comply. She playfully patted him on the shoulder and quipped, "I'm feeling warm. It's summer, after all. What were you thinking?"

Mark slid his hand beneath the blanket.

He reached for her feet and remarked, "Your feet are cold."

He couldn't fathom why her feet felt so chilly in the midst of summer when she had always been in robust health.

Cecilia extended her foot, allowing it to rest in the warmth of his palm.

His skin radiated heat, making her feel comforted.

Cecilia nestled against the pillow and softly disclosed, "After giving birth, I've had some minor health issues. It's not a big deal."

Yet, Mark was insistent on warming her feet.

As they lay down, facing each other, Cecilia hesitated briefly before inquiring, "How have you been in Rouenn? Rena never told me. And I lacked the

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courage to ask."

Mark reminisced about those times.

They had been incredibly challenging.

The most trying period was when he had gone without sustenance for a month, let alone a proper meal.

During the most daunting moments, he would look at photographs of Cecilia and Edwin. After Olivia's birth, he added Olivia's pictures to his source of solace.

However, Mark had no inclination to divulge it to Cecilia.

He extended his arm, allowing her to nestle comfortably beside him.

He opted to share the brighter aspects of his experiences abroad during those two years.

"The snow there was enchanting. From the hospital window, I could catch a glimpse of a majestic mountain range."

He paused as he picked which stories to share. "I recall one New Year's Eve when I woke up, and Peter brought some pumpkin pies. I had a strong craving for them."

"Did you manage to have some?"

Mark chuckled. "Yes. Just one bite."

Having said that, Mark abruptly switched off the light.

He slid under her blanket and gently lifted her clothes.

Cecilia swiftly grasped at the sheet.

As Mark got out of the covers, her face flushed crimson and felt feverish. Fortunately, the room was shrouded in darkness.

Mark lay beside her, his fingers delicately tracing her face.

She chided him as a scoundrel.

Yet Mark lowered his voice, laced with an indescribable romance, as he

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whispered, "I've always wanted to have a taste."

Cecilia could no longer endure his teasing.

She turned her back, choosing silence as her response.

His flirtatious nature was rather undeniable.

In the darkness, Mark gazed at her slender shoulder and wore a subtle smile.

He leaned in gradually and tenderly said in a low voice, "Throughout those years, you were what I missed most."

Cecilia's cheeks felt like burning up once more.

She was both tempted and touched, yet occasionally, she suspected that his sweet words had been honed on many women, which ignited a spark of anger within her.

"I'm going to sleep," she said.

Mark smiled and embraced her waist.

The night passed by, and Saturday morning came.

Zoey rose early, and the two children couldn't remain idle. They had been playing with flowers and grass in the yard since the early hours.

Edwin wielded a small shovel in his hand, displaying his youthful vigor.

Olivia donned a flowery hat.

She looked absolutely charming.

With her two delicate legs, she followed her brother, playfully plucking at the plants.

Zoey indulged Olivia, allowing her to do as she pleased.

However, a minor mishap unfolded shortly thereafter.

Olivia accidentally came into contact with a sizable worm.

The fright it caused was palpable. Her face scrunched up, and then she broke into tears.

All she could do was wail.

"Daddy!"

Edwin followed her line of sight and spotted the worm. He promptly divided it into two with the shovel. Then, he rushed to console his younger sister, however, he wasn't particularly adept at calming children.

Olivia cried so vigorously that her face reddened, and she became breathless.

Zoey also tried to soothe Olivia.

But their efforts failed to stop Olivia's tears.

Mark emerged from the house, standing about ten meters away from Olivia. She tottered toward him and wrapped her arms around his long leg.

Mark bent down and scooped her up, placing her on his shoulder.

Edwin jumped up and down with excitement to share what happened.

He handed a tissue to Mark and explained, "Olivia saw a worm."

At the mere mention of the worm, Olivia burst into tears once more and clung to Mark's neck, refusing to let go.

Her tears and runny nose stained Mark's expensive shirt.

Mark didn't mind it at all.

He gently wiped her face and patted her chubby frame.

Meanwhile, Olivia nestled into his embrace.

Edwin's countenance bore a mix of envy and affection, as he cherished his sister and held no resentment.

Zoey approached and gazed at Olivia.

Zoey smiled warmly and remarked, "Olivia is truly attached to her father."

Mark observed the sun and instructed Zoey to take Edwin indoors for breakfast. He then trailed behind them, with Olivia cradled in his arms.

Olivia remained unsettled.

She reclined in her father's embrace, yearning for her milk bottle, but obstinately refusing to get down.

Mark continued to hold her, preparing a bottle of milk.

Eventually, Olivia clutched the feeding bottle and drank while still in Mark's arms. She dozed off eventually, her lips relaxing, allowing the bottle to slip. She'd awoken, resuming her determined effort to drink.

Mark kept coaxing her, reluctant to divert his gaze.

Edwin hadn't eaten much and approached his sister.

Bending down, he remarked, "Olivia is so adorable."

Mark affectionately ruffled Edwin's short brown hair and replied softly, "You're adorable too."

Edwin puckered his lips and remarked, "I'm a little guy. 'Adorable' isn't the right word for me."

Mark smiled warmly.

Olivia was finally sound asleep, which was good since children required ample hours of sleep each day.

Mark mused that the one upstairs also had a penchant for sleeping in. He then carried Olivia upstairs.

As expected, Cecilia was still in slumber.

Mark tenderly placed Olivia in her mother's bed.

Cecilia roused from her sleep.

She gazed down at Olivia in her embrace, planting a gentle kiss on her daughter's forehead. In a hoarse voice, Mark suggested, "It's still early. Why don't you sleep with her for a little while longer?"

Cecilia hesitated.

It was already eight o'clock, and she felt it might be too late to go back to

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sleep.

Mark playfully tapped her head and teased, "My mom knows you well. You don't have to pretend to be diligent."

Cecilia pressed her lips together, shooting a stern look at Mark.

Just as Mark was about to respond, his phone rang, and it was Peter on the line.

Mark picked up the call, exchanged a few words, and then stepped out onto the terrace.

Even from inside the room, Cecilia could faintly hear their conversation.

The call centered on Laura, who was adopted by Peter and his wife, residing in Duefron.

Laura didn't speak, but her hearing was unaffected.

She attended a regular school.

However, she recently had a dispute with a classmate, resulting in a fall down the stairs and a leg injury.

Peter was in search of a reliable doctor.

After ending the call, Mark proceeded to make several more phone calls, evidently assisting in the quest for a doctor.

Cecilia listened to Mark's conversations in silence.

She had anticipated a heightened emotional reaction upon hearing about Laura's situation again, but, in reality, her inner turmoil remained quite subdued. It could have been the result of the changing circumstances or the fact that Cecilia had weathered even more harrowing experiences that had steeled her resolve.

Mark remained on the phone for roughly ten minutes before returning to the bedroom.

Olivia was peacefully asleep in her mother's embrace.

Meanwhile, Cecilia maintained a steady gaze on Mark.

He appeared somewhat anxious, and after a moment, he motioned toward his phone, explaining, "Peter needs my assistance with an issue."

"Is it related to that girl?" Cecilia inquired straightforwardly.

Mark met her eyes and eventually nodded.

Wary of her potential anger, he approached and gently caressed her head.

Cecilia sat up.

She suggested, "My mom knows an excellent orthopedist. I'll ask her to send me that doctor's number."

Mark's body tensed involuntarily.

He found it hard to believe.

Cecilia lowered her head and tenderly stroked the child in her arms. Speaking softly, she confided, "Mark, I may not be fond of that child, but most of our disagreements stem from you. I don't have to single out a child specifically. Moreover, Laura is under Peter's care now. Peter and his wife aren't young anymore. I don't want to see them burdened with too much worry."

Mark remained silent, gently touching Olivia's face.

Cecilia offered, "I'll reach out to the doctor for you. You can visit Laura at the hospital."

Mark hesitated briefly.

He had initially intended to enjoy the weekend with Cecilia and the kids.


Cecilia smiled warmly. "Tomorrow is another day. If you can't make it tomorrow, there will be countless weekends ahead."

There was a tacit understanding between them.

As long as Mark was by her side, Cecilia was willing to compromise on anything.

Mark nodded in agreement.

Mark changed his attire and headed downstairs. In the living room, he

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spotted Edwin engrossed in his homework.

Upon Mark's arrival, Edwin lifted his gaze.

Then he nervously inquired, "Dad, are you going out?"

Mark contemplated the best approach and decided not to deceive Edwin. He replied, "I'm going to visit a little girl, but I'll be back for lunch with you."

Edwin accepted his response and resumed his homework.

However, his tiny fists remained tightly clenched.

Mark squatted down, ruffled Edwin's hair, and suggested, "Your mom has given her permission. How about joining me?"

"I need to finish my homework,"

Edwin responded, his expression icy.

Mark gave Edwin's head another gentle pat before heading out.

As soon as Mark was gone, Edwin put down his pen.

He stared at the departing figure by the door, tightly pursing his lips.

It was a recurring pattern.

Mark always leaving them behind.

Edwin believed in Mark's priorities, work seemed more important than his family, and even Laura took precedence over them.


Mark reached the hospital.

Peter was occupied with finding a doctor for Laura and addressing the dispute between the two children.

Outside the ward, the parents of the troublemaker arrived.

Peter took the reasonable approach.

Despite that, the child had crossed the line by not only tormenting Laura but also pushing her. The brat's parents approached and adamantly refused to apologize. Instead, they immediately proposed a settlement of one hundred

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thousand dollars to resolve the situation.

Such an amount would not be sufficient to cover the medical bills.

Moreover, the parents displayed no hint of remorse whatsoever.

Peter's demeanor turned frosty. The brat's imposing mother, loudly retorted, "Is one hundred thousand dollars not enough? How much are you demanding then? I've heard that girl transferred from Czanch, and her background is questionable. What's the harm in my child making a few comments about her?"

Peter's anger surged, and he was tempted to confront the parent physically.

However, Peter's wife restrained him and whispered, "Mr. Evans is here."

Mark had arrived with the doctor introduced by Juliette.

The physician, disinterested in becoming entangled in their dispute, proceeded to enter the ward to examine Laura's injured leg.

Mark's expression darkened as he observed the belligerent woman.

Her initial timidity had waned upon encountering Mark, recognizing him as a person of high status.

Nevertheless, she mustered her resolve.

She remained steadfast in the belief that her loud voice would grant her an advantage.

She persisted, "You brought in some help? Don't assume you can intimidate me just because there are many of you. Let me make it clear. I can offer only one hundred thousand dollars, not a penny more. What's the issue with shoving her? She's just an ill-mannered child with no parental guidance. She won't keel over from being pushed a couple of times."

Peter, in his agitation, moved forward with the intention to confront the woman.

His wife, however, intervened, preventing him from losing his temper.

Exasperated, Peter exclaimed, "Why should I act as a gentleman at a time like this?"

But to everyone's surprise, it was Peter's wife who stepped forward and

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delivered a resounding slap across the shrew's face.

Her action carried a considerable amount of force.

It left the woman's face stinging with radiating redness where her palm landed and the rest pale.

In response, the woman began to loudly protest, "She slapped me! She slapped me! Is this reasonable?"

Mark spoke in a stern, low voice, "What's wrong with giving you a slap?"

He advanced toward her.

The shrew instinctively took a step back until her plump frame was pressed against the wall. She tried to feign courage as she stared at Mark and said, "You think you can resort to violence just because you're wealthy? Did I say something wrong? After all, she's just a bastard."

Mark continued his approach, taking measured steps toward the woman.

She swallowed nervously, and even her husband didn't dare to intervene.

Mark's voice lowered further as he declared, "Let me make it abundantly clear whether she is a 'bastard' or not. Her father was a brilliant student at the University of Oxford, a prodigious young talent who met a tragic end while working in the space industry. He gave his life to his country. Laura, as his daughter, deserves care and respect, not derogatory labels."

Mark's voice trembled with emotion.

Then, he swiftly raised his hand and delivered a resounding slap to the woman.

He seldom resorted to violence, but that moment had crossed the line.

Cathy had given birth to Laura secretly, and she had planned Paul's downfall.

However, Laura remained entirely innocent in the web of deceit.

Laura was merely eight years old, but already displaying remarkable talents, much like her father.

With that, Mark stared down at the woman.

The woman remained in a daze for some time before her arrogance crumbled away.

She covered her face as her tears ran down.

Her husband grumbled sternly, "You've got the nerve to cry. Bring that child here to apologize to the little girl. If something is wrong with the girl's leg, tell your son to marry her."

Peter's wife immediately exclaimed, "My Laura would never marry a scoundrel!"

Their discussion had clearly veered off course.

The adults talking over each other left Mark with a growing headache, so he decided to leave Peter to deal with the couple and proceeded into the ward.

As he entered, a flood of thoughts overwhelmed his mind.

It had been a considerable time since he last saw Laura, and when he was face to face with her again, his emotions were far more complicated.

Inside the ward, Laura's leg was immobilized in a cast.

Remarkably so, she hadn't shed a tear despite her injury.

When she caught sight of Mark, her lips parted, as if she wanted to say something.