

# **Out Of The Shadows: Tilda's Brilliant Second Life**

## **Chapter 03**

Chapter 3 The Slap That Never Came

"What did you just say?"

Russell stared at her like he couldn't believe his ears.

Even Wade froze.

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"I said why should I apologize? This isn't the Middle Ages. Are you really going to punish your daughter like a criminal?"

Tilda's voice was calm, almost too calm.

Her eyes were steady and cold, revealing almost nothing.

But deep down, there was a spark—one that had nothing to do with the Jensons.

She'd given up on them long ago.

When love dies, hatred goes with it.

Her anger was now with herself.

She thought of her past. Back then, when Russell told her to apologize, she did—scared and desperate.

When they accused her of baseless things, she tried again and again to explain, but no one ever listened.

As soon as Kyla cried, Wade slapped her.

She had apologized again and again, terrified they would hate her. Terrified to lose what little she thought she had. Even with blood in her mouth and shame in her eyes, she took the blame for something she didn't do.

Why?

Why had she been such a fool and lived without pride?

Tilda's fury was with the girl she used to be.

"Well, well," Russell said sharply. "Look at you—grown up now, huh? Talking back to me?"

His temper flared. He raised his hand, ready to strike—

But Kyla stepped in.

"Dad! No!"

Her voice cut through the air, stopping him mid—swing.

Blair turned in shock. "Kyla, you..."

Kyla broke down, sobbing so hard it seemed like she could collapse at any moment. "Don't hit her! Please don't! She's your real daughter!"

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### Chapter 3 The Slap That Never Came

Those words—your real daughter—pulled Russell back.

His gaze returned to Tilda, full of conflicting emotions.

He didn't want to admit it, but this cold, ungrateful, stubborn girl was his flesh and blood.

And still... how could she be so wicked?

"Let's just talk," Blair said shakily. "No need for this to get violent."

As much as it hurt to see Kyla cry, Tilda was still her biological daughter.

"Kyla, you're too good," Wade muttered, his voice tight.

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Watching Kyla take the burn, she would rather be wounded and broken just to side with Tilda. Wade felt like his heart was being cut to pieces.

Why? Why couldn't Kyla be his real sister? Why did it have to be Tilda—the one who was so cruel? It just

wasn't fair.

Russell took a deep breath, forcing his temper back down.

He kept his voice even. "Tilda, do you understand what you did wrong?"

"Not really."

The reply was quick and sharp.

Everyone froze.

This wasn't the girl they knew. She wasn't timid. She wasn't trying to earn anyone's approval. She wasn't trying to please them. She was different.

"YOU DON'T KNOW?" Russell repeated, each word cutting through the air like a whip.

"I don't," Tilda said again, clear and steady. If he wanted her to repeat it, she would.

As many times as he needed.

She doesn't know.

Her dark eyes locked on his, deep and unreadable. For a second, a chill slid down Russell's spine. He had never seen that look in her before. She didn't even seem like the same person.

Russell Jenson had once been the proud and celebrated chairman of the Jenson Group. A veteran in the business world, he had spent a lifetime navigating high-stakes deals and meeting every kind of person imaginable.

Even now, with his sons grown and running the company and himself long retired from the front lines, the sharp instincts he had honed over the years had hardly faded.

"Mom, Dad, please stop this," Kyla whispered through her tears, moving closer to Tilda.

"Kyla, stay away from her!" Russell reached for her, worried she might get hurt—worried Tilda might lash

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out again.

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For a brief moment, something ached in Tilda's chest. But she let it. Wounds healed. Eventually.

She had seen this family for what it was. She no longer hoped for anything from them. And she would never bend again just to keep the peace.

"Tilda," Kyla sobbed, turning toward her. "I know you're the real daughter. I'm so sorry. You've had to live here pretending to be some distant relative because of me. I'm sorry that you couldn't even use your real name!"

She clutched her chest, gasping for air. "You can have it all back—your name, your place. I don't want anything. If me being here makes you uncomfortable, I'll leave. I'll move out. I'll disappear. You'll never have to see me again!"

Her tears flowed freely.

She looked so fragile. So heartbroken.

Blair couldn't hold back anymore. Her eyes turned red, and tears began sliding down her cheeks, one after another.

"No one's kicking you out," Russell said firmly. "Kyla, I don't care if Tilda's my biological daughter. You're my daughter too. Blood doesn't change that. You'll always be a Jenson."

"Dad!" Kyla cried, collapsing into his arms. "Dad, I'm scared! I'm so scared!"

"It's okay," Russell whispered, holding her tight. "I'm here. No one can hurt you."

Then he turned a murderous glare on Tilda.

Whatever doubts he'd had were gone. Kyla's tears had turned his guilt into pure rage again.

But Tilda didn't flinch. She stood off to the side, silent and untouched, as if none of this had anything to do with her—like she was just watching a play.

"Tilda!" Wade burst out. "Do you even have a heart? Can't you see what's happening? Don't you think you owe Kyla an apology? Tell her you're sorry right now!"

Wade couldn't take it anymore. He stepped forward, eyes blazing, staring her down.

Tilda almost laughed. Her eyes, cold and mocking, locked on him. She didn't say a word, but her look said plenty.

And Wade felt it—like she was judging him. Belittling him. She was the sister he had never accepted. The one he'd wished was dead.

Furious, he yanked out his phone and shoved it in her face. "Look at what you did! Don't accuse us of blaming you for nothing!"

A bold headline filled the screen:

"Jenson's Real Heiress Revealed—Tilda Jenson's True Identity Exposed"

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The article told everything: how Tilda had been stolen from the hospital as a newborn, went missing for nineteen years, and finally returned to her family.

The photos captured everything—Tilda walking in and out of the Jenson villa, snapshots from her campus. life, and shots of her at family events.

Then came the second headline:

"What Happens to the Adopted Daughter Now?"

The internet exploded. Comments flooded in:

"Real heiress vs. fake heiress—this is getting juicy."

"Rich people drama at its finest."

"No way—Jenson Group's stock is actually going up over this."

"They really adore Kyla. She's always at family events, always gorgeous, and treated like royalty."

“The real one’s pretty too, not gonna lie.”

“But she doesn’t have the same presence. Kyla’s way more refined. Tilda probably had a rough life, and it shows.”

Tilda barely glanced at the screen. Not a single emotion crossed her face.

“So what?” she spoke flatly.