

This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr Chapter 103

“It’s not you I’m looking for; I want to speak to Sonia. Is she there with you?” Grace asked on the other line, prompting Charles to glance over at Sonia.

“She’s here,” he answered.

“Pass the phone to her.”

Having made a noise of agreement, Charles handed Sonia his phone while saying, “Here, it’s my mom.”

Sonia took the phone over and greeted pleasantly, “Mrs. Lane.”

“Sonia! I’ve missed you so much.” Grace beamed as soon as she heard Sonia’s voice on the other end of the call.

Sonia, on the other hand, smiled as well. “I’ve missed you, too, Mrs. Lane.”

“You could always drop by to see me, you know,” Grace pointed out, feigning dejection.

“Sorry, Mrs. Lane. I’ve been tied up with tons of stuff recently. I barely have time to breathe,” Sonia winced and said apologetically.

“Well, you could come over for a meal right now if you have the time. I’ll bust out a few of my best recipes for you,” Grace cajoled kindly.

Sonia was just about to say something when Charles—who had been eavesdropping—spoke up instead. “Mom, I’m bringing my darling for seafood.”

Grace, however, was insistent as she countered, “You know how restaurants never run a quality check on their seafood supplies, and it’s not as if they could do better than me when it comes to cooking.”

Sonia interjected, "Thank you for the offer, Mrs. Lane. We'll go over to your place in a bit!"

"Oh, please, no need for the formalities. See you soon!" Grace chortled happily, elated that the younger girl had agreed to drop by for a meal.

When the call ended, Charles put his phone away and gave Sonia a resigned look. "Well, it looks like we're going to have to give the seafood restaurant a miss."

"It's fine; there's always next time, anyway. Now, we should probably go and pick out gifts for your parents." With that, she linked arms with him and led him toward the car.

After they made their rounds through the boutiques in the mall, they finally picked out an elegant cloak for Grace and a tasteful necktie for Curtis. Then, they made their way to the Lane Residence.

The Lanes had always had close ties with the Reeds, and their relationship was more family than anything else. In particular, Grace had been best friends with Sonia's mother. As far as Sonia was concerned, Grace was like a second mother to her, having taken care of her ever since her mother's passing.

It wasn't long before Charles and Sonia pulled up in front of the Lane residence.

This was the first time Sonia had dropped by in six years, though she noted that the house looked the same as it had before. As such, she did not feel out of place at all and rather felt a warm sense of familiarity.

"Sonia!" Grace practically ran out of the house to greet her guest when she heard the sound of the car pulling up. Her eyes lit up at the sight of Sonia, and she approached the latter with her arms spread wide open.

"Mrs. Lane," Sonia greeted with a bright smile.

As both women embraced, Charles stood by the side and drawled sarcastically, "Don't mind me, Mom. I'm just your biological son, is all."

Grace rolled her eyes as she said pointedly, "I see you every day, and believe me when I say I'm getting tired of it. My attention is on Sonia now. Come here, Sonia, let me take a good look at you!" She clasped Sonia's hands in hers and slowly spun her around, then concluded plaintively, "You've lost weight."

Sonia was somewhat amused by the remark. "No, I haven't, Mrs. Lane."

"You have," Grace insisted. "Your face is all cheekbones now."

"That's because I've lost all my baby fat, so now I appear a little more slender than usual," Sonia placated. "Alright, that's enough fretting, Mrs. Lane. Shall we head into the house?"

"Oh, of course. Come along, then." Grace took her by the hand and led her into the family home.

Upon entering the villa, Sonia noted that there was no one else at home but them, and she couldn't help but ask, "Is Mr. Lane not home?"

"He's still golfing with his buddies. No matter. Sonia, why don't you tell me how you've been for the past six years." Ever since Grace watched the press conference, she had been wanting to know all that had happened to Sonia.

"Okay," Sonia answered easily with a nod and began to detail the life she had had with the Fullers, though she kept it brief to save Grace the heartache.

However, Grace was still furious when she heard the last of the story. She slapped the edge of the coffee table in a physical show of frustration and snapped, "I knew those Fullers were rotten! You should have told us how badly they were treating you, Sonia. If you had told us, then we would have stood up for you and gotten them to back down."

Charles agreed as he bit into an apple. "That's what I told her, too."

The fact that she had kept mum about her abusive marriage wounded him, and the rage he felt never went away. That being said, he was less angry with her than he was pitiful of her.

At the sight of Charles and Grace's outward concern, Sonia felt warmth course through her. Tears pricked her eyes as she said, "I didn't want to make you worry over me."

After all, she had lost both her parents, and the closest thing she had to a family was Grace and the rest of the Lanes. She might have been able to get them to stand up for her throughout her marriage to Toby, but they couldn't come to her defense all the time. Besides, they weren't actually related to her, which meant her troubles would only grow to become an unnecessary burden for them. She would rather give them a peace of mind than have them resent her in the long run.

"What am I going to do with you?" Grace gently prodded the younger girl's forehead and heaved a sigh.

Sonia knew that Grace was frustrated, but she smiled good-naturedly as she wrapped the latter's arm like an affectionate child.

Grace softened at this gesture and smoothed Sonia's hair with motherly fondness.

Just then, Charles frowned as he sniffed the air curiously. "Mom, what do you have on the stove? I think it's burning."

Upon hearing this, Grace snapped out of her thoughts, and her eyes lit up with panic. She rose to her feet in a flurry and exclaimed, "Oh, no! My seafood chowder!"

Without a second longer, she rushed toward the kitchen to salvage the chowder simmering in the pot, and thankfully, she made it in time to keep the chowder from burning.

Now that the chowder was saved, she brought two tall glasses of juice over to Sonia and said, "Here you go, Sonia. Have some juice while you watch a bit of television; I'll be in the kitchen whipping up a couple more dishes, and we can dig in after!"

"Okay, Mrs. Lane." Sonia nodded with a warm smile.

Grace shot Charles a look. "Come and help me out in the kitchen."

“Help you out?” Charles blinked. He could hardly believe what he had just heard as he pointed at his nose. “Are you serious, Mom? What could I possibly help—”

“Are you coming or not?” Grace’s face was dark as she demanded coldly.

He bristled at this and did not dare reject her. Resigned, he stood up and mumbled disgruntledly, “Okay, I’m coming.”

He looked dejected as he slowly shuffled along behind Grace and retreated into the kitchen.

Sonia giggled, clearly entertained to see him like this.

In the kitchen, Charles looked around the space and asked reproachfully, “What do you want me to help you with, Mom?”

Grace cast him a sideways glance. “Please; I know how useless you are with these things. There’s a higher chance of you blowing up the kitchen than you actually being of any help at all.”

He quirked his lips resentfully at the harsh comment. “So, what am I doing here?”

“You’re here to tell me your intentions for Sonia. Do you still have feelings for her?” She looked at him intently.

Incredulous, he began to say, “Mom, how—”

“How do I know you still have feelings for her?” she continued for him, knowing what he wanted to ask.

He parted his lips as though to say something but fell silent in admission instead.

His mother was right; he liked Sonia, and he always had since they were kids. However, he never told Sonia how he truly felt about her because he knew she did not feel the same way toward him, and she saw him as her best friend. He thought his feelings were a well-kept secret, but as it turned out, his mother knew better.

“I didn’t know at first, but you were the one who got drunk on the night of Sonia’s wedding and blurted it out.” Grace sighed heavily, then went on to say, “You know, I was pretty shocked when I heard it, too. If I had known that you like her that way, then I would have done everything in my power to set the both of you up together. But you decided to keep it a secret, and I just assumed that your affections for her were those of a brother’s. By the time I found out about the truth, it was too late.”

Charles rubbed his nose awkwardly and did not offer a reply.

Grace was still sorting through the vegetables as she said, “You still haven’t told me if you still have feelings for her.”

He turned around and peered around the kitchen entry, his eyes dark with longing as he stared in the direction of the living room. “My feelings for her have not changed in the slightest.”

“Perfect. Sonia is single again, so all you have to do is to boldly pursue her and turn this boyfriend-act of yours into reality,” Grace quipped encouragingly.

She really liked Sonia, and she desperately wanted Charles to make the girl his wife.

However, he shook his head, and his face fell as he said, “No, I don’t think so. She doesn’t like me, and if I were to romantically pursue her, she would only shrink away from me out of fear. I’d rather we stay like this.”

It wasn’t as if he had not seen the age-old trope where the guy romantically pursued the female best friend, but the chances of a happy ending were slim to none, and the girl would end up being so terrorized that she would leave the boy for good. After all, the reality of a male best friend-turned-boyfriend was often harder for one to accept.

Charles didn't want Sonia to grow apart from him, and he did not want to risk it, either. He would rather stay her best friend and be by her side than lose her altogether.