

BREAKING THE NEWS

Written by

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EXT. GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - FRONT STEP - DAY

ZOE, early 20s, preppy skirt and blouse, stands at the front door, adjusting her clothes. She presses the doorbell and cringes when it BUZZES.

BERNARD, 60s, butler uniform, opens the door.

BERNARD

Miss Zoe.

Zoe smiles and claps Bernard on the shoulder. He smiles slightly, shaking his head.

ZOE

Bernie! It's been years! How the hell are you?

BERNARD

Fine, Miss Zoe. Do come in.

Bernard steps back into the house. Zoe walks in.

INT. GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Bernard closes the door behind her. He motions to the first door on the right in the hall.

BERNARD

Your grandfather will see you in the study.

ZOE

(under her breath)
Of course he will.

Zoe lets herself into the study.

INT. GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Zoe looks around at the room. It is a stuffy, dark room with a large mahogany desk on one side, an overstuffed leather couch opposite the desk, and a fireplace in the far wall.

Sighing, Zoe perches on couch. Her legs swing slightly, and she plants them firmly on the floor.

GRANDFATHER, 60s, a distinguished gentleman, walks into the room.

GRANDFATHER

Zoe, my dear, what a pleasure to see you.

Zoe stands up at the greeting. She winces, rolls her eyes, and sits back down.

ZOE

Hello, Grandfather.

Grandfather passes Zoe and sits down at the desk. He ruffles through a few sheets of paper that were already on the desk, sets them down and finally looks at Zoe with a tight smile.

GRANDFATHER

To what do I owe this pleasant surprise, after all these years?

Zoe meets his eyes for a split second and then looks down at her feet.

ZOE

I would like to invite you to my house for dinner tonight. To, um, well-

GRANDFATHER

Zoe, please speak clearly. You know muttering is unbecoming. Eye contact is important, as well.

Zoe looks up and holds his gaze this time.

ZOE

Yes, Grandfather. I would like you to meet my, uh, ahem, my friend. No, I mean, the person I'm going to marry.

Grandfather's head pops up and his face breaks into an uncharacteristic grin.

GRANDFATHER

Well it's about time you settled down and started a family!

Zoe looks at her feet again.

ZOE

Yes, well, does that mean you'll come?

GRANDFATHER

Certainly. Six?

ZOE
Six will be fine.

GRANDFATHER
Wonderful! I look forward to
meeting him!

Zoe's mouth opens. She closes it without a word. She stands and faces the door to the study. She speaks to the door.

ZOE
We'll see you tonight then.

GRANDFATHER
Yes, I will see you both tonight.

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Zoe sits at her kitchen counter, head in her hands. She looks at the cell phone sitting next to her on the counter, picks it up, puts it down, picks it up, puts it down.

She reaches for a bag of chips, and the back door to the kitchen opens.

DANIELLE, 20s, men's work clothes, walks in. Danielle's face is obscured by a large paper grocery bag.

Zoe's face breaks out into a huge smile. She jumps off the stool and grabs the grocery bag. She peers inside the bag.

ZOE
Perfect, you got everything I
listed!

Danielle smiles, and Zoe gives her a big hug. Danielle leaves the kitchen.

DANIELLE O.S.
Of course I did, but I need a
shower desperately. He's coming at
six, right?

ZOE
Yep, you better get that butt in
the shower! I'll get dinner
started.

Zoe unpacks the groceries and squats in front of the refrigerator. As she puts fruit away in the drawers, she looks toward the kitchen doorway.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Babe, are you sure this is a good idea?

DANIELLE O.S.
Yes it is, stop worrying. It will all be just fine.

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Zoe stands at the stove, cooking. She jumps when the doorbell RINGS. She squares her shoulders

ZOE
I can do this, I can do this.

Zoe wipes her hands on her apron. She turns her head in the direction of the bedroom.

ZOE (CONT'D)
He's here!

DANIELLE O.S.
(muffled)
I'll be right out!

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - FOYER - EVENING

The apartment is light and airy, with white walls and floor-length sheer white curtains on the windows. The furniture is shabby chic and mismatched.

Zoe stands at the front door and straightens her clothes. She unties the apron around her waist, begins to take it off, thinks better of it, and reties it back again.

Zoe opens the door. Grandfather stands on the front step.

ZOE
Hello again, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER
Zoe, my dear.

Grandfather walks into the apartment. Again they do not touch. Zoe backs up as he walks past. She closes the door behind him. They stare at each other for a moment.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)
Thank you for having me to dinner.
Where is your husband-to-be?

Zoe motions vaguely in the direction of the bedroom. She hesitates and then inclines her head.

ZOE

Um, my fiancée is showering and dressing. Shall we sit for a few minutes? Dinner will be ready shortly.

GRANDFATHER

Yes, that would be good.

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Zoe and Grandfather walk into the living room. He sits on a slipcovered recliner. Zoe sits on the couch. They sit silent, Zoe visibly uncomfortable.

They both look toward the hall when they hear heels CLICKING on the hardwood floor.

Zoe's face lights up in a big smile at the sound and she stands. Danielle glides into the room, wearing a long dress, long brunette hair shining.

Zoe links arms with Danielle, and they face Grandfather.

ZOE

Grandfather, I would like you to meet Danielle. My fiancée.

Grandfather stands. His mouth opens and then closes. He glances at the front door.

Zoe's face falls as she sees his reaction. She and Danielle look at each other. Danielle steps forward, hand held out.

DANIELLE

It's so nice to finally meet you, Sir. Zoe has spoken of you often.

GRANDFATHER

I cannot say the same, unfortunately.

He glances at the door again and then back to Danielle's outstretched hand. With a visible sigh, he reaches out and grasps Danielle's hand.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

It is a pleasure to meet you, Danielle.

