

Chapter 25: One Day

“Oh, my goodness! Not again!” Mrs. Shaw exclaimed, seeing Evan being guided by Wendell into the villa’s entrance at four in the morning.

She tried to aid Wendell, but Wendell said, “It’s okay, Mrs. Shaw, I can manage. Please help me open the door to his room.”

More than a week had passed since Evan learned that Shantelle had left the city. After confronting his parents, he locked himself inside his room. Evan did not bother to eat until lunch the next day. He spoke to no one, not his parents, friends, or the villa’s caretakers. Evan only returned to work after three days of isolating himself.

In the succeeding days, he spent it at the office, working until midnight. Occasionally, he went to the club with his friends Wendell and Sean. Wendell often drove Evan home since he was usually drunk. Tonight was no exception. Wendell rang the villa’s gates, delivering Evan in a drunken state. Same as the last that he was intoxicated, Evan was talking like Shantelle had never left.

“Mrs. Shaw, where is the Misses? Tell her to make my favorite dish.” a “Why is she not home yet? It’s already late. Mrs. Shaw, call the Scotts and have Howard pick up Shanty.”

“Wendell, call Shanty.” “Yes, Evan. I will. Take a nap first, okay, buddy!” Wendell could only ride on Evan’s gibberish, knowing he was not himself. Generally, the next day, Evan would be back to being silent.

Wendell carefully laid Evan on the bed. He turned to Mrs. Shaw and said, “He is fine, Mrs. Shaw.” “Oh, my goodness,” Mrs. Shaw asked. “How long will he be like this?”

“I don’t know, Mrs. Shaw, but it’s different with Evan because he knows he is at fault,” Wendell said. He returned to studying his friend, saying, “Only time will tell.”

*

“Mr. Thompson?” In the morning, Mrs. Shaw knocked on Evan’s room for the tenth time. It was already past nine, and his assistant had been calling the landline since seven.

It wasn’t like Mrs. Shaw to enter the room without permission, but at the same time, she was worried for Evan’s sake.

“Sir, Mister Thompson?” Mrs. Shaw called again while opening the door halfway. To her surprise, there was no one on the bed. “Sir Thompson? Mister Thomson? James has called about an important contract.”

There was no answer. She knocked on the bathroom door, but there was no response either. When she opened the bathroom, no one was there.

“Where is Mister Thompson?” Mrs. Shaw was confident the man had not left the villa since four in the morning. He was not capable of walking a straight line, much more, have the readiness to leave the house.

Mrs. Shaw was about to leave the room when she heard a thud inside the walk- in closet. She frowned and decided to investigate it.

After switching the lights to the enormous room, she found Evan sleeping on Shantelle's side of the closet! He was still in his clothes from last night, curled like a ball on the part where Shantelle's long dresses were kept.

She walked over to Evan with a painful expression. Instantly, Mrs. Shaw fell to her knees, crying. She wound up waking Evan.

"Oh, my. Mister Thompson, I'm sorry you and the Misses had to part. If only you had realized how you loved her then, this would not have happened to both of you," she said, stuttering in her words. "All those times when you were together – "Her howls became lower as she said, "All those opportunities lost."

The words that Mrs. Shaw said stung Evan's heart. He wasn't completely sober yet, but he understood her words. Indeed, there were so many opportunities. They were married for two years, and even after their divorce, Evan remembered how he felt empty but never acted on those feelings. He silently reflected, 'Did I love her? Did I love Shanty?' Perhaps, because Evan would not have been so miserable these past few days if it were not the case. He had acknowledged how he missed Shantelle, but had not yet admitted it was love.

Evan placed a hand on his chest and clenched it. The pang in his chest was unbearable. He thought, 'So this is pain... the pain of loving someone. I loved Shanty. Why didn't I see it before? Was it because she was always there that I took those feelings for granted?'

'I loved her... I loved her, but she is gone. How unfortunate,' Evan mocked himself. For a minute, she listened to Mrs. Shaw cry in front of him. He shut his eyes, stopping his tears from escaping.

Finally, Evan massaged his forehead, sensing a headache. He tapped on Mrs. Shaw's shoulder and softly requested, " Please, Mrs. Shaw, prepare some chicken soup for me."

He looked up and studied the white gown he had bought Shantelle for her birthday. Mrs. Shaw had hung the same in the closet a few days back. Then he looked at Shantelle's other clothes.

Mrs. Shaw was still wiping the wetness on her face. She was about to leave the room when Evan instructed, "Please make sure to maintain Shantelle's clothes."

"When she comes back, she can readily wear them," he said. He left the walk-in closet and went for a hot bath.

Days went by again. Evan found himself in front of the Scotts' mansion. This time around, he had spoken to Kristine Jones before visiting. That day, he came with his assistant and a lawyer with an offer.

A maid guided them into the living room. Kristine and her husband were waiting for him. "Good Morning, Mister Thompson," Mister Jones greeted.

"Good morning, Mister and Misses Jones," Evan greeted back. His assistant and lawyer echoed the same. "Welcome to our home," Kristine said. After Evan and his companions took their seats, she sought, "What brings you here, Mister Thompson?"

"I would like to make an offer," Evan suggested. He turned to his lawyer and presented a document to the Jones couple. Kristine and her husband read the document carefully, flipping from one page to another.

When Evan saw their overwhelmed expressions, he explained, "I want to buy back this house twice the amount you paid Doctor Scott. This is... my ex- wife's home, and I want it to remain the same."

"Please, let me buy this house for her," he repeated. The Jones couple looked at each other, contemplating. The Scotts' estate was

really lovely, but... Evan's offer was also very generous. They excused themselves into the library to discuss, and when they returned, Kristine said, "Mister Thompson, you must really love your ex-wife. I hope this is all worth it. We agree to sell you the property."

Relief filled Evan's heart. The house was nowhere close to having Shantelle back, but this was where she had lived for twenty years. Evan thought that one day Shantelle would return. One day, he will give this house back to the Scotts as a gift, and one day, Shantelle will forgive him.

One day. No matter how long it would take, Evan would hope for that... one day.