



Roses

Ethan

What if...

What if the child was mine?

My body stiffens. I stand in front of the wall-sized window in my office, glaring at the gardener tending to the flowers.

Those flowers, the red roses, are Grace's favorite flowers. I hate the fragrance of roses. But for her, I didn't mind filling my garden with them.

Yet, she cheated on me. Betrayed me. Lied to me.

But what if...

The child is mine?

My throat constricts. Grace's cold stare flashes before my eyes. These days, she looks like a feral fox instead of the cute kitten from before.

How dare she act like that after what she did to me?

She has no shame, no sense of remorse for her actions.

Then how can I believe for a moment that the tears she sheds and the way she says that the baby in her womb was mine are not lies too?

The housekeeper did report that she took pills every morning

religiously.

But I don't fucking understand why.

She stole me from Lily. Got me involved with her. I was happy with her.

Then why did she keep cheating on me and take the morning after-pills?

Maybe, those pills were for her lovers and not me.

Fire unfurls in my belly as I regard that thought. I slam my fist into the wall, pain spreading in my fingers.

A knock sounds on my study room's office before Josh slips inside quietly. I clench my fist tighter, taking it off the wall.

"Did you investigate that woman again?" I inquire.

"The housekeeper, Serena insists that she saw Mrs. Calder taking the pills herself. There are bills under her name and she was seen in the CCTV footage of the pharmacy, Boss." Josh informs.

An invisible hand grips my heart. I have checked the facts several times, hoping for foul play to prove my so-called wife innocent.

But she is not.

She slept with a dozen men.

And carried someone else's child.

My glare on the roses hardens. After everything I gave her, and the way I cherished her, she stabbed my heart.

Not once but so many times that it feels like my heart is permanently damaged, like my trust has shattered.

I can't even find joy in the woman I love. Lily. I should be delighted with her, but right now, the mention of her name gets on my nerves.

" Tell the gardener to rip every fucking rose out of that garden and dump it into the trash. " I hiss.

" Are you sure, Boss? It's a rare breed of roses, pure blood in color and more fragrant— "

" Rip them to shreds. " I cut in, fire burning along my veins.

I don't want to hear how I chose those flowers after carefully examining every breed of red roses. Just because I wanted to give her the best of everything.

" On it, Boss. " Josh replies.

The door opens and closes after he leaves. I take in a deep breath, unclenching my fists.

Before I can relax, the door bursts open.

" Ms. Whitlock! You can't go in there like this. "

I glance over my shoulder. Lily is panting, her eyes watching me intently.

" Sir, I tried to stop Ms. Whitlock but she insisted on coming here. " The maid behind her reveals nervously.

I wave at her dismissively. " Get out of my sight. "

For some reason, seeing Lily brings me a deep sense of irritation. It's all because of Grace. She got me so angry that I can't think straight.

"Ethan." Lily sniffles.

"How are you now, Lily? Are you looking after yourself?" I question, suppressing the annoyance.

She nods, rushing towards me. Without hesitation, she wraps her arms around my torso, embracing me tightly.

I grit my jaw. If she was not abused and broken, I would have pushed her away. I love her, but I am not in the mood to deal with her right now.

"Ethan, why are you doing this to me?" She sobs, surprising me.

"What is it? Why are you crying?" I frown.

"She called me! She told me you brought her here again. That she is your wife and I must leave you alone." Lily cries out.

"What?" My blood heats.

"Grace called me, Ethan. She said if I don't leave you alone, she will send me back to the Robertos. This time, she will get me killed, Ethan. I was right! I can't believe but I was right about her." Her tears wet my shirt.

How did Grace call Lily? My frown deepens.

Then, it clicks in my head. There is no way she attacked Selena so suddenly without an ulterior motive.

She must have stolen her phone. And that good-for-nothing maid didn't notice.

" I was right, Ethan. Grace has known the Roberto family for a long time. She must be the one who sent Sebastian after me. And I...like a fool...married that man who abused me for years. Ethan, my sister... she....is so evil. " Lily chokes on her breath, her arms tightening around me.

" Say everything clearly. " I separate myself from her and take a step back.

" She threatened me with Tristin. She wants me to leave you alone, Ethan. She said you want me gone, just like her! You brought her back and now she is your wife. If I don't back down, she will tell Tristin to take me away from you. " Lily wipes her cheeks, her eyes meeting mine with a hint of vulnerability.

A part of me still can't believe that Grace can be like this. The girl, who pretended to be quiet and obedient for several years, is now acting like a wicked entity.

" Tell me you didn't bring her back, Ethan. You are...divorcing her, right? " She whispers, placing her hands on my chest.

I feel guilty. I want to marry Lily. But I can't seem to be able to forget Grace's betrayal.

" I am divorcing her. " I wipe her tears with my thumbs and cup her cheeks. " Give me some time. I will divorce her. You will be my wife, Lily, like I told you. "

" You won't change your mind, right? " She places her hands over

mine, leaning into my palms. " You won't leave me, right? "

" No. " I shake my head.

" Promise me, Ethan. Promise me that I will become your wife. " She steps closer.

Somewhere deep down, a voice keeps screaming that this is wrong.

" You don't need my promises. My words are enough. " My eyes burn as I take my hands off her cheeks.

" Please, Ethan... " Tears well up in her eyes.

" Don't cry. " I sigh, giving in. " if a promise makes you happen. Then, I promise. "

Her face lights up instantly. I force a smile on my lips and slide her hair behind her ears.

" I was worried, you know...and Mom and Dad couldn't see me like that. " She starts, licking her lips.

My brows lift. " what did you do? "

" Please don't be angry, Ethan. " Lily whispers.

" What did you do, Lily? " I hiss through my gritted teeth.

" Mom and Dad insisted on tagging along. They are downstairs. " She steps away as if startled by the sudden change in my mood.



I notice the move and soften my stance. She has been through a lot of abuse. It's natural she is scared of men. I don't want to scare her more.



" Tell them everything is fine between us. " I take another step back to put distance between us.

" They are not here for us, Ethan. " Lily resigns with a sigh. " they are here for Grace. They want to take her back home. "

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