

Chapter 104: It's showtime.

Tess's POV:

It's been days – or better yet – months since Ethan cared about me, and now, he vanished as if covered by a magician's smoke. Where the hell was he? Something was off with him. This was the first time in several years that I couldn't understand what was going on.

I tried to call him night and day after I broke the fake news that I was expecting a baby. But everything would depend on how fast I could hook him. After all, a marriage that wasn't consumed could be considered void, and if he saw me naked and with no belly bump, he would never believe me, and our plan would sink before we could do anything to save it.

And then, when I turned to Alexander to ask him for help, he just said: "I'm sorry, babe. Ethan isn't answering my calls either. I think that he is out of town," he told me.

Did he not care what was going on? Didn't he know that our plan was extremely fragile and time-sensitive?

"How about Vincent? Have you heard from him?" I asked desperately. Ethan and Vincent were as inseparable as two peas in a pod. You would likely find one once you find the other.

"He told me that he was going to leave the city for a few days. That someone invaded his house and he wasn't feeling safe at home," Alex told me. Seriously, this man's phlegm infuriated me at times!

"Now, that is because of us, isn't it?" I asked Alex. "I knew from the beginning that breaking into Vincent's house without even making sure Patricia was with him was a bad idea, but you just didn't listen to me!" I exclaimed. "And now, not only do we not know where Patricia is, but we also managed to make Vincent suspicious!" I said frustrated.

"I was looking for Patricia, and since Vince was acting oddly, I thought that she could be at his place, but my men didn't find anything," he explained to me.

"Oh, my God, Alex! Someone could have caught the guys and they would have pointed directly at you!" I exclaimed to him. "I already had too many variables to worry about with our plan, and you add more to it!" That man was impossible at times.

"Yeah, but we aren't out of the woods yet," he murmured annoyed.

"What do you mean?" I asked him, clueless.

"I mean that one of the guys bled due to Vincent shooting him. He had probably spilled blood in the house, and he might be investigated for it." Alex answered me.

"So, it all depends on if this guy is in the police's database or not?" I asked him, astonished.

"Probably. That's why I have a guy in the PD that can alert me and an escape route ready for us." Alex told me simply.

"So your current plan is to just not get caught, is that it?" I demanded.

"It's better than ending up in jail, don't you think?" Alex retorted.

"And how about Ethan, you genius?" I asked him.

"Well, if we get to this point, we will have to forget our revenge," Alex told me.

"But we are so close!" I moaned.

"But you don't know what they can do to you in jail, do you, honey? You don't know what you might face if you go ahead with the plan and it's too dangerous for us to bear," He mumbled to me.

"You're probably right," I mumbled back to him.

"But if we're going to proceed with this plan, we need to find Ethan ASAP, otherwise he won't believe that I'm pregnant because my belly doesn't grow," I told him.

"You're right. Do you think that I should hire someone to look for Ethan too?" Alex asked me.

"Aren't you spending too much using this kind of resource, honey?" I asked him unsure.

"The ends justify the means, as Machiavelli says," Alexander told me.

"I will try to reach Ethan for a couple of days more, and then, we can make a decision," I tried to reconcile.

"Fine," Alexander mumbled.

"Do you think that they might be at the same place?" I risked a guess.

"Who knows, Tess! All that I know is that they left for different reasons and that they left me out of their business this time," Alex told me frustrated.

"Fine, ne! I won't ask you anymore!" I exclaimed to him.

*

I lost track of how many messages I left for Ethan before his voicemail got full, and he was still solemnly ignoring me. I tried to reach him out through his secretary, but not even Eric knew where his boss was.

Something was off. Ethan would never ignore me like this. Not even when I was his insufferable mistress. Not when he was aware that I was 'pregnant'.

I mean, the first time that he found out that I was pregnant, he treated me like I was a porcelain doll, and the miscarried baby wasn't even his. Even though he didn't believe in me at first, he would give me at least the benefit of the doubt, right? He would at least see my ultrasound or something like this.

On the last day that I asked for Alex, I was almost giving up and telling him to find someone who could track Ethan, when he finally picked up.

At first, I didn't believe in his voice.

"Hello?" Ethan answered the call.

"Oh, my God, Ethan! Where the hell are you?" I asked him desperately.

"I had to deal with some s**t outside the town, Tess. Don't worry. I didn't answer anybody. It wasn't just for you," he mumbled.

"And when will you come back?" I asked him eagerly. I was relieved because I thought that he was missing because of me, but apparently, there was another reason for his disappearance.

"I will be back tomorrow, and I want to meet you, Tess," Ethan told me. Just Tess? Not love, darling, or anything else? Have I lost him for good now?

"Okay," I mumbled. "Is everything all right?" I couldn't help but ask him.

"Yes, it is. If your baby is mine, I'm willing to take full responsibility," he told me.

"I'm glad to hear that," I told him.

"Okay, I gotta go now. Talk to you later," he told me and killed the call.

Well, at least, he decided to stop ghosting me and was answering my calls.

*

On the next day, I was waiting anxiously for Ethan's call. I didn't get too much sleep because I was too anxious. Around 10 in the morning, he called me.

"Hey, my dear! How are you doing?" I answered the call as soon as the phone started to ring.

"Hey, you," he told me. "I was wondering if you would like to have lunch with me," Ethan asked me.

"Sure! Name time and place, and I will be there," I told him.

"Absolutely! I will send someone to pick you up at noon. Does that work for you?" He suggested.

"Of course, love. I will be ready," I told him and killed the call.

I was euphoric. Finally, he was coming back to his senses and was forgetting about that ridiculous woman that he had married. I was finally getting what I deserved: a place by his side.

Don't get me wrong, I liked Ethan, but I didn't love him. He was a tool, a ladder for the next level. My love and allegiance were completely Alex's. And having Ethan as my husband and Alex as my lover would be the best of both worlds, at least temporarily. That is until Alex takes control of Ethan's company, so we would finally be free to get rid of Ethan.

I couldn't forgive him and that damn old rag of bones called Michael for my father's death. They were the ones who brought those people to our small town. They were the ones who brought the problem to our door!

And it wouldn't be worth any promises on my dad's deathbed that would make me overcome that fact. By that time, I was completely alone with a ridiculous inheritance. My mom was long gone with disease and now my father was murdered because of them. The least they could do is take care of me with them and take care of me.

And even though Alex decided to come with us, he had more resources, and he was going because of me, because I had no choice. Soon he became associated with Ethan, and I consequently became close to him as well. The rest is history. We have been trying to get revenge for my father for many years. But death is not enough for Ethan. He needs to lose everything before that.

Well, for today at least, I needed to pretend that I still loved him. So, I decided to dress up like a vixen.

I wasn't a fan of being a scarlet redhead, so I traded any red dress possibility for a more subdued color, however, I would make my mark on my accessories.

I felt beautiful in my cream dress and cherry shoes. I had matched the color of the shoes with the color of the lipstick, and I had a slightly more discreet bag. My heels were so high that I could hurt myself if I misstep. Thankfully, Ethan was a good deal taller and stronger than me, so we were a classic pair, and he would never let me fall.

As soon as I got out of the car at the restaurant door, I thanked the driver he had sent to pick me up and waited for him on the street, by the door.

I didn't go into the restaurant on purpose. I wanted to be seen by people, and if possible, even photographed for some gossip blog. I wanted it to get to Hannah to the point in which she never wanted to come back to town.

Also, I wouldn't want to sit inside and wait pathetically for him. That would be the worst-case scenario. If he missed our appointment and I was seen eating lunch at that high-profile restaurant alone, I would be the reason for laughing.

Thank heavens I didn't have to wait long for him. A couple of minutes later, a car pulled up in the same spot where the car I'd arrived in had stopped, and Ethan got out, looking as handsome as ever. I straightened up and prepared to mark territory as soon as he got to me.

Well, it's showtime, isn't it?