

Chapter 2

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Drick scoffed. "No way! Don't even think about scamming me!"

I stayed calm. "Then we'll let the police settle it."

His bravado crumbled. His face turned a shade of purple as he stammered, "Can we do installments...?"

I figured Wanda would lay low for a while after that. Clearly, I gave her too much credit.

Word had it she'd started an internship as a livestream host, but I didn't expect her to turn my house into her personal set.

When I got home, there she was, phone in hand, streaming live like she owned the place. A group of classmates buzzed around her, handling lighting and equipment.

"This is my home," Wanda boasted. "Isn't the decor luxurious? Every morning, I wake up to maids bringing me breakfast and helping with my morning routine."

My parents were off to the side, exchanging awkward glances as they listened to her nonsense.

"Wanda," my dad finally said, keeping his tone polite, "in our line of work, it's better to avoid being too public. Maybe you could do your streams from your workplace instead?"

But Wanda wasn't paying attention. She flipped on her phone's camera and aimed it straight at him.

"Look, everyone! This is Mr. Lambert, the CEO. Isn't he handsome?"

My dad, caught off guard, managed an awkward wave, the unease written all over his face.

Wanda, unfazed, launched into a dramatic tour of the house, showing off the furniture. Then, Emma Bailey—her mom—appeared in the frame. Both of them froze.

"Mr. Lambert," Emma said after a beat, breaking the silence, "the kitchen's all cleaned up."

Her gaze shifted to Wanda, confusion clouding her face. "Wanda, what are you doing here?"

I'd been watching the whole scene from the sidelines and decided to stir the pot. With a smirk, I chimed in, "Emma, your daughter's livestreaming. Didn't you know?"

Wanda froze, her face paling as she started babbling. "What are you even talking about? Someone like her my mom? That's ridiculous! I'm a wealthy heiress—she's just the housekeeper."

She glared at Emma, as if trying to will her into silence. "Get back to work! Don't mess up the floors on your way out!"

Pulling Emma aside, she hissed, "How many times have I told you not to call yourself my mom in front of people? Do you want to ruin me?"

Emma stared at her, stunned. Then, without warning, she slapped Wanda across the face. The sound echoed in the room.

"How dare you talk to me like that? I'm your mother!"

Wanda's cheek flared red as she stood there, shaking with fury but too stunned to respond. Her disheveled state made her look almost pitiful.

The livestream comments went wild:

[OMG, she's disowning her mom? Who does that?!]

[Wait... so all that heiress stuff was fake? Yikes.]

Leaning against the doorframe, I watched the chaos with a barely-contained grin.

Eventually, my mom stepped in to calm things down before it spiraled even more.

Once the drama fizzled out, my mom pulled Wanda into a bedroom. She spoke gently, trying to comfort her, and even handed her a small gift to settle her nerves.

"Mrs. Lambert," Wanda started, her tone syrupy sweet, "since you don't have a daughter, why not make me your goddaughter? Then someday, my kids can call you Grandma. Sons are great, but a daughter is like a warm coat for her parents!"

I rolled my eyes internally. In my last life, she'd used the same fake-sweet tone to wrap my parents around her little finger, convincing them to blow ridiculous amounts of money on her.

Mom's smile tightened. She gave Wanda a polite, lukewarm answer. "Of course. We've always thought of you like family."

Wanda's eyes lit up, totally misreading the vibe. "That's awesome! We should throw a banquet to make it official—something super fancy!"

Mom's smile wavered, probably remembering how Wanda had just treated Emma. Her voice cooled. "That won't be necessary. My husband and I are really busy. We're doing fine, so there's no need to worry about us. Just focus on taking care of your mom, okay?"