

Chapter 411 Mark's Despair

The crowd burst into cheers as they watched the rocket get launched into orbit.

Its tail flame illuminated every face, but when the light fell on Cecilia's, tears were streaming down her eyes.

Cecilia stood there, motionless, while her knees trembled beneath her weight.

In a daze, she stared at Mark whom she loved the most holding a little girl while laughing with Cathy.

It was at this point that Cecilia regretted ever coming here.

All this time, had Mark been in touch with Cathy and this unknown child? Although she wasn't sure whose child this one belonged, they did look like a family once they were all together.

Meanwhile, Edwin kept tugging at her sleeve, calling her "mommy" like a lost kitten.

The sound of his voice snapped Cecilia out of her daze, and when she looked down at him, his face made her calm down.

She was no longer that naive young girl.

Not only was she Mark's future wife, she was also Edwin's mother.

Cecilia looked at Mark, who also happened to be looking at her, and felt conflicted.

Then, with Edwin in her arms, she turned around and walked away without ever looking back.

It was only then that Mark snapped to his senses. From the look on Cecilia's face, he could already tell that Cecilia had misunderstood his relationship with Cathy. With this in mind, Mark immediately put down the

little girl and hurriedly ran after Cecilia.

"Mark!" Cathy shouted to no avail.

Mark just kept on running until his figure disappeared into the crowd.

Separating him and Cecilia were a sea of people. He tried pushing through them as he shouted, "Cecilia, wait!"

When Cecilia heard his voice, she quickened her pace.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Peter rushed over.

The moment Peter saw Mark's expression, he immediately knew that something had gone awry. With a gasp, he said, "I have no idea why Miss Fowler suddenly decided to come here!"

The crowd blocked Mark's path, and soon, they began to surround him, raining him with empty flattery.

At this point, Mark was frustrated. He just wanted to catch up with Cecilia and explain to her.

He kept trying to push through them, but it grew more difficult as more people got in his way.

"Enough!" Mark shouted, rendering everyone around him silent. They all stared at Mark, looking perplexed.

In their minds, they thought that Mark should be happy because the launch of his rocket was a resounding success. Why did he look so troubled now?

Catching his breath, Mark turned to Peter and instructed, "Tell the guards at the gate to stop her!"

At this time, Cathy had just caught up with Mark, holding a little girl in her arms.

Peter shot Cathy a conflicted look before he looked down at his phone and dialed a number.

After saying a few words, he looked up at Mark and said, "Miss Fowler



drove her own car and left as soon as she could!"

Suddenly, a shadow passed over Mark's face, making his expression appear grimmer.

With a frazzled look, Mark ran straight to the door. His demeanor now was a complete departure from how he was commonly perceived. It marked the first time that people had seen him lose his cool.

Peter was supposed to follow Mark, but he chose to remain here.

He kept his eyes fixed on Cathy as well as the little girl she was holding.

This little girl was actually Cathy's and Paul's daughter.

No one had expected this from Cathy. Cathy was supposed to have been transferred to Tashkao.

However, on the day before the event, Cathy brought a child with her and said that she wanted to see Mark.

As soon as Mark saw the child, his jaw fell to the floor.

Peter was certain that nothing inappropriate was happening between Mark and Cathy.

Then, Cathy clarified and explained that the child belonged to Paul. "Mark, had you not been in love with Cecilia and canceled the task, Paul and his wife wouldn't have died!" she shouted at him. "You're indirectly responsible for their deaths! Don't bother to know how this child came to be. All you need to know is that she's my child and Paul's."

At that moment, Mark was clenching his fists so hard his nails had dug into his palms. He wanted to strangle Cathy so badly!

How could she do such a thing? How could she use a child, a living person, as a tool to guilt-trip him?

Peter was aware of all this, and just thinking about it was enough to make him seethe in anger.

With sharp eyes filled with disdain, Peter uttered, "Even if Mr. Evans allows you to stay in Czanch because of this child, that doesn't change



anything! He doesn't love you. Whatever you do, nothing is going to change that fact."

Hearing this, Cathy's countenance darkened.

Meanwhile, Mark managed to catch up with Cecilia at the airport.

It was already late at night, and Cecilia was quietly sitting in the departure lounge. Edwin had fallen asleep on Cecilia's lap. From the looks of his face, he seemed exhausted. Under the light, Cecilia's eyelashes appeared wet, indicating that she had cried.

Looking at Cecilia from a distance, Mark felt a lump in his throat.

He began slowly approaching them and gently called out Cecilia's name.

As soon as Cecilia heard his voice, her body tensed.

Even without looking back, she could tell that he was coming closer based on the sound of his footsteps.

However, at this point, she no longer wanted to see him. She already knew that he was here to win her back and explain the situation to her. But to her, the truth was plain for her to see. Nothing needed to be explained.

She pursed her lips and crossed her arms, not wanting to make a scene in public.

The more Cecilia didn't talk, the more uneasy Mark felt.

He sat down beside her and brushed a lock of Edwin's hair away from his eyes. "Why did you come here without telling me in advance?" he asked, his voice sounding gentle and hoarse.

Cecilia remained quiet and didn't utter a single word.

The two of them were locked in a terrible stalemate.

Mark looked into her eyes and emphasized, "That child is not mine!"

Deep in her heart, Cecilia felt disappointed when she heard that.

Was their relationship so weak that he needed to explain this?

Shouldn't he be explaining why he was standing next to Cathy, the woman who had hurt her so deeply?

Back then, they broke up, and Mark still had Cathy working for him. Cecilia knew she was in no position to have a say on that.

However, now that they had reconciled, Cathy, who should've already been gone, still remained by his side.

When Cecilia was far away in Duefron, Mark and Cathy were standing side by side on the stage and looked like a perfect match.

If this were in the past, Cecilia would've just left and never looked back.

But now, she had Edwin, and the two of them were already engaged. Things were much more complicated.

Because of this, it left a bitter taste in Cecilia's mouth.

Mark, thinking that he understood why she was angry, carefully approached Cecilia and decided to lay all his cards on the table. "That little girl belongs to Paul and Cathy. You still remember Paul, right? Cecilia, that child is currently in primary school, and she lives in Czanch."

Mark couldn't bring himself to send Paul's daughter away from her hometown, all because of his gratitude and guilt.

Once he was done explaining, Cecilia shivered slightly as she thought about something.

That little girl was Paul's daughter? So, it meant...

As soon as Paul was mentioned, Cecilia recalled how Paul had died. With eyes cast downwards, she uttered beneath her breath, "So is this you atoning for your sins? Tragically, one of your colleagues has died. But have you thought about me?"

Couldn't he take a look at all the sacrifices she had made in her youth and all the suffering she had endured? Were they all meaningless to him?

If he had truly cared about her, he wouldn't have anything to do with

Cathy even if he hadn't driven her away.

The tasks Cathy was doing could've been assigned to someone else.

While Mark held Cathy's daughter in his arms, his own son could do nothing but watch as his father held another person's child.

Love was an inherently selfish emotion, and Cecilia didn't think she had it in her to be generous in this situation.

As the harsh white lights fell on them, she stared at him for a second before letting out a sigh. "I don't care whether you're trying to atone for your sins or you're just making things right. But Mark, remember, I have no obligation to follow the suit and endure it."

A woman's youth was limited, a fact that Cecilia knew very well.

She had witnessed all the way Rena and Waylen had put through before they finally got together.

She had suffered a lot in her relationship with Mark. She thought it was time to put those suffering a stop.

Had this been in the past, she wouldn't have been able to look at Mark when saying such threatening words.

But now, things were different. With an unwavering resolve, she stared straight into Mark's eyes and declared, "Postpone the wedding! We'll talk about this once you're done with everything!"

Fearing that he might not understand, she further explained, "A normal marriage cannot accommodate three people, let alone four."

Although Cecilia didn't hate Cathy's little girl, she couldn't bring herself to like her due to the mere fact that she was Cathy's daughter.

As soon as Mark heard this, his expression turned serious.

"But I never want four people! I just want to spend the rest of my life with you!" he cried. "That kid just wanted to see the rocket launch. After this, she and I will never see each other again."

At this point, Cecilia was already too exhausted to argue. She just

flashed him a dry smile. She knew Cathy would definitely do something in the future.

Mark swallowed hard as he felt an overwhelming sense of helplessness engulf him. Based on the look on Cecilia's face, he could easily tell that she was serious with her pronouncement.

By now, the atmosphere between them had grown heavy and tense.

All of a sudden, Edwin woke up.

As he rubbed the sleep off his eyes, the first thing he saw was Mark. Edwin had always been afraid of Mark, so the moment he saw Mark, he immediately sat up. "Uncle!" he blurted out.

Mark mussed his hair and said, "You silly boy. You should call me dad!"

Edwin wanted to jump into Mark's arms, but a thought occurred in his mind and stopped him from doing so. He gnashed his teeth and remained stationary for a while. When he looked up at Mark, his eyes were bubbling with tears.

Today, Edwin saw Mark holding another child in his arms.

Seeing the hurt on Edwin's face, Mark felt his heart crack. "You silly boy! That girl's not my child!"

Edwin was a simple-minded boy. The moment he heard Mark's explanation, he immediately threw himself into Mark's arms without uttering a single word.

Mark smiled as he comfortingly rubbed Edwin's back.

Then, he turned his attention to Cecilia and said to her in hushed tones, "Stay at my place for one night. Tomorrow morning, I'll drive you back to Duefron."

Cecilia shook her head and refused.

"I'll go back by myself," she insisted.

Mark let out an exasperated sigh. "Our issue should be resolved in private. Don't cause a scene, okay? I've already called Zoey and told her you'll

come and see her today. She's happy with it."

When Mark invoked Zoey's name, Cecilia remembered the kindness Zoey had been showing to her, and tears welled up immediately.

Cecilia sniffled before wiping her nose with the back of her hand.

After a long pause, she said, "I don't need you to drive me back tomorrow!"

Judging from her words, Mark already knew that words were now powerless to coax her.

He didn't say anything anymore. Instead, he simply carried her luggage and got into the car with them.

When they reached home, Zoey was already waiting for them.

As soon as Zoey saw the two, she immediately sensed the tension between them. Being a sensible woman, she chose to remain quiet.

After putting Cecilia's luggage down, Mark grabbed a stick of cigarette and lit it up.

He blew a thick cloud of smoke into the sky before turning to Zoey. "Mom, take good care of them. I have to go back to the launching scene."

He still had problems there that he needed to sort out.

Zoey already knew what had happened thanks to Peter, but she chose not to say anything. Instead, she agreed and told him to resolve those problems quickly.

Before he could leave, Zoey told him, "Once you're done with things over there, start focusing on your family."

Her words compelled Mark to contemplate about his situation.

After letting out a heavy sigh, he took a step forward and proceeded into the darkness.

Meanwhile, although Cecilia was in a bad mood, she forced herself to cheer up. She took Edwin with her to have dinner.

Zoey wanted to take Edwin to the courtyard for some fun, but Cecilia refused. "He is in a foul mood. Let me take care of him. I'll lull him to sleep."

Zoey nodded and decided to leave them alone.

As an observant woman, Zoey noticed that Cecilia had actually slept in the guest room.

Although Zoey knew Cecilia and Mark had a fight, the fact that Cecilia chose to sleep in the guest room still made her worried. Zoey didn't go to bed until Mark returned at two o'clock in the morning.

Peter was with Mark. After parking the car, the two of them came in.

The servant brought them some food, and after finishing a bowl, Peter left.

Zoey was holding a cross in her hand as she watched Mark smoke in front of her. His face was crumpled into a frown as though he was harboring a deep-seated grudge toward someone.

By this point, Zoey could no longer hold back her frustration.

"You're already a grown-up, and yet, you still can't tell what's right from wrong!" she scolded him. "Do you remember how much you have sacrificed to be where you are now? Yes, Paul died, but were you the one who killed him? If it weren't for Cathy, Paul and his wife wouldn't have died. And after that, she dared to come to you with Paul's child and beg for mercy. What a shameless woman!"

Cecilia had suffered a lot because of you throughout the years. Don't you think she deserves to stand by your side at that moment? No woman on earth could tolerate what Cecilia had seen today! If you couldn't make things right and treat her well, you might as well not come back. I don't want to see your face ever again!"

Zoey expressed her thoughts earnestly.

With a cigarette lodged between his fingers, Mark slowly puffed out smoke rings in the air.

With a bitter smile, he replied, "I didn't mean that!"

In response, Zoey scoffed. "You are supposed to treat Cecilia well. She was born into a wealthy family. She's been very considerate of you! Think about it. Do you think any other pretty girl would have waited for you like Cecilia did for so many years?"

A somber silence fell over Mark.

He took another long drag of his cigarette before he stood up and walked into his room.

Then, he pushed open the door. He thought Cecilia would be there, but she wasn't.

She was actually in the next room.

Cecilia lay on the bed with Edwin safely nestled in her arms.

Both of them were sound asleep as the moonlight outside bathed them with a faint glow.

When Mark entered their room, he didn't turn on the light.

He simply sat on the edge of the bed and caressed Cecilia's face.

Her skin felt cold and wet against his fingertips.

Looking at her face, his heart ached. "Don't cry, okay?" he whispered.

As expected, Cecilia wasn't actually asleep.

She gently patted Edwin while keeping her head down. "You must be exhausted from today. Go to bed and rest. We can discuss this issue some other time."

Mark shook his head and refused to leave.

How could he leave her alone in such a sad and angry state?

So, he gently lifted Edwin to one side and tucked him in the quilt. Then, despite Cecilia's protests, he carried her into his bedroom.

This room was essentially soundproof. Mark closed the door behind them before he placed Cecilia on the soft bed.

It was then that Cecilia finally exploded.

"Mark! What do you want? Do you still want to sleep with me?"

Mark quietly stared at her with an unfathomable gaze as he watched Cecilia's chest heave with rage.

After a while, he decided to turn up the temperature inside the room.

While waiting for the room to warm up, the two of them shared a suffocating silence.

After all these years, this might be the first real argument between the two of them.

In the past, whatever quarrel they had was resolved by Mark's unilateral suppression of the issue.

This time was different. Standing in front of the heater, Mark contemplated how he should phrase his next words. After a long time, he finally turned around and said to her, "I did let Cathy stay in Czanch. But, Cecilia, I'll quit. I have already prepared my resignation."

Cecilia knew that if they weren't able to talk this through tonight, he would never let her go.

She pulled the quilt closer to her and crumpled its corners. "So, will you stop seeing her and keep your distance from her in the future? Can you leave that child alone? If you say yes to these questions, then I will forgive you here and now. Then, our wedding will be held as scheduled."

Mark gnashed his teeth and looked away.

He still had lingering feelings of guilt toward what had happened to Paul. On top of that, Paul's child was completely innocent.

He took a deep breath and finally faced Cecilia. "I won't meet them unless it's necessary."

As soon as he said that, the disappointment became quickly evident on

Cecilia's face.

Mark had always been handsome even though he was tired. Many women yearned for him, but they were all unsuccessful.

Before, he said that he only wanted her and her alone, and back then, she believed him.

All she wanted from him was a relationship where both of them were equals.

However, after years of suffering and anticipation, she couldn't even get a promise out of him.

Tears began to well up in her eyes.

After taking a deep breath, Cecilia looked Mark straight in the eye and emphasized each word, saying, "Mark, that's Cathy! She was the mother of that little girl you once held in your arms and your past lover, someone whom you've had sex with! Well, what did you do? You should take care of her child! Are you kidding me? What? You want me to bear with it? Can't I just marry someone else? Why do I have to keep humiliating myself like this?"

Not to mention that Cathy almost killed her at that time.

Yet, over the years, her love for Mark had never wavered, not even once.

But at this moment, after repeated disappointments, she was starting to lose affection.

She began to harbor the idea of leaving him.

Right now, she was doubting whether his love for her was actually as deep as she had initially thought. Because if that were the case, then how come he would treat her like this? He was such a ruthless man! He knew how much she cared about their relationship.

Seeing the pained look on her face, Mark stepped forward and gently placed a hand on her shoulder, wanting to give a comforting pat.

But then, Cecilia slapped his hand away, shouting, "Don't touch me!"

Her voice sounded harsh and venomous.

Mark swallowed hard. He tried leaning forward to kiss her lips, but Cecilia turned her face away.

With a tone as cold as ice, she told him, "Mark, is that how you see me? A dispensable woman? A sex partner? You indulge me whenever you're in a good mood, but you push me away whenever you don't need me."

As Mark heard these words come out of Cecilia's mouth, his countenance darkened.