

Chapter 27: Give Me A Chance

“Evan, son. Do we really need to go?” Erick Thompson asked. The Thompsons were in the car, heading their way to the airport. They were flying to Lockwood for the formalities of Evan’s recently acquired property. “Of course we do, Erick. Evan wants us to see his plans,” Clara said in the car.

“Please, father,” Evan said in a lifeless tone. “I booked a charter flight, so it will be comfortable for everyone. I want you to see the potential of the place.”

With a sigh, Erick answered, “Very well. Evan was on his laptop while in the car, reading emails he had missed the other day. Work had to continue for Evan, being the CEO of his father’s company, but it was obvious that he was unhappy.

He lost that glow on his face. He let his beard grow lengthier than usual, and his eyes looked tired. It was clear to everyone how Evan still had not slept properly.

While reading one email, he noticed a familiar person walking down the street. His eyes rounded, recalling how his private investigator could not find her new address. She lived in the same city but proved rather hard to find.

“Karise,” Evan said under his breath. His heart raced, seeing hope at last. “Stop the car, Howard. Stop the car!”

After the vehicle pulled over on the sidewalk, Evan rushed out and chased after Karise. “Karise! Karise!” He called. “Please stop! I need to speak to you!”

Karise heard and glanced his way. He saw how her eyes rounded and how she ran in another area.

“Karise! Please, stop!”

Eventually, Karise was out of breath, and Evan cornered her in one alley. Karise was taking deep breaths as she comforted her chest with her palm. She barked, “What do you want, Evan?”

“Karise,” Evan was also panting. He moved toward her and pleaded, “ Please, I beg you. I need to know where Shanty is.”

“Why? You are divorced! Let her have her peace!” Karise shot back. “She needs to live her life, Evan. What do you want from her -”

“I miss her. I miss her so much. It’s been so hard to live through the day and not think of her I miss her scent, her smile, her beautiful face, the way she talked about science – everything about her.”

Evan did not hesitate to let out his inner thoughts. “I was wrong to ask for a divorce. I need her to know that.”

Evan saw Karise was taken aback, but very quickly, her face showed a hint of anger. She countered, “What the hell, Evan? First, you pushed her away, and then you say you miss her? Well, too bad because Shanty doesn’t miss you!”

“Where is she? Let her decide for herself,” Evan suggested.

“And what about Nicole?” Karise pointed out. “Isn’t it that Shanty stood in your way? Didn’t you love Nicole? Then you could not get over the forced marriage thing, Evan. Tell me, what really went on with your head, huh? Did your pride get in the way? Did your fucking ego make you blind to see how great Shanty was for you? Almost every man in Rose Hills was jealous of you, Evan!”

"I did not have any relationship with Nicole! And fucking no! I never loved Nicole. I never cheated on Shanty!" Evan maintained, but he did not have the time to explain it all how Nicole turned out to be Melody Campbell. He was more surprised that Karise did not seem to know. Evan tried to describe his point of view. "My reasons were more than just about Nicole. Hear me out."

Seeing how Karise paused, he admitted, "Yes, you are right, Karise. My ego got in the way. I could not get over how my father pushed me into our marriage. I felt suffocated. I thought I wanted my freedom – I thought that being single, I would be contented, but I'm fucking miserable, Karise. I miss Shanty so much!"

Evan tried to reach for her hand, but Karise pushed him away and firmly answered, "I don't know where she is."

"You are lying! You are her best friend!" Evan rebutted. Then, he did the impossible and went down on his knees. In front of her, he asked, "I know you are just looking out for Shanty, but please let me see her – let me speak to her. I was wrong to let her go."

"Get up, Evan! Get up!" Karise raised her voice and said, "Why now? Why did you realize this now when it's already too late?"

Karise berated. "I'm sorry, Evan, but I don't know where Shanty is." @ "Karise!" Evan held her wrist and asked, "I am asking you not as Evan, but as an acquaintance who is regretful. No one is perfect, and I certainly am not. I beg you, give me a chance."

Evan looked into Karise's eyes and declared, "I love her, Karise. I know that now. I love Shanty. Give me a chance to prove it."

"If you won't let me see her, at least please tell her for me," Evan implored. "Karise, you are my only hope."

Karise looked down at Evan pitifully. She listened as he begged again. She thought about it deeply, but recalling Doctor Scott's goal for Shantelle, she responded weakly, "I'm sorry, Evan, but the Scotts left without saying where they were headed. They meant never to come back. I think... it's better that way."

"Forget Shanty," She suggested. "Your story ended the moment you asked for a divorce. It's time to close that chapter of your life. She has moved on, and so should you."

Karise walked away, leaving Evan still on his knees. She had already made it out in the same alley, and only then did she turn to check on him. She saw Evan, still kneeling from afar, his back facing her, his head down, looking thoroughly defeated.

She should not feel sorry for Evan, but considering that Shantelle was pregnant, she whispered, "Should I let Shanty know?"

Later that evening, Karise called Shantelle's new mobile number, but she did not pick up. She called the landline of the new Scotts' residence in Warlington, and Doctor William Scott answered the call. "Doctor Scott, is Shanty home?" She asked.

"Yes, but she is studying right now for her exams. Eleanor is giving her some pointers. Can I take a message?" Doctor Scott offered.

There was silence between them, but finally, Karise revealed, "I – I bumped into Evan. He seemed apologetic –"

"Karise, Shanty has to become a doctor. Please don't give us news about Evan. I already cut relations with the Thompsons. I don't want to have Shanty cut ties with you too. Do you want that to happen? Will you promise me never to bring this up? I don't care about Evan or whatever he has to say. I don't care that he is the father of Shanty's child. My daughter has us, and she has you too. We are more than enough," Doctor Scott declared.

"Promise me, Karise. Promise me," William continued. "I'm – I'm sorry, Doctor Scott. It won't happen again," Karise said in the end.

After the phone conversation with Shantelle's father, Karise looked out the window of her home. She thought it was funny how Evan only realized Shantelle's worth now that she was out of his life.

Barely a whisper, Karise said, "I'm sorry, Evan, but you are just going to live with the choice you made."