

Chapter 30: Shantelle's New Love

"Sorry, Evan. Doctor Scott isn't in Hamlin, either," Evan heard Keith say on the other line, and very quickly, his heart sank.

"What about the private investigator you hired? Didn't that come up with any results?" Keith asked.

"Who was the PI again? Mr. Ren Austen, yeah what about him?"

"Strangely, no," Evan replied. Evan thought it was unusual. Mr. Austen was the same person who had found out about Nicole. Despite his experience, he could not find Doctor Scott. Still, he trusted the investigator due to his previous dealing with him.

Aside from hiring a private detective, Evan did what he had never tried to do before: he created a social media account. James, his assistant, walked him through it.

Evan tried to spy on Shantelle's friends, creating a fake name, but they would not randomly accept unknown persons on their friends' list. He felt like a foolish teenager, but what else could he do?

Evan had to use every method possible to find his ex-wife.

He also asked for Keith's help. He always knew his friend had social media, but it was the same; According to Keith, Shantelle's friends had blocked him. Not only Keith but also Sean.

Of course, Evan considered there was also that possibility that Shantelle eventually disabled her social media or that she might have changed the name on the account.

"Well, what can I say, Evan? A person in hiding cannot be found," Keith suggested. "I'm sorry, Evan, but at least we tried. I have to go. I need to make money. It's an important day for me tomorrow."

"Thanks, Keith," Evan said. "Thanks for trying."

Evan was on the road, counting the months in his head. It had been almost ten months since Shantelle left, yet he still had not found her.

They say time heals, but time has not helped at all. The Lockwood National Park had kept him busy, but he felt emptiness and longing whenever his day ended.

He had his laptop open in front of him, but he gawked outside the car's window. As he closed the laptop, his eyes landed on the ring on his finger. Till that very day, he still wore his wedding ring, including the gift Shantelle gave him.

"Mr. Thompson, where to?" Howard, his driver, asked. "To the cemetery," Evan instructed. That day was another attempt to find Shantelle, and he hoped he would succeed. Within Rose Hills cemetery, Karise was with her family and friends, mourning the loss of her mother.

Her mother's sudden stroke left her in the hospital for a month. Despite the efforts of the doctors, her mother still passed away. It left Karise's family heartbroken. With the length of period, her mother was in the hospital, Karise's family fell into near bankruptcy.

Karise was crying in front of her mother's coffin when she saw the man collecting the payment for her mother's burial. She walked towards him and begged, "Please, not now. I promise I'll pay for everything. It's just been so hard -"

Her words were cut off when the man before her gave her a receipt. The man said, "The memorial package has been fully paid. You don't need to worry."

The man left, and from where she remained, she understood the reason. She saw Evan Thompson. Karise scoffed. When she caught Evan walking towards her, she said, "If this is a bribe, it won't work. No matter how you pay me off, I won't tell you because I do not know where Shanty is!" "I wasn't expecting anything in return. What I do hope is for Shanty to come and see your mother," Evan replied. "You don't need to pay me back. Consider it as my help, for old time's sake." Evan placed a hand on Karise's shoulder and said, "I'm sorry for your loss, Karise."

Minutes turned into hours. Evan boldly joined in the gathering of Karise's family and friends, despite being uninvited. He wished he could finally see Shantelle. She would not miss this very last day of the wake. Shantelle loved Karise and her mother. She would come and pay respect.

Time passed. People around the wake had already begun to leave, and the rain started to pour, yet Evan remained in his seat under the tented lawn of Rose Hills Cemetery.

"Evan, it's getting dark. My mother is already beneath the ground. She is not coming. I'm telling you, she has already forgotten about Rose Hills," Karise warned Evan. "We are leaving."

"Shanty is coming here to see your mother. She would not miss this very last day," Evan insisted, looking past the rows of tombstones.

"You are crazy, Evan. Go home! She is not coming. I know it!" Karise said. She and her family left reluctantly. Only Evan remained while Howard, his driver, parked nearby.

Hours passed again. Evan slept in the car while Howard staked out the cemetery for Shantelle's possible arrival. However, to his dismay, Shantelle never came. As Evan awoke the next day at six in the morning, he heard a knock on his car's window. It was Karise.

When he rolled down his window, Karise said, "Evan, what are you doing? It's enough. Let Shanty go. As you can see. She did not come. It's like I said to you yesterday, she would not come."

"Forget, Shanty, Evan. For your sake, for her sake, and everyone's sake." Karise was about to leave, but she returned to give Evan a piece of advice. She said, "If fate would have you meet again, then maybe you are destined, but stop torturing yourself and move on with your life -"

"You don't understand, Karise. I fear regret will continue to haunt me," he said in a lifeless tone. He looked at where Karise's mother was buried again and said, "I guess she isn't coming. I hoped that she did."

"Goodbye, Karise, and I'm sorry again for your loss," Evan said. Karise purposely drove back to the cemetery to see if Evan had waited for Shantelle. The crazy part was how he really did! 2

Karise watched as Evan's car drove away. Guilt consumed her completely, but what was she to do? She promised Doctor Scott not to tell Evan. She wondered, "Am I doing the right thing?"

Then, recalling how Shantelle cried over Evan, how she gave up so much for him only to get hurt, Karise muttered, "I'm sorry, Evan, but more than anything, my girl needs to love herself. She can't be with you."

Karise was confident that her best friend would not come that day. It was because, that very day, Shantelle was in the hospital, ready to give birth. In Warlington, within the hospital's delivery room, a woman's screams could be heard.

“Aahhh!” Shantelle was holding her tears. Beads of sweat formed on her forehead as she pushed and pushed.” Arrghh!”

“The baby is almost out, Shanty! You can do it,” the doctor instructed. In tears, Shantelle gave another push. Her beautiful face frowned as she held her breath. “Wah! Wah! Wah!” Upon hearing the baby’s cry, she also howled in tears. Finally, her son was out.

“Baby boy Scott!” The doctor announced. Nurses quickly cleaned him up in Shantelle’s chest. The baby kept crying and crying, making Shantelle shed more tears.

“Oh, you are so beautiful, little one,” Shantelle said, stroking his head and back. “I love you. I love you. You are my lucky baby, my gift, my love.”

She kissed the baby’s head and claimed, “Thank you for coming into my life. From this moment on, I will never love another man. Only you. I will love only you.”

“I’ll love you, Lucas.”