

The background is a deep red color, densely populated with various shades of red hearts of different sizes. Two thick, gold-colored diagonal lines cross the image from the top-left to the bottom-right, framing the central text.

THE FIGHT OF LOVE'S PAST

AMARIS RICCI

The Fight of Love's Past

Amaris Ricci

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Fernando had taken ill and his wife calls Genai and tells her she has to come and see him before he dies. She takes the entire family to Italy. While they are there, Tylan insists that he see his child.

Pierce is fiercely reminded that Sofea is not biologically his when he sees Tylan. He isn't intimidated but he wonders how someone could walk away and stay away from such a beautiful child.

Sofea is now 10 and as the Cavello family are having dinner, Genai's past walks into the restaurant.

Will she tell Sofea who her father is? What has Fernando left for Genai? Will Pierce have to compete for Genai's love? Will Sofea want her father to be a part of her life? What is Tylan's fate after living such a reckless life?

"I won't have you waltzing into her life and then wrecking it. Pierce is her father, the only one she knows, we knew what we were getting into and you knew I was keeping our baby. You didn't want any responsibility then and you don't want any now. Don't do this Tylan, leave her alone, I beg of you."

"She is my flesh and blood Genai, you have no right to keep her from me, I will not stand for it bella, I won't. You tell her about me or I will plaster it all over the news that you are keeping her from me."

Tylan stormed out of the office and slammed the door. He grabbed his surprised date and left.

Chapter ONE

“Come on guys we are gonna miss our plane!” Sofea yelled at her family as she bounced down the driveway to their car.

The Cavello family was preparing to leave for Italy. Genai's good friend and business partner Fernando was dying and he asked his wife to get Genai there as fast as she could. Not wanting to expose Sofea to the likes of her father but knowing she could not stop it, she asked Pierce if they all should go as a family trip.

“Do you still love him?” Pierce asked softly.

“I love him because he gave me Sofea, that's about as far as that goes. The love I have for you is different, even what I feel for Fernando. The thing is you took my heart and you still have it. Tylan could never belong to me and Fernando was never a choice. I am not afraid I will fall back into his arms, which was never my concern. I just don't want his way of life to influence Sofea, you are the only father she has ever known other than my own father. I would never jeopardise that.”

“I understand, well if everyone wants to go, we all go, I will get someone to take over the clinic and my duties at the hospital for two weeks. The children are already on vacation so off to Italy we go.

Genai walked into Fernando's house with her family in tow.

“Genai! I am so glad you are here and you brought all of them that is wonderful. Come, into the dining room, Felicia has made lunch for you all. Genai, Fernando wants to see you in a hurry, I don't think he will last much longer now you are here.”

Before Genai could say a word, Anella pushed her up the stairs and into Fernando's room.

“Ah bella you came! I have missed that smile of yours. Anella, you will see to the family yes?”

“Already done my love, now I will go entertain, they are a beautiful bunch. Call me when you are ready.” Anella closed the door and left.

“Oh Fernando, why are you leaving me so soon?”

“My time is here bella, I have lived a good life yes, I have raised three children, and although my son has not been around, he knows he has my love. I have loved a good woman and had love given to me in return. How are you doing? No sign of the tumor returning?”

“No thank goodness and my family is wonderful they will meet you soon.”

“I will be pleased I am sure. Now to the reason I wanted you here. You know I left money for you in my will, what I didn't tell you is that I left everything else to you.”

“Why would you do a fool thing like that?”

“Because you are the only woman other than my wife I can trust to do the right things in life.”

“I got pregnant by a man who threw me away.”

“That was his fault not yours. I have put things in place where the business automatically transfers to you before my death and when you sign the papers you have full control. If you want to sell, that is up to you, but don't sell everything, keep Fernai's, that is your baby and you will leave that for your children. Anella wants a smaller house after I go and Anabella is already off to college and the others are living their own lives so you don't have to worry about anyone fighting you in court, they already know of my decisions.”

“Oh thank you Fernando, I will do you proud.”

“Oh I have no doubt. Now let me see this lovely family of yours, so I can die in peace.”

For the next few hours Fernando and Anella chatted and laughed with Genai and her family. They were staying with them but wanted to go out to dinner since they were in Italy after all and Genai obviously took them to Fernai's.

All the old staff were there along with a few new faces. They all greeted Genai and her family with open arms. They all wondered if she would sell the place and if they would have to find employment elsewhere. She reassured them that she had no intention of selling and their jobs were secure.

While eating and talking Genai grabbed her husband's arm and her face turned pale. Strolling into Fernai's was none other than Tylan V and hanging on his arm was a beautiful dark skinned woman. For some reason the universe tilted and his eyes landed smack dab on Genai.

Chapter TWO

Pierce followed his wife's gaze and when he saw Tylan he knew he was Sofea's father. Genai never showed him a photo and he never searched Google to find out what he looked like. He felt a tinge of jealousy, then anger. It was obvious he was still a playboy.

Tylan made his way slowly to Genai's table keeping his eyes on her but before he could stop Sofea looked up and saw him and her eyes lit up.

"Mom that's Tylan V." Sofea squealed.

"Hello Tylan how are you." Genai said cheerfully ignoring her daughter's outburst.

"Genai, you have come back after all these years, Fernando must be so glad to see you. Who is this lovely little girl and such a charming boy?" Ignoring Pierce all together.

"This is my husband Dr. Pierce Cavello, our son Pierre, our daughter Sofea and our baby girl Peige. Everyone this is Tylan Vincenzo."

Tylan shook Pierce and Pierre's hands, he kissed Sofea's hand and he touched Peige on her head softly.

"Genai, now you are here you must work for me yes? I am bored with the stuff shirts again, can we chat in private? I promise I will only take a few minutes of your time."

Genai looked at Pierce for permission so to speak, he gave her a kiss on the lips and stood up to pull out her chair. She got up and made her way to her office.

Genai thought she knew what Tylan wanted to speak to her about and it would not be fashion and when she closed the door all hell broke loose. Tylan back Genai up against the door and pinned one hand behind her back.

“Tylan stop it I'm married.” She pushed on his chest hard with her free hand.

“I am hard just seeing you bella, no one gets me as hard as you do, let me have you again just once please!” He took the hand from his chest and placed it on his pants. Genai pulled away quickly, realising she felt nothing for this man any longer.

“Why to get me pregnant and give my husband yet another child to raise and support that is not his biologically? Go to hell Tylan.” She pushed again and he stumbled backwards and let go of her.

“I want to see my daughter without your husband hovering!”

“Hovering? He was there for her since I met him. She doesn't know you. I won't have you waltzing into her life and then wrecking it. Pierce is her father, the only one she knows, we knew what we were getting into and you knew I was keeping your baby. She is almost ten and not once did you come to visit or ask about her support. I almost died and she would have had to live without both her parents. Fernando sent money, he chatted with me every day and where the hell where you? You didn't want any responsibility then and you don't want any now. How long do you think the money you gave me lasted? Don't do this Tylan, leave her alone, I beg of you.”

“She is my flesh and blood Genai, you have no right to keep her from me, I will not stand for it bella, I won't. You tell her about me or I will plaster it all over the news that you are keeping her from me.”

Tylan stormed out of the office and slammed the door. He grabbed his surprised date and left.

Pierce saw Tylan storm out of the restaurant and five minutes later Genai still didn't appear. He asked a waiter where her office was and asked her to watch the children for a few minutes. When he got there he knocked on the door and called her name.

“Genai honey.”

The door flung open and Genai flew into her husband's arms.

“He can't have her, I won't let him take her from me.”

“She's mine too.” Pierce whispered.

“Oh honey I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that, you are the only father she knows and I want to keep it that way.”

“We will do this together as we do everything else. Come, let's get the children home. We will go see Tylan tomorrow.”

“Okay.”

Later that night all Sofea could talk about was Tylan V and how handsome he was. Pierce was having a hard time and Genai saw the pain behind his smile.

“Sofea honey, can you stop talking about Tylan for a minute?”

“Yes mama what's wrong?”

“Nothing, I will explain later. Now off to bed with you, I need to talk to your father after I put the others to bed as well.”

“I'm sorry I know how hard this is for you and I will have to tell her eventually.”

“I'm not handling it very well to be honest. I knew I would feel jealous but I have this rage inside me that seems to be quite consuming.”

“Pierce?” Genai was shocked, her husband never spoke of or displayed this level of jealousy before.

“I need a drink, go put the others to bed, I will see you in a bit.”

Pierce got up and went to the bar across the room. Genai got up and went to put Pierre and Peige in their room.

Genai took a shower and put on a sexy teddy Anella had given her. She sat on the bed and waited for her husband. Half hour later she got up, put her robe on and left their room to find him. She passed Fernando's room and she heard voices.

“It hurts Fernando. Tylan is a big part of her life and there is nothing I can do to change that. Why does this hurt so much?”

“Ah my boy, loving someone is not easy no matter what people say. You have to dig deep and be patient. Genai is an exceptional woman, I always knew this. I'm

afraid I broke her heart once but she understood. Women like her love with everything they have. They never leave anything back and it makes them vulnerable in the worst way. Tylan has always been a playboy but Genai was the only woman who actually got him to calm down. The time they were together he was focused, stable. When she told him she was pregnant, he left her not because he didn't want to be a father, but he didn't want to be a failure. As famous and wealthy as he is, he is an insecure and very self-conscious man. He is the least of your worries. Genai talks about you all the time and never once has she questioned her love for you. She reminds me of Anella in so many ways. Now, I am sure Genai is a bit confused and if you tell her how you are feeling she will understand. Now an old man must rest, ask my sweetheart to come tuck me in, I love having her next to me when I sleep."

Pierce got up and glanced at the old man. Fernando was great to talk to, he told you like it is and never wondered how you would take it. He left the bedroom and went to find Anella.

"My husband is ready for bed yes?"

"Yes he is."

"Don't worry Pierce, your wife is quite safe from Tylan." She tiptoed and kissed him on the cheek.

Pierce was still raging inside and he knew if he saw Genai now he would mess everything up. So instead of going to bed, he sat in the living room and drank, 'til he felt a bit numb.

Genai watched her husband drink after drink. Pierce never drank more than a glass of anything. She was about to go down to him when she saw him get up and place the glass on the bar. She quickly walked to the bedroom and sat on the bed.

"Am I losing you Genai?" His voice came from the doorway. Genai turned to face her husband who was clearly now drunk as a skunk.

"Oh honey what have I done to you?" She got off the bed and started to make her way towards him.

"Stay away from me."

Genai, felt her heart stop.

“You still love him and you won't admit it.”

“Of course I love him, he is Sofea's father.”

“I thought you loved me.”

“Yes I do, I thought we went through this.”

“Are you gonna let him touch you?”

“You are being ridiculous and you have had too much to drink.”

“I'll show you ridiculous.” Pierce locked the door behind him and stumbled across to his wife. Genai felt no fear at first but when her husband grabbed her and threw her on the bed. She began to struggle.

“Pierce stop it.”

“You belong to me GenaiCavello, I will not let anyone take you away from me.” He yanked open her robe and when he saw the teddy, the rage in his eyes turned to sheer lust.

“Pierce don't. Not like this.” Genai whispered.

“I have to, he won't have you, you can't let him!” Pierce fumbled with Genai's clothes and she just let him rather than aggravate him.

Pierce got up from the bed and took five minutes getting his own clothes off. Genai got up and helped him, then lay back down. He crawled on top of her and fell asleep. Genai smiled and eased him off her and curled up beside him.

Pierce got up in the middle of the night and realise what he had done or thought he had done. He looked at his wife and she was wrapped in in the sheet. He got up and made his way to the shower. Half hour later he came out to find Genai sitting on the bed.

“Did I hurt you?”

“Yes.”

“Oh Jesus, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.” Pierce ran over to her and knelt at her feet.

“You hurt me by thinking I would choose Tylan over you. You hurt me by questioning the love we have. I would never be unfaithful to you, I love you and only you.”

“I didn't....”

“No you fell asleep.”

Pierce rested his head in Genai's lap. He immediately got aroused.

“I would like permission to make love to my wife in apology for being a terrible husband.”

“That is something you will never be. We are allowed to behave out of character every once in a while and yes you may but you have to trust in our love. I need you to be strong for me.”

Pierce got up quickly and pulled the sheet from Genai, he quickly covered her body with his and slid into her.

“I do love you Pierce, please don't doubt that.” Genai looked up into her husband's eyes.

“I know honey, I know..... I just.....” He let out a big sigh.

“We can talk about it later, right now, we have another matter which needs fixing.”

Chapter THREE

Three hours Later.

“Fernando are you awake?”

“Come bella, keep me company for a few minutes and tell me what's wrong.”

“He wants to take her from me.”

“He won't, I will let you in on a secret. Tylan is a lonely man, he pretends a lot and you were the only woman who treated him like a human being, when you told

him you were pregnant the only defense he had was to run away. He thought he would ruin his child's life but it's only now he realises how wrong he was."

"How do you know that?"

"Two reasons, I know because I was like that and when he was born, I ran away from his mother just like he ran from you."

"Tylan is your son?"

"Yes he is and Sofea is my grandchild, that's why I left everything to you. My other children have their fortunes and I could not leave you or Sofea out. When Tylan came to me and said he was seeing this beautiful designer named Genai, I knew he made the right choice. I told him not to hurt you but he did anyway. Now, all you and your husband need to do is let him see Sofea, this will allow him to decide if he wants to be a part of her life or if he is just words. She deserves to know him no matter how badly he acted in the past. Does that make sense to you?"

"Yes I guess it does but I'm still scared, what if she wants to stay with him?"

"Not that lovely little girl, she loves Pierce to death, she will automatically love her father but Pierce has her heart."

Genai leaned over and kissed a sleeping Fernando and left the bedroom. She met Anella in the hallway.

"Come with me for a minute Genai."

Genai followed her to a small sitting room just off the balcony. They sat down and Anella began to speak.

"Years ago my husband came home and told me about this wonderful designer he met. My original fear was that he would end up like all the other men out there falling for a pretty face. He told me you were full of life and ideas and he wanted to help you in any way he could. He also told me you wanted him to make love to you and he refused and told you he was married. What made my respect for you go through the roof was that you respected his marriage. Many women have stripped in his office. Models have crawled into bed with him after a photo shoot while I was away but you Genai, you saw him for the wonderful man that he is and I can't thank you enough. He told me he left everything to you and I was not surprised nor upset. Did he tell you Tylan was his son?"

“Yes just now.”

“He is our son. I was a young model and he saw me while at a business dinner where Fernai's is now. I fell in love with him immediately. He took me places, we made love all over and when I told him I was pregnant he ran. I had to raise Tylan on my own. Then one day he showed up and begged for forgiveness. I had never been with anyone else but him and I took him back with open arms. He told me he had another son but his mother wanted nothing to do with the child and I took them both in. We got married when Tylan was 3 and Cenzino was a year old and he has never left my side. I know seeing Tylan is hard for you and you have moved on with your life but he gave you Sofea and that binds you to him for all eternity. You will do what's right by my granddaughter, I know you will.”

Anella kissed Genai on the cheek and left to go sleep next to her husband.

Genairealised Pierce was still in his insecure mode and nothing she said seemed to convince him she would always be his.

Tylan had come over to make his goodbyes to his father and after saying hello to a grinning Sofea he stopped in front of Genai. His intent was evident.

“I still need you Bella, why do you keep denying me.” His voice dropped so only Genai could hear him and he knew Pierce was not far away.

“Tylan, I have no feelings for you in that way anymore, just go see your father and leave me be.”

Tylan did what any man would when he wants a woman to remember the good times they had. He took a lock of her hair in his hand and sniffed it.

Genai pulled away and stormed off. Tylan just laughed and made his way to his father's room.

“Should I be worried? I saw how he looked at you and what he did.”

“Pierce?”

“Just look at him and now that Sofea will know who he is, she will prefer a handsome, famous father to a mere Doctor.”

“You saved my life, you gave me a father for my child, you allowed me to be a mother to yours and then you blessed me with another child. Sofea loves you, she

will not leave you. I am hoping Tylan will just see her, give her some money and go back to his fast life.”

“Do you think you could go back to him?”

“Honey stop that, I would never leave the loves of my life. I left him because he decided being a father was too much change for him. He didn't even try. From what he said to me in my office, he has not changed.”

“What did he say?”

“He wanted me to have sex with him and that I was the only one who got him so turned on.”

“I will kill him if he touches you.”

“He is all show, he would never go that far without my permission and he won't get it. I'm too much in love with my husband to ever go with anyone else. Now, if you have no more doubts, I would like my half naked husband to get completely naked and make love to me.”

Pierce grinned and did as his wife requested. He felt a slow jealousy burning inside him. Tylan V was known for his looks, his body, his voice and his way with women. H was married to the only woman who gave Tylan a child and that meant Genai held a huge place in Tylan's heart and life. Pierce knew how that felt because she was the same for him.

Chapter FOUR

The next day Genai and Pierce left Pierre and Peige with Anella and sat Sofea down in the private sitting room.

“Sit honey we need to talk to you.”

“Tylan is my father.”

“Jesus, how did you figure that out?”

“Have you seen my face? I look just like him, we have the same eyes, nose and lips. I didn't want to say anything until you were ready to talk about it. I know he left you before I was born so I know it hurts for you to see him again.”

Genai stared at the wonderful child she carried. Pierce shifted from one foot to the other behind Genai.

“Don't worry Dad, he can never match up to you, I will always love you as my father but I would love to officially meet Tylan.”

Genai began to cry.

“Mom, what's wrong?”

“He wants to take you away from us.”

“Well that's not going to happen, he can't just pick up where he left off. We Cavellos are glued together forever.”

“Are you sure you don't want to stay here with him, I won't force you to go back home but I won't give you up without a fight either.”

“When that plane leaves in a few weeks we all will be on it. When I turn 18 and he still wants to see me I will come back.”

“Well then, let's go officially meet your father.”

Tylan's house was massive, it had everything a bachelor could want but it looked cold and lonely. Everything was perfectly in place and you could tell it was done by an interior decorator. When Genai pushed the doorbell a woman dressed in a robe came and opened it. She looked at Genai, Pierce and Sofea and yelled behind her.

“Ty, you have company, better put some clothes on.” She turned without even saying good morning and made her way to the kitchen.

Ty came to the door clearly hung over and he smelt of marijuana.

“This is not happening, we will be back when you are suitable for visitors.” Genai grabbed Sofea's hand and turned to leave.

“Wait mom, I need to do this now please.”

Genai's heart broke. She didn't want her daughter to see Tylan this way but maybe it was for the best.

“Go get a shower and present yourself properly, if not we are leaving and ask the blonde to vacate the premises as well.” Genai was furious.

“As you wish bella, as you wish.”

They heard voices and glass breaking. Then the blonde rushed past them still in her robe, got into her car and sped off.

Genai, Sofea and Pierre took a seat on the sofas nearest to the door and waited.

About fifteen minutes later the Tylan V Genai knew, reappeared in full force. He was wearing a complete Hermes line, including an Arceau steel watch, Genai had given him when she found out she was pregnant. He epitomized sexiness, wealth and celebrity status.

“You kept it?” Genai asked surprisingly.

“It’s the second most precious gift you have ever given me why would I not have it?”

Genai knew he was referring to Sofea as number one. Pierce shifted in his seat.

“Good morning everyone, I’m sorry about earlier. Would you like something to eat or drink?”

“No thanks, let’s get this over with.” Genai said, still clearly upset.

“I assume this is my daughter.”

“You assume correctly. It’s nice to finally meet you. I have a few questions for you and how you fit into my life depends on those answers.” Sofea took charge of the conversation like a pro.

“Just like your mama. Fire away.”

“Why did you leave my mother?”

“I was not ready for the responsibility of a child.”

“Are you ready now?” Tylan’s face registered shock.

“No I am not.”

“Then we have nothing else to discuss. Mom can we go now?”

“Just like that?” Tylan asked Sofea.

“My mother told me she loved the man who got her pregnant because he gave her me. You weren’t ready then and you clearly aren’t ready now, I don’t want someone in my life who doesn’t want me. I am a Cavello. Pierce is my father, I

can depend on him to save me from the monsters in my closet and under my bed, when I'm sick, he tucks me in bed and makes me comfortable. He was there when my mother was sick and if you think I am going to let you ruin her life again and now his, you are seriously wrong. I love you because you gave me life but that is as far as that goes. Mom, dad, I would like to leave now."

"I must say I expected different from a child of mine. No matter, I will see you all in court."

"What?" Genai whispered.

"She is mine and I will take her from you."

"Tylan, there is no court on this earth that will keep me with you, I will run away the first chance I get. Don't make me hate you."

"I care not if you hate me, you are mine and I will see to your future as a Vincenzo."

"Mom take me home please."

The three Cavellos left Tylan standing at the door, they did not see the tears in his eyes.

Chapter FIVE

True enough to his words, the next day a man served Genai papers to appear in court in a few days and she was to surrender her travel documents, along with her husband's and Sofea's to the nearest police station. They did as requested not wanting to cause any resistance.

Fernando told her to be patient and not to worry, he seemed to know how things would work out.

The day came and they all went to court, except Pierre and Peige, Anella stayed home to watch them.

Fernando hired a lawyer for them and as they sat down, Tylan's lawyer whispered something in his client's ear. He nodded and faced the judge as he sat down.

Tylan put forth such a convincing testimony that anyone would believe he was the perfect father not given the chance to see his daughter. He told the court he only wished to have a relationship with his only child and he could not do this if they lived all the way in Barbados. Much to the surprise and demise of Genai, the court ordered full custody to Tylan. Genai fainted, Sofea started screaming and as Pierce tended to his wife and daughter he could not hold back the tears.

Tylan came over to them and he picked Sofea up, like she was a feather even though she kept screaming she didn't want to go with him. He ignored her protests and carried her out to his waiting car.

Tylan had to work fast. He didn't have much time but he knew he did the right thing. Genai would forgive him eventually and he would apologise to Pierce and Sofea when the time was right. He had paid the judge to rule in his favour explaining what he needed to accomplish. The judge made him sign a document stating that upon his death the ruling of the court would be null and void according to his last will and testament.

Sofea cried all the way to the house. When he got her inside he sat her on the couch and started talking to her.

"Sofea, I need to tell you something and I need you to listen. Please honey."

Sofea looked him in the eyes and held her head up.

"I'm dying miabellafiglia. I needed the court to award full custody so I could change your name to mine and when I die everything would be yours without a fuss. I couldn't tell your mother and I hope that she understands why I did it this way."

"You really don't want to take me away?"

"No and I'm sorry for making you cry, it breaks my heart. I will make it up to all of you."

Sofea nodded.

“Now, a man will come and I will sign some documents, your name will be changed to Vincenzo, you can decide to keep it or not after I'm gone okay?”

She nodded again.

“Can I call my mother?”

“Sure but don't tell her anything yet, just let her know you are okay, you will see her soon and not to worry.”

Sofea called her mother at Fernando's house and after a few minutes she hung up.

“You are a wonderful child and I hope I haven't completely ruined you.”

The man came, the documents were signed and SofeaCavello was now Sofea Vincenzo. Everything Tylan owned was now hers. Every photograph, design, product, even the house, vehicles and money, the royalties from commercials etc.Sofea was now worth millions.

“What are you dying from?”

“Something I would rather not talk about to my only daughter but I will tell you this. Of all the women I have been with, your mama is the most special, I could trust her with my eyes closed, others I have not been so fortunate with. I trusted your mama so much we ended up with you. As for my sickness, I trusted another woman who I thought loved me but she didn't.”

“You have AIDS don't you?”

Tylan started into the eyes of his only child and smiled.

“Yes I do, what do you know about it?”

“You had unprotected sex with a woman and she gave it to you.”

“That I did.”

“Tell me the truth, are you sorry mama kept me?”

“Never! I love your mother more than I have ever loved anyone and I treated her badly yet she never got angry and never asked for anything except love in return. I was scared I would not be a good father. I always knew your mama would do her

best to raise you, she is perfect in my eyes and so are you. Now enough about me. Now that you are rich what is the first thing you would like to buy?"

"I don't want to buy anything, I want to know more about you, from what you tell me, we won't have much time together and I want to remember you from my own point of view."

"Ah such wisdom, you really are a product of your mother, at least I was able to give you my good looks."

They both laughed and as Tylan began to tell his daughter about his life, everything seemed to fall into place.

Back at Fernando's house.

Genai was dying inside. How could he do this to her family?

"Bella, be patient a little longer, everything will work out."

"What are you not telling me Fernando?"

"In time."

A few days later Fernando died in his sleep. The funeral was scheduled a few days later as everything was already in place. Tylan showed up with Sofea hand in hand. She rushed over to her mother.

"Are you okay? Is he treating you well?"

"Yes mama, I am fine, I miss you so much."

"Hey pumpkin." Pierce said from behind her.

"Daddy!" She flew into his arms.

The Cavellos hugged and kissed until Tylan was ready to leave, he never said a word, even at the service.

Genai had read the eulogy and when she was finished there wasn't a dry eye in the place.

Another week passed and Tylan decided it was time. He was ready to leave this world and his body could take it no longer. Tylan did not want his daughter to watch him die so he called Genai and asked her to come over to collect Sofea. He

and Sofea had spent the time talking about everything, they laughed, cried and all in all they were satisfied with the few moments they shared.

“Sofea my one and only child, it's time for me to go, I wish I had more time to spend with you and I will never be able to make up for the years I missed. I hope you can forgive me at some point.”

“I already forgave you papa, I know you loved mama and I know you love me, things happen and we make choices. I am glad I got to see you, I will never forget you and I will do my best to make you proud of me.”

“I already am. Now go wait on the porch for your mama, she will be here soon.”

Tylan kissed his daughter for the last time and watched her close the front door.

He pulled an envelope from his pocket and lay down on the sofa. He had taken some pills and he just waited for the effects to kick in. As he closed his eyes he heard a small voice talking to him.

“I couldn't let you die alone papa, I love you.”

He felt a kiss on his cheek as he breathed his last breath. Tylan Vincenzo was gone.

Chapter SIX

When Genai pushed the front door, Sofea was on the floor in tears. Tylan was on the sofa, lifeless.

“Mama, he's gone.” Sofea ran to her mother and held on for dear life.

Pierce checked him over and called for an ambulance. He spotted an envelope in Tylan's hand with Genai's name on it. He picked it up and handed it to her. She opened it and when she was finished she handed it to Pierce.

“Are you kidding me?”

“He knew he was dying mama.”

“I realise that honey. Pierce, can you take her home, I guess I have to deal with this as he wished.”

“No I don't want to leave him.” Sofea shrieked.

“I know pumpkin but I need your memories of him as they are and not being covered up and put into an ambulance. I promise I will come home as soon as I can. Do this for me please.”

“I understand.” Sofea glanced at her father once more and hugged her mother.

Pierce lifted Sofea in his arms and as he took her to the car Sofea squeezed him tight. All the way back to Fernando's house she sniffled and held onto his hand. Anella had just gotten the phone call from Genai and she was in tears.

“Don't cry, mi ma, he's at peace now, at least I got to meet him before he died.”

“Ah my child, I love you so, you are such a blessing. We need to be strong for your mama, she has the hardest job of all.”

Tylan S. Vincenzo was buried next to his father. He had left instructions for Genai only, not even his own mother. She was to carry out his wishes to the letter and she did. When they were all back at Fernando's house Anella handed her an envelope.

“I can't handle any more bad news Anella.”

“Trust me.” She held out the envelope.

Genai stared at it for a few seconds and then took it. She ripped it open and started laughing.

“Care to share?” Pierce asked.

“Tylan had AIDS, he didn't want to wither away and the one thing he felt would make his life worth something was to give his daughter a gift. Sofea is rich, this was his plan all along. He never meant to take her away and I was so angry at him. Why didn't he just ask me? Now I will never get to say I'm sorry.”

“He knew mama, he told me you would understand. I think he needed you to be angry at him for once, he said you weren't angry when he left. I began to love him a little too.”

“Oh my lovely girl. Well, now that the Marcellos have made our family richer what do we do? Stay here or go back home?”

“I don't want to live here but we can stay a while longer and sort out Tylan's estate and you have to deal with your end as well. A few more weeks should do it.” Pierce offered.

“Yes I will help smooth things along, Fernando had very competent people working for him and they will be loyal to you as well. Now, help me sell this house and find something smaller, unless you want to keep it as a family home. I would love that, then I wouldn't have to move and you can stay here when you visit.”

“Guys?”

“I'm in.” Said Sofea.

“Me too.” Pierce followed.

Chapter SEVEN

As time went by, Sofea came to terms with her father's life and death. She was now 18 and she knew what she must to keep his memory alive. They had sorted out his estate and decided Anella could handle everything from there on until they decided to go back. She ran the business like her husband, efficient and with finesse.

“Mama, can we go back to Italy this year, there is something I need to do.”

“I guess it was inevitable and Anella is itching to see us, so I guess it off to Italy again.”

“When do we leave?”

“I will call Roderick when he will be back, he took the crew down to the photo shoot in Trinidad. He can either bring the jet back or we can take the next flight out and meet him there.”

“Next flight out.”

“Hey Captain, sorry to work you so hard. We are coming down to meet you in a few hours and then we need you to take us to Italy.”

“Okay but you will need to give me at least 4 hours, I really need some sleep.”

“Not a problem, can you book us in at the Hummingbird Villa please, we are all coming. As a matter of fact, we will stay in Trinidad for 4 days, that will give you time to get the crew back to Barbados and get some rest, then you can take us to Italy.”

“Are you sure, you won't need me sooner?”

“Pretty sure, mini vacation, we need it. I will see you when we get there.”

“Yes ma'am.”

Genai had a love for travelling, when the children were in school she would work from home. Pierre would be 10 soon and Peige would be 8. She loved being at home when they came in hungry, sweaty and needing attention. She also loved being there when her loving husband came home. When vacation time was coming up she would plan a trip and surprise them.

So far they had been back and forth to Italy, the spent time in Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia, they did Hawaii. Disneyland was at the top of the list so she had left that for a summer time. She knew eventually Sofea would be ready to take over her father's business and she made sure she had the tools to do so. Sofea was now a graduate of the University of the West Indies having received her degree with Honours. Genai tutored her in the design business, told her every little trick, trade and secret she would need to succeed.

Sofea's face was the female version of Tylan, she walked with proud steps and even though she was aware of how much she was worth, she never acted like it. She started a charity for the research of childhood diseases, she opened a design academy and named it Tylan Design Academy. All under the guidance of her parents. She kept in constant contact with her grandmother Anella and she was learning fast. She knew she wanted to stay in Italy but she didn't know how to tell her parents. Somehow, Genai knew but she said nothing, her heart was breaking.

“Mom, why do we have to stay in Trinidad so long, I thought we were going to Italy right away?”

“Sofea, we needed some family time before we left, you know how fast paced the design world is and I know you want to stay with Anella. So this is the last time in a while that all of us will be together, so either deal with it or you can spend the next four days sulking.”

Genai was clearly upset, she didn't want her daughter to go but she knew she was walking in her mother's footsteps and there was nothing she could do to stop it.

“Sofea honey, take your brother and sister and take a dip in the pool, I need to talk to your mother for a bit. Don't forget to put the wings on them before they go in.”

“Okay papa, come on you two, I will teach you how to dog paddle.”

Sofea grabbed her brother's hand and they left to go change into their swim suits.

“She's not a baby anymore my love, she needs to fly just like you did.”

“I'm having trouble letting her go, I don't want her to end up like me.”

“What, you mean with a wonderful family, a multimillion dollar business, a husband who loves you more than life? Surely things didn't turn out that bad.” Pierce spoke softly.

“You know that's not what I meant. What if she meets a man and get pregnant like I did, the design world is full of ruthless people, I was lucky to have Fernando to guide me and I still ended up with his son who abandoned me, when I needed him the most.”

“You can't keep her with you because of your own past, she will resent you for it and you know that. Okay here's what I propose. All the businesses are running smoothly, how about we move to Italy for a few years and come back when Sofea is completely settled?”

“You would do that for me?”

“Never doubt me love. Now go tell our daughter you aren't mad at her and tell her how you feel, she will understand.”

Genai hugged and kissed her husband, then left to go find the children.

“I’m sorry mama, I didn’t mean to upset you, I promise I will enjoy our time here, just don’t be mad.”

“I’m not mad peachkin, just finding it hard accepting that you are a woman now. I know you will be the best at everything you do but you will always be my little girl.”

Genai began to cry, Peige saw her crying and ran over and hugged her. Pierre not wanting to seem like a cry baby, stayed in the water and pretended not to notice.

Pierce looked at the girls through the window, then he grinned at his son wiping his face, he knew just how he felt.

Chapter EIGHT

The Cavellos spent four glorious days in Trinidad, they ate the local dishes, tried different fruits and vegetables and visited Yerette in Maracas Bay, Port of Spain. They took loads of photos of the birds.

Roderick called and said the jet was cleared for take-off at 6am the next morning. Genai paid for their stay at the villa upfront and left a tip for the friendly staff.

Bright and early the next morning they packed up, made a last minute check for their surroundings and left the villa. A taxi was waiting to take them to the airport. They cleared Customs and Immigration and boarded the jet. The children were dog tired, except Sofea, she knew what lay ahead.

The trip was a long one. They would stop in Miami, Spend a few hours shopping, refuel and leave for Spain, then on to Italy. The children spent the time reading, watching Blue-Ray movies, listening to music and playing games on King.com.

“Wake up peachkin, we are here.”

“Mama?” Sofea was in a deep sleep and when her mother woke her up, it took her a few minutes to figure out where she was.

“Italy?”

“Yes love, come on the others have already fled their seats and are waiting in the car.”

“Okay.”

Pierce watched as his wife and daughter exited the jet and he was grinning. He knew they had tough times ahead but he never faltered in his love for his family.

Genai saw her husband grinning at her and she immediately became aroused. Even though she could not hear his thought she knew exactly what he was thinking. She blew him a kiss.

“Ewwwww.” Pierre and Peige sounded their voices loudly and laughed.

“Oh shush, I hope when you get married your children go ewwww.” Sofea said happily.

“Come on guys let's go Anella is probably beside herself waiting for us.” Pierce shouted across the pathway.

They all buckled in and the limo made its way out of the airport.

“OH! Look at you! Come give grandma hugs and kisses I have missed you so!”

Anella rushed over to the children and for the next ten minutes they were giggles and squeals and she greeted each one of them. Next she hugged and kissed Pierce.

“I am glad to see you again you handsome devil. You take good care of my family yes?”

“Like I have a choice Nella, you would have my hide if I didn't.”

“You bet I would.”

He left Genai for last.

“You have no idea how good it is to see you again. It seems Fernando has left the love he had for you with me. How long are you staying?”

“As long as Sofea needs us, she isn't coming back with us I suspect.” Genai tried not to cry but being in the house without Fernando was hard.

“Shush child, things always turn out right don't they? Fernando left something for you we had forgotten, come. Pierce, sort the children's rooms out and you know where your room is. We shall sit and have something to eat for lunch soon yes?”

“Sure Nella. Come on bambini.”

Anella took Genai into Fernando's old office where she now worked from. She took out a small grey velvet box and handed it to Genai.

When she opened the box, fresh tears fell.

"He knew Nella, he knew."

"I don't know how but my husband had the gift of predicting the future. He had this made this when she was born. He said when you were ready to let go and let her walk her path, you were to give her that."

Genai ran her hand over the door sign. It was dark red with gold writing engraved – 'SofeaCavello – Manager'.

"Nando Interiors is under instructions to outfit her office as soon as she is ready. The accounts are all set and everything else is in place, all you need to do is sign the documents and Sofea is on her own."

"I don't know if I can. I went through so much with her and now she is all grown. How do I do this?"

"You won't have much of a choice, Sofea has the looks and charisma like Ty, the willpower of Pierce, she thinks business like Fernando and her heart is soft like mine. You have been her role model, someone who followed her dreams and if she thinks it will break your heart, she will go back home with you. If you try to stop her, she will do as you ask but she will never forgive you."

"Mama?" Sofea appeared in the doorway of her parents' room.

"Yes honey, what's up?"

"I....."

"Out with it."

"I don't want to stay here."

"Why not honey?"

"You don't want me to."

"Come sit with me for a minute."

Sofea walked over to the bed and instead of sitting, she lay on the bed and rested her head in her mother's lap. Something she always did as a child.

“I know you are afraid and so am I. I also know that you have been dreaming of following in Tylan's footsteps from the day you met him. I understand everything you are going through and I know I may have expressed my inability to let you go but your life is not mine to live. It's true my parents let me come here and I had so many disappointments but the one thing I will never regret is making the decision to have you. This is my biggest concern. I don't want that for you. I want what every woman wants for her daughters, to find a man who will love them no matter what, who will treat them with respect and keep them safe. He will give her his name and treat her as his queen.”

“.....but mama, isn't that what Papa is for you?”

Genai felt as if a bright light switched on in her head. She pulled Sofea upright and hugged her until she began to squeak.

“Mama! I can't breathe.”

“Oh Fernando was right, he was always right. Things turn out right in the end no matter how bad they seem in the beginning. I love you SofeaCavello and whatever you decide, I will support you always.”

“.....but mama, you have always done that, that's why I love you so much, you allow me to speak my mind as long as I am respectful and by living the way you do, I know what stability and responsibility are. You taught me so many things and I hope I make you proud of me.”

“I was proud of you from the day you were born. Come on, we have a family waiting to hear some good news.”

“Thank you mama.”

Genai and Sofea went down to the sitting area where, Pierce, Pierre and Peige were in the sitting room waiting to hear what Sofea decided.

“Hey guys, where's Mi ma?”

“She had to go see some guests, she is in the foyer, she said she would be back soon, so just give her a few minutes. Just then the Foyer door opened and Anella stepped through it.

“Sofea, before you said anything, I have a surprise for all of you.”

She stepped back through the foyer door and they heard voices.

“Surprise!”

“Mom, Dad, Andrew! How, when, why, what?”

There was a mess of hugs, kisses, squeals of delight for at least half an hour.

“Okay okay, we all know why you are all here.” Sofea, stood up and faced her family.

She held out her hand to Genai and when her mother took it, she started to cry.

“It’s okay peachkin, we are all here for you.”

“Thanks mama.” Sofea wiped her eyes with the back of her hand.

“I met my father just before he died and he left his entire legacy to me. I got a glimpse as to the kind of man he was, why he chose mama and why he left her. Mi ma has been running the businesses here until my parents had enough confidence in me to allow me to do what I was born to do. I know my mother’s fears but I also know that without her, I would never be who I am today. Pierce Cavello has been a constant source of support since the day he met my mother and he never once said a bad word about my father to my knowledge. So, I have decided that I will stay here and with the help of Mi ma, I will take over the Tylan V brand.”

Sofea looked at her mother and although they had the talk she expected to see disappointment. What she saw was pride and love. Genai was the first to hug her and they all decided to go out and celebrate at Fernai’s.

During the next 10 years, Sofea poured her heart and soul into her work. Anella died when Sofea was in her 25th year. Sofea brought her parents and siblings up for the funeral and there was nothing in life she wanted more than to have her family with her. Anella was buried next to her husband and son. Their other children had come down as well and they all surrounded the grave in a shared grief. They left the cemetery and made their way back to the family home. They sat around and told jokes, shared memories but best of all, they shared love.

The end.

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