

## Chapter 472 Learn To Cook

Cecilia fixed her gaze on Zoey.

Zoey maintained a facade of composure, yet Cecilia discerned the heartache etched into her face.

The fear that lurked beneath also didn't go unnoticed.

Zoey had envisioned peacefully enjoying her twilight years, especially when Mark had now returned, narrowly escaping a grim fate. Her love for him ran deep, but unexpectedly, danger had crept perilously close.

Cecilia felt a profound empathy for Zoey.

For she, too, had been gripped by fear during those harrowing moments.

Cecilia stood by Zoey throughout the night. Meanwhile, Mark guided Edwin in his homework within the study, with Olivia nestled contentedly on his lap, occasionally tugging at his attention.

Hours went by and to Zoey's surprise, it was already ten in the evening.

Following a stroll through the garden, Zoey realized Cecilia was still trailing her like a shadow. Zoey smiled and remarked, "It's getting late. You don't plan to spend the night in my bed, do you? Don't worry about me. I'm really fine."

Cecilia blushed slightly.

Zoey ushered her upstairs.

Up on the second floor, Mark was not in the master bedroom. Cecilia then found him in the children's room.

Edwin lay sound asleep.

Mark reclined against the headboard, Olivia nestled upon him. Olivia was in her white onesie, still damp from a recent shower as she lay on Mark's



chest, her head tilted slightly upwards.

In a hushed tone, Mark read a fairy tale to her.

When he reached the part about the wicked queen, she buried her face into his belly.

Cecilia lingered by the door, a hint of envy in her demeanor.

As Mark raised his gaze, his eyes bore a silent message for Cecilia to retreat to their bedroom first.

She then understood that Olivia was about to drift off to sleep.

Cecilia returned to the bedroom, where she took a shower. Emerging from the bathroom, she found Mark waiting inside the room.

He stood by the French window, a half-burnt cigarette delicately held between his slender fingers.

Cecilia was taken aback.

She approached quietly, taking the cigarette from between his fingers and stubbing in out, and then she softly whispered, "Why are you smoking?"

Mark, typically a model of self-discipline, wasn't in the best of health.

His decision to smoke indicated that something was deeply troubling him.

Turning to face Cecilia, Mark gazed at her intently.

After a lengthy silence, he admitted, "I mishandled Elaine's affairs. If I had been more cautious from the outset, she wouldn't have had the opportunity to manipulate the household staff like this. Cecilia, I've disappointed both you and my mother."

Cecilia gently shook her head.

Embracing him, she murmured, "It's not your fault."

He held her close for an extended moment, whispering, "Trust me. I won't allow her to come near you and the children again, nor will I permit her to disrupt our lives."



Cecilia's heart quivered.

Yet, she refrained from intervening on Elaine's behalf. Cecilia understood that if Mark hadn't been vigilant that day, he could have suffered irreparable harm. By then, no one would show sympathy; they would only label him dissolute and turn such a tragedy into idle gossip.

It was at that moment Cecilia realized Mark still harbored lingering fear.

Mark had his loved ones.

He cherished Cecilia and their children, and he felt compassion for Zoey. He was deeply worried for the people he held dear in his life.

Cecilia's gaze drifted to the extinguished cigarette, a desire to indulge him tugging at her.

However, Mark gripped her waist and pinned her against the cool windowpane.

His straight nose brushed tenderly against her neck as he uttered in a raspy tone, "I told you I was fine, but you still deprived me of your touch for a whole week. Cecilia, I take good care of myself, but at the meantime, I'm not a fragile soul that shatters with a single caress."

Having spent considerable time with him, Cecilia understood his thoughts well.

She blushed and averted her gaze, her voice tinged with a hint of unease.

"I never stopped you from touching me," Cecilia asserted.

Mark remained still, his eyes penetrating and intense.

Cecilia had just taken a shower and draped herself in a rose-red silk bathrobe. Her allure was undeniable, especially with her long, slender legs.

Mark's hand went down, deftly undoing the belt cinched around her waist.

She advanced toward him, biting her lower lip, and she assumed a slightly coquettish demeanor. "It's cold."



Mark cradled her in his arms as he adjusted the thermostat.

Warmth flooded the room as the heating system hummed to life. Beads of sweat soon began to glisten on her delicate form.

"Are you still cold?" Mark whispered in her ear.

Cecilia clung to him, her embrace fervent.

She found herself incapable of forming a coherent response. Heat enveloped her, and everything before her appeared hazy, with only Mark's presence etched vividly in her mind.

When their passionate encounter finally came to an end, the clock had struck one in the morning.

Cradled in Mark's arms, it took Cecilia some time to regain her composure. She murmured softly, "I think that love potion you took days ago is still working its magic."

Mark let out a small chuckle.

His fingers traced lightly along her slender shoulder as he whispered in a soft, soothing tone, "I'm going to take a shower."

Cecilia mumbled drowsily. She had longed to talk with him upon his return. However, fatigue swiftly overcame her, causing her to drift into slumber the moment she shut her eyes. In a daze, Mark reclined beside her.

Amidst her half-consciousness, Cecilia caught fragments of his words.

"If you're always this sweet, I won't need to smoke anymore."

Morning arrived, and Cecilia woke up.

Mark was gone, and Edwin had departed for school.

Only Olivia remained perched on the bed's edge, regarding Cecilia with curiosity.

As Cecilia rose to her feet, she just realized she was clad in Mark's black shirt.





A rosy hue painted her cheeks.

After refreshing herself, Cecilia descended the stairs with Olivia cradled in her arms. Zoey was in the midst of packing her belongings.

Glancing at the clock, Cecilia noted it was already ten o'clock, feeling a touch of embarrassment.

However, Zoey didn't seem to mind at all; in fact, she appeared rather relieved.

It seemed that her son was adept at tending to his wife.

Zoey didn't dwell on Cecilia being late. Instead, she simply mentioned her plan to take Cecilia and Olivia to the mountains.

Cecilia found it quite surprising.

Zoey had resided in Duefron for an extended period, yet Cecilia had never witnessed her embarking on a mountain excursion.

When Cecilia inquired about it, Zoey simply offered a faint smile.

Upon reaching the mountainside, Cecilia soon realized their purpose was to pay their respects at Jarrod's grave.

Jarrold had passed away.

One of Jarrod's junior apprentices welcomed them in. After paying their respect to the deceased, Zoey secluded herself in a meditation abode for a long while.

Cecilia had faintly heard that Jarrod used to reside in that very place.

When Zoey came out, her eyes held a hint of redness.

Cecilia could only make a guess, but she didn't dare to speak on it. During the journey back, she remained by Zoey's side; even Olivia sat quietly.

Zoey was willing to share her thoughts though.

She said, "I should have come and paid my respects much earlier. Maybe we really shouldn't seek help from him in the first place. It's not fair."



She understood what Zoey meant.

Still, Cecilia remained silent, not daring to utter a word.

Later, when Mark returned home, Cecilia recounted it to him. He removed his coat and settled on the sofa. After a lengthy pause, he drew Cecilia onto his lap.

Resting his chin atop her head, he said tenderly, "My mother is an incredibly determined woman."

He said nothing more.

Without further inquiry, Cecilia clung to Mark, planting a tender kiss on his neck.

She adopted a slightly playful demeanor.

In a hushed tone, Mark inquired, "What are your plans now?"

He longed for her to reside there, but they hadn't remarried yet, and he knew she wouldn't agree.

As anticipated, Cecilia replied softly, "I'll take the children back to my apartment. I'll put my career on hold for now and focus on being with them."

Mark didn't press the issue.

He playfully pinched her nose and suggested, "How about visiting my mother during weekends?"

"Okay." She was quite direct with her response.

She was catching her breath, her face flushing crimson. She was on the verge of gently patting him to release his hold.

But before she could act, Mark kissed her.

Dusk soon took over the sky.

The setting sun streamed in through the glass, casting a kaleidoscope of colors onto their bodies as if they were adorned with a delicate layer of



iridescent glaze.

Cecilia's clothes were disheveled, and Mark had her pinned on the couch, ardently pursuing intimacy.

She resisted and whispered tearfully, expressing concern about someone walking in on them.

Mark reassured her, "No one will come. The household staff is quite elderly. They typically tend to their chores in the morning and won't disturb us at this hour."

Cecilia teasingly labeled Mark a beast.

They had been intimate just the night before, and he was eager for another round.

Mark grinned at her.

He playfully nudged his nose against hers, gently rubbing it.

Though it wasn't quite a sensitive spot, his touch inexplicably made her blush. To ward off his mischievous advances, she nestled against his shoulder and implored, "Stop it."

Mark proceeded to draw open all the curtains.

In the waning sunlight, she appeared astonishingly beautiful.

Mark had shared many passionate moments with her, but he rarely resorted to such flirtatious tactics. More often, he savored the simple caress of her youthful, tender form, for that alone was enough to kindle his desire.

However, she had blossomed into a mature woman.

Some aspects of their intimacy had gained a newfound allure. Although she initially resisted, she eventually acquiesced, willingly engaging when she caught his subtle cues.

She responded with a subdued consent.

Mark whispered in her ear, "Your Uncle Mark's stamina may not be as

impressive in a few years. Be a good girl for me now, alright?"

He slid inside her, nearly reducing Cecilia to tears.

He was being utterly smug about it. He did it on purpose.

Honestly, Cecilia had no doubt he could maintain his virility even into his seventies or eighties.

What a cheeky old rascal!

Mark claimed victory over her body and straightened his clothes as he got ready to pick up his son.

Cecilia's frustration boiled over, delivering a swift kick toward him.

Mark, still smiling, seized her legs and assisted her in putting on her clothes. He then planted a tender kiss on her, his demeanor amiable. "If you're feeling weary, take a rest. I'll tend to you when I return tonight."

Cecilia lay on the sofa, utterly motionless.

Mark departed to collect Edwin. As the young boy climbed into the car, he couldn't help but notice Mark's unusually upbeat mood. Edwin pursed his lips in response.

Indeed, Mark was in remarkably high spirits.

After driving for ten minutes, Mark pulled over.

There was a renowned milk tea shop nearby. Mark unfastened his seatbelt and proposed, "Let's go get some milk tea. I'll grab one for your mom too. She's quite upset right now. I'll try to cheer her up."

Edwin exited the car.

After closing the car door, he raised his head and inquired, "Why are you in such a good mood if Mom is upset?"

Mark affectionately ruffled Edwin's hair.

"Silly boy, you'll understand when you're older."

Edwin then recalled what he had secretly witnessed during some nights





when his father embraced his mother, kissing her until she started to cry.

Edwin blushed.

He found himself in a somewhat uncomfortable situation.

Mark had heard that Cecilia had taken Edwin for a milk tea. With that in mind, he had intentionally taken Edwin to buy some.

Seeing the lengthy queue, Mark decided to lift Edwin up.

Edwin, already a big boy, felt even more ill at ease. He was nearly four feet tall already, and being held by his dad made him feel rather self-conscious.

Nonetheless, Edwin loved spending time with his father and hesitated to request to be put down, so he endured the discomfort in silence.

Mark purchased the milk tea and some pastries. As they returned to the car, he glanced at Edwin through the rearview mirror and asked, "Why aren't you drinking it?"

Edwin clutched the cup of milk tea to his chest.

After a long silence, Edwin finally spoke up. "I want to share this with mom."

Mark's eyes glistened slightly, but he quickly hid his surging emotions from his son.

The car pulled into the villa.

As Mark alighted from the vehicle, he assumed Cecilia was still upstairs, fuming with anger.

However, the moment he stepped out of the car, he was greeted by a delightful aroma.

He couldn't help but smile. It was Zoey who was preparing dinner, and the scent was familiar to him.

While he pondered that, a servant approached, bearing a dish of steamed fish, and cheerfully remarked, "Mr. Evans, you've returned. Miss Fowler



learned to cook from old Mrs. Evans today and expressed her desire to prepare a meal for you. However, Miss Fowler accidentally cut her finger, causing Mrs. Evans considerable distress."

Mark was momentarily taken aback.

Then he passed the milk tea and desserts to Edwin, saying in a gentle tone, "Go find your sister. Don't let her have the milk tea though; she's too young for that."

Edwin nodded in response.

Mark headed toward the kitchen.

The villa's kitchen was quite spacious, and all the wall lights were switched on, illuminating the area during the late hour.

Within the kitchen, Cecilia was with Zoey, engrossed in learning how to cook. Zoey's instructions were hushed, and Cecilia listened with great attentiveness.

Mark approached and softly took hold of Cecilia's hand.

Cecilia had a band-aid wrapped around one of her fingers.

Mark was concerned for her, his tone laced with reproach. "Why aren't you getting more rest? And why are you learning to cook?"

