

# Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

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## Chapter 711

Norah could sing—maybe not flawlessly, but well enough. Cooper clapped excitedly. “Mom, Dad, there’s a parent-child singing contest at school tomorrow. Can you come?”

It was the weekend, ideal for working parents. Kevin had to handle a project since Kian was out.

“Honey, can you go?” he asked at a red light. “I’ve got a client meeting.”

Norah nodded. They shared parenting responsibilities, and Kevin’s job supported them—she never resented that.

Cooper hugged her arm. “Dad, it’s okay. Mom’s enough. The teacher said one parent is fine, but both are welcome.”

They laughed the whole way home. Reina woke up sensing the noise, yawning sleepily. Aunt Wang gave her a bottle, and she drank eagerly. The cozy moment warmed Norah’s heart.

“I’ll make dinner,” Norah said, kissing Kevin. “You play with the kids.”

Cooper washed his hands and devoured the hamburger Norah made. “This is just as good as takeout!”

“If you like it, I’ll make it again,” Norah said, handing him a glass of milk.

After dinner, they played together until Cooper crawled into bed with them and fell fast asleep.

The next morning, Kevin made breakfast while Norah and Cooper got ready. “Mom, did you pick a song?” Cooper asked.

“Yep. Chose it last night,” Norah replied. For the kids, this contest was a big deal—she was determined to shine for Cooper.

At the kindergarten, Norah turned heads in her black dress. She carried herself with such grace that even the kids whispered to Cooper, “Your mom’s so pretty.”

“Everyone’s mom is pretty,” Cooper said—but pride lit up his face.

They sat together. A nearby mom asked, “How do you stay in such good shape? I can’t lose this belly fat.”

Norah smiled and shared her favorite yoga videos. “Exercise really helps. Eating less is one thing, but moving your body makes the biggest difference.”

They exchanged numbers, bonding over their kids’ friendship. Soon, the teacher kicked off the contest. Parents sang casually, and the crowd applauded no matter the skill level.

Norah’s a cappella performance drew cheers. “You were great,” said the mom next to her.

Norah smiled modestly. Then came the awards—every parent got a red flower.

“Mom, yours is bigger! Ours are a matching set!” Cooper beamed, pinning his flower beside hers.

They strolled around the playground. Another parent accidentally bumped into Norah and walked off without a word. She wasn’t hurt, so she let it go. Parents had their moments, but it wasn’t worth getting upset about.

## Chapter 712

Norah noticed her bag’s zipper was open only after getting in the car. “Cooper, want to go straight home or take a walk?” she asked.

“Home, Mom. I’m tired and need rest. School’s tomorrow,” he said, buckling his seatbelt.

Norah nodded. They chatted while the driver took them home, time passing quietly.

Once inside, Cooper didn’t linger. He took off his coat, slipped into his slippers, and ran over to Norah. “Mom, I’m heading upstairs to do homework. I want to finish before dinner.”

“Homework?” Norah blinked. Kindergarteners had homework? She knew it helped build good habits, but still—it seemed like a lot.

“The teacher said it’s to get us ready for elementary school,” Cooper explained. “It’s easy. I finish fast.”

Still, Norah followed him upstairs to check. In his room, Cooper pulled out a school-issued notebook.

“Two assignments—writing and comparing sizes.”

She scanned it. The writing task used simple, low-stroke words, and the math involved comparing numbers under twenty—totally manageable for his age.

“Think you can do it all?” she asked. “If anything’s confusing, I’ll help.”

Cooper grabbed a pencil and breezed through a math page. “I know this stuff, Mom.”

“Take your time,” Norah said. “I’ll check it after dinner.” She trusted him—no need to hover like a drill sergeant. That only backfired.

Downstairs, she played with Reina. Evening came, and Kevin walked in holding Norah’s favorite milk tea. “Reina, Daddy’s home!” Norah said, waving Reina’s hand.

Reina giggled and waved back. “Recognize Daddy?” Kevin grinned, scooping her up like a natural.

“Sorry I couldn’t pick you up,” he said to Norah.

“No need to apologize,” she replied. “We’re together now. That’s what matters.” She knew his work was for the family—she didn’t nitpick.

“You’re the best,” Kevin said, squeezing her hand. Then he glanced around. “Where’s our little guy?”

“Doing homework,” Norah said.

Kevin let out a breath. “He’s growing up fast. He was so tiny when he was born, and now—homework. Next, he’ll be walking himself to school.”

“It’s a good thing,” Norah teased. “He’s focused on school, not eloping. Just homework.”

Reina handed Kevin her favorite toy. He took it and gave it a squeeze, but his smile faded a little.

“She’s so tiny now, but she’ll grow up fast too. Just thinking about her getting married someday—it already hurts.”

Norah laughed. “She’s not even one! Let’s not jump to weddings just yet. Go make dinner. I’ll check on Cooper.”

Kevin’s thoughts drifted back to Norah’s delivery—painful, even with the best care. He silently promised to raise Reina with stories of strong women, not just fairy tale princesses.

Upstairs, Norah knocked on Cooper’s door and waited for his okay before stepping in. “Homework done? Dinner’s in half an hour.”

“Done!” Cooper said proudly, handing over his notebook. “How many points do I get?”

Norah looked it over. His writing was still a bit shaky, but neat—and every answer was right. “You did awesome,” she said, giving him a big thumbs-up. “Rest up. We’ll eat soon.”

“I want to see Reina,” Cooper said, grabbing her hand. Downstairs, he clung to Reina’s tiny hand like it was treasure.

Norah joined Kevin in the kitchen. Suddenly, Cooper called out, “Mom! Where are our red flowers?”

“In my bag,” Norah called back. “I’ll grab them.”

### **Chapter 713**

Kevin stopped her. “You’ll need to wash your hands after. I’ll get them.”

“They’re in my backpack—just unzip it,” Norah replied casually. She had nothing to hide.

Kevin and Cooper walked to the entrance. “So, how was the singing contest?” Kevin asked.

“Mom was amazing! Everyone clapped!” Cooper beamed, proudly praising Norah’s beauty and kindness. “She never yells at me—unlike the other moms.”

Kevin smiled, unzipped the backpack, and found the red flowers. He handed them to Cooper, then placed the bag on the shelf. Cooper tripped over some shoes and nearly fell. Kevin caught him, but in the process, Norah’s bag tipped over and its contents spilled out.

Aunt Wang quickly came over and took Cooper away. Kevin bent down to clean up. Near Norah’s lipstick, he noticed a note. He didn’t mean to pry, but the note was already open—and the message was chilling. It contained threats, signed by “a mysterious organization.”

His expression hardened. This was a direct provocation. No one threatened Norah or the kids and got away with it.

“Dinner’s ready!” Norah called from the kitchen, bringing out the food.

Cooper ran back, tugging on Kevin’s arm. “Dad, come eat!”

“I’m coming,” Kevin said, slipping the note into his pocket. He repacked the bag, said nothing about the threat, and joined them. He’d handle this quietly—protecting his family without burdening them.

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### **Ophelia’s Side**

Since that night, Ophelia had shut herself inside her city apartment. She barely ate unless she was starving and only replied to her parents with short messages. She avoided everyone else.

Then came Emilio, knocking at her door. She ignored him, wanting nothing to do with him, but he wouldn't give up. He had checked the building's surveillance to confirm she hadn't left.

His nonstop banging irritated her—and her neighbors.

"Are you insane?" a neighbor yelled. "You've been knocking for twenty minutes! If no one answers, they're not home!"

"Someone *is* home," Emilio insisted.

"You're disturbing everyone!" the neighbor snapped. "If they don't answer, they don't want to see you. Text or call. Stop banging!"

The noise got worse. Ophelia didn't care about Emilio, but she didn't want to trouble her neighbors. She finally opened the door, apologizing. "Sorry. I was asleep. Didn't hear it. Sorry for the noise."

"Keep your drama private," the neighbor grumbled, softened by her sincerity, then walked off.

Ophelia tried to close the door, but Emilio blocked it with his hand. "Let's talk inside," he said. "We're already causing a scene."

"You *already* caused a scene," she said, pulling on the door.

He pushed back. Neither gave in. Finally, Ophelia let go and walked away. Emilio followed, closing the door behind him. "You're letting me in."

"I didn't say that."

Still, he pushed forward with his proposal. Since they'd slept together, they should get married.

"I've thought about it," Ophelia said, facing him. But his eyes weren't filled with love—only obsession. "We're not even right as friends, let alone partners."

Emilio's face went pale. "You're cutting me off? After everything I've done?"

"Love isn't about fairness," she said. "You like me, but I don't owe you anything in return."

If it were real love, he'd respect her decision—not try to force her hand.

## **Chapter 714**

"You don't like me even a little?" Emilio asked, desperate.

He had done everything he could—how could she still not feel anything?

"This isn't the past," Ophelia said, her head aching. "Stop bringing up that night. If sleeping together means marriage, then Kian and I—with a kid—should've been married long ago."

Emilio's jaw tightened. "Don't try to provoke me."

"I'm not. I'm just making a point. Now go. And stop banging on my door. I don't want another scene."

"You're heartless," Emilio muttered. "Not even a cup of tea? I stood outside forever—I'm exhausted."

Tea wasn't a big deal, but Ophelia saw right through him. If she gave an inch, he'd take a mile. "No," she said. "The Fletchers don't need my tea. I'll walk you out."

She opened the door. Cold air rushed in, chilling Emilio to the bone. "So that's it? Not even friends?"

"No contact for now," she said calmly. "I'll send a gift when you get married."

Only after he let go could they possibly be friends. Emilio stared at her, then turned and left. But he didn't want her wedding gift—he wanted *her*.

Later, he went to the bank, then a jewelry store. He picked out extravagant gold pieces.

"Where's your fiancée?" the salesgirl asked. "Couples usually shop together."

"She's busy," Emilio replied. "I want heavy, luxury pieces."

He chose the most expensive necklaces and hairpins. When it came to bracelets, the salesgirl asked, "What's her wrist size?"

He hesitated. He'd never even held Ophelia's hand. "Do you have any open-style bracelets?"

"Just a few," she said, eyeing him curiously. He was generous, but clearly didn't know her well.

"I'll take this," Emilio said, picking the heaviest one. He also added a phoenix crown to his list. Money wasn't an issue—he just wanted to impress the Labries.

The salesgirl smiled. Her monthly sales goal was met in one visit.

Emilio bought some premium cigarettes and alcohol, then drove to the Labries' home. When Paloma saw the haul, she was stunned. "Emilio, this is our home—why so many gifts?"

"I'm proposing," he said, showing off the gold, the cash, and the gifts. "All of this is for you."

The Labries exchanged looks, unsure what to say. Emilio's effort was obvious, and his feelings for Ophelia were clear. But marriage? That was up to Ophelia.

"We appreciate it," Paloma said gently. "But please take these back. You and Ophelia need time. I want her to have a beautiful wedding someday."

"We've already been intimate," Emilio said firmly. "I want to marry her now—before it turns into a shotgun wedding. If we settle down quickly, Kian might finally stop bothering her."

Paloma stiffened. Ophelia had sworn off relationships—how could this be true? She wouldn't hide something like that.

Emilio kept pressing, warning about Kian's persistence, but the Labries didn't respond the way he hoped. Paloma's confidence in her daughter began to waver.

## Chapter 715

Paloma knew she couldn't rush Ophelia into marriage. She gave Brody a look, and he quietly poured tea.

"Emilio, have some tea," Brody said. "You haven't even rested."

"Uncle, Aunt, I want to marry Ophelia," Emilio said earnestly. "Our families are a perfect match. I'll treat her right, and so will my parents. Please say yes."

Brody hesitated. "It's too sudden. An engagement should come first. Then both families can meet to discuss things. Take your gifts back—we'll visit you soon."

Emilio felt the rejection but knew he'd already gone too far. Still, he refused to leave empty-handed. "The gold and gifts are for the engagement," he said, forcing a smile.

Brody called after him, "We can't accept the engagement gifts yet," but Emilio was already gone.

"We need to call Ophelia," Brody said.

Paloma nodded. They video-called her. Ophelia, after freshening up to hide her emotions, answered with a smile.

"Mom, Dad, I'm fine on my own," she said lightly.

"What's going on with Emilio?" Paloma asked. "He showed up with gold and engagement gifts. Are you two that serious?"

Ophelia's smile disappeared. Emilio had blindsided her parents after she already rejected him—trying to pressure her into marriage. "He said... you two were intimate," Paloma added awkwardly. Brody quietly stepped away to give them privacy.

“He said that?” Ophelia was stunned. Tears welled up. That betrayal—sharing a lie like that—broke her.

“Mom, I don’t have feelings for him. You might like him, but I don’t. His character’s off—he’ll do anything to win, but once he loses interest, he’ll turn cold.”

Paloma frowned. Emilio’s actions had raised red flags, but she still tried to soften it. “Maybe he’s just nervous and making mistakes.”

“No,” Ophelia said firmly. “I was drugged that night—whatever happened, I regret. I won’t ruin my life over a mistake.” She refused to marry Emilio, especially after how immature he’d been.

“If you want to get married, great. If not, that’s fine too,” Paloma said, finally siding with her. “We had hoped things would work out with Emilio, but that doesn’t mean you should marry him.”

After a cigarette outside, Brody came back and agreed. “We’re fine if you stay single. Just be happy.”

Ophelia broke down in tears. Their support meant everything. She’d been afraid they would pressure her into marrying Emilio. “Thank you,” she sobbed. “You two are amazing.”

“Talk to Emilio directly,” Paloma said gently. “He’s stubborn, but not a bad person. He’ll understand.” They planned to return the gifts.

After the call, Ophelia decided to start working at her parents’ company to ease their burden. Feeling hungry, she went downstairs—and spotted Kian standing under a streetlamp.

First Emilio, now Kian—like they were tag-teaming her. She tried to walk past without looking at him.

“Still avoiding me?” Kian asked, catching up. “I’ve texted you, but you blocked me.”

## Chapter 716

“You can yell at me, hit me, make me kneel on durians—I’ll take it,” Kian said. “Just don’t ignore me.”

He’d never begged like this—not even with tough clients. But for Ophelia, he’d give up everything.

Her eyes welled up, her feet frozen in place. She shook her head, avoiding eye contact—if she looked back, she might give in. “Kian, it’s over. We shouldn’t even be talking.”

Their last encounter should’ve been at the divorce office, saying their final goodbye.



“We can start over,” Kian said. “You still care—I can feel it.”

“Start over?” Ophelia snapped. “We lost our child. And I... I got drunk and...” She almost mentioned Emilio—something that haunted her—but caught herself. Why explain? They were getting divorced. Kian might think she’d cheated.

She hated how torn she felt. She wanted space, but also feared his judgment. Love felt like a wound that wouldn’t heal.

“I saw you at the bar,” Kian said quietly. “You were—”

“Don’t!” she cut in, panicking. What had he seen? If he knew the truth, it could destroy her.

“Am I really that awful to you?” Kian asked, his voice thick with pain. That night had felt magical to him—but for her, it was a nightmare.

She stayed silent. She was the one who was broken. That night, she had wished it had been Kian. But life wasn’t that kind.

She walked away slowly, like a shadow of herself. Kian just stood there, watching—until an elderly woman passed by and spoke.

“Young man, standing here all alone? You fight with your girlfriend?”

“Worse,” Kian said. “We’re divorcing. She won’t even look at me.”

The old lady’s face turned serious. “She’s giving you the cold shoulder? I’m old, but I’ve got advice. Want to hear it?”

Kian braced himself for the usual “just move on” speech. Love wasn’t something you could just toss away. But she surprised him.

“I chased my husband when I was young. His family called me low-class, a country girl. I didn’t care. I loved him. It took time, but I won him over.”

“Did his family ever accept you?” Kian asked.

“They did,” she smiled. “Parents want good partners for their kids. Once we got married, they welcomed me. Gave me control of the family funds, too. I outlasted all the gossip.” She grinned. “I’ll live to 99!”

Kian’s mind spun. Brody and Paloma had been kind to him—supportive of the marriage even if they’d had their doubts. Unlike his mother, who always meddled. But now that she’d had surgery, she couldn’t keep interfering forever. He could play along when she was around.

“Thanks, Grandma,” he said sincerely.

She chuckled. “Don’t thank me. You’re handsome—it’d be a waste to lose someone who loves you. My husband was handsome too—that’s why I chased him!”

Kian laughed, but inside, he felt a fire reignite. Ophelia used to love his clean, suited-up look—he’d use that to slowly break through her defenses.

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### **Ophelia’s side**

After eating, Ophelia didn’t go straight home—afraid Kian might still be outside. She wandered into a nearby mall, watching happy couples pass by and feeling more alone than ever.

She sat on a bench, tuning out the world.

A nervous college student approached. “Miss, are you interested in our travel agency? We offer short and long trips at good prices.”

“Travel?” Ophelia perked up. The idea of escaping—away from Kian, away from Emilio—sounded perfect. She took a flyer.

“Any groups leaving soon?”

### **Chapter 717**

“The earliest group leaves tomorrow morning,” the student said excitedly. “Horseback riding on the grasslands, drinking kumis—seven days, all expenses covered.”

On her first day working part-time, Ophelia had already made a sale. That money could help pay for her grandma’s treatment.

“I’ll take that one,” she said. Anywhere far from here would do.

She paid for the trip, then booked a hotel near the departure point instead of going home. In her room, she video-called her parents. “I’m joining a tour group tomorrow. I’ll be back next week.”

“Go explore a bit,” Paloma said. “Did you pack?”

Ophelia shook her head. “I’ll just buy what I need.”

“We’ll send your bedding,” Brody said. “Hotel sheets might irritate your skin.” He hadn’t forgotten her childhood allergies.

“I’m already away from home—don’t go out of your way,” Ophelia said, trying to stop them.

But they insisted. Her heart softened. After hanging up, she thought about Kian—probably home with Teresa by now.

But downstairs, Kian was still waiting in the cold. When someone placed a blanket over him, he looked up, hopeful—Ophelia?

His hope vanished when he saw Teresa.

“What are you doing here?” he snapped.

“You’re still out here?” Teresa said. “I called your company. You left hours ago, so I figured you’d be here. Why are you doing this to yourself?” She adjusted the blanket. “Go home. It’s cold. You’ll get sick.”

“It’s none of your business,” he said, tossing the blanket back.

“If you don’t want my help, fine,” Teresa snapped. “But don’t faint out here waiting for an ambulance!” Was Ophelia really worth this humiliation?

Kian turned his back on her. Furious, Teresa sent a text. Half an hour later, Mrs. Paterson showed up.

“Mom, you just had surgery. Why are you out here?” Kian asked, shocked.

“Good thing I came,” Mrs. Paterson said, poking his forehead. “Look at you—freezing out here like an idiot. I’m dying. Can’t you let me rest in peace?” If Ophelia wasn’t a Labrie, she would’ve paid her off. But instead, she had to deal with Kian. “Please, just let me go peacefully. If you stay here, I’ll stay too.”

She handed her coat to Teresa and stood there in just a thin shirt, shivering.

“Mom, stop,” Kian said, voice breaking. “You’re making me kneel.”

“I don’t want that,” she said, pretending to kneel. “I just want you to end things with Ophelia. That’s my last wish. Can you deny me that?”

Kian caught her mid-kneel. “I’ll go home with you. Just don’t do this.”

She nodded, satisfied. On the way back, she suddenly felt a sharp pain in her chest, but blamed Kian’s stubbornness and ignored it. She kept talking, but Kian didn’t respond. He kept his eyes closed, silently crying.

She slept soundly in her hospital bed. Kian stayed up all night, watching her. But as morning came, he grew suspicious. A post-op patient, walking around in the cold like that? The doctor had warned him to be cautious. Something didn’t add up.

## **Chapter 718**

The timing of his mom's "illness" felt too perfect. Was she faking it? The idea wouldn't leave Kian's mind. Calmly, he left the hospital, determined to find the truth.

Not long after, Mrs. Paterson got out of bed. She had no clue that her late-night stunt had made Kian suspicious. She met with the doctor—an old classmate—and urged him, "You've got to exaggerate my illness to Kian. Make it sound serious. Otherwise, he'll keep defending that troublemaker."

"Don't worry," the doctor said, patting his chest. "I've got you. But hey, since we're old friends, can you help me out? My son wants to study abroad, and we need some funds. I'll pay you back when my bonus comes in."

Mrs. Paterson waved him off. Money wasn't a problem. When Kian was still an assistant, he used to send her part of his paycheck every month. Now that he had his own company, the amounts were even bigger. She agreed without a second thought.

"Don't stress about the money," she said. "Pay me back whenever. We're friends—I trust you."

The doctor smiled and left, shaking his head. She didn't know how good she had it. If Kian were his son—with that wealth and a good daughter-in-law—he'd be living the dream. Why stir up all this drama? But it wasn't his place to judge.

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Meanwhile, Ophelia woke up, packed her bags, and headed to the travel agency with her suitcase. A bus took the group to the airport. The agency had booked economy seats, but Ophelia upgraded to first class. As she looked out at the blue sky and clouds, she felt a flicker of freedom. Maybe being alone wasn't so bad.

After this trip, she'd focus on her career. No more stalling. Even if Kian came back, she wouldn't let his moods mess with her anymore.

Hours later, the plane landed. The agency had a packed schedule, and though Ophelia's mind was still restless at first, galloping across the grasslands on horseback cleared everything. Her only focus was to hold on tight and not fall. For the first time in ages, all the bad memories and messy people faded away.

But back home, Emilio was in a dark mood. He had told his parents he wanted to marry Ophelia.

His parents—Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher—had a classic arranged marriage. They barely knew each other before the wedding, stayed distant afterward, and even had Emilio through IVF. They lived separate lives but, surprisingly, agreed on the marriage.

"I don't care who you marry," his dad said, "as long as she's a good match and helps the family."

“Make the wedding grand,” his mom added. “Don’t embarrass us.”

Emilio looked at them with pity. Their marriage was cold and empty. He’d never let that happen with Ophelia. He imagined cozy nights together, vacations with their kids—a real family.

“You don’t need to worry about the wedding,” he said. “I’m just letting you know. We’ll have a family dinner soon. Don’t screw it up.” Then he walked out, done with them.

He called Brody to set a date, but Brody hesitated. “Sorry, Emilio. Ophelia’s traveling, and I’m not sure when she’ll be back. Let’s talk later.”

The message was clear: “Later” meant “never.” Brody wasn’t interested in the marriage.

“Uncle, it’s fine if Ophelia’s not back,” Emilio pushed. “Let’s have the parents meet first.”

But Brody stood firm. “Emilio, this is a big deal. We have to wait for Ophelia and hear her opinion. We can’t rush this.”

Emilio hung up, stunned. Not only was Ophelia avoiding him—now even her parents were backing off. He was running out of options.

**“Ophelia, you’re leaving me no choice.”**

That night, a headline exploded online:  
**“Fletcher and Labrie Families to Marry and Unite.”**

The comment section blew up. Some people congratulated them. Others questioned it.

“Isn’t Emilio the guy who gave Ophelia flowers outside the courthouse? Said they were just friends. Now they’re getting married? LOL.”

“Rich folks and their ‘clarifications’—all about image. But hey, they do look good together.”

“Why’s everyone freaking out about Ophelia moving on? Kian already had another woman at the courthouse. Guys move on fast, but women get dragged for it? Double standard.”

“Whatever. Their drama’s not ours. Just pass the popcorn.”

Emilio took screenshots of the positive comments and sent them to Kian. They moved in the same circles—getting Kian’s number was easy. It was late. Kian was probably asleep.

**Let him wake up to this. He deserves it.**

**Chapter 719**

Kian wasn't asleep. He sat at his desk, files spread out under a warm desk lamp. The truth stung—his mom's surgery had been fake, but her illness was real: early-stage lung cancer and a weak heart. A deadly combo if left untreated. Still, she refused real treatment—too focused on keeping him away from Ophelia.

He planned to confront her in the morning. But when he grabbed his phone, Emilio's name popped up with a taunting text. His stomach dropped.

*Emilio and Ophelia... getting married?*

It was all over the internet. If it was trending, it had to be true. Was this really what Ophelia wanted? Or had her parents pushed it? No, they usually respected her choices—unlike his own mom.

Still, he couldn't break up her engagement just because he loved her. That would be selfish. Maybe they really weren't meant to be.

Before bed, he wrote an email to her:  
*[I'll never forget that night at the bar when you hugged me and said my name. If you hate me, delete this. I won't reach out again. But if you ever need me, I'll be there.]*

He knew she barely checked her inbox. She might never even see it.

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The next morning, Ophelia was at breakfast, halfway through a bun, when she overheard the table next to hers.

"Did you hear? The Fletcher and Labrie families are getting married."

"Nope. I don't keep up with that kind of gossip."

"They're not celebrities, just rich. But Kian? He's hot. Maybe I should get a job at his company and try for some office romance."

Ophelia froze. *Fletcher and Labrie?* She was the only Labrie daughter. Had her parents seriously set up a marriage without telling her?

She texted them:  
*[Mom, Dad, you didn't arrange an engagement behind my back... right?]*

Her mom replied instantly:  
*[Of course not! We were about to ask if you knew anything, then saw it all over the news saying you and Kian are in love. Can you call us?]*

Ophelia pushed aside her breakfast, rushed to her room, and called. Turned out her parents had just seen the news that morning too. Everyone was blindsided.

“This kind of fake story could really hurt people!” Paloma fumed. “We’re suing whoever started it.”

“It’s not some random troll,” Ophelia said. “I know who did it.”

“Who?” Brody asked. “Tell me. I’ll handle it.”

“Emilio.”

Silence.

Her parents looked stunned. Emilio had always treated them well. Could he really do something so shady?

“He’s obsessed with marrying me,” Ophelia said. “He showed up at my place, made a huge scene. I said no, then he ran to you guys. You said no too. He’s desperate. He’d do anything.”

Paloma hesitated. “That’s a serious accusation. We can’t say that without proof.”

They didn’t want to believe it. Emilio had always seemed like a good guy.

Brody finally said, “Stay on your trip for now. We’ll get to the bottom of this and take the headline down. If it *is* Emilio, he’s done with our family.”

“I’m coming home,” Ophelia said. “You’ve got enough to deal with. I’m not in the mood for sightseeing anymore.”

They didn’t stop her. She’d mentioned interning at the company before—now felt like the right time.

“I was thinking of making you a manager,” Brody said, “but I’m worried you’re not ready. People won’t take you seriously.”

Ophelia smiled. “Then I’ll start from the bottom. Just give me a regular job. I’m booking a flight.”

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While she rushed back, Kian was at the hospital, test results in hand, pleading with his mom.

“I know my body,” Mrs. Paterson snapped. “I already had surgery. I’m fine.”

Kian shut her down. “No, you didn’t. You and the doctor faked it.”

**Chapter 720**

Mrs. Paterson felt her stomach twist. Kian's concern for her illness was the only thing keeping him from running straight back to Ophelia. Now that he knew the surgery was fake...

"Kian, let me explain," she stammered.

"Explain what?" he snapped, his head pounding. "This isn't a game. You're sick, Mom. Why are you playing with your life like this?"

The files in his hand were crystal clear. The experts all agreed—if she didn't get surgery now, she'd eventually be stuck in bed or worse.

"I did this for you," she said, guilt-tripping like always. "If you hadn't been so difficult, I wouldn't have needed to lie."

She rambled on, hoping he'd fold. But Kian just stared at her, sadness written all over his face.

"Mom, you already got what you wanted. Can you please just listen to the doctors now?"

She realized something—he only knew the *surgery* was fake, not that her condition might not be as bad as she made it seem. She could still use that.

"Fine," she said with a cough. "But only if you completely cut ties with Ophelia. Show me divorce papers, and I'll start treatment."

"We've already filed," Kian said calmly. "The cooling-off period isn't over yet."

He didn't want to push too hard. If he did, she might refuse treatment entirely.

"Then I won't feel safe until I see the final papers," she said. "No papers, no meds."

Kian's patience snapped. "If that's how it's going to be, maybe I *will* remarry Ophelia. You've seen your condition. Without treatment, you won't last long."

Mrs. Paterson froze. Her guilt trips usually worked. But this time? Nothing. If Kian and Ophelia reunited, maybe even had a child... she'd lose everything.

"Kian, I'm your *mother!*"

"And that's the only reason I'm here begging you," he said coldly.

Finally, she backed down. "Fine. I'll start treatment. But if I even *hear* you've seen Ophelia, I'm stopping everything."

After Kian left, the doctor walked in.

"You really starting treatment?" he asked.



“Treatment’s for sick people,” she said with a laugh. “I’m fine. I just said that to string him along.”

The doctor almost mentioned that Kian had already paid the bills, but stopped himself. If they refunded the money, Kian would know something was up.

Instead, he said, “How about I bring your meds every day, but you don’t take them or get any IVs? That way, if Kian checks in, it *looks* like you’re doing something.”

“Smart thinking, old friend,” she said with a grin—completely unaware of the trouble she was stirring up.

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Ophelia landed and went straight home. Emilio was at the door with arms full of expensive gifts, chatting with her parents. But Paloma and Brody weren’t their usual warm selves—they were polite but stiff.

“Emilio, you don’t need to bring us things,” Brody said flatly.

“These gifts must’ve cost a fortune,” Paloma added. “Please take them back. We can’t accept them.”

Emilio felt the change in the air. He wasn’t welcome—not as a guest, and definitely not as a future son-in-law.

“Just tell me what I did wrong,” he pleaded, dropping to his knees. “I’ll fix it. Please don’t cut me off.”

Brody and Paloma panicked, trying to help him up, but Emilio wouldn’t budge.

“If you won’t tell me, I’ll kneel here forever,” he said.

“Emilio.”

Ophelia’s voice stopped everything.

He turned, his expensive suit pants already dirty. He reached for her hand, but she pulled back.

“Did you spread that marriage rumor?” she asked, her voice cold.

“I don’t even know what’s online,” he replied.

“Don’t play dumb,” she said. “The story about me and Kian getting married. If you did it, just admit it. We’ll find out anyway.”

On her flight home, she'd finally connected the dots. Emilio's "coincidental" appearances weren't random—they were planned.

"You don't trust me at all, do you?" he said, trying to deflect.

Ophelia gave a bitter smile.