

Out Of The Shadows: Tilda's Brilliant Second Life

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Are the Jensons Really That Cold?

Wade didn't see it coming.

Tilda didn't look sad at all.

She spoke with such firmness, so sure of herself, leaving no space for doubt.

Facing her icy attitude, Wade didn't even notice the little bit of panic starting to rise inside him.

"So I help you, and this is how you treat me?"

"Well, now you can regret ever helping someone as cold and ungrateful as me!"

Tilda fired back without holding anything back.

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Finished

In this life, she was never going to bow to anyone again or let them treat her like trash, especially the Jensons.

From start to finish, she owed them nothing!

"You little-"

"Wade, stop yelling at Tilda!"

Seeing him keep pushing, Una couldn't take it anymore. "Do you even get how much she's wanted a real family? For her to say such cold and hurtful things—don't you Jensons ever stop and think about what you've done?!"

Tears filled Una's eyes and spilled down her cheeks.

She wiped them away with the back of her hand, lifted her chin, and glared at the stunned Wade.

"I'm not letting the Jensons bully Tilda!

"You guys are nothing but bullies!"

Even Una, who was just watching from the side, could feel Tilda's pain.

How could Wade—her own brother—yell at her like that? Say things that cut so deep?

Tilda was gone for 19 years. Those were the years she needed family the most! Are the Jensons really that heartless?

If they don't care about her and only want to hurt her, why call her family at all? Why bring her back just to shove her into the dark? She's their real family, not an enemy! She's Wade's sister!

"1..."

Wade had no words.

The biggest reason Tilda had left the Jensons was their misunderstanding.

Maybe that was why he cared so much.

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It was all guilt. Nothing else.

"It's okay, Una

To me, the Jensons are nothing now."

Tilda reached over and gently wiped away Una's tears.

I must have been blind before, thinking a family that treated me like dirt was worth more than anything.

They almost made me forget the rare friendships I already have, friendships other people would kill for.

When Wade heard that his chest tightened.

The hopeful girl who'd been wishing for love just two weeks ago seemed gone for good.

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"Tilda, don't you ever come back to the Jensons! If you regret it later, I'll be there to see you embarrass yourself!"

Wade spat out the insult and almost ran away.

"I won't regret it! Ever!"

Tilda shot back without a second's pause.

And she'd never forgive them.

Not now. Not ever.

-Tilda..."

Una cried and hugged her tight, her heart breaking.

"I didn't know... I thought maybe you and the Jensons could still work things out. I just wanted you to think about it again.

"But now I see it. They treated you like dirt. They don't deserve your happiness.

"You must be hurting so much. If you want to cry, just cry....

But Tilda didn't cry—Una was the one sobbing.

"It's fine, Una. I already cried all my tears. You're right. They don't deserve my happiness.

"The only ones who deserve it are the friends I choose. With you, I'm not alone."

Una nodded, sniffing and wiping her nose, eyes full of tears. "Yeah! Remember that! I'll always be here for you, Tilda!"

Tilda wiped her tears and smiled a little. "Seriously, I should be the one crying. Why are you the one crying instead?"

"I'm just worried about you. You probably cried in secret. Just thinking about it hurts me."

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Tilda went quiet, lost in thought.

Yeah.

I don't even know how many times I cried because of the Jensons.

Always at night, when no one was around to hear. Even if I told anyone, it would just make me feel worse.

I always hid my sadness, crying alone under the blankets,

I was scared they'd see me, hate me even more, or throw me out for good.

But my tears for the Jensons have been gone for a long time.

They never cared.

From now on, I'll only cry for the people who are worth it

Tilda walked Una to a cab. "Tilda, are you sure you don't want to stay at my place?"

"No, thanks. I already found somewhere to live.

"By the way... thanks."

Tilda touched her head lightly, eyes full of gratitude.

“Don’t thank me, or I’ll stop being your friend!

“If anything happens, call me! I’ll help however I can!”

Una pouted and squeezed Tilda’s hand.

“I will.”

I guess I’m not really alone this time.

After Una left, Tilda shoved her hands in her pockets and decided to walk by the river for a while.

The riverside looked beautiful, the breeze soft.

October nights in Slosa were cool and nice.

The alcohol buzz had almost worn off.

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She saw couples walking hand-in-hand. Families of three, laughing, walking their dogs, calling for their kids to slow down.

Tilda felt like she didn’t belong.

Why?

Isn’t family supposed to be the most basic thing?

Why do other families love their kids so much, while the Jensons stepped on me and even left me to burn in a fire?

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I never wanted to take anything from Kyla.

All I ever wanted was family. With the new little sister, my heart felt full.

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I just wish the Jensons could give me even a small part of the love they gave Kyla. After all, I'm the girl who carries their blood but was lost for 19 years.

Such a small, simple wish. But it never came true.

A lot of it is Kyla's doing. But even more is the Jensons' blind love and trust in her.

If they had cared even a little—if they'd bothered to find the truth, to understand me and stand up for me—things wouldn't have turned out this way.

But no.

To the Jensons, I'm like a thorn.

Nobody wants me around.

They probably wish I'd disappeared or died 19 years ago.

Tilda pulled her shirt tighter.

She felt cold.

The farther she walked, the fewer lights and people there were.

Then she stopped.

"If you've got business, come out now."

A few shady-looking men stepped out behind her.

"Hey, gorgeous. Don't run. We won't hurt you."

"We just want a little ... fun."

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These guys hung out near bars, preying on drunk women who staggered out.

Some girls would pass out right there on the street.

That was when these men would swoop in—stealing their money, and if they were lucky, more than that.

If the girls woke up and wanted to call the cops, these guys had photos to blackmail them with.

It always worked.

Usually, they didn't bother with sober girls like Tilda.

But she was too pretty.

Her confident air made her even harder to ignore.

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They followed her without thinking.

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Finished

They didn't even realize she was leading them into a darker, quieter area, with almost no one around.

It was like she was walking right into their trap.

"Do you know why I brought you here, even though I knew you were following me?"

Tilda took off her shirt, showing a black vest underneath.

Her perfect figure made the men's eyes go wide, their smiles more sinister.

"This one's making the first move?"

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"Guess it's our lucky night!"

Tilda kept talking. "I'm in a bad mood. I need someone to take it out on."

She'd just kicked Preston earlier, but that hadn't been enough.

And then Wade had made things worse.

If she didn't let it out tonight, she'd have nightmares for sure.

Since they're looking for trouble, let's see if they can handle it.

"Go get her!"

The men didn't care what she said. Lust took over, and they lunged at her.

But...

Thump! Thud!

Painful groans filled the alley.

Tilda moved with sharp, ruthless force.

Every move was meant to hurt.

They are just scum, hunting women.

Better gone than alive.

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Looking at them lying there groaning, Tilda pulled her shirt back on with style.

That was when her eyes met a pair of deep, dark ones.

Every hair on her body stood up.

Who is that?

And how did I not notice him before?