


Chapter 17: Forget Evan

"How was the first day in medical school?" Shantelle was beyond shocked to find Keith Henderson leaning against a BMW sports car in front of her school.

He looked striking in a white Chinese-collared shirt, grey coat, and trousers. His dirty blond hair was brushed up neatly, and his face was clean-shaven.

"I look great, don't I?" He teased. Seeing how Shantelle studied him closely, a sly grin formed on his face.

"What - what are you doing here?" She asked, ignoring his comment.

"I am on a business trip. Prima MedCare has over ten thousand policyholders in Warlington, and I plan to strengthen our company's hold here in the city," Keith revealed. 

When Shantelle raised a brow at him, he chuckled. He said, "Oh, you mean, here? In front of your school?"

"I asked Doctor Scott where you were. I was going to see him anyway, so I decided to pick you up. I know your father has yet to hire a driver," Keith said. "I'm in town for two months. I can be your driver."

Shantelle shook her head and said, "You don't need to. I can get a taxi -"

"I'm heading to Warlington Hospital. You can ride in a taxi, pay a taxi fare and put your trust in a stranger, or you can ride with me... for free," Keith pointed out.

"Fine." Surrendering to Keith's offer, she rolled her eyes and went straight to the car's passenger side.

While on the road, they were silent. When they were nearing the hospital, Keith announced, "There is something you should know about Nicole -"

"That she is living with Evan in our marital home? I know," Shantelle said while looking out the window.

"What?!" That information took Keith aback. He answered, "I don't think -"

"I heard it loud and clear. Nicole picked up the landline when I called Mrs. Shaw, our house caretaker," Shantelle reported, still avoiding his gaze.

Keith sneered. He said, "I don't know about that, but -"

"I don't want to know anymore, Keith. Please, stop. I came here to forget Evan, not to remember him all over again." Shantelle thought back to when she found out about Nicole living in their villa. She cried

for hours, feeling the pain in her chest coming back all over again. She could not count how many times she said she would no longer cry over Evan.

Better said than done. The things that love do to you.

"But, Shanty -" Keith tried again. However, Shantelle cut her off. 6

"Please. You promised me, Keith. Back at the club. You would not tell Evan where I am, and here in Warlington, let's not talk about him either," She reminded.

"We did not agree on the latter, but if you insist," Keith replied.

"I don't want to change my mind about Evan and Rose Hills. This is my life now, here in Warlington," Shantelle expounded. "So, whatever you want to say, don't."

Silence stretched between them. Eventually, Shantelle reasoned, "I love him, Keith, but loving him is too painful. Again, I came here to forget. Soon, I won't love him anymore." 5

"I understand, Shanty," Keith answered, fixing his eyes on the road. "I know exactly how you feel."

Dead air fell upon them once again. When they were

nearing the hospital, Shantelle took the opportunity to ask, "When - when did you start following me on social, by the way?"

"I have always followed you since you turned eighteen. Remember, your father invited us to your debut," Keith reminded. "Besides, we've known each other since we were young. Like the Thompsons, we are locals in Rose Hills. Sean and Wendell only moved to the city in high school."

"Oh, right, I forgot about that," Shantelle replied. "You were at my eighteenth birthday party."

Keith laughed as he turned off the engine. He answered, "That's fine. I'm used to it. You forget about other people... except for Evan." ²²

"Doctor Scott, it is our honor to have you on our list of doctors in Warlington," Keith said, smiling after William Scott signed the documents.

"This is an ex-deal, Keith," William responded. He looked out the glass door of his office and seeing Shantelle sitting in the waiting area and reading a book, he emphasized, "Remember our arrangement."

"I won't tell anyone in Rose Hills," Keith confirmed.

It had been over a year since Keith had been poaching Shantelle's father to be part of their company's accredited doctors. He honestly thought it was impossible until over a month ago. Doctor Scott called him, asking if he could connect him with Warlington Hospital. So when Keith found out the same hospital was in need of a new medical director, he recommended Doctor Scott. In return, Shantelle's father conceded to cooperate with their insurance company. Part of their agreement included, his full silence about the Scott's relocation. 5

"And you should not update Shanty of Evan's life," William reminded. "It was a risk for me to trust someone close to Evan, but you promised, and your offer was very attractive."

Immediately, Keith felt regretful. Earlier, he was this close to telling Shantelle about how Nicole turned out to be a psycho who had staged her rape to blame him and Evan. He had left Rose Hills for over a week, but Sean had updated him about everything. Within his group of friends, it was Sean who knew him best. 5

"Keith, my daughter, had given up so much to be with Evan. Yet, he did not see through her sacrifices. Yes, Erick and I are partly to be blamed - me for allowing the marriage and Erick for forcing it on them, but to

me, Evan could have tried harder," William expressed his inner thoughts. 7

"Now, Shanty is back on the right track, and I want no one to interfere in her plans. She is talented, and she took a lot from me. We both have the same dream: to save people's lives. Shanty has to become a doctor. If anything is going on in Rose Hills that you think would tempt my daughter to return, I want you to keep it to yourself," William instructed.

"We are never going back to Rose Hills... unless it's a matter of life and death," William added.

Shantelle's father then looked at Keith, and seeing him think deeply, he asked, "What's on your mind, Keith?"

Keith had been reflecting on what Doctor Scott said. When Shantelle's father noticed, he decided to give his two cents on the matter. "Doctor Scott. If I were Evan, I would have cherished Shanty, but Evan - he -

He cleared his throat and added, "He never wanted to get married at twenty-five."

"When he returned to Rose Hills, he had many plans, especially him and Wendell. He was going to travel across the country and establish branches for their financial entity. We were going to attend most, if not

all, Grand Prix. We were going to travel to the Bahamas - but that all changed when he was forced to marry Shanty," Keith explained.

"I don't agree with Evan's decision of divorcing Shanty, but -" Keith paused before resuming, "A part of me understood why he wanted to be free of the marriage." 4

Keith leaned back in his seat and added, "I think you and Uncle Erick should have just... let nature take its course -" 4

"Well, that's why I am changing things now," William interrupted Keith. "I acknowledge where we made a mistake in the past. That is why my daughter should just... forget about Evan."

A day passed.

Back in Rose Hills, Wendell was driving back to his family's home in the middle of the day. He went past a checkpoint the authorities had set up nearing their community. He chuckled, realizing how serious Evan was about catching Nicole.

It wasn't like Nicole had committed a heinous crime to have all the police stations bow down to Evan's request. However, Evan was Evan. He was Erick

Thompson's son, and the city was indebted to the Thompsons.

If not for the most impressive corporation in the city, many locals would be jobless. If not for Evan's recent initiatives, the Thompson Group of Companies would not be as thriving as it was today. Last, Evan was a generous soul deep down. He supported charity events and donated to the city's public hospital.

Arriving at the Franco residence, Wendell noticed the same car that entered the Campbells' estate the other day. He drove past the car and proceeded to his family's mansion.

While at the entrance to their home, the gate's automated system incurred problems. Wendell had to open the gate manually.

After doing so, Wendell walked back to his car. Just then, he saw the Campbell's car return. He frowned, thinking, 'Didn't they just leave? Why are they back so soon?'

There weren't any establishments nearby. It was rows and rows of houses up until the checkpoint.

Then, he saw an older man. He was cursing as he stepped out of the car and opened the gates to their home. Someone's head popped out on the other side

of the vehicle but retreated quickly as soon as the man scolded. 1

"Mister Campbell. It's been a long time. Here on a short visit?" Wendell asked. He strengthened his voice to make himself known.

He saw the frightful look of Thomas Campbell. It was as if he saw a ghost in Wendell.

"Excuse me?" Thomas asked with a frown.


"Wendell Franco. We were neighbors until your family left town," Wendell reminded. He walked across the street to let Thomas see him clearly. "I was a schoolmate of Melody back in high school." 1

Briefly, Wendell locked eyes with Mister Campbell. He had amber-colored eyes, a striking eye color that somehow he thought was familiar. It wasn't just the eye color, though, but also the shape of his eyes - how downtrend it was. 8

"Oh, Wendell Franco. Right!" Thomas Campbell said. "Sorry, Wendell. It has indeed been a while. I am just here on a short visit, yes. It was an emergency."

"I see," Wendell said, his eyes studying the silhouette frame inside the tinted car.


"That's Melody. She came with me on this trip, but

 +15 BONUS

we should be leaving this week," Thomas said. "Excuse me, Wendell."

Wendell simply nodded. He also entered his car. However, as he drove into the driveway of their home, he thought, realizing the girl he saw was a blonde. He raised a brow and remarked, "I guess she didn't enjoy being a brunette."

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