

Out Of The Shadows: Tilda's Brilliant Second Life

Chapter 04

Chapter 4 The Sweet, Innocent Kyla?

"So? After seeing all this, you still feel nothing?"

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"Tilda, we had an agreement. You promised we'd wait for the right time to reveal your identity—so it wouldn't hurt Kyla. You swore you'd keep quiet until then."

"But you—" Wade's voice shook with anger as he pointed a trembling finger at her. "You told us one thing, then went behind our backs and fed the tabloids the story! You sent them the photos. Don't even try to deny it—we've confirmed it!"

The way Wade looked at Tilda was full of hostility, like she was his worst enemy instead of the sister they had searched for all these years.

"Tilda." Russell said coldly, "because you grew up without the right environment, I'm giving you one last chance. Bow and apologize to Kyla, and I'll forgive you. Apologize, and you can stay in this family as the rightful heiress."

Russell glared at Tilda coldly.

He expected her to panic. To show regret. Maybe even cry.

Instead—

"Oh? Where's your proof?" Tilda's voice was calm, almost casual.

"Proof?" Wade blinked, caught off guard.

"You can't just throw out random accusations. If you're going to claim I leaked everything to the press, you'd better have evidence. If you don't, I could sue you for defamation."

Her composed reply stunned them all.

Sue us?

Defamation?

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Was this really Tilda—the same timid girl who used to keep her head down and avoid conflict?

Even Kyla, still sniffing beside Russell, glanced up through her cry.

Tilda was different.

Something had changed.

Same face. Different fire.

She stood there, calm and poised.

More confident than ever.

And there was something about her—an elegance that seemed to radiate from the inside out.

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A cold ripple of unease ran through Kyla, but she quickly buried it.

No. My plan is perfect. It has to be.

She kept her head low, hiding her expression.

Russell's jaw tightened. "Fine. You really want to play tough?"

He pulled out his phone, dialed a number, then hit speaker and tossed it onto the table.

The call connected within seconds.

A respectful voice answered, "Mr. Jenson."

“Mr. Read, tell everyone—who gave you the tip for that front–page article?”

A short pause. Then, “Didn’t we already go over this? It was Ms. Tilda.”

All eyes turned to Tilda.

This time, they thought, there’s no way she can talk her way out.

But Tilda didn’t flinch.

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Instead of breaking down, she calmly pulled out her phone, turned the volume all the way up, and hit speaker mode.

“You’re saying I gave you the tip?” she asked.

Her voice wasn’t her own. Using a voice–changing app, she’d softened it into something higher and more delicate. Anyone who actually knew Tilda’s voice would recognize instantly—this wasn’t her.

Russell frowned.

What on earth is she doing?

Kyla’s stomach tightened. This is bad. Really bad. But if I jump in now, I’ll look guilty.

“Yes, Ms. Tilda,” Stan Read’s voice came through the speaker. “This isn’t my fault—I didn’t expect your father to find out so fast. Look, we’re just a small media company trying to keep the lights on. If we upset the Jenson Group, we won’t last a week in this city!”

Stan kept talking, but cracks were already showing in his story. The Jensons were starting to notice.

“Then tell me,” Tilda said evenly, “how exactly did I contact you in the first place? And why would I be stupid enough to give away my real identity?”

“If the Jenson Group is as powerful as you claim, and you folded the second someone scared you—wouldn’t

that make me suicidal?”

“Well-” Stan hesitated, then rushed out, “You called from a public phone. And as for your identity... let’s just say you slipped up. I figured it out myself.”

“You guessed?” Tilda’s laugh was soft but sharp.

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“So you didn’t have actual proof before you ran the story? Just a hunch?”

“I-I...” Stan’s voice faltered.

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Sweat pricked at his skin. Inside, he cursed himself.

He should never have said that.

Stan paused, drew in a breath, and answered with forced calm.

“I’ve heard your voice before. It’s one of a kind. Even when you tried to disguise it, there’s no way I could mistake it.

“And we met in person to go over the details. When you handed me those photos, I saw your face with my own eyes.”

“Oh, really?” Tilda arched an eyebrow. “You’re that sure about someone’s identity just from her voice—the same voice I just proved can be faked with an app? Don’t you think that’s a little ridiculous?”

She pounced on the flaw in his story.

“And you claim we met in person. That I gave you those photos. Do you have any proof of that? Security footage? Pictures? A recording?”

“I...” Stan’s voice faltered. Sweat slid down his temples.

He had nothing.

Because the whole thing was a lie.

“And the voice you’re hearing right now?” Tilda added smoothly. “That’s not even mine. It’s a voice filter. I’ve been using it in front of everyone here. So if you really met me face-to-face, how could you fail to recognize my actual voice?”

“You’re not seriously saying I stood there in front of you the whole time using a voice-changing app, are you?”

The truth was, Tilda didn’t need any app. She could change her voice on her own. But the app made the trap easier to spring.

She’d been through all of this once before.

Now, with a second chance, she carried the knowledge of everything that was coming. That was her greatest

weapon.

And with the weight of family ties no longer holding her back, nothing could stop her—especially not when she had come back from the future knowing exactly how the game would play out.

Stan had no answer. He just sat there in stunned silence.

This wasn’t how it was supposed to go.

He’d been told Tilda was timid—eager to please, easy to break. That if they pushed her hard enough, she’d crumble, apologize, and take the blame without a fight.

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No one said she’d fight back.

No one said she’d call his bluff.

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If he hadn't been promised that Tilda wouldn't cause a scene, he never would've framed the true heiress of the Jensons. One wrong move, and it could cost him everything.

Kyla's heart thumped wildly.

Idiot! She screamed silently.

You botched it that fast? What kind of idiot becomes an editor-in-chief with half a brain?

Even Russell was starting to sense something was wrong.

"Mr. Read," he growled, "didn't you say Tilda gave you instructions herself?"

"There's got to be some kind of misunderstanding," Stan stammered. "It must've been someone pretending to be her who set me up."

Desperation bled into his voice as he scrambled for a way out. He didn't even know who the real mastermind was. All he knew was that the reward he'd been promised was too good to pass up.

Still, he had a guess. A suspicion. But the moment he said that name out loud, his career—and maybe more—would be over.

"I swear, I'll find out who's behind this," Stan said quickly.

Russell's gaze shifted toward Kyla.

She kept her head bowed, shoulders trembling, quiet sobs slipping past her lips. She looked so fragile, so small—like something that needed to be shielded from the world.

Russell shook the thought away.

No. It couldn't be Kyla.

Kyla is kind. She is pure. Sweet and innocent.

There was no way a girl like her could have dreamed up such a cold, calculated plan.