

# Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

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## Chapter 721

Ophelia's bitter smile wasn't just for Emilio—it was for herself. She'd put her trust in the wrong people too many times. "Trust isn't something you get for free—it's earned," she said, her voice calm but firm. "Get up, Emilio. A man only kneels to heaven, earth, and his parents—not to me. Don't do this."

"Ophelia!" Emilio clung to the hem of her coat like it was the only thing keeping her from slipping away forever.

"Go home," she said, slipping off her coat and leaving it in his hands. "You live your life, I'll live mine. I already told you—we can't even be friends."

She turned and walked away with her parents. Paloma looked back a few times, like she wanted to say something, but stayed quiet. She picked up her pace until the three of them disappeared from Emilio's sight.

Back home, Ophelia didn't bring up Emilio. She went straight into business mode. "Mom, Dad, I want to start at the company this afternoon. Have you arranged a role for me?"

"No need to rush," Brody said. He had set something up for her, but now that she was serious, he hesitated. "Take a few days off. Relax at home."

Once she joined the company, she'd be working just like everyone else. No special treatment, no easy days. Brody wanted her to enjoy a bit more freedom while she still could.

"Dad, you've got gray hairs," Ophelia said, gently pulling one from his head.

Brody chuckled. "Just a few. I noticed them earlier. Normal for my age."

"You could keep them black if you took better care of yourself," she said softly but with resolve. "I know you're worried about me, but I can't stay under your wing forever. It's my turn to take care of you."

Brody couldn't argue with that. After lunch, Ophelia took the oldest car in the garage and drove to the office. Brody had already told the manager to keep her identity under wraps—she'd be just a regular intern.

Her supervisor, who'd been there for three years, gave her a tour and handed her a stack of files. "Miss Labrie, format these and send them to me this afternoon."

“Got it,” Ophelia replied, using a fake name to blend in. She sat down and got to work.

The afternoon flew by. She completed the tasks quickly and even helped with extra assignments. She stayed late with the team before heading back to her apartment.

That night, no Emilio at the door. No one watching from downstairs. She finally slept peacefully.

The next morning, she was up early and back at work. Even though it was her family’s company, she pitched in wherever needed, not just in her assigned tasks. After a week, her hard work impressed her supervisor. “I’m meeting a client tomorrow,” he said. “Come with me.”

“Me? Are you sure I’m ready?” Ophelia’s eyes lit up.

She’d worked as Kevin’s secretary before—she could handle clients. But getting this opportunity just one week into the internship? That was huge.

“I’ve seen your work,” he said. “Your skills and attitude? Honestly, you’re better than I am. You’re ready.”

She dove into the project files he sent her to prepare. As she opened her email—something she hadn’t checked in a while—she noticed a message from Kian. Her finger hovered over “delete,” but she accidentally clicked “open.”

Might as well read it.

Her heart pounded as she read. The last part hit her hardest: Kian had been with her that night at the bar—not Emilio?

What had Emilio been lying about?

Before she could unblock Kian, her phone rang—it was her dad, calling her to his office. When she walked in, Brody looked furious.

“Dad, why do you look so mad?” she asked, trying to ease the tension by massaging his shoulders. “Relax. I’ll cook you and Mom a nice dinner tonight.”

“We got played,” Brody said through gritted teeth. “By Kian. Thank God you’re not with him anymore. Or you’d be dealing with one disaster after another.”

He slammed a stack of papers onto the desk. “Look at what *he*’s been up to.”

Ophelia flipped through the documents, and her expression turned to disbelief. Emilio hadn’t just stalked her—he’d created the smear campaign against her online. Then, he swooped in to “help” fix it, all to make her feel like she owed him. Every move was calculated.

"I'm furious," Brody snapped. "Forget looks or status. From now on, character is everything. Guys like him—smooth talkers with hidden agendas—are the worst. Thank God you're not married to him. Divorce would be hell."

Ophelia tried to calm him down, but a wave of dizziness hit. Her vision blurred, and she grabbed the table for balance—then collapsed.

"Ophelia!" Brody yelled.

## Chapter 722

Brody's heart stopped as Ophelia collapsed. He rushed over, picked her up, and yelled, "Someone call an ambulance!"

Employees panicked, scrambling to help. Minutes later, an ambulance arrived. Brody rode with her to the hospital, pacing outside the emergency room like a man possessed. She was his only daughter. If anything happened to her, he and Paloma wouldn't survive it.

When the doctor finally came out, Brody rushed over and grabbed him. "How is she? What's wrong?"

The doctor gently pried his hands off and said calmly, "She's okay. Her blood sugar was just too low. But... she's pregnant. There are two heartbeats in one body. She needs to eat more and take better care of herself."

Brody froze. Pregnant?

It had to be Emilio's.

He'd already decided Emilio was manipulative and unfit for Ophelia. But now, things were different. She'd already lost one child—another abortion could destroy her, both physically and emotionally. Sure, they could raise the baby without him, but Emilio? He'd never give up. He'd fight for the child to keep her tied to him.

Brody walked into her hospital room, weighed down with worry. Ophelia looked pale, lying on the bed, but she gave him a weak smile. "Dad, you look like I'm dying. What's wrong?"

He didn't answer.

Her smile faded. "Wait—am I dying? I feel fine. I'm not ready to die."

"You're not dying," Brody said quietly. "You're pregnant. What do you want to do?"

Ophelia blinked. "You're kidding, right? The doctor said last time I'd need months to prep before I could even *try* to get pregnant."

Brody handed her the medical report. "I wouldn't joke about this."

She stared at the paper, reading it over and over. Pregnant. For real.

“Emilio is too dangerous,” Brody said. “If he finds out, he’ll use the baby to control you. And someday, the child will want a father. You might never be free of him. I think... you shouldn’t keep it.”

He hated saying it, but someone had to be the bad guy if it meant saving her from more pain.

“No,” Ophelia said firmly. “It’s not Emilio’s. It’s Kian’s.”

She touched her stomach gently, wondering if this was the baby she had lost before, coming back to her. “I’m keeping it, Dad. Kian and I are divorced, but he won’t hound me. I know him.”

Brody frowned. “And what about his mom? That woman’s toxic. Anyone tangled with her is doomed.”

He’d already softened toward Kian—especially after finding out it was Teresa, not Kian, behind the online attacks. And a rival company had backed it. Kian wasn’t the villain. If it were just Kian, Brody might even be open to letting him be a part of their lives. But his mother? She was a dealbreaker.

“Don’t blame me for being blunt,” Brody said. “Unless she’s out of the picture, there’s no future between you two.”

“I understand,” Ophelia said. After losing a child because of her former mother-in-law, she wasn’t about to make the same mistake again. “I won’t let it happen twice.”

Brody nodded, relieved she wasn’t being naive.

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At the hospital, Kian visited his mother every day. She’d been acting sick for weeks—taking pills, hooked up to IVs, putting on a show. But that day, he forgot something and went back to her room.

He stopped cold in the doorway.

Inside, he overheard her talking with Emilia.

“Aunt, you’ve been faking this whole time,” Emilia said. “These hospital bills are insane—thousands a day. Kian’s working his tail off to pay for this.”

Mrs. Paterson scoffed. “It’s just money. If it secures his future, I’d spend ten times more.”

“But it’s not working. Kian doesn’t want Teresa. He’s still in love with Ophelia. If you hadn’t interfered, none of this would’ve happened.”

Emilia hesitated, then added quietly, “You caused her miscarriage. Honestly, who’s the real villain here? If Kian still cares about her this much, why not let them be?”

“Ophelia will *never* be a Paterson,” Mrs. Paterson snapped. “If he doesn’t want Teresa, fine—there are other girls. We’ll find one, get him married this year, and have a grandkid by next.”

Emilia sighed. “If Ophelia’s baby had lived, you *would* have had a grandkid this year. And she can get pregnant again. They clearly can’t let each other go.”

## Chapter 723

Mrs. Paterson let out a cold laugh. “Pregnant? I asked the doctor. Ophelia’s body can barely carry a baby—especially after the miscarriage. Even if she’s with Kian, she won’t have his child.”

The door suddenly burst open. Kian stood there, face dark with rage. Every word he’d just heard had pushed him past his limit. This woman—his own mother—was unrecognizable.

“Kian, why are you back?” Mrs. Paterson stammered, her voice shaky. She thought she was alone and had spoken freely.

“If I hadn’t come back, I wouldn’t know half the things you’ve done,” Kian said, his voice trembling with fury. “You’re a woman too. How can you be this heartless?”

It wasn’t just the miscarriage she caused—her cruelty went far deeper. No wonder Ophelia wanted nothing to do with him. He didn’t deserve her.

“I was just talking—” Mrs. Paterson tried to explain.

“Enough,” Kian snapped. “I’m getting a vasectomy. That baby’s gone, and I won’t have another.”

He meant it. He would schedule the procedure that day.

Mrs. Paterson’s world came crashing down. Everything she had done—scheming for the “right” daughter-in-law to carry on the family line—was pointless now. If Kian followed through, that dream was over.

“No children? That’s the worst betrayal!” she cried. “If you do this, I won’t go through with my treatment!”

“You never did,” Kian shot back. “You lied because you didn’t think you were really sick.”

She didn’t respond.

“But you *are* sick,” he said, pulling medical reports from his bag and slapping them on the table. “Lung cancer. Heart issues. You’ve delayed things so long that surgery might not even help anymore. Read it. Get treated or don’t—I’m done.”

He grabbed his bag and walked out.

Mrs. Paterson stared at the report, frozen. Her chest tightened, pain shooting through her. She used to ignore it, but now it terrified her.

“Emilia! Get a doctor!” she yelled. “I need a full check-up. Call Kian back—what’s wrong with me?!”

Panicked and confused, Emilia ran off for help. Since Mrs. Paterson’s usual doctor wasn’t around, another one stepped in. After the tests, he frowned and looked over her medical history.

“This doesn’t make sense. You’ve been listed as receiving top treatment. Why is your condition worse?”

“I didn’t take it,” she admitted, her voice cracking. “No meds, no IVs. I refused it all.”

The doctor looked at her in disbelief. “If you’re refusing treatment, go home. Stop wasting your son’s money. And don’t drag the hospital into this.”

“No, I was wrong,” she begged. “I’ll follow through now, I swear.”

She had talked tough about not fearing death—but now that it felt real, she was terrified. Her life had been easy, funded by Kian’s money and devotion. Death would take all that away.

“Go back to your ward,” the doctor said. “We need family consent and more tests before we move forward. I’ll report this to my supervisor.”

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That evening, Kian sat in silence, recovering from his vasectomy. The loss of his child haunted him. He had failed as a father, and that guilt would never go away.

Then his phone lit up: *Ophelia*.

Her number was burned into his memory. He answered quickly, his heart racing. “Ophelia, you’re finally calling.”

“Just a reminder,” she said flatly. “Don’t forget to bring the divorce papers on Monday.”

She didn’t mention her pregnancy. It was too dangerous—Mrs. Paterson might interfere again.

“Okay,” Kian said quietly. Then, after a pause, “I had the vasectomy today.”

“What?” she asked, stunned.

"I promised to protect you when we got married," he said. "But I failed. My mom hurt our baby. I don't deserve you. We're getting divorced, and I won't have more kids."

Ophelia didn't respond. Tears streamed down her face. Why did Kian have to be so good? If he were cruel, it would've been easier to let go.

"You're still young," she finally said. "You might meet someone else. Vasectomies can be reversed. Don't trap yourself."

"Losing you is my only regret," Kian said, his voice breaking. "My life is over."

The only thing keeping him going now was working quietly to support her, to give her everything he could from a distance.

"Let's not talk about this anymore," Ophelia said. "How's your mom?"

She didn't even know why she asked. If it weren't for Mrs. Paterson, none of this would've happened.

## Chapter 724

"She's really sick," Kian said, his voice heavy with resignation. "Even if she has surgery, she'll probably be bedridden for life." Mrs. Paterson had brought this on herself. Ophelia had done nothing but care—visiting, making her healthy soups, trying to be kind. If his mother hadn't stirred up so much trouble, they could've been a happy family, looking forward to their baby. But life doesn't work on "what ifs"—only consequences.

Ophelia went quiet, processing. "How did this happen?" Before the divorce, Mrs. Paterson had seemed fine—vibrant, even. How had it all gone downhill so fast?

"She faked being sick at first," Kian said. "But now she's actually sick. Lung cancer, heart problems... it's all gotten worse. She missed the best chance for treatment."

Ophelia nearly said, *She deserves it*. But this was still Kian's mother. She bit her tongue.

After the call ended, she sat alone, thoughts swirling. With Mrs. Paterson too sick to meddle now, did that change anything? Did she still want the divorce? She wasn't sure anymore.

Suddenly, voices outside broke her train of thought. Peeking through the window, she saw Emilio facing off with her mother, Paloma.

"We were clear last time," Paloma said, irritation creeping into her voice. "No need to keep coming around. Why are you here?"

The evidence against Emilio was undeniable. Why couldn't he let go? Paloma would never let her daughter fall into a trap just because of sweet talk.

"I'm not here to cause trouble," Emilio said, his head lowered, his voice meek. "I just want to take back the gifts I gave you."

Paloma didn't catch the flicker of obsession in his eyes. "Fine. Come with me. I've packed everything—untouched."

The Labries weren't desperate. They weren't selling their daughter. Now that things with Emilio were over, all his gifts—unused or refunded—were going back.

But Paloma's firm stance only made Emilio more desperate. They wanted to cut ties? He wasn't letting that happen.

Inside, he didn't leave right away. "Let me treat you to one last dinner," he said. "A farewell meal."

"No need," Paloma replied, polite but firm. "I don't eat dinner. Trying to stay in shape."

Emilio kept pressing, turning up the charm. "Just one meal. Outside. Let me see Ophelia one last time. I swear—after this, I'll delete her number and never come back."

"My mom's already told you," Ophelia said, coming down the stairs. "This is over."

Being polite only gave him room to play games. It was time to shut it down, hard.

Paloma stood behind her. "Go home, Emilio. I'll wire the money for the gifts. They're too heavy to carry—I'll have the bodyguards take them out."

That word—*bodyguards*—was a warning. Step out of line, and they'd throw him out. Emilio caught it. He shot one last look at Ophelia. "Take care of yourself. Stay safe."

*Don't go out unless you have to.* He didn't say it out loud, but the threat hung in the air. He'd stalked her before. He'd do it again. And if he got the chance, maybe he'd leak something online. A compromising photo, a story twisted just right. Society judged women harshly. Her parents might give in—just to save her name.

Watching him leave, Ophelia's gut twisted. Something felt off, but she couldn't place it.

"Sweetie, all debts are settled," Paloma said, hugging her. "You're free to live your life. Your dad and I are with you all the way."



Ophelia hugged her back, grateful but cautious. Better to stay alert. The next day, she slipped a bottle of pepper-spray powder into her backpack. One spray, and anyone would be crying.

The day went by smoothly. After work, she and her coworkers hit up the nearby snack street. As she passed a narrow alley, a hand shot out and yanked her in.

### **Emilio.**

The polished front was gone. His eyes burned with mania as he grabbed her arms. “I love you, Ophelia. I’d give you everything. Why won’t you be with me? Don’t you have a heart?”

“You don’t love me,” she snapped. “You love control. You just want to *own* me—fit me into your little perfect-wife fantasy. You don’t care about *me*.”

She stared him down, voice steady. “There’s a police station nearby. Crowds, vendors everywhere. One scream and people will come running. Do you really want that?”

Emilio laughed, unhinged. “Look outside. The vendors? I paid them off. Ten grand each. They shut down early. No one’s coming.”

### **Chapter 725**

Ophelia glanced out. The once-busy street was now a ghost town. Vendors *never* closed early—unless someone paid them to. Emilio.

“You’re disgusting,” she said, her voice sharp.

He smirked like he was proud of it. “Thanks for the compliment. You’ve got two choices: be with me willingly... or I’ll *make* you.”

Either way, he was set on marrying her.

Ophelia’s hand crept toward her backpack zipper. “I’m not choosing either,” she said, sneering. “You’re a monster.”

As she reached for the pepper spray, Emilio lunged. He grabbed her, buried his face in her hair. “You smell so good, darling. Next week, your divorce papers will be ready. Let’s go get our marriage license that day, yeah?”

“Get off!” Ophelia kicked backward, but Emilio caught her legs, his hands roaming.

“So eager, huh?” he mocked. “Want it right here? How exciting.”

He’d planned the whole thing—seven-star hotel, rose petals, candlelight dinner. But Ophelia? She needed to be *broken in*, like some wild animal.

“You’ll go to jail!” she shouted.

His grin widened.  
“Once we’re married, you won’t send me anywhere. Maybe you’ll even have my kid tonight. You’d really raise our child without its dad?”

He was sure.  
No matter how tough women talked, pregnancy changed everything. Hormones would make her stay.

“You’re not even a beast—you’re worse,” Ophelia spat, sick to her stomach. His tongue grazed her calf. She nearly gagged. Her hand fumbled in her bag, panicked. The spray was there. She *knew* it was.

Then—  
A figure charged into the alley.  
A hard kick sent Emilio flying.

The man pinned him to the wall, fists flying.

“Kian?” Ophelia blinked.

It was him. Her hero. Her lifeline.  
“Run!” Kian yelled, not even looking back.  
“You want to fight me? Fine. But lay a hand on Ophelia? You’re not a man—you’re a monster.”

A real man *protects* women. Doesn’t hurt them.  
Kian had been tailing Emilio for days. Watching.  
If Emilio had played it straight, Kian would’ve backed off.  
But *this*?

If he hadn’t shown up now, Ophelia would’ve been destroyed. His fists weren’t enough. He wanted this creep to pay.

Ophelia called out, “Kian, step aside.”

Emilio, bloodied and bruised, looked up and *smirked*.  
“See? I’ll always matter more to her. Get lost—this is between us, husband and wife.”

Kian cursed under his breath.  
“Husband and wife? This is *assault*.”  
But Ophelia’s words had already hit him harder than any punch.

He loosened his grip on Emilio but kept a hold on his collar. He turned to her, hurt. "He's no good, Ophelia. Don't choose him."

"Move. And close your eyes," she said.

Emilio's smirk grew. Of course she'd pick him. Women *always* chose the bad guy.

Kian's heart dropped. He'd die for her—but if *this* was what she wanted...

He shut his eyes, swallowed hard.

Then—

A piercing scream. The *fssshh* of spray.

Ophelia had unleashed the pepper spray full force.

Emilio collapsed, howling in pain, thrashing on the ground. Stray dogs bolted from the alley's mouth.

"Think you can bully me?" Ophelia growled, slamming her heel into him. "You messed with the wrong woman."

Kian opened his eyes, stunned.

Ophelia stood tall, fierce and unshaken, shaking the spray can. "I brought this for a reason," she said. "Thanks for having my back."

"No need for thanks," Kian replied, grinning, blood on his lip. He felt lighter than air.

"You're hurt," she said, spotting blood on his arm. "We're going to the hospital. But first—we call the cops. He's not getting away with this."

## Chapter 726

Kian nodded, ready to follow her lead. Whatever she said, he'd go along with it.

Seeing him so obedient, Ophelia flashed back to their early days—when they'd just fallen in love. Kian used to grin like an idiot, and when she asked why, he'd say, "As long as you're here, I'm happy no matter what."

Now they were on the brink of divorce. Her baby would have her love, her parents' love—but not a father's.

"Will you hate me for following you?" Kian asked. "I know you didn't want to see me, but I was worried. He's not a good guy."

“No,” Ophelia said, shaking her head.

“No, you don’t hate me? Or…?”

“I don’t *not* want to see you,” she clarified. “We loved each other deeply. We didn’t split because the love was gone—it was misunderstandings and our parents.”

She didn’t hate him. But that didn’t mean she could keep living like this.

Kian’s heart sped up, hope flickering in his chest. But the police showed up before he could say more.

“Who called this in? Why is this guy unconscious?” one officer asked.

“I did,” Ophelia said. “He tried to assault me. I used pepper spray. The marks on his face are from my husband—he stepped in to protect me.” She explained how Emilio had paid off the vendors to clear the street.

The officers nodded and hauled Emilio’s limp body away. “We’ll need you both to come in for statements,” one said.

Ophelia agreed. As they walked to the police car, Kian grabbed her hand. “What did you just call me in front of the cops?”

“Husband,” she said. “We’re still married. The divorce isn’t final yet—we’re in the cooling-off period. If you don’t like it, I won’t call you that again. We’re getting the certificate soon anyway.”

“No!” Kian tightened his grip. “I don’t want a divorce. Let’s withdraw the application.”

Ophelia didn’t answer. She hadn’t made up her mind.

At the station, they gave their statements. Emilio, still unconscious, was taken to the hospital. Ophelia accompanied Kian to get his arm treated.

Her parents rushed over once they were notified. Paloma let out a breath of relief when she saw Ophelia unharmed. “I was terrified. Emilio’s insane. We’re sorry—we misjudged him.”

“I’m fine,” Ophelia reassured her. “Kian saved me. And I had pepper spray—it packs a punch.”

Brody glanced at Kian, who was getting his arm treated. “How’s he doing?”

Ophelia led them to his room. Kian stood to greet them, but Brody waved him off. “Sit. Focus on your arm.”

Brody had never liked Kian—especially after the divorce talk. He’d wanted him gone. But today, Kian had saved his daughter. That changed everything.

Paloma felt the same. She inspected Kian's injury and told the doctor, "Use the best treatment. No scars."

The doctor nodded.

Paloma wanted to say something to Kian but didn't know how. They'd never been close. Ophelia broke the silence. "Mom, Dad, go home. I'll stay with Kian and handle the rest with the police."

"Okay," Brody said, turning to leave. At the door, he paused. "If you want to be with him, we won't stand in your way."

Ophelia blinked in surprise. "You were so set on us divorcing. What changed?"

Brody sighed. "He's a good guy. And your kid would probably be adorable. He stood up for you. Besides, his mom's too sick to cause trouble now."

Ophelia froze. She hadn't told them about Mrs. Paterson's illness. They must've found out while investigating Emilio.

"I'll think about it," she said. "See you tonight."

Back in the ward, Kian's wound was patched up. The pain wasn't much, but he exaggerated, wincing.

"Want a painkiller?" Ophelia asked, heading for the door.

Kian grabbed her hand. "Stay with me, and the pain's gone."

"So you're faking?" she teased. "Not scared I'll get mad?"

"If you're mad, yell at me, hit me—just don't ignore me," he said, half-joking, half-serious.

"You're such a drama king," she said, but her heart ached for him. She couldn't stay angry.

Alone in the ward, they started with small talk. Then the conversation flowed, easy and warm, like it used to. There was so much to say.

When word came that Emilio was awake and back at the station, Ophelia stood. "Time to go deal with him."

## **Chapter 727**

At the station, Emilio's bloodshot eyes locked onto Ophelia and Kian standing together. He lunged forward, but the officers held him back.

“Ophelia, how could you betray me?” he shouted. “You’re divorced! Are you getting back with him? Why would you hurt me like this?”

To anyone watching, he sounded like a heartbroken man abandoned by the woman he loved.

Ophelia’s face turned cold. “Let’s be clear, Emilio. We were barely even friends. You crossed a line. Kian and I aren’t divorced yet—we’re still legally married. Even if we were, and even if I did remarry, that’s *my* decision. It’s none of your business.”

Just because he wanted her didn’t mean she owed him anything. Did he really think she’d drop everything when he got bored? She wasn’t some toy he could control.

“I won’t let you be with him,” Emilio spat. “He’s not right for you. Have you forgotten your child? Your own flesh and blood?”

He knew bringing up the miscarriage would hurt—but he wanted to twist the knife, to turn her against Kian.

Ophelia’s hand moved to her stomach. “I’m pregnant again,” she said calmly. “It’s Kian’s. The child we lost... came back.”

Kian’s eyes widened, hands trembling. A baby? Their baby?

Emilio’s face contorted with rage. It must’ve been *that* night. If Kian hadn’t shown up, it could’ve been *his* child. He wished he’d hit her hard enough to stop the pregnancy. Without the baby, they’d never reconcile.

Ophelia caught the look in his eyes and knew what he was thinking. “Give it up, Emilio. Everything you did is on video. There’s no way out. You’re going to jail.”

“There weren’t any cameras in that alley!” he snapped, confident she was bluffing.

An elderly woman stepped forward and spit at him. “No cameras, but I’ve got a phone. Filmed the whole thing. You’re pathetic—bullying a pregnant woman like that.”

Emilio’s defense crumbled. Both the Labries and Fletchers were notified. Emilio’s parents arrived quickly, full of apologies and money, but Brody wasn’t buying it.

“Your son stays in prison for as long as the law allows,” Brody growled. “No bribe changes that. I’ll be watching. If you try to pull strings, I’ll report it.”

The Fletchers didn’t argue. They cut Emilio loose without a fight. He was their only child, but they’d frozen fertilized eggs years ago as a backup. If the “golden boy” was ruined, they’d just raise a new one.

“He’ll do his time,” Mr. Fletcher said. “Then we’ll send him abroad. He won’t bother your daughter again. Just keep this quiet—for both our families’ sake.”

“Fine,” Brody said. “But if he shows up again, deal’s off. I’ve got all the evidence.”

The Fletchers knew the Labries were just as powerful—and had ties to Kevin. Crossing them would be a mistake.

With Emilio handled, Ophelia returned to work. But Kian kept showing up—not saying anything, not causing trouble. Just quietly staying nearby.

Three days later, she’d had enough. She got into his car. “Let’s go.”

“Where to?”

“Civil Affairs Bureau. I left work early. They’re still open. We can get the divorce certificate.”

Kian’s foot hovered over the gas pedal. Then he pulled out the key and turned off the engine.

Ophelia raised an eyebrow. “You’ve been waiting for this moment. Now you won’t drive?”

“Car’s broken,” he said, looking innocent.

She saw right through it but let it slide. “Fine. I was hoping you’d drive me home. I’ll just grab a cab.”

Before she could open the door, Kian restarted the car and headed for the Labrie house.

“Didn’t you say it was broken?” she asked, teasing.

“Fixed itself,” he said with a grin. “Truth is, I don’t want a divorce.”

Ophelia’s heart softened. With their problems behind them, staying together didn’t feel so impossible anymore. She didn’t want other men. And she didn’t want her child growing up without a father. If their paths kept crossing, why keep fighting it?

“I know you don’t,” she said gently. “And I’m starting to think I don’t, either.”

At a red light, Kian turned to her, eyes bright. “This car’s got a mind of its own. Heard ‘Civil Affairs Bureau’ and gave up.”

“Then just take me home,” she said, smiling. “No divorce today.”

The light turned green, and Kian spun the car around, heading for the bureau. “Let’s cancel the application before they close.”

Ophelia laughed. The car had stalled for divorce but sped toward reconciliation.

The same clerk who had processed their divorce application was still there. She smiled as she handled the reversal.

“You sure?” she asked. “Cancel now, and if you file again, the cooling-off period starts over.”

“Absolutely sure,” Kian said firmly. “No divorce. Ever.”

Ophelia nodded. “We’ve thought it through. This is what we want.”

## **Chapter 728**

“Wishing you both happiness,” the clerk said, finalizing the revocation quickly.

Kian pulled out their marriage certificate, the red cover matching the joy in his heart. “Ophelia, how about another honeymoon? Maldives this time?”

“What about a wedding first?” she teased, smiling.

Their eyes met, warm and sweet like honey.

Their first wedding had been rushed and lonely—no family support. But now, with the Labriés’ blessing and a baby on the way, everything felt different. Mrs. Paterson still disapproved, but that was her problem now.

“Kian,” Ophelia said suddenly, “I had a dream last night. A little boy called me ‘Mom’ and said he’d bring his sister to meet me.”

“Twins? A boy and a girl?” Kian’s face lit up with joy. Whether one child or two, he was thrilled. He didn’t want Ophelia to go through another pregnancy—he’d had a vasectomy. This baby (or babies) would be their everything.

“We’ll know at the next checkup,” Ophelia said gently. Boy or girl, it didn’t matter. This child was her miracle. Her parents were just as excited.

“Oh, and Kian,” she added carefully, “now that we’re staying together, should we tell your parents?”

She was worried about Mrs. Paterson causing more trouble again. But keeping it a secret forever didn’t seem right either. They were Kian’s family, after all.

Before Kian could answer, his phone rang—Emilia was crying.

“Kian, come quick! Aunt fainted—she’s in surgery. The doctor says she might not make it!”

“Really?” Kian asked, skeptical. After all the tricks they’d pulled, he wasn’t sure what to believe.

“It’s true!” Emilia sobbed. “I saw her collapse! If I’m lying, I’ll flunk every class and never graduate!”



That was basically a blood oath for a college student. Kian went quiet.

"I know Aunt and I messed up," Emilia admitted. "Yell at me later, but please sign the surgery consent form. Uncle's out of town—you're all we've got."

If Kian didn't show up and Mrs. Paterson didn't survive, she'd never see her son again. Emilia was drowning in guilt for helping with her aunt's schemes.

"I'm coming," Kian said and hung up. He turned to Ophelia. "Hospital or home?"

"Together," she said, putting on her seatbelt. "Drive safe. No drama."

She wasn't petty—she wouldn't hold grudges against a dying woman.

At the hospital, they rushed to the operating room. Emilia was pacing nervously but lit up when she saw them.

"Brother Kian, thank you! I was so scared you wouldn't come."

"Don't thank me," Kian said flatly. "Thank Ophelia for not holding a grudge."

Emilia's guilt deepened. She bowed repeatedly to Ophelia. "I'm sorry. Hit me if you want—I deserve it."

"Let it go," Ophelia said. "You're young. Focus on your studies and stay out of other people's relationships."

Emilia was barely 18—a pawn in Mrs. Paterson's manipulation. Ophelia knew who the real culprit was.

"I'll go back to school once Aunt's better," Emilia promised. "No more meddling."

The three waited in silence. Mr. Paterson called via video, his face reddening when he saw Ophelia. He looked ashamed. Despite all the harm they'd caused, she still showed up. Her grace stunned him.

"Dad, I had a vasectomy," Kian said bluntly. "Ophelia's pregnant. This is our only child. If it's twins, they'll have different surnames. If it's one, it's a Labrié."

"Kian!" Mr. Paterson choked. "You didn't talk to me about this?"

"Would you have agreed?" Kian snapped. "You never asked my opinion about your schemes. I learned from you. Agree or not—I'll join the Labrié family if I have to."

His words stung. Mr. Paterson's face twisted in fury, but the video call stopped him from blowing up.

## Chapter 729

“Dad, calm down,” Kian said, seeing his father’s face turning red. “Getting angry won’t help. Look at Mom.”

Her plotting had landed her in the OR. Mr. Paterson nearly choked. “You dare talk to me like this? Give the phone to Ophelia!”

“She’s busy,” Kian replied calmly. “Say what you want or hang up.”

He knew his dad wanted to pressure Ophelia. Not happening. “These are my choices. Don’t blame her.”

“Fine! You’re untouchable now!” Mr. Paterson snapped and ended the call. He couldn’t curse Kian out without risking a heart attack.

Ophelia looked at Kian, worried. “Your dad looked like he was about to explode.”

“He’ll be fine,” Kian replied. “I’ve known him over twenty years. He’s tough.”

They sat in the corridor until the operating room doors finally opened. Kian rushed to the doctor. “How is she?”

“Partially successful,” the doctor said. “She survived, but her lower limbs are paralyzed. Recovery depends on her health and a bit of luck.”

He sighed. He’d seen stubborn patients, but Mrs. Paterson had refused treatment until it was almost too late.

“She pulled through for now. But if she doesn’t follow up with therapy, today’s effort will be wasted.”

“Thank you, Doctor,” Kian said.

In the ward, he repeated everything to his mother.

Mrs. Paterson’s eyes filled with tears—fear, regret, all of it. “I was wrong,” she whispered. “I’ll follow the doctor’s orders. Kian, tell me you were joking about the vasectomy...”

Kian’s face hardened. “You wanted a grandson so badly—so why did you hurt Ophelia?”

Mrs. Paterson broke down. She used to think childbirth was the woman’s burden. Men just ‘planted the seed.’ If she’d known Kian would take it this far, she’d never have tried to destroy Ophelia’s pregnancy.

“I was wrong... But it’s not too late to reverse it, right?”

Kian stayed silent.

Just then, Ophelia walked in. Mrs. Paterson tensed, expecting a cold confrontation.

“Aunt,” Ophelia said calmly, “your hospital bills are covered. Just focus on healing. After discharge, I’ll help you find a good rehab center.”

Mrs. Paterson blinked, stunned. Ophelia... was helping her?

Kian repeated what he’d said to his father, then left with Ophelia.

Left alone, Mrs. Paterson lay in silence.

“Aunt,” Emilia finally spoke up. “I’ve kept quiet long enough. What you did... it was too much. You’ve helped me a lot, but I can’t cover for you anymore. You’re tearing the family apart.”

Mrs. Paterson mumbled, “Why is Ophelia pregnant again?”

Full circle. Again.

Emilia groaned. “Why is that a bad thing? Kian had a vasectomy—it might not be reversible. This pregnancy is a blessing. Aunt, no offense, but stop interfering. Kian can’t live without her.”

“I’m done,” Mrs. Paterson said softly. “I just want to get better and live a little longer.”

Then Teresa barged in, furious. “Mrs. Paterson! I treated you like my own mother, and this is how you repay me? Why?”

“I didn’t mean to,” Mrs. Paterson said weakly. “I wanted you and Kian together. But your generation makes their own choices. I can’t control it anymore.”

She was bedridden, her strength gone. She had nothing left but the will to survive.

Teresa scoffed and dropped her nice-girl act. “I played along because I thought you’d help me get Kian. But now? You’re useless. He doesn’t even respect you. Why should I keep pretending? I don’t need another ancestor to worship!”

Mrs. Paterson looked at her, stunned. “Teresa, when did you become like this?”

## **Chapter 730**

Mrs. Paterson couldn’t hold her anger back any longer. “I was a fool to ever want you as my daughter-in-law!” she yelled at Teresa. “Thank God Kian never fell for you. You would’ve destroyed this family!”

"You started all of this!" Teresa fired back. "You dragged me into being the other woman. You gave me that drugged tea—who knows what it's done to my body?" She wasn't holding anything back now. "So here's the deal: either make Kian marry me—figure it out. I drugged him once, I can do it again. Or give me 50 million."

Mrs. Paterson stared at her in shock. "Fifty million? Are you out of your mind?"

That kind of money could last generations. Even if Kian had it, it was his hard-earned fortune. There was no way she'd let Teresa blackmail them.

"Fine, don't pay," Teresa said, pulling out her phone and pointing it at her. "I'll take your secrets public."

Mrs. Paterson's stomach dropped. "What are you doing?"

"Your son's a CEO. Your real daughter-in-law's a Labrie heiress," Teresa said with a smirk. "Once this goes viral, your whole family's reputation will be trashed." She was fearless—fighting dirty if she had to. She was getting her money, one way or another.

"Teresa, how could you..." Mrs. Paterson's voice cracked. She tried to sit up, but her body failed her.

That's when the truth finally sank in: she'd been duped. Teresa had faked her sweet act. Ophelia, blunt as she was, had always been genuine. Regret weighed heavy on her. She'd pushed away a real daughter-in-law for this manipulative fraud.

"Cut the pity act," Teresa snapped. "Money or I go live—right now."

Mrs. Paterson hesitated. "I'll pay. Just go home and I'll transfer it when I have it."

"Yeah, sure," Teresa scoffed. "You'll call Kian the second I leave. Pay up now, or I start streaming." She shoved the phone closer to her face.

Mrs. Paterson didn't have that kind of cash. Teresa didn't wait—she hit "go live" and started ranting about Mrs. Paterson's schemes. The audience was small, but Mrs. Paterson didn't know that. All she could see was her reputation—and Kian's company—falling apart.

This was all her fault. She'd failed her son.

Desperate, she lunged at the phone, knocking over the electric kettle beside her bed. It clattered to the floor, splashing hot water on both her and Teresa.

"You did that on purpose!" Teresa screamed, grabbing her arm in pain.

Just then, the hospital room door opened. Ophelia walked in with a doctor—and froze when she saw Teresa. She glanced at Mrs. Paterson, her face calm but distant. She'd seen this woman for who she really was long ago.

“Daughter-in-law! Take her phone!” Mrs. Paterson pleaded. “She’s live-streaming—she’s going to ruin us!”

Teresa flinched at the words “daughter-in-law.” Mrs. Paterson used to call *her* that—now she was being thrown away like trash.

Ophelia moved fast, grabbing the phone. The livestream had less than a dozen viewers. She shut it off and tossed the phone to the side. “Teresa, you came to me,” she said coldly. “Perfect. Now we settle everything—past and present.”

“She’s the one behind it all!” Teresa cried, pointing at Mrs. Paterson. “She went after you, made you lose the baby!”

That kind of deflection might’ve worked before, but not anymore. Not with Ophelia. Not with Kian.

Mrs. Paterson cried out as Ophelia turned to leave. “I was wrong,” she sobbed. “I should never have hurt you. Daughter-in-law, can you forgive me?”

Ophelia paused. She could let go of the past, but the child she’d lost was a scar that wouldn’t fade. “I’m pregnant again,” she said quietly. “After the baby’s born, you’ll see it a few times. That’s all. Rest well, Auntie.”

She’d only come to arrange a specialist for Mrs. Paterson’s illness—never expected this kind of mess. The regret on Mrs. Paterson’s face seemed genuine, but it didn’t change anything. From now on, they’d live separate lives.

Mrs. Paterson broke down in tears. Being called “Auntie” instead of “Mom” hurt deeply. She remembered how warmly Ophelia used to say it—and realized she’d ruined that bond with her own hands.