

The Ex's Month-Long Wedding Cruise

When I first moved into Tessa's apartment, two thoughts hit me.

One: Tessa was just as high maintenance as she'd been in college. Everything in her place screamed luxury. High-end furniture, designer décor, the kind of perfectly curated space that made you wonder if people actually lived there. I was happy she had a job that let her maintain the lifestyle.

Two: Tessa's apartment was the most comfortable place in the world to feel like shit.

Even though she had decorated a guest room just for me, I spent most of my worst nights on her couch, wrapped in an overpriced throw blanket, drinking wine straight from the bottle.

And now, as I stare at the notification on my phone, I know exactly what I need to do.


I walk into Tessa's kitchen, grab a bottle of red wine, some expensive brand I don't recognize, and collapse onto her couch. Popping the cork, I take a long gulp before daring to look at my phone again.

For months, I wanted this. I prayed for him to reach out. Now, it's the last thing I need.

Calm down, Emilia. It's probably just closure or whatever.


It's not like one message could change anything.

I tap the notification. My stomach twists as I realize I never changed how I saved his name.

Babe <3: Hey, Em. I know we haven't talked in a while, and the last time we did... well, it wasn't great. I'm not pointing fingers, but you could've handled things better. 

Babe <3: I'm gonna be the bigger person here. For old times' sake, I think we should try to be amicable. And honestly? I really fucking miss you. You were my best friend.

Babe <3: I'm getting married in two months. Right before the season starts. Never thought I'd meet the one, but I did. I hope you find someone like that too.

Babe <3: We're doing a month-long cruise before the wedding. I sent your invite to your email. It's a couples-only trip, so bring your boyfriend. Or that friend of yours.. Tilda? Is that her name? Doesn't matter, just bring a plus one. 

Babe <3: Really hope you come. Bye, I guess.

I stare at the screen, heart pounding.

Zane is getting MARRIED?!

I throw back wine at a pace that makes me dizzy.

A month-long cruise? A couples-only cruise?

I take another large gulp of wine.

Of all the ways and reasons I imagined Zane reaching out to me, this was never one of them.

I'm halfway through the bottle when the tears finally come.


Ten years.

We were together for a whole decade. And in all that time, I was never enough for him. Never someone he saw as worth marrying.

But in just seven months, he's found his bride. Someone he adores.

Someone he's happily planning a wedding with, when I had to beg just for him to be present for ours.

Holding a month-long cruise to celebrate their love before they even get married.

I never asked for anything that extravagant. I just wanted his attention. His love. 

We started dating when we were fourteen. Every adult around us said it wouldn't last, that we were too young to know anything about love. The only person who believed in us was my brother.

Even thinking about him makes me cry even harder, so I shove the thought away. One day, I'll have to unpack that can of worms, I'd been holding it off for seven years now, but today isn't that day.

Zane and I beat the odds. We went through high school together, then college. His teammates used to call me Mrs. Whitmoore.

Everyone around could see we were set to play the long game. Everyone but Zane, the person who was supposed to be playing on my side of the field.

The only person I truly cared about.

I never even used to care about changing my last name or wearing his

ring on my finger, I just wanted to be his. Forever.

Tess once said the only reason I wanted to marry him so badly was because everyone else expected it.

Maybe she was right.

Tess is always right.

That thought hits me just as I realise I'm wasted. The wine bottle is nowhere to be found, and in my attempt to locate it, I end up rolling off the couch and onto the floor.

Groaning, I fumble for my phone, my hands are clumsy and shaking. Tessa. She'll know what to do. She always does.

The call barely rings before she picks up, her voice is warm and steady, like a lifeline. "Hey, honeycomb. Isn't it a little early for a wellness check?"

"Zane is getting married." My voice comes out in a pathetic slurp as I try to peel myself off the floor.

I blink blearily around the room. Where the hell did the couch go?

I'm still searching for the couch when—

BAM!

I slam my toe against Tessa's coffee table.

"Shit!" I curse loudly, clutching my foot like it might fall off. The pain is sharp, but my drunken brain registers it a second too late.

In my attempt to regain balance, I miscalculate completely and fall

backward-

Right onto the couch I'd been looking for.

I glare at it suspiciously. I swear it wasn't there a second ago.

I'll have to tell Tess her couch disappears from time to time.

"What?!" Tess practically shouts into the phone. I hear muffled voices in the background before she lowers her voice. "I'm sorry, I'm at work, but did I hear you correctly?"

"You did!" I announce dramatically. "He sent me an invitation to his wedding. And a month long couple-only cruise before the wedding, Tess! Since I clearly can't move on, you'll have to be my plus one."

I cackle like a lunatic then stop abruptly.

Wait. What was I laughing at?

"Tess?" I squint at the phone. "You still there?"

Her voice softens in a wa

y that makes my stomach twist. "Yeah, I'm still here. Just... stay put, okay? I'll be back from work before you know it. And stop drinking my wine, honeycomb, that shit's expensive."

She pauses. Long enough that I can hear the weight in her silence.

"And, Em... I think I have something important to tell you."

Then the call ends.

