

## Shadows 86

Chapter 86 Apologize That's your apology ? You sound like you're about to kill someone . I don't accept it . " Of course , she didn't . She was still Tilda - the sharp - tongued , relentless woman Howard had always despised . To him , she was vicious , shameless , impossible to satisfy . Her words made him furious . " Tilda , that's enough ! Look at him ! That man is your father . He gave you life . He's your family . Do you have to be this ruthless ? " Howard's voice cracked , and his eyes were red with rage . He felt sorry for Russell .

In that moment , he couldn't even bring himself to compare her to Kyla anymore . Tilda wasn't worthy of the comparison . She didn't to come close to what Kyla was . No. She wasn't even worth comparing to a normal person . Hell , even an animal . Even a dog knows how to show loyalty when it's fed . At least a dog understands gratitude . But Tilda wasn't worth a damn at all . Having a daughter like her - it would've been better to bring home a stray dog . At least a dog wouldn't betray its master .

At least a dog wouldn't push its own father to submit , only to keep kicking him down with insult after insult . Howard's gut twisted with regret . Back when Blair first insisted on the DNA test to bring Tilda back into the family , if he had known it would lead to this chaos , he would've fought to stop it at any cost . Better to risk his life than let her back in . Now the Jensons were in shambles . Now his proud father was reduced to this . " Watch your mouth , Howard . " Tilda's voice cut through the room like ice . " I cut ties with your family long ago .

Don't shove the family card in my face . Father ? He doesn't deserve the title . And you , don't flatter yourself as my brother . You make me sick . " Her eyes narrowed , cold and merciless . " From the start , after I broke away , I never once came looking for you . You're the ones who keep popping up , barging into my life , stirring up trouble , accusing me over and over . And now you dare play the victim ? Spare me . Don't bark in front of me . I won't respond to that . " A chill ran through the air .

Tilda hated nothing more than being shackled by " family . " When she had stayed quiet and hidden her brilliance , the Jensons had done nothing but trample her , ignore her , freeze her out until she nearly broke . They adored Kyla , while Tilda spiraled into depression , cutting herself , trying again and again to end it . only reason she was still breathing was because Una had always found her in time to call an ambulance . And the Jensons ? They never showed up . Not once .

When she came home from the hospital , bandages still raw , emotions barely stitched back together , they never asked if she was okay . They just sneered . Said she was too old to be so dramatic . Said suicide attempts were just for show . And now that she was back in the Jensons as the real daughter , draped in wealth and privilege , they acted like she had no right to complain . That she should remember

all the starving , struggling people in the world and be grateful . They had already given her enough . So she'd better shut her mouth and quit being so damn ungrateful .

For the Jensons , it had always been about appearances . The family's image , the family's " unity . " But that unity only ever existed on one condition - kick Tilda out and protect Kyla at the center of it all . The moment Tilda pushed back , showed her strength , and cornered Russell , suddenly they remembered she was their daughter , their sister . Suddenly they wanted to throw around words like family and blood . She almost laughed . Do they even hear themselves ? Do they deserve to use those words ? When they needed her , they called her a Jenson .

When she resisted , they accused her of being ungrateful , said she never should've been born . And when they didn't need her , they wished she would just disappear . Die , even . A Jenson ? she thought bitterly . The only thing shameful about me is being tied to this family at all . " Tilly , calm down , " Andy said softly , touching her arm . Her fury stilled instantly . She held herself together , her eyes returning to that deep , unreadable calm , like a still lake that gave away nothing . " Sorry , Andy , " she said lightly . " I lost it for a second . It's just ...

some things are too disgusting to listen to without snapping . " She gave him a look that said he didn't need to worry . " Tilda ... " Howard spoke again . " Enough , Howard . Don't say anything , " Russell barked . " Dad ! " Under his father's hard stare , Howard finally dropped his gaze and turned his face away . He couldn't bear to look . He was afraid that if he did , his temper would snap and he'd strike Tilda on the spot . The vow he had made to himself - to never raise a hand against a woman - felt like it was splintering , ready to break . Tilda had pushed too far .

She wasn't human anymore in his eyes . She was a monster . " If you think my apology wasn't sincere enough . " Russell said at last , his voice rough , " Then fine . I'll let go of everything - my pride , my position - and I'll apologize again . I'm sorry , Tilda . It was my fault . I shouldn't have misjudged you . " He even lowered his head and gave her a respectful nod . He softened his tone as much as he could , choking down the fire burning in his chest , stripping away the last scraps of dignity he had left .

But then , Tilda spoke . " Beg me . " The word fell from Tilda's lips like ice . Russell froze . His body locked , his head snapping up as if he couldn't believe what he had just heard . She stood there in the light , her figure sharp and commanding , like a queen looking down on all beneath her.