

The CEO's Ex-Wife Is A Famous Doctor

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Chapter 192: The Funeral

Keith closed his eyes, sensing his friend's warm embrace. His voice was weak as he said, "Thanks, Evan, for coming." "Of course, man! What kind of a friend would I be if I didn't come here," Evan said. He patted Keith's back, proposing, "Shanty and I are here for you. II

The next to embrace Keith was Shantelle. She gave encouragement and said, "At least Uncle Charles got to see Charlene before resting. He must have been happy during his last few days."

Upon letting go, Keith nodded, acknowledging, "He was. And I knew how he held on longer for Charlene."

"Uncle Keith, I'm sorry for your loss," Lucas said with woeful eyes.

Keith ran his fingers through Lucas' hair and answered, "Thank you for being here, Lucas boy. You made your uncle happy. Now go to your aunt and make her happy as well. Then, grandma Helen too."

Behind Evan and Shantelle, Erick Thompson and Clara approached Keith. William and Eleanor also came to pay respects. They offered Keith an embrace. Erick, for one, expressed, "I'm glad you patched things up with Charles, Keith. At least you won't have regrets in his passing."

"I." Keith gulped air down his throat and replied, "I can't say, I don't, but I am thankful I had time with him."

When it was time for William to hug Keith, he said, "I don't have any wise words to say. We all have our own way of dealing with grief, Keith. Just remember, life goes on, and you still have a family that loves you."

It really wasn't like Keith to be emotional, but he couldn't help but feel teary-eyed. He sucked in a breath and answered, "Appreciate your wise words, Uncle."

It was the day of Charles' funeral, and Keith's friends and relatives arrived one by one. Wendell and his wife turned up. Like Evan and Shantelle, Milan and Wendell embraced him. There were fewer words but more warmth, which consoled him.

When Sean arrived, he came with his entire family, including his parents. Keith was closest to Sean and had a good time with the Rosses during his younger years.

Their presence gave him added ease. Sean's father, Sherwin, offered, "Keith, you have a father in me. I always considered you a son since you and Sean were like brothers."

As each minute passed, more and more words of wisdom and reassurance were offered to Keith, and seeing how his friends' wives were flocking over Karise, he knew his wife was also receiving the same comfort. To his right, his mother, Helen, was being soothed by Karise's father. If anyone, Mister Myers knew what it felt like to lose a partner, having lost his wife many years ago.

The memorial service was held at Rose Hills' grand chapel, where nearly half the seats were filled with mourning guests. Soon, the ceremony began.

A priest welcomed everybody, reminding them of the reason for their gathering. Then, Keith was called to the front to say a few words.

It wasn't easy for Keith, but he was the best representation of his father. Standing at the podium, he smiled, holding back his tears. He said, "Anyone who knew my father knows he was stern and vocal about his opinions. He had ways of getting what he wanted, which can be intimidating. Was it bad? Looking back, I think I learned to be tough because of him. I guess you could say each parent has his way of teaching their children discipline."

"I am not proud to say that my dad and I didn't get along well. He pushed me too hard that I became rebellious in my little ways. But because he pushed me that way, I also had the fire to prove him wrong. I managed his company and owned it," Keith described.

"When I became the CEO of his company, I scoffed, telling my father at the back of my head; See, Dad? I'm not Evan, but I made it. Oh, yeah. He compared me a lot to Evan. He thought my charms didn't help in business, but it landed me more clients than my fingers could count." Keith paused, chuckling at that memory. The audience also laughed with him.

He looked at his paper before glancing at the crowd. He resumed, "I wish I was wiser then and knew this day would come because I would have appreciated his efforts, regardless of his methods."

"If our relationship were stronger then, maybe, we didn't drift apart like we did," Keith claimed. "Sadly, that realization came rather late, but let me share what I have learned now. I regretted not having that tight relationship with my father. Both my father and I had wrongs and rights, but now, I wish I had worked harder to get his approval on things I stubbornly felt were important to me. Misunderstandings might have been easily resolved, and I might have experienced happier days with him."

"To my friends and relatives whose parents still live, I implore you to love and spend time with your parents because time is too precious to waste it on grudges and misunderstandings. Time can also be like a thief in the night, taking away those moments that should be filled with happy memories," Keith resumed, already sniffing his tears away. "I felt deprived, but I'm still glad my father and I patched things up before he passed away. At least I had nearly a year with him, and I will forever cherish those days."

"Allow me to show you those treasured days when my family was the happiest," Keith said before pointing to an LED screen on the left side of the chapel.

The screen flashed pictures of Charles. It started when he was young and married his wife, Helen. The following images were of Charles, carrying baby Keith in his arms.

Keith was sitting beside his wife when he saw his baby pictures. He smiled, acknowledging how his father truly loved him.

More photos were shown on the screen, and the next were images of Charles, Helen, and Keith in the younger years of their family. Keith recalled how his father began to become very busy when he was in high school, already starting the insurance company. However, it was not until Keith was in college that their business took off.

The subsequent photos showed his father's business achievements and vacations with Helen. Finally, the images shifted to when Keith and Charles made amends.

There was a photo of Charles, his smile reaching his ears, as he lifted Kamila above his head. There were dinner pictures of them as an entire family with Karise, and in the later part, Charles wept at the sight of Charlene.

In the last part, a video of Charles was shown instead of a picture. He was already weak but had both Kamila and Charlene in his arms. He said, "It's not about how long I live, but having these precious moments."

Charles' voice was barely audible that whoever made the video transcribed his words.

Then the slide show presented Charles's best photo, and that was on the day of his wedding with Helen. The presentation ended with many guests weeping and smiling at the same time.

It was Helen who stood up in front of the crowd next. She said, "Yes, he said those exact words to me because life had taken US into several turns. Sometimes, they were faulty, but what mattered to Charles most was how he had his family with him in the end. He said he was happy, which was enough comfort for me to let him go."

"Charles, wherever you are now, we will forever miss you. Be at peace. Be happy," Helen concluded. "I love you."

Because they had a very touching memorial ceremony, it became easier for Keith to watch his father's coffin be buried beneath the ground.

Following the touching service, everyone drove to the memorial garden, where a tent had been set up for the burial.

The last words were said before Charles's coffin was settled into the pit. Keith stood before the excavated ground and carried Kamila while Karise hugged him tightly. Baby Charlene was with Helen the entire time.

When the earth slowly covered the coffin, Keith said to Kamila, "Say bye to grandpa."

"Baba!" Kamila said. She smiled and gave her grandpa a flying kiss.

By the time Charles's coffin was fully covered, the guests slowly left. Keith's family remained to sit on their chairs, taking it all in.

Keith remained standing right where his father was buried. He did not know if he could move just yet, but eventually, he felt hands massaging his shoulder blades.

He turned to find Sean, and next, Evan joined in. Wendell followed. Keith's friends simply stood there. They did not utter a word at first, but ultimately, Sean asked, "Anything we can do to make you feel better, man?"

"No, man. I'm good," Keith replied.

"I mean, I could kiss you," Sean suggested, and the other guys chuckled.

"You know what, Sean. I think I'll take you up on that offer," Keith teased, and Sean's eyes rounded.

Wendell and Evan laughed, but eventually, Keith said, "Kidding. I'm glad you all are here. I couldn't ask for more."