

## Chapter 322 In His Dream

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Even without Rena's explicit mention, Cecilia intuited that the doll must have been sent by Mark.

A few days earlier, Mark had traveled to Heron, the only place in this country where people could buy this doll.

During the night, Cecilia nestled on the expansive, pristine bed, cradling the rabbit doll in her arms.

Her heart ached for Mark and she felt the need to convey her gratitude for the thoughtful gift. Moreover, she wanted to wish him a joyful New Year...

Finally, she mustered the courage to message him.

"Uncle Mark, Happy New Year!"

Impatiently, Cecilia waited for his response, which eventually came with a simple "Happy New Year."

Those few words moved Cecilia to tears, prompting her to hide her face in the quilt, crying silently, overwhelmed by emotions she couldn't fully articulate.

Normally, Cecilia was fearless in expressing her love if she admired someone.

She could straightforwardly say, "I like you."

However, Mark was different; he was Rena's uncle.

Despite despising herself for harboring such feelings, Cecilia couldn't escape her affection for Mark. She seldom paid attention

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However, Mark was different; he was Rena's uncle.

Despite despising herself for harboring such feelings, Cecilia couldn't escape her affection for Mark. She seldom paid attention to the news, but now she intentionally watched TV and read newspapers, and even eavesdropped on her father when he discussed Mark with her brother.

Nevertheless, she was well aware that Mark didn't belong to her.

In Czanch, during the night, dressed sharply in a suit, Mark sat

in his office, deep in thought as he stared at his phone.

Peter entered, knocking on the door gently.

"Mr. Evans, are you ready? Everyone outside is waiting for you to inspire them."

Mark remained motionless.

Concerned, Peter approached and inquired softly, "What's wrong, Mr. Evans?"

Mark pointed at his phone and smiled. "She just sent me a message."

He believed Cecilia must be delighted with the doll but he regretted not being able to give it to her in person.

After slipping the phone into his pocket, Mark stood up, his smile vanishing, and he transformed into the admired Mr. Evans that everyone knew...

Peter followed Mark, sighing.

Outside, the atmosphere was lively. After exchanging pleasantries, Mark had dinner with his subordinates.

The dinner concluded at midnight and Mark had indulged in some drinks.

Seated in the back seat of the car, Mark continued reading Cecilia's message while engaging in conversation with Peter. "You have no idea how much I want to drop everything and take a month's break... I wish I were ten years younger."

Then, perhaps, he would have the audacity to stand beneath the fireworks, to hold her hands, and to witness her enchanting smile.

Peter was taken aback. After arriving at their destination, it took him quite some time to persuade Mark to go inside.

Zoey was concerned about her son and took care of him herself.

In his midnight dreams, Mark felt the presence of someone tender beside him. He reached out and murmured, "Cecilia."

Though Zoey didn't hear it clearly, she knew it was a girl's name.

In that moment, Zoey firmly patted her son's hand and scolded with a touch of irritation, "You seem to be having sweet dreams, don't you? Which girlfriend were you dreaming of just now?"

Mark jolted awake, his mind still lingering on the dream's memory. Feeling somewhat embarrassed, his cheeks flushed.

With a stern expression, Zoey remarked, "Dreaming of a girl is pointless. You should marry her, have a family and make something worthwhile out of it."

Sitting up, Mark reached for a cigarette, taking a few drags in silence before responding with a smile, "Mom, it's nothing like that."

He then extinguished the cigarette and headed to the bathroom.

Zoey couldn't help but wonder about the name Mark had called out.

Cecil... Cecile?

Was that the name he had uttered?

In the bathroom, Mark leaned against the wall as the warm water cascaded down his body.

His vision was blurred, but he was acutely aware of his feelings for Cecilia. During the past half-year when he was estranged from her, he had no interest in dating other women.

No matter how sensible those women might have been, he couldn't bring himself to appreciate them.



Although he knew deep down that a future with Cecilia was unlikely, he was still naive enough to remain faithful to her in his heart.

He couldn't bear the thought of being with another woman, fearing Cecilia's disapproval. He dreaded the sight of her frowning or becoming angry with him.

Mark smiled helplessly at his own inner turmoil...

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Mark and Cecilia then deliberately avoided contact with each other, even during his business trip to Duefron.

If they chanced upon each other, they only exchanged fleeting glances from a distance.

The turning point occurred when the house Rena resided in suddenly exploded...

On that fateful morning, Mark was engrossed in a meeting when Rena's desperate call pierced through, "Uncle Mark, help me!"

Mark rushed to Duefron immediately.

In the hospital, Rena was struggling to give birth to her baby.

Standing outside the delivery room, Mark felt his heart nearly stop beating.

He had already lost his sister and he couldn't bear to lose Rena too.

With teary eyes, Mark asked, "Where's Waylen?"

The Fowler family was present.

Juliette wept in sorrow, and Korbyn shook his head helplessly. Finally, Cecilia spoke up softly. "He went to Braseovell to handle Elvira's case."

Upon hearing this, Mark erupted in frustration, shouting, "What a fucking idiot!"

In a trembling voice, Cecilia called out to him. The harsh words he had intended to utter got stuck in his throat, leaving him speechless.

Mark entered the delivery room to see Rena. About ten minutes later, he emerged.

The baby's condition was precarious. In truth, Rena could have given up but she persisted, determined to bring the child into the world.

Her ribs bore the pain of two fractures, and she didn't even care.

Outside the delivery room, the atmosphere in the aisle remained hushed. Mark leaned against the wall, tilting his head slightly, his eyes brimming with unshed tears...

The wait seemed interminable.

Rena endured a grueling 16-hour labor and it wasn't until midnight that she finally gave birth.

Alexis Fowler.

Alexis arrived prematurely, her condition critical, prompting nurses to rush her to the ICU. Alexis' family hadn't even had the chance to catch a glimpse of her...

The doctor emerged, advising them to prepare themselves mentally and also be mindful of Rena's emotions.

Tears finally escaped Mark's eyes.

It was the first time Cecilia witnessed Mark shedding tears. In her memory, he was always resolute, unfazed by anything.

Past midnight, he couldn't sleep but found solace in smoking outdoors.

Morning came.

Mark entered the ward, while Juliette went to the reception desk. Inside, Cecilia perched by Rena's bedside, seemingly dozing off.

Gently, Mark patted Cecilia's shoulder.

Instantly, Cecilia stirred awake. Her reddened eyes met his, and she called out to him in a daze, "Uncle Mark."

"Do you still remember that I'm your Uncle Mark?"

His voice sounded hoarse, his words laden with ambiguity.

However, Cecilia had little room to dwell on the matter. In this tense situation, her fleeting emotions paled in comparison. All she wished for was Rena and Alexis to be safe.

Cecilia stepped out of the ward, allowing Mark to have a private conversation with Rena.

Heading to the ICU's entrance, Cecilia peered through the glass door but the view inside remained obscured.

She leaned against the door, shedding silent tears.

Her heart pleaded for her little niece's well-being...

She didn't know if her brother and sister-in-law would reunite as before, but she wanted Alexis to thrive. The little one was so young and adorable.

Not far away, Mark stood in silent contemplation.

He overheard the little girl talking to herself...

Peter offered gentle advice, "You should eat something. How can you go a whole day without eating or drinking?"

Mark turned around and replied softly, "Bring her some breakfast."

## Chapter 323 Mr. Evans, We Just had A One-night Sta...

Although Mark was very busy, he chose to remain in Duefron to accompany Rena.

Peter even managed to secure him a small office through some connections.

Although it wasn't that big, it was fully equipped and comfortable.

Mark usually worked there while his bodyguards patrolled outside. Peter would go in and out of the office, depending on his work.

The next day, Waylen came back from Braseovell.

He was worn out and full of guilt.

Outside the ICU, Mark hit Waylen hard. Even though Waylen didn't fight back, Mark still injured his right hand...

Peter teased Mark playfully while treating his wound.

"You're not a young school kid anymore. Perhaps it's time you learned the art of patience."

Mark's suppressed anger flared up again. "Are you kidding me? I don't think I hit him hard enough. Next time I see him, I'll beat him to death."

While the two were talking, they were suddenly interrupted by a commotion at the door.

Peter went out to investigate and soon returned with someone.



It was Cecilia.

Having worked for Mark for many years, Peter was sensible, and he went out to give the two some privacy.

Cecilia took a few steps forward, but she didn't dare to get too close to Mark.

Mark clamped a fresh cigarette between his lips and lit it. After taking a drag, he asked softly, "What're you doing here?"

She raised the ointment in her hand and said shyly, "Let me treat your wound."

As a matter of fact, Peter had applied ointment on Mark's wound just now, but Mark didn't mind having his wound treated a second time.

Sitting next to him on the narrow sofa, Cecilia held his hand and carefully dabbed the ointment onto his wound. While taking another long drag, Mark watched her elegant movements...

Her face was flawless, and her eyelashes were long and curved.

As though nothing had happened, Mark grunted, "That boy was nice. Why aren't you with him?"

Cecilia was stunned for a moment, but she soon understood what he meant.

She took a deep breath and answered, "Well, I don't like him that much."

Then she let go of his hand and whispered, "There. All fixed up."

Cecilia tried to stand up to leave, but the man stopped her.

He grabbed her by the wrist, forcing her to sit back down. She didn't know if she was imagining things, but she felt so close to him... She could even smell the distinct fragrance of his aftershave.

Slowly, she raised her head to meet his intent gaze, his eyes deep.

He couldn't rest touching her soft lips with his slender fingers.

She trembled at his touch and helplessly called him "Uncle Mark"...

Mark brought his face close to hers, murmuring, "Now, tell me. What's the real reason that you came? Do you want to apologize for your brother? Or are you interested in a man more than ten years older than you? Tell me what you really want."

He was so straightforward with her, which made her cheeks burn with shame.

Lips trembling, she couldn't say a word, but she already knew that her answer wasn't what Mark wanted.

The next second, he kissed her.

Just like last time, Mark gently pressed his body against Cecilia's, whispering at her to relax. Then, the kiss gradually became more rough and passionate.

Feeling very uneasy, Cecilia tried to struggle.

But her petite figure was no match for him, and the next moment, she was pulled on top of his lap.

His possessive kiss made her mind go blank and her legs limp. She could only hold his shoulders tightly for support, but later on, she found herself wrapping her arms around his neck...

Her limbs were so weak from his kiss that she had no idea how she'd ever walk back in the end.

Biting her lip, she looked at the ravenous man in front of her. Why was he like this?

From that day on, she started to avoid him.

Occasionally, they'd cross paths at the hospital, but she'd pretend not to see him.

Watching her walk past him, Mark fell into deep thought.

Peter nudged him and said, "You must've taken advantage of her, so she's scared."

With his hands in his pockets, Mark thought of the kiss that day. The little girl curled up in his arms, like a helpless kitten. Perhaps it was because she was angry at him that she pushed him away these days.

But instead of deterring him, it had the opposite effect.

Mark wanted Cecilia, and he knew it. Whenever he was dealing with Rena's matter, he couldn't help but think about Cecilia and him.

He wondered if being together with her was possible.

He wanted to find a way out of the countless impossibilities.

But until now, Mark hadn't found a solution.

Waylen had made a big decision. He planned to secretly send Alexis to the lab for treatment in order to set Rena free.

Because of this, Mark had slapped Waylen in the face—twice.

Then, despite raising his reddened palm a third time, Mark couldn't bear to deliver another slap. He knew that it was difficult for Waylen to have made such a decision...

On the night Alexis was sent away, Mark drank a lot, and even Peter couldn't stop him. At last, the helpless Peter sought out Cecilia's help and begged her to persuade Mark. "Mr. Evans has an important meeting tomorrow morning. If he keeps drinking like this, he might be too drunk to go."

Although Cecilia was unwilling at first, Peter begged her until

she finally agreed.

Peter opened the door for her, but stayed outside. He explained, "I'll guard at the door."

It was dark inside the small office.

It took a while before Cecilia's eyes finally adjusted to the darkness. She found Mark's silhouette slumped over the sofa, with several bottles of wine on the floor in front of him. He probably heard her footsteps, so he raised his head to meet her worried gaze. Then he poured himself another glass.

"That's enough..."

She stepped forward and held his hand, preventing him from holding the glass.

Mark looked at her quietly with his bloodshot eyes. After a long time, he growled, "Get out."

Cecilia refused.

She knelt on the carpet and started gathering the bottles of wine.

Mark watched her. She looked like a child playing house.

But he was well aware that Cecilia was not a child anymore. She was a full-grown woman...

He gently pulled her over and raised her chin, looking at her face carefully.

Truth be told, they were both alone in this world, and they each only had each other.

Mark croaked, "Cecilia, let's at least have a try."

The alcohol gave him the courage—or audacity—to compromise at that moment. Like all the ordinary men in the world, he couldn't resist the temptation that was right in front of him. At this moment, he thought that even if sleeping together couldn't



change anything, he at least would have to be responsible for her. Then no matter how difficult it was, they had to face it together.

Cecilia didn't hear him clearly because his words were so slurred.

But before she could ask, he pressed his lips against hers.

While kissing her, he pressed her against the sofa. The bittersweet taste of red wine on his lips was intoxicating.

"Uncle Mark..." she said in a trembling voice.

Mark gently stroked her face, eyeing her the whole time.

Cecilia began to shake like a leaf. She knew exactly what he wanted, because the way he looked at her now was wild and primal—filled with lust.

He did it with her once on the sofa.

All the while, he restrained his true desires and was deliberately gentle with her.

And yet, he felt that it was far from enough.

Later, he carried her to the small bedroom.

The bed in there was rickety, rattling at the slightest sound.

Mark didn't restrain himself this time. He did her so ferociously that the small bed shook like a boat in the middle of a stormy sea, mixed with her uncontrollable low moans...

Cecilia had been in relationships before, but she wasn't really experienced in bed.

Mark, on the other hand, didn't need her help.

Outside, Peter overheard what was going on. He considerably ordered the bodyguards to retreat a little, and he guarded at the

door for the next few hours...

Early the following morning, Cecilia awoke in Mark's arms.

She felt a little sore, but truth be told, she felt really comfortable in his arms and didn't want to move.

"Are you awake?" The man's hoarse voice broke the silence.

Cecilia didn't dare to make a sound.

In fact, Mark didn't want to get up either. He seldom did it without restraint, not to mention the million things he had on his plate. He grabbed the watch at the bedside to check the time. He had to get up in half an hour.

There was something he wanted to say to Cecilia right now.

But before he could say anything, Cecilia's timid voice interrupted him.

"Mr. Evans, don't worry. It was just a one-night stand."

Mr. Evans?

A one-night stand?

Mark smiled angrily. He tugged at her ear and asked, "Who's the one who called me 'Uncle Mark' the whole night? You little temptress, you're calling me Mr. Evans now that you're done with me?" If everyone takes advantage of me like this, I'll die in a woman's bed someday."

His words were harsh, and her eyes turned a little red.

But underneath his gruff facade, Mark also felt bad. He loved her, but he couldn't be with her for all kinds of reasons.

In the end, Mark pulled Cecilia into a hug and whispered, "Have you gotten the rabbit doll yet? Did you like it?"

Cecilia blushed and nodded shyly. "Yes, I like it a lot."

Mark didn't say anything anymore and just held her.

After a long silence, he whispered in her ear, "As long as you like it..."

Then he finally let go of her and began to get dressed. "Get some more rest. I'll be back at noon."

Mark was usually good at flirting.

But at this moment, he didn't know what to say or do. This little girl was different.

He straightened his clothes neatly, sat on the edge of the bed, and pinched her cheek.

"I have to get going. Otherwise, I'll be late for my meeting. Look at my neck. Do you think it looks like I'm scratched by a naughty cat?"

Wrapped in the quilt, Cecilia looked at him, tears welling up in her eyes.

They had slept together.

But he didn't promise anything, nor did she dare to ask him if they had a future together. She knew she wasn't right for him, but...

Feeling aggrieved, she didn't wait for him to come back.

She deliberately started to avoid him, but she couldn't fall asleep at night because of him.

Mark was snubbed...

Four days later, Cecilia received a call from Mark. His voice was gentle but a little tired. "I'm going back to Czanch tomorrow. Can I see you?"

Cecilia couldn't admit to herself how much she wanted to see

him.

But because of their identities, she was destined for heartbreak.

All the same, she still pined for him...

Finally, she agreed to meet at a nice, quiet restaurant. Peter waited for Cecilia at the entrance and led her to the private room.

The room was huge, but there was only one person there—Mark.

He was wearing a light blue shirt and black suit pants today.

He had taken off his dark blue coat and draped it casually on the back of his chair. When Cecilia arrived, he was bent over a document.

Peter coughed lightly and announced, "Miss Fowler is here."

With a smile, Peter closed the door to give the two some privacy, but he still vigilantly guarded the door from outside.

With her back against the door, Cecilia looked at Mark with nervous uncertainty. It was a little troublesome to talk about love with an older man. She never knew what he was thinking...

Mark put down the document and looked up at Cecilia. After a long time, he said with a smile, "Why are you just standing there? Be a good girl and come closer."

Cecilia bit her lip, cursing him in her mind.

He still treated her as a child!

All the same, she found herself gravitating towards him and obediently taking the seat next to him.

Mark poured her a glass of water, asking gently, "Does it still hurt down there?"