

Chapter 246 The Patriarch's End

Edrick

I hated to say it, but Moana looked more beautiful than ever as she practically assaulted my evil father on the back lawn.

“He’s no threat,” she said as she released her grip on his shirt and let him fall back to the ground, then turned and walked back to meet me. “The knife is gone. He’s just an angry old man now and nothing more.”

Moana was right; the knife was indeed gone. It shattered when Michael tried to stab her with it.

During those moments when the knife was plunged into her belly, it felt as though my heart stopped. I watched in horror as the knife disappeared into her belly. When my father pulled it out, it was covered in blood and he had a maniacal grin on his face.

But something happened then. She became enveloped in that golden light again, only this time it was even brighter and more blinding than before. I thought she was dying, but it turned out that she healed instantly. If my father had stabbed her just milliseconds earlier, he certainly would have killed her.

She was already shifting by the time he stabbed her. Although the knife pierced her skin, the wound closed immediately on its own. I remembered seeing the golden light grow. The knife burst into a million pieces. Shards of it went flying through the air and rained down on my father and me like a hailstorm.

I didn't remember anything after that other than my consciousness fading in and out of existence as Moana tried to heal me.

I thought for sure that I would die. And I did die, for a short time. But not for long. Moana persevered, just like she always did. When I woke up, she was standing over me as I laid on the dining table, and all I wanted to do was kiss her.

She was like my guardian angel.

In an odd way, I was glad that she accidentally healed my father. I didn't want him to die. I wanted him to suffer throughout the remainder of his miserable little existence, locked away in a cell somewhere to rot.

"You w***e!" Michael screeched, shaking me out of my deep train of thought. "I would have killed you anyway, regardless of whether you were the Golden Wolf or not! All you've ever done is ruin my family and taint my bloodline!"

Moana opened her mouth to retaliate, but I grabbed her arm and shook my head. The security guards were already dragging Michael to his feet. I gave Moana a squeeze before I walked over to face him.

His face was beet red and covered in his own sweat, blood, and dirt from the ground. He growled and snarled like a rabid animal, practically foaming at the mouth as he struggled against the security guards.

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"Go on and humiliate yourself, Michael," I said, not even wanting to refer to this monster as my own father anymore. "You're not escaping now. Do you have any last words before I send you off to prison, where you belong?"

Michael let out a low, angry growl. "You've betrayed your family, Edrick," he whispered, spittle flying out of his mouth as his body shook.

“You’ve chosen that... that scum over your own flesh and blood. You will rue the day that you made that mistake. Mark my words.”

I couldn’t help but laugh. “You’re so wildly misguided that it’s almost pathetic,” I said, pushing my sleeves up to my elbows. “I’m not the one who ruined this family, and neither is Moana. You have no one to blame but yourself.”

Michael’s face darkened and his eyes went wide. “What?” he said. “Have you gone mad?”

I shook my head and took a step back, preparing myself to do what I should have done years beforehand as I curled my fingers into a fist and pulled my arm back.

“I haven’t,” I replied, tilting my chin down while the security guards continued to hold Michael in place by either arm, leaving his face free and clear for me. They knew what I was planning on doing to him. “But you have if you think that you didn’t already ruin this family over twenty years ago when you decided to cheat on my mother.”

Michael’s eyes widened. He opened his lips to speak, but before anything could even come out, I pulled my arm back a little more as though I was drawing an arrow. I then let my fist go, and watched with satisfaction as it flew straight into my evil father’s jaw.

His head reeled backwards, and blood instantly began pouring out of his nose. All of a sudden, I felt a hand on my arm and looked down to see Selina standing there with a stern look on her face.

I thought that she was going to scold me for hitting my father, but she didn’t.

“Here.” She pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket and gave it to me. “To wipe the blood off of your fist.”

I couldn’t help but laugh. The old housekeeper then turned to face Michael, and stormed up to him while he was still groaning over his

broken nose. I watched in awe as she reached out and grabbed a handful of his shirt, pulled him down to her level, and then spat in his eye.

“I’ve always hated you,” she growled. “And just so you know, there has never been a single time in which I didn’t spit in your tea when you came to visit.”

With that, Selina stomped on my father’s foot, causing him to yowl in even more pain while her spit dripped down his cheek, then picked up her skirt and stormed back off to the house. The security guards and I howled in laughter.

Finally, I turned around to see Moana standing behind me. She was holding Ella, and was carrying her back to the house. I watched them leave, and couldn’t help but smile at the image of Moana’s red hair billowing in the wind as she walked back to the house.

“What should we do with him?” one of the security guards asked over my dad’s howls of pain.

I simply shrugged as I wiped the blood off of my knuckles.

“Take him to the police,” I said. “Tell them everything.”

“Y-You’ll regret this.” My father’s voice was hoarse and choked, and yet he was still blabbering on. “I’ll give it a week, and then you’ll see how you wish that b***h was dead.”

I just shook my head. “You’re wrong, Michael,” I said, stuffing the bloody handkerchief that I used to clean my knuckles in his shirt pocket. “In fact, you’ve never been more wrong in your life. I’ll give it a week, and then you’ll wish that you were dead.”

My dad just scowled at me. I waved my hand dismissively, then turned to join my family back at the house.

“Don’t worry about being gentle with him,” I said to the guards over my shoulder. “Be as rough as you want. In fact, I’ll give a raise to whoever is the roughest.”

Behind me, I heard the sounds of my father being roughed up by the security guards. But I wasn’t concerned about that, as all I saw when I looked up was Moana’s beautiful face looking out at me from the doorway, and her hand on her belly.

Chapter 247

A little while later, Edrick and I were standing in the front doorway of the mansion and looking out at the scene before us.

The security guards were leading Michael, who was cuffed, over to the car. His nose was still clotted with blood from Edrick's punch, but something about it was satisfying to see. I enjoyed seeing Michael finally face some consequences for his actions, and I especially enjoyed watching Selina scold him like a child.

What was even more satisfying, though, was seeing him being shoved into the back of the car to be driven down to the police station.

Kat was found by the guards, too. Not long after Edrick punched Michael in the face, Kat was found hiding in the woods. As it turned out, Michael paid her a pretty penny to get close to me and lead me off into the forest to get lost so that he could kill me. She looked ashamed as the guards cuffed her, and wouldn't even lift her gaze to look at me.

Edrick had already called the police and told them what happened. They were waiting for Michael and Kat now, and I couldn't wait to see them both behind bars after everything that they did along with Kelly and Ethan.

As we watched the security guards drive away with Michael in the back of the car, Edrick slipped his arm around me and let out a sigh. I couldn't help but tear up as I gazed up at him; just an hour ago, I thought that I had

lost him forever. And now, he was standing beside me without a scratch on him.

“Come on,” Edrick said, guiding me away from the door. “You should rest. Are you feeling alright?”

I nodded. “I’m fine. I feel great, actually. Maybe we should follow the security guards so we can give our statements to the police—”

Suddenly, Edrick threw his head back and laughed. It was a loud and hearty laugh, much like the way that he laughed when we went to the comedy show together. Hearing it after thinking that I would never get to experience his laughter again made me smile and made my heart feel full.

“You’re always onto the next thing, aren’t you?” Edrick asked, giving my shoulder a squeeze. “Always so focused on your goals. A little hard-headed, too, if you don’t mind me saying.”

I felt myself blush. “I guess you’re right,” I said with a laugh. “I guess I should have stayed here instead of going on that walk, huh?”

Much to my surprise, Edrick shook his head. “It’s not your fault,” he replied. “All of this would have happened one way or another. Those dreams that you had were visions of the future — you have the power of Foresight. There would have been no way to get out of what happened on that cliff.”

I couldn’t help but furrow my brow in confusion. “But my visions were wrong,” I said. “I always saw Michael killing me and pushing me off the cliff...”

“We’ll never understand it,” Edrick said. “Foresight is a powerful gift, but it’s often misunderstood. Someday, maybe you’ll learn how to harness it a bit better. For now, though, let’s just be glad that your visions prepared you for what was to come. I think that without those visions warning you about Michael’s plan, he would have been able to kill you.”

I stared down at the floor for a few moments, processing. If only the Mother Witch was still alive and could help me figure these things out. Now, I was alone in this. It was going to be a massive learning curve to teach myself how to be the Golden Wolf. Where would I even start?

But I supposed that I wasn't really alone. I had a family now. At least we could learn together and be there to support each other through it all.

Finally, I felt Edrick's hand under my chin. He tilted my face up and for the first time that day, I was able to gaze into his blue eyes deeply without any pain or worry. There was nothing steely or icy about them anymore. They were even more blue than the sky.

With a smile, Edrick slowly bent down to kiss me deeply on the lips.

I relaxed into his kiss and wrapped my arms around his neck, standing up on my tiptoes to kiss him. As I did, I felt a deep and relaxed sigh release from his chest. He pressed himself up against me, and for a moment I felt our hearts beating against each other.

"Eww!"

Ella's tiny voice rang out through the hallway, causing both Edrick and I to pull apart from each other and laugh. With a giggle, Ella ran up to us. Edrick scooped her up in his arms and held her on his hip.

"Are you doing okay after everything, Ella?" he asked. He had a bit of worry drawn across his face.

Ella paused for a few moments, thinking as she tapped her chin thoughtfully. Finally, she nodded. "I have the best mom and dad in the entire world," she said, grinning. "You guys are like superheroes. I couldn't be better!"

Ella's words made my heart flutter and instinctively, I reached down and touched my belly.

For the first time, I finally felt like we were a real family. Nothing was keeping us apart now, and I couldn't wait to see our little family grow. I imagined that Ella would be an amazing and loving big sister, and I could only picture how happy Edrick would be to hold his second child in his arms.

Edrick chuckled at Ella's words and pulled both of us close. For a long time, the three of us just held each other in the hallway as though we would never see each other again. I looked up to see Ella smiling down at me, and I reached up to pinch her little cheek. Her tiny giggles sounded like music to my ears.

Everything else that happened leading up to this moment almost seemed to melt away. Nothing else mattered. During these moments, there was only us, and I vowed then and there to keep it that way.

When Edrick set Ella down, though, he nodded to himself and then gave me a melancholy look.

"Maybe we should head out," he said, glancing out the door that still stood ajar behind us. "Not to visit the police station, though."

I c****d my head to the side. "Where, then? Do you want to go back to the penthouse now?"

Edrick shook his head. "No," he replied. "We need to check on my mother. I hope that my dad didn't hurt her in any way."

My eyes widened. Verona... I had forgotten about her. It seemed as though the brief sense of peace that I felt earlier would have to be put on hold until we checked on her, and I was okay with that.

Just like Edrick, I also hoped that she was safe and that Michael didn't hurt her. After all, I wanted her there to meet her second grandchild.

Chapter 248 The Matriarch

Edrick

Within an hour, Moana and I were nervously walking up the front steps to my parents' mansion.

We left Ella with Selina just in case we walked in on anything sinister. The house was mostly dark, which was out of the ordinary. As I slowly opened the front door, I felt my heart catch in my throat.

“Hello?” I called out, holding Moana’s hand as I stepped into the large foyer. “Mom?”

There was no answer. Moana and I exchanged nervous glances and walked in a little further.

“Verona?” Moana called, cupping her hands around her mouth to make her voice travel further. “Are you there?!”

Still no answer. We decided to head into the sitting room, where my mother often liked to be during her free time, but it was dark and empty. At this point, I was starting to get even more nervous.

“I swear, if that bastard did anything to her...” I growled, “I’ll—”

Moana gasped. “Look!” she said, pointing behind me. I followed her finger to see what looked like a small fire outside.

The two of us quickly ran out the patio door toward the fire, then across the garden. As we ran, we saw a lone figure standing by the fire.

It was my mother. She was standing by the fire pit, in her dressing gown, and was tossing what looked like pieces of paper into the flames.

“Mom!” I exclaimed, running up to her. “You’re alright!”

“Oh, darling!” my mother replied. She grabbed my face and kissed my cheeks, then did the same to Moana. “I was so worried about you...”

“What happened?” I asked. “And what are you doing?” I glanced down at the papers in her hand, only to see that they weren’t papers at all. She was holding photographs. I snatched the stack out of her hand and flipped through them. They were all pictures of my dad.

My mother simply shrugged and poked the fire with a long rod. “I’ve been wanting to do that for ages, darling,” she said, flashing a vibrant smile as she watched the photos burn. “It feels good to do it.”

I let out a sigh and tossed one of the photographs into the fire myself. It did actually feel good to see my father’s face burn to a crisp.

“Did he hurt you?” Moana asked, taking a step forward with concern written across her face.

My mother shook her head. “No. Although he did threaten to hurt you two, as well as Ella. He tossed my phone right in the fountain, if you’ll believe it! And then he just took the car and drove off without a word!”

My eyes widened. “So when I called you—”

“He heard me,” she replied with a nod. “That was when he took my phone. Said that I should learn to mind my own business for once. Hah! As if I’d ever do that.”

I couldn’t help but smile at seeing my mom still being as witty as ever despite what had happened. She tossed the rest of the photographs into the

fire all at once, and the three of us watched in silence as the flames jumped up into the sky, devouring the paper within seconds.

“Well then...” My mother turned to face the two of us. “Tea?”

Moana and I followed my mother inside, where she put the kettle on the stove. “Where are the servants?” I asked.

My mother simply shrugged. “Your father sent them away not too long ago. It was a shame, really. I don’t know exactly what he was up to, although I think I have a pretty good idea.” She paused and looked over at Moana with nothing but sympathy in her eyes. “Once I can get my phone and my things in order, I’ll call them back and give them all raises for the trouble. It has been nice having the place to myself, though, I must say.”

While the kettle started to heat up, the three of us sat around the kitchen counter. Finally, I started to explain everything to my mother... From the very beginning.

...

When I was finished with both my story and my tea, my mother stared down at the leaves in her cup without a word.

“I’m sorry, Verona,” Moana said quietly. “This is my fau—”

My mother suddenly jerked her head up with a wild look on her face and gripped Moana’s hand tightly. “Don’t you dare finish that sentence. None of this is your fault. If it wasn’t you, then it would have been someone else. He already took that prostitute’s life all those years ago... He has a penchant for causing destruction.”

There was a silence, filled only by the sound of the crickets chirping through the open window.

Finally, I licked my lips and spoke. “He’s going to prison, mom,” I said. “Will you be okay?”

My mother nodded vigorously. “Of course I’ll be alright, dear. My lawyer and I have both been waiting for this day. And trust me when I say that I’ll certainly be getting the fortune and the house in the divorce. A man behind bars for crimes like that doesn’t deserve a penny.”

I couldn’t help but chuckle a bit. “You’re never one to pity yourself,” I said, patting her hand. “Moana and I are here if you need anything.”

My mother simply nodded, then finished off the rest of her tea. Suddenly, I heard her voice ring out in my head.

“You’ll marry her?”

I tried to hide the fact that my eyes wanted to widen, and coughed slightly. “Y-Yes... I think so. Do I have your blessing?”

“Moana,” my mother said, turning to face her with a smile, “could you do an old woman a favor?”

“Sure,” Moana replied. “What is it?”

My mother smiled. “Could you go up to my bedroom and get my pocketbook for me?”

Moana nodded and disappeared with a smile, without a moment of hesitation. A few moments after she left, my mother turned to face me and took both of my hands firmly in hers.

“Of course you have my blessing,” she whispered, giving my hands a squeeze. “I’ve been hoping for this moment. I’ve always liked her, even when she was still a human.”

I felt my face go a bit red, and I couldn’t help but smile. “Thanks, mom,” I said. “That means a lot.”

My mother’s grin widened. “I’m giving you my mother’s ring,” she said. “I think Moana will love it. My mother was a lovely woman... She would want you and your bride to have it.”

Suddenly, I felt overcome with emotion. Without a word, I stood and walked around the counter to meet my mom. I pulled her into my arms and hugged her tightly.

Moana returned a few moments later while we were still hugging, slightly out of breath from rushing through the massive house. “I’m sorry, Verona, but I couldn’t find it,” she said. “You said it was in your room?”

My mother just smiled and shook her head. “That’s alright, dear. I don’t need it.”

A little while later, Moana and I stood at the door to head home for the night. In a few days, we planned to return to the penthouse. But for now, we just wanted to enjoy the mountain estate without any fear for once.

Just before we left, my mother sneakily slipped the little velvet bag containing my grandmother’s ring into my hand. She curled my fingers around it and patted my hand, gazing up at me with a smile that only a mother could have for her child.

Even with my father and Ethan both in prison, I knew that this was just a new beginning for all of us.

And I couldn’t have been more excited.

Chapter 249 Purpose Over Profit

Moana

The months in between Michael going to prison and Daisy's birth were a whirlwind of emotions and unexpected turns. After the incident with Michael, where he was sentenced to prison for his attempt on my life, my world took another astonishing twist.

The news outlets revealed a shocking revelation: Moana, the seemingly ordinary girl who was raised in an orphanage, was, in fact, the legendary Golden Wolf.

I never imagined my life could become so entangled in a web of fame and attention.

Suddenly, everyone wanted a piece of me. All sorts of brands and non-governmental organizations bombarded me with invitations and tempting monetary offers. It was overwhelming, to say the least. My inbox was flooded with messages from high-profile companies and influential figures, all hoping to capitalize on my newfound fame.

It felt like the world had changed overnight, and I struggled to comprehend the weight of it all.

As the news continued to report on the outrageous offers I was receiving, doubt crept into the minds of many. People began questioning whether the Golden Wolf, the protector of nature and advocate for equality, would truly stay true to her purpose or succumb to the allure of money.

These doubts lingered in my mind as well, threatening to pull me away from the path I had set for myself.

In the midst of this chaos, I almost fell victim to a company that was particularly skilled in branding. They had a compelling narrative and seemed genuinely interested in making a positive impact on the world. At first, it was love at first sight. I was thrilled to have the chance to be involved with such a high profile company.

However, as I delved deeper into their motives, it became evident that they were driven solely by profit. Their true intentions were masked by a cleverly crafted facade, and it took the guidance of my trusted companion, Edrick, to see through their deception.

Edrick, ever the wise and discerning soul, helped me navigate through the sea of offers.

Together, we carefully scrutinized each proposition, seeking the genuine ones from those that were merely seeking to exploit my fame. We rejected all those with insincere intentions, determined to stay true to our mission of making the world a more equitable place.

It was a lot of work for a while, and a lot of late nights were spent sifting through mountains of proposal letters and applications.

However, amidst all of the chaos, we discovered a small organization that aligned perfectly with our values.

“Look,” I said late one night as Edrick and I sat up and worked through the sea of paperwork. It was just a couple of months before Daisy was set to be born, and my belly was practically bursting as I leaned forward to hand Edrick the piece of paper that caught my attention. “Look at this organization I just found.”

Edrick furrowed his brow as he took the letter from me. “Humanity’s Reach Initiative,” he said under his breath.

Edrick furrowed his brow as he took the letter from me. “Humanity’s Reach Initiative,” he said under his breath.

“They’re not offering any money,” I said, feeling my chest swell a bit with excitement. “All they want is someone who is really dedicated to helping the world.”

Edrick looked a little skeptical. “We can give them a call if you’d like,” he said, supportive as always. “We’ll call tomorrow.”

Indeed, the next day we called Humanity’s Reach Initiative. Within a few weeks, I was signing my first contract.

They may not have had the grandeur or financial prowess of the other offers, but their dedication and commitment to their cause shone through. Their passion for creating a better world was undeniable, and I knew deep in my heart that they were the right choice.

Rather than merely accepting their invitation, Edrick went a step further. He decided to invest in this organization, recognizing the immense potential they held to effect real change. It was a gesture that truly touched my soul.

Together, we wanted to nurture and uplift those who shared our vision, knowing that every small step towards progress mattered.

When we made our decision, the runner of the organization expressed her immense gratitude. Her name was Jolene, and we had been working closely with her for a few months. Countless press conferences, public events, and charity galas later, Jolene wrote a heartfelt letter, publicly thanking both Edrick and me for believing in their cause:

To Moana and Edrick Morgan:

I hope this letter finds you both in the best of spirits, for it carries with it an abundance of gratitude and appreciation. It is with utmost sincerity and admiration that I reach out to express my heartfelt thanks for your

unwavering support and belief in our organization, Humanity's Reach Initiative.

Words alone cannot capture the depth of gratitude that fills my heart as I reflect upon the momentous decision you both made. Your selection of our small organization, despite the limited financial resources we possess, has reaffirmed our unwavering dedication to creating a more equal and just world. It is through the genuine intentions and unwavering commitment of individuals like yourselves that our vision can come to fruition.

Your rejection of the enticing monetary offers from other brands and NGOs speaks volumes about your character and the values you hold dear. In a world driven by profit and self-interest, you have remained steadfast in your pursuit of genuine change. The trust you have placed in us is both humbling and inspiring, and it fuels our resolve to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those who need it most.

Edrick's decision to invest in our organization goes beyond mere financial support. It represents a partnership built on shared values and a mutual understanding of the potential we possess to create lasting change. Your investment is not just in our organization, but in the countless lives we aim to uplift and empower.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for recognizing the true essence of our work, which extends far beyond financial gain. Your belief in our mission to foster equality and justice serves as a guiding light, propelling us forward in our endeavors. Your support provides us with the means to continue advocating for those who have been marginalized and forgotten.

In light of your generous support, we pledge to remain transparent, accountable, and focused on our shared goals. Your trust empowers us to dream bigger, to reach further, and to touch the lives of countless individuals who yearn for a better future.

On behalf of the entire Humanity's Reach Initiative, I extend my deepest gratitude to both of you. Your decision to choose purpose over profit has reinvigorated our spirits and solidified our commitment to the cause we hold so dear. We are honored to have you as partners in our journey, and we look forward to forging a future of meaningful impact, together.

With immense appreciation and warmest regards,

Jolene

Leader, Humanity's Reach Initiative

Reading that letter, which was published in the local newspaper, made tears come to my eyes. But beyond that, it was humbling.

It was a humbling experience to witness the impact we could have on someone's life by extending a helping hand. Their gratitude reassured me that we had made the right choice amidst all the chaos.

In the days that followed, as news of our collaboration spread, I realized the true power that lay within me.

It was not just the power of being the Golden Wolf, but the power to choose, to discern, and to inspire change. I understood that the path I had been thrust upon was not just about protecting nature but also about using my influence to create a more just and compassionate world.

The overwhelming offers and temptations had momentarily veered me off course, but with Edrick's guidance, I found my way back.

Together, we rejected the falsehoods and embraced the genuine opportunities. We were determined to remain steadfast in our purpose, never allowing ourselves to be swayed by materialistic desires.

With so much change underway, the world really did feel like my oyster.

And I was prepared to weather the tides of the ocean as the Golden Wolf, so long as I had my newfound family by my side.

Chapter 250

The time between Michael going to prison and Daisy's birth were such a whirlwind of activity that the months practically flew by.

Ethan and Kelly wound up being transferred to a mental health facility. I think that was better for them in the long run, as the things that they did were ultimately the result of Michael's brainwashing. I didn't hold any grudges against them; in fact, Edrick and I visited them on a monthly basis, and the medication and therapy that they went through seemed to be helping a bit.

Of course, Kelly could never get over her obsession with Edrick. Nor could Ethan get over his obsession with me. It was very likely that they would spend years in that place, but at least we could have somewhat normal conversations with them when we went to visit.

Michael, however, had no visitors and I didn't feel the least bit bad about it. Verona eventually finalized her divorce with him, and she got most of his money as well as the house. She became the matriarch of the Morgan family, and over the next six months we went to countless wonderful parties hosted by Verona where there was no drama or fighting. It felt good to finally have a chance to enjoy attending those sorts of parties without judgment or hatred.

My status as the Golden Wolf was quickly discovered by the public. There were, of course, some fringe groups who wanted me dead, but they had

no way of killing the Golden Wolf now that the knife was gone. Thanks to what happened at the cliff, the future generations of the Golden Wolf would be allowed to live and continue to create peace in the world.

I continued teaching at the school, and split my time with the orphanage and the Humanity's Reach Initiative as well. I was on track to become the next headmistress at the school someday, but I still didn't know if that was what I wanted. Countless humanitarian organizations were still begging me to work for them, and the prospect of trying something new was exciting to me.

Since I continued teaching, I only volunteered for these organizations instead. On more than one occasion, Edrick accused me of doing too much and not getting enough rest. I just laughed at him because I knew that the baby and I could handle it. We had been through so much before, and the volunteering that I was doing was making the world a better place.

Edrick continued being the WereCorp CEO, but he was much different after the events at the mountain estate. He became more fair toward his human employees, and even went so far as to purchase Sophia's orphanage. He donated money to other local orphanages, and the two of us quickly became known as the biggest philanthropists in the city.

On Christmas, we even threw a massive charity gala that beat a record for the most amount of money raised toward humanitarian organizations. It was of course run by the Humanity's Reach Initiative, which had grown immensely since we joined and put in our efforts.

The two of us were happy together. We didn't have to hide our relationship from anyone — not even ourselves. In the penthouse, we were a little family. We didn't get engaged, though, but that was okay with me. I was just excited to meet our daughter.

I was lying on the couch after a long day of teaching and going to public events when I felt it. Selina had just given me a good scolding for overexerting myself so close to my due date, and now I was reading a book with a sandwich and a cup of tea sitting on the coffee table.

Suddenly, I felt something strange.

“Um... Selina?!” I called out. I dropped my book and stood, my eyes widening at the large wet spot left behind on the couch.

Selina came running, and her eyes widened as well.

“Did your...” Her voice faded and she clamped her hand over her mouth.

I nodded slowly, both excited and terrified out of my mind. “My water broke. Daisy is on the way.”

Edrick and I decided to name the baby Daisy. Daisy Anne Morgan... Someday, I would tell her how her big sister picked that name out, and it was the prettiest and most special name I had ever heard.

The contractions began soon after my water broke.

Selina was on the phone with Edrick and was telling him to get home when I felt the first one. I let out a loud groan and practically doubled over from the pain as I gripped the back of the couch with white knuckles.

“Mom?” Ella asked, tugging on my skirt. “Are you alright?”

I nodded and swallowed, feeling myself already beginning to sweat from the pain. “Yes, love. It’s called a contraction.”

Ella c****d her head to the side. “What does that mean?”

I gritted my teeth through the pain and managed a smile. “It means that your little sister is trying to get out,” I said, pinching Ella’s cheek. I was overtaken then by another wave of pain, and Selina came scurrying out of the kitchen with a worried look on her face.

“Edrick is on his way. I’ll take you to the hospital now if you want—”

“No.” I shook my head firmly. “I want to wait for Edrick.”

Selina opened her mouth to protest at first, but then quickly shut it again. I could tell that she knew that there was no changing my mind now, and so she and Ella both stayed with me while I paced back and forth around the living room, clutching my belly as waves of contractions came over me.

Finally, Edrick burst out of the elevator with a wild look on his face. His tie was loosened, his shirt was half untucked, and his hair was a mess. He looked like he practically flew here.

I couldn’t help but laugh.

“You look ridiculous,” I teased.

“Mom peed on the couch!” Ella shouted.

Selina hushed Ella. “Don’t be rude!” she scolded. “It’s not urine! It’s called amniotic fluid.”

Ella furrowed her brow, still clutching my skirt. “Well, it looks like pee.”

Edrick and I both burst out laughing. Ella never ceased to lighten the mood, even when she didn’t mean to.

Within minutes, Edrick and I were on the way to the hospital. Ella threw a royal fit when she found out that she couldn’t come until later, but I knew that it would likely be hours spent in the hospital and that it would be worse if she came now.

As Edrick drove, he clutched my hand and kept looking over at me nervously, as though I would explode or even just disappear into thin air.

“I love you,” Edrick said as he took a turn.

Through the pain of the contractions, I could hardly speak. I could only smile back at him, and I squeezed his hand three times. Over the past six months, we had developed a secret code to say I love you without having to speak... And at that moment, I needed to use that secret code more than ever.

Edrick grinned and squeezed back. Soon enough, the hospital came into view. Despite the pain, I couldn't stop smiling.

I was so excited to finally meet our daughter.