

TMBA 1201

CHAPTER 1201 OMNIPOTENT HUSBAND

Erica realized that she was such a spendthrift. Would Matthew use this as an excuse to divorce her this time?

If he divorced her, how could she ever find another rich husband like him once again?

When Matthew came out of the bathroom, he saw her sitting on the carpet with two boxes in her hands. Her eyes were drowning in some sort of sorrow, and it looked like she was deep in thought.

They had come back home together, so he knew what was going on in her mind. He asked helplessly, "Are you still feeling bad about the money?"

Erica nodded without turning to look at him, "Of course, I am. It was a lot of money. I had never spent so much on gifts before."

"It was just tens of millions. Why do you care so much? Seriously though, how bad would you have felt if it had been hundreds of millions instead?" Matthew asked casually.

Erica's head shot up and she looked at the man in shock. Matthew was in his pajamas already. "Are you telling me that you have given someone a gift worth hundreds of millions?"

He admitted frankly, "The most expensive gift I have given was worth over a billion dollars."

Erica gasped, "You're worse than me!"

Matthew chuckled and explained, "You made the right call. The money you spent on the gifts will not go to waste. The guests at the auction were from the high society of Alorith. The husbands of the women you had bought all those gifts for are either rich or very important men. Now that you have bought their wives such expensive gifts, it will be easier for you to approach them for favors some day."

She was silent for a moment. "But I have an omnipotent husband who can do just about anything. He has money, power, good looks—everything a man could ever want. Why would I ever go to anyone else for favors?"

A satisfied grin appeared on Matthew's face and his eyes danced with joy. 'This girl is so good at flattery,' he thought. "Anyway, it's good to have more friends. So, forget all about that and go take a shower."

Erica sighed heavily and slowly stood up from the floor. "Fine."

After she entered the bathroom, Matthew took out his mobile phone from his pajama pocket and dialed Phoebe's number. As soon as she answered, he went straight to the point. "I will give you three million for the gold bookmark, the butterfly brooch and the crystal leaf. Have them all sent to my villa

tomorrow."

No one knew it better than Phoebe why he wanted those three things. Erica had taken a liking to them at the auction.

Phoebe was angry; her hands trembled. She demanded, "I bought those items because I loved them! How could you take them away from me like this?"

She had bought all three items for less than a million. So what if he had offered her three million? It was not money that she wanted.

"And what about you? How could you take those away from someone who actually loved them?" he retorted.

Did she really think that he had just been sitting there idly? He knew exactly what had happened at the auction. Phoebe had felt Erica's desire for those three items and had deliberately competed against her for them. How could he, who was also sitting right next to Erica, not have noticed it?

"She doesn't deserve them! She bullied my sister! Don't I have the right to take revenge on her?"

Phoebe was a little excited and her voice was less calm now.

"No, you don't. How much do you know about what had really happened? I already have someone investigating about what Tessie had done. If I find out that she hurt Erica, don't blame me for what I do to your sister."

Phoebe was stunned.

Why was Matthew in love with Erica now? Why did he not love her? Why? But Phoebe wasn't convinced yet! She refused to believe the truth in front of her.

The next day, around noon, Phoebe arrived at the villa with a paper bag, wearing her maternity dress.

She walked in casually, as if the place belonged to her. The chefs were busy in the kitchen. She sat down in the living room and put the paper bag on the coffee table.

Erica was still in her cartoon pajamas. When she heard the doorbell, she walked to the stairs to see who had come. She stood on the steps and looked down at the woman. "What are you doing here?"

Since Matthew wasn't home, Phoebe couldn't care less about her fake courtesy towards Erica. "Isn't it normal for me to be here? Before you arrived in Alorith, I often hung out with Matthew."

She had purposely left out the truth that Matthew would never go out with her alone. She could only tag along when Nathan hung out with Matthew.

"If you don't have anything else to say, you may leave now. I don't want to see you," Erica said with a scowl.

Phoebe flipped her long hair coquettishly. "Why should I leave? I'm waiting for Matthew to come home."

'Is Matthew coming home now? Why didn't he tell me? This guy is so mean! How could he tell her and not me, his wife?' Erica thought angrily. "Fine. Wait."

Erica walked to the kitchen, drank some water and headed upstairs to change her clothes, completely ignoring Phoebe.

But Phoebe had no intention of letting her be in peace. "Erica, you knew that Matthew didn't love you. Why did you still marry him?"

Erica looked back at her, confused. "Who told you he doesn't love me? Whom else do you think he loves? You? A married woman?"

Erica fired back. Yet, deep down, she knew that it was true. She had always known that Matthew loved Phoebe. At least, that was what she believed.

"If you hadn't showed up in Matthew's life, I wouldn't have married Nathan! I would have been the hostess of this villa!" Phoebe glared at Erica, her eyes filled with fury and envy.

Erica laughed. "If Matthew really loved you, why would he ever have agreed to marry me? Don't be so narcissistic. Even without me, he would have still married Erica Zorn or Erica White. Either way, he wouldn't have married you."

"Ha! Do you really think nobody is aware that your marriage to Matthew was arranged? He was forced to marry you!"

With one arm across her chest and the other supporting her chin, Erica asked sarcastically, "Why are you so obsessed with how we got married? The reality is that I married Matthew and I am now Mrs. Hilton, and you are Mrs. Green. Did your husband ever realize that you couldn't wait to be Mrs. Hilton? I wonder how he would have felt if he had found out about this? How could he rest in peace?"

Phoebe gritted her teeth and yelled, "Don't you dare talk about Nathan! You're not good enough to even mention his name!"

"Fine. Then, you stop talking about Matthew. You don't deserve him either." Erica knew that she wasn't as smart as Phoebe, but she wouldn't lose to her in a battle of words.

"Erica, I'll expose your true colors and show Matthew what kind of person you really are. And then, I will

ask him to take responsibility for me and our baby."

Erica's eyes fell on her belly thoughtfully. "Are you even sure that the baby is Matthew's, and not Nathan's?"

Phoebe was stunned at first, but then immediately recovered and told her with certainty, "Of course, it's Matthew's! I'm sure!"

"Oh! Well, in that case, you should take good care of yourself and the baby, so that you can seize any chance in the future to make a comeback. Besides, it would benefit you to be nicer to me. Maybe one day, if I am in a good mood, I might allow you to stay with Matthew as his mistress."

"Erica!" Phoebe screamed. Her yell attracted the attention of the chefs in the kitchen.

Facing her furious eyes, Erica snorted coldly, turned around and went upstairs.

On the third floor

Erica fumed. She was so pissed off that she walked around the room in circles. It was the first time she had ever met a woman like Phoebe. She swore that she would give her hell in the future!

Unable to control her irritation, she logged into her Weibo and posted, "What to do if I meet an enemy I hate very much?"

A few minutes later, she got a private message from Can't Do Anything. "There are many ways to deal with an enemy. You can destroy everything he or she loves, or you can destroy the person. It depends on how hateful this enemy is."

Erica began to think about what Phoebe loved and wanted. All that woman wanted was Matthew.

She replied honestly to Can't Do Anything, "She wants my husband! I can't destroy my husband, can I?" Besides, she didn't have the ability to do that! He was Matthew!

Can't Do Anything replied, "Of course not! But you can make your husband fall in love with you, and make sure he's loyal to you. Once his heart is yours, no one can take him away from you!"

## CHAPTER 1202 EATING FOR TWO

"But my husband seems to love her..." Erica said to Can't Do Anything. This was a sore spot for her. If Matthew wasn't still in love with Phoebe, Erica would have asked him to destroy that woman.

Can't Do Anything tried to reassure her. "No way!"

"Yes way. It's true. It's been going on for years, apparently. You must have heard about it. Everyone in the city knows Matthew has a crush on someone else."

"Yeah, I've heard the rumors. Who hasn't? But if he really loved Phoebe, he wouldn't have married you. Think about it: why would he do that? You're the one in his heart."

Many people had said this to Erica, and she knew they were right. But she just couldn't get rid of that niggling doubt that Matthew still carried a torch for Phoebe.

When Erica didn't text him back right away, Can't Do Anything sent her another message. "What you need is more spice in your marriage. Try your best to love him, or—failing that—make him fall in love with you. Stranger things have happened. Why not give it a shot?"

Can't Do Anything was right, though. Erica knew that. But he or she still couldn't banish all of Erica's doubts and worries. "I'm still not sure..." Erica tapped out.

"Then you can test your husband!"

"Test him? How?"

This time, Can't Do Anything didn't text back immediately. After a while, Erica received a call from Matthew. "I'd like you to come downstairs."

"You're back home?"

"Yes."

"Let me guess: Phoebe's with you. I'll pass, thanks."

Massaging his eyebrows, Matthew wondered, 'Are all women like that?' "Didn't you want her to come here?"

"Why would I..." The rest of her words caught in her throat. Oh, yes, she remembered now. She told Matthew that she was going to invite Phoebe to come to the villa and claim her status as the hostess. It was a momentary flash of anger and facetiousness.

She didn't expect that Matthew would really take her up on that. Wasn't he afraid she'd hurt Phoebe?

Phone in hand, Erica stomped downstairs.

Before she saw Matthew, she got a private message from Can't Do Anything. "Find out if he wants to sleep with you or not!"

Erica stopped on the steps. Find out if he wanted to sleep with her? Of course he wanted to. Matthew had said it himself! As she went downstairs, she replied, "I don't think that's such a hot idea."

She was hoping for other ideas to test Matthew.

Can't Do Anything replied, "He's your husband. What's wrong with finding out if your hubby wants to sleep with you or not? Do you want another woman to take him away from you?"

That made sense. She was almost convinced.

As she surveyed the living room, she saw Matthew had put away his phone and talking with Phoebe.

Phoebe silently handed the paper bag to Matthew.

Erica tore her gaze away and replied to Can't Do Anything, "But I'm still worried."

This time, Can't Do Anything took his own sweet time replying. Erica was already in the dining room and still nothing.

Why didn't he reply to her message? Did he find her annoying? Was he busy? The chefs were busy making Western food for lunch.

When the chefs saw her, one of them came over and asked, "Mrs. Erica, do you want to eat now?"

Glancing at the two people walking to the dining room, she raised her eyebrows at Matthew and said to the chef, "Ask Matthew." She just wanted to be invisible now.

Matthew was holding his phone and looking at something. He was close enough to hear the cook's question. He nodded and said, "Let's eat."

The three of them sat down at the table. Naturally, Matthew sat next to Erica and said in a gentle voice, "You gotta be hungry. I was in the office and I guess the time got away from me. Sorry to keep you waiting!"

Erica was about to shake her head when she saw that Phoebe was staring at them. So, she got closer to him and gently stroked his collar. "It's okay," she said sweetly. "I'm very happy that you came here to have lunch with me."

Of course, Matthew knew what she was up to. A tinge of helplessness flashed in Matthew's eyes. He touched her head and said, "Okay."

After Erica sat back, he took his phone and sent a message before putting it back into his pocket.

The chefs put the appetizers in front of the three. Just then, Erica received a message from Can't Do Anything. "What are you worried about? Afraid that your husband won't be responsible for you after you make the beast with two backs?"

In fact, Erica didn't know what she was worried about. Maybe she was afraid one day Matthew would divorce her and marry Phoebe.

Thinking of this, she took a long look at the pregnant woman opposite her, ignoring what Matthew was doing.

A moment later, her phone buzzed again. Can't Do Anything wrote, "Your husband must love you. Don't worry. Just sleep with him! It'll make everything better."

Erica had a sudden suspicion. Why did this person want her to have sex with Matthew so much? Was she overthinking it, or was Mr. Can't Do Anything really her husband?

Thinking of this, she suddenly looked at the man next to her. Matthew was looking down at his mobile phone, and just like her, he hadn't touched his food at all.

She asked curiously, "What are you doing?"

A hint of nervousness flashed across Matthew's eyes. It was gone as soon as it appeared. He calmly put away his phone and said, "Nothing."

But Erica was perceptive. She noticed that momentary change in his expression. What was that? Nervousness? So, what was he doing on the phone?

Curiosity made her bold. "Hand me your phone."

Matthew's hand holding the fork paused. "We don't play with phones during mealtime. Eat first."

Erica snorted inwardly. That guy was up to something.

Phoebe was put in an awkward situation. The couple were flirting with each other as if no one else were around, and no one paid attention to her.

The second dish was Russian soup. According to Matthew's order, the chef served the first bowl of soup to Erica. However, Erica refused and told the chef with a smile, "Why don't you serve Mrs. Green first? She's our guest, after all. Besides, she's pregnant and eating for two."

The chef did as he was bade and brought the bowl to Phoebe. She had been in a good mood, and was quite hungry. And she got to spend time with Matthew. But Erica killed the mood completely. Staring at the brightly-colored soup in front of her, she suddenly had no appetite at all.

She picked up the spoon and listlessly took a sip of the soup. It tasted wonderful, but she had no interest in eating anymore.

After tasting a few dishes, Phoebe said, "Thanks for lunch, Matthew, really. But I've lost my appetite and

feel like I'm full. But your chefs are incredible. Mind if I borrow one of them for a while?"

She thought Matthew would definitely agree to such a minor thing. It was not like she was lying.

Next to him, Erica had just put a lump of black pepper steak into her mouth and was chewing it. Hearing this, she quickly took hold of his big hand and said, "What a coincidence! I don't have much of an appetite either. I'm not pregnant, though. Besides, I'm really starting to like Western food. Why doesn't Mrs. Green hire another cook herself? The Campbell family can get any kind of chef they want. Right, Mrs. Green?" 'She needs a new title. Phoebe the Manipulative! Phoebe the Bitch!' Erica thought.

She put down the fork rather carelessly, leaving a bit of sauce from the fork on her face, right above the corner of her lips. She was angry and wasn't really paying attention.

But she didn't know about it at all. The sauce on her face and the fact that she talked with her eyes wide open...Phoebe didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She had to admit that Erica was really cute.

Not to mention Matthew, who always thought Erica was adorable and made him happy. This time, she was doubly so. The man who had always been indifferent to other people now had a bright smile on his face. He didn't answer Erica's question but pinched her chin to make her look at him.

While Erica was still confused, he lowered his head slowly, his face close to hers...

#### CHAPTER 1203 DISGUSTING

Erica thought that Matthew was going to kiss her, and her heart started to beat faster. Although she really wanted to show off their love in front of Phoebe, she didn't expect that he would actually kiss her.

But his lips did not fall on hers. Instead, he licked the sauce above the corner of her lips.

Erica felt his wet tongue grace her face. For a moment, she closed her eyes, but then he let go of her.

Matthew relished the after-taste of the sauce carefully and said, "It tastes good."

'Huh? What tastes good? My face? My skin care products?'

Erica wondered quizzically as she wiped the place where he had kissed. 'Eh, what is this? Sauce?'

She felt embarrassed at first, but when she caught the glimpse of envy and hatred on Phoebe's face, Erica beamed. She grabbed a tissue and wiped the originally stained and now clean spot on her face. Then, she dramatically forked a piece of black pepper steak and brought it to Matthew's mouth. "Honey, have a taste. It's delicious."

The first time Erica had called him "honey," she had felt a little awkward, but now she was getting more and more used to it. Matthew was very much satisfied by that progress.



He didn't notice the steak because he was still thinking about how Erica was now used to calling him "honey." This gave Phoebe a chance to bring down Erica. "Humph! Don't you know that Matthew is a neat freak? How could you feed him using your fork?"

When she had had dinner with Matthew in the past, she had picked up food for him and placed it onto his bowl of rice with her own chopsticks. However, he had ruthlessly asked the waiter to change the tableware and bring him a new bowl of rice.

Erica scoffed at her and said proudly, "My husband is not a neat freak. Even if he is, he is only so in front of outsiders. He will eat whatever I feed him."

Matthew had a strange feeling when he heard her last sentence.

Phoebe smirked. She was excited to see how Matthew would react. Erica would have to eat her own words, along with her steak.

But she was more than disappointed by his actions. She watched helplessly as Matthew ate the steak from Erica's fork, and there was no trace of disgust in his face as he chewed on the meat.

Erica pretended to be indifferent, but her heart jumped with joy. She said, "Honey, Mrs. Green said she wants our chef. What should we do?"

"That's up to you," Matthew answered.

Happy with his reply, she smiled and blew him a kiss. Then, she turned to Phoebe. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Green. I really like the food cooked by our chef."

Though she was apologizing, the smug smile on her face said she was anything but sorry.

Phoebe was too angry to even come up with a retort.

She was getting really pissed off by the happy couple. She quickly put down the knife and fork with a clank, and held her lower abdomen, taking a deep breath. "Matthew, I'm not feeling well. My stomach is hurting a little."

Erica glanced at her belly suspiciously, wondering if she was telling the truth.

Matthew took out his phone to call the family doctor, but Phoebe stopped him. "Could you accompany me to the hospital? After Nathan's departure, I have been going to the hospital to do the prenatal checkups alone."

Erica opened her mouth to argue, but the thought of Matthew's baby in Phoebe's belly stopped her from saying anything. She had no reason to refuse to let him, the baby's father, accompany her for a prenatal checkup.

The joy from all her previous victories instantly dropped to the bottom. She suppressed the sadness in her heart and silently ate her food.

"I'll ask Paige to accompany you to the hospital," Matthew said indifferently.

Erica paused. Matthew didn't have to be so heartless. It was his baby after all. She gently touched his elbow and said, "You should go with her. What if something happens to the child?" 'The baby is innocent, isn't it?' she reasoned in her mind.

Even though Matthew believed that Ethan was her child, he still treated him well. Now, Phoebe was pregnant with his child. Although Erica didn't like it, she couldn't stop Matthew from caring for his child.

Looking at Erica, Matthew put down his knife and fork and said indifferently, "Fine, then. You come with me."

If he went with Phoebe to the hospital, then who would give Erica company? It was best that they went together.

"What am I supposed to do at the hospital? I don't need any checkup." Erica thought he was being unreasonable!

Matthew calmly repeated what she had just said. "And what am I supposed to do at the hospital? I don't need any checkup either."

Both women at the table were rendered speechless.

Erica said in a serious tone, "You can't do this! You are a man, and this unborn child has nothing to do with our squabbles. Go ahead. I don't mind!" She didn't want Matthew to be an irresponsible father.

But the man's aura became colder. 'She still doesn't love me! She doesn't even mind me accompanying another woman to her prenatal checkups, ' he thought bitterly.

Matthew grabbed Erica's wrist and said coldly, "I told you! We're going together!"

"But, my food..." Erica protested. 'I'm not done with my food yet.'

'How could she possibly be thinking about finishing her food right now?' Matthew thought angrily. He took out a tissue from the box and threw it on her steak.

'Nooo! My steak! It's ruined!' she cursed him inwardly.

Erica glared at Matthew and huffed angrily, "Fine! Let's go to the hospital together. I am your legal wife! She is your mistress. If you don't mind me accompanying, why would I care?"

Matthew didn't correct her. "Thank you, Mrs. Erica," he said.

He didn't need a mistress. She was the only one he wanted. She was the only Mrs. Hilton in his life.

Erica glared at Phoebe. She ruined their meal. She pointed her finger at the culprit and hissed, "You might be like the purest moonlight in Matthew's heart. But so what? Don't forget that he is now married to me. Sooner or later, he'll be over you. You'll end up like a grain of rice stuck to his shirt, which is disgusting and belongs in the trash!"

As she spoke, she picked up a grain of rice from the edge of the seafood plate which was mixed with the rice, and threw it into the trash can in front of Phoebe.

It seemed like she had just thrown Phoebe into the trash can. It really did help her vent some of that anger.

Matthew and Phoebe didn't know how to react.

Erica went upstairs to change, leaving them both in the dining room.

Matthew put his hands in his pockets and looked at Phoebe indifferently, showing absolutely no emotion. "If you don't want to go to this kind of thing by yourself in the future, you should go straight to Paige. I have a family, a wife. It's not appropriate for me to accompany you to these appointments."

Erica had obviously misunderstood his relationship with Phoebe. But it wasn't a big deal. He would explain everything to her when the time was right. However, if the media photographed and publicized that he accompanied another woman to prenatal checkups, Erica would definitely be laughed at.

Phoebe's heart skipped a beat. Matthew seemed to be more indifferent to her than before. He had never spoken to her like this in the past.

Erica, who had run upstairs to change her clothes, had a change of heart. The more she thought about their conversation, the angrier she became.

And she felt like she didn't do well. So, she ran downstairs like a gust of wind without changing. She gasped for air as she stood in front of the two surprised people.

She pointed angrily at Phoebe. "You are asking my husband and me to go to the hospital with you for your prenatal checkups! Who do you think you are? Some kind of princess? Oh man! How I wish I could just twist your head off whenever I see you. You want me to go to the hospital with you, huh? No way in hell!"

Then she turned around and warned Matthew, regardless of Phoebe's embarrassed face. "I won't go, and neither will you! And you have to get my permission before ever meeting this woman again. If you

have a problem with that, I'll inform your dad!"

Matthew was stunned. His wife was so fierce that he was actually a little scared of her at that moment.

#### CHAPTER 1204 HE'S MY HUSBAND

Erica didn't mind if she couldn't get an answer out of Matthew. She shot a fierce look at Phoebe, and if looks could kill, the pregnant woman would be lying on the floor. "I wanted you here to tell you in person Matthew is mine. Anything you had in the past stays there—in the past. If you don't want to raise the kid after it pops out, we'll help you raise it. Don't come here again. Or I swear I'll make you pay. I'm rich, so it's easy for me to get someone to mix contraceptives in your food. That'll fuck up your endocrine system and stop your period. You'll know what menopause feels like early. Don't believe me? Try me."

This time, Phoebe's belly really ached. Would Erica really poison her like this? She was more vicious than Phoebe had given her credit for. She shuddered uncontrollably.

As soon as she opened her mouth and was about to ask Matthew for help, Erica interrupted. She shouted at her, eyes wide open in an unsettling gaze. "Don't look at my husband! Why ask him for help? He's my husband! Even if he doesn't love me, the Hilton family will back me up. He has to spoil me. Right, Matthew?"

The girl seemed upset. Matthew decided that discretion was the better part of valor, so he deferred to her this time. He held her in his arms and nodded obediently.

The man who had always been cold and aloof around Phoebe actually nodded after hearing what Erica had said. It was hard for her to accept. She nodded awkwardly and took a deep breath to maintain her composure.

"I need to go to the hospital. Paige doesn't need to go. I'll just have the driver take me!" she said in a hoarse voice.

After Phoebe found a ride to the hospital, Erica was instantly relieved and muttered in a low voice, "If I had known that she was that annoying, I wouldn't have bothered to claim my status as the hostess." She was so angry that her stomach ached.

Matthew picked up the bag beside him and said, "She was going to give this to you. That's why she was here."

"What's that?"

"Open it."

Erica opened the bag and found it was the things she thought were awesome at the auction yesterday. "Why did she give them to me? This is too much. You put her up to this, didn't you?"

"I asked her to give them to you," Matthew answered honestly.

The girl's bad mood was alleviated a little. "I figured. How did you know which ones I wanted?" she asked.

Matthew didn't explain himself, but comforted her instead. "Don't be too angry. It's bad for your health."

"Well, I see!" Erica was in a good mood, so she didn't give him any backtalk.

In the afternoon, Erica went to the college. If Hyatt hadn't told her, she wouldn't have known that Kaitlyn and Luther had switched to another college.

"Why did they transfer?" She looked at Hyatt in confusion.

Hyatt told her, "Everyone says it's because Kaitlyn and Luther pissed you off, and Matthew taught them a lesson. I don't know if it's true."

"Really?" 'Matthew never brought it up. Oh, wait, that's right... He knew I was framed. But he never told me he'd deal with it. Was it really because of Matthew?' she wondered.

In order to find out the truth, Erica sent a message to Matthew asking, "What did you do to Kaitlyn?"

"Owen handled it. I don't know the particulars," he texted back.

It was obvious that he didn't want to tell her.

'Well, I'd better go home and ask him face to face!'

After she had attended two afternoon classes, it was getting cold and dark. The weather forecast called for heavy rain tonight. Erica shivered in the cold. She was going to grab a bite to eat with Hyatt. Preferably something to warm her up.

As soon as she walked out of the school gate, she received a phone call. She didn't recognize the number. "Hello?"

"Erica, it's me, Julianna."

Erica's mood was as gloomy as the weather at the moment when she found out who was on the other end of the line. "What's up?" she asked coldly.

"I need to talk to you. It's about Tessie."

"I don't want to hear it." She didn't want to talk about Tessie now. Matthew had sent someone to figure out what exactly had happened to Tessie. She'd know the truth soon enough, and didn't need to talk to Julianna.

Julianna sneered, "You're such a bitch. You've done so many shitty things, and now you don't even want to hear about Tessie. What's the matter? Afraid?"

"What should I be afraid of?"

"If you're not scared, just come. Come to the primary school Tessie and I went to. It's definitely walking distance from the college."

Erica and Hyatt exchanged glances. Since they were free, he might as well go along. "Okay!" she answered.

After Julianna hung up the phone, Tessie couldn't wait to ask, "So did you talk to her? Did she agree to come?"

"Yes, I'll text her the address." Julianna tapped in a detailed address and sent it to Erica.

Tessie was relieved.

When Julianna was out of earshot, Tessie walked outside and called Phoebe. She did her best to keep her voice low. "We did it, Phoebe! Julianna got Erica to agree to meet her at No. Eighteen Primary School. I can't wait!"

"Good. I'll let them know. Don't get yourself involved in this," Phoebe said. She just got back from the hospital. Fortunately, her baby was fine.

"Yeah, probably a good idea."

At No. Eighteen Primary School

It was the first time Erica had ever been here. It was early evening, and classes had already let out for the day. There was only a doorman at the gate, and the whole school looked empty.

The school was old and shabby, and lacked some modern amenities.

They followed the directions to the address Julianna gave her. Erica and Hyatt waited for Julianna under the eaves of the teaching building.

The gloomy sky had clouds of a gunmetal gray. It looked like it could rain at any time. Hyatt looked at Erica rubbing her hands from the cold, and said, "Hey, let me buy you a cup of hot milk tea. See if that'll warm you up."

Erica didn't turn him down. She was more than a little cold. "Cool, thanks. I'll wait for you here."

"Okay." Hyatt turned and walked out of the schoolyard.

When he walked past the playground, he brushed past several young men and women, but he didn't pay them any mind.

The young men looked at Hyatt as he walked toward the school gate, and thought for a while. They knew they'd seen him before, but they couldn't remember who he was.

One of the boys whispered, "He looks familiar."

"I think so, but it doesn't matter. Let's go! We'll get paid when we're done. You have the camera, right?"

"Yeah, I'm ready. Don't worry!"

Julianna wasn't there at all. Instead, several young men and women showed up.

A girl in a denim coat came up to her and asked, "Are you Erica Leonard?" Her tone was contemptuous.

Erica glanced at her and asked, "What's going on? Do you know Julianna?" She was sure she didn't know this girl.

"She'll be here soon. But first, we need to talk to you!" The girl tried to put her arm on Erica's shoulder as if they were good friends.

Erica sidestepped the maneuver and said with a fake smile, "I'm sorry. We're not that close. Now we've got that out of the way, what's this all about?"

The girl sneered and said, "Follow us. This is not the place to talk. I'll take you to the classroom where Julianna and Tessie used to take classes."

"I'm not going anywhere. I'll wait right here!" Erica had a bad feeling about this. Julianna said she wanted to talk about Tessie. Then why did she ask six people to meet her?

This time, the two girls approached her at the same time, and flanked her. One on the left and the other on the right. They held her arms and took her upstairs. "Come on. She arranged a surprise for you up there!"

"Let go of me! Do you want me to hurt you?" And that was when Erica knew that Julianna had fooled her.

CHAPTER 1205 INCIDENT ON CAMPUS

Having gone out to buy milk tea, Hyatt noticed with some consternation that the rain seemed to be growing heavier by the minute. He decided, then, to go back and ask Erica to make an appointment with Julianna for some other day.

He made it back to campus without incident, except that the rain soaked him, since he had no umbrella. The building was quiet and for the most part seemed deserted—but when Hyatt was just around a corner from where he'd left Erica, he heard her speaking to someone. Her voice was angry, but there was a trace of panic in it as well. "Tell Julianna," she was saying, "that if anything happens to me today, she's dead meat!"

"Shut up!" someone retorted. "Lenora, if she doesn't want to go upstairs, just have the others come down. No one's around, so the ground floor's as good as anywhere else."

There was a girl's voice—Lenora, presumably—speaking into a phone. "You guys can come down now. This bitch won't go upstairs!"

Rain beat against the windows. Dripping and shivering, Hyatt carefully stuck his head around the corner. Not far down the hall, he saw a small group of young men and women. Two of the latter had grabbed Erica by her arms. Squinting, Hyatt realized with a start that he recognized the assailants—he had seen them while out on his errand!

As he stared, five more people, about the same age, emerged from a stairwell nearby.

Erica now had a dozen people surrounding her.

Dread overwhelmed Hyatt's mind; now his shivering had nothing to do with being wet. His limbs felt weak, and his knees wobbled.

'What are they going to do to Erica? What should I do? What should I do?' Panic fogged his brain, and he struggled to get ahold of himself.

Suddenly the group was moving—Erica's captors were shoving and dragging her toward the door to a bathroom, which was between them and Hyatt. As they came closer, he heard them more clearly.

"I heard that you could be quite violent to your schoolmates," taunted one of the men—a boy, really. "Come on, show us what you can do!"

"She doesn't look tough to me," said someone else. "Look at that delicate skin—she must be a really rich, dainty lady. Doesn't look like a bully at all."

Erica stubbornly kept her head high. "Did Julianna tell you to come here?" she demanded.

They didn't deny it. In fact, one of them confirmed it—a young man with short, rather stupid-looking spiky hair. "Yeah, but we don't really have anything else to do anyway. We may as well just have some



fun with you!"

Water flowed from Hyatt's thick hair and down his cheeks. Every inch of his skin felt cold and clammy.

He wanted to call out to Erica. For a moment, all he could think of was the brave expression she'd worn when she defended him. He couldn't just do nothing!

Finally he got himself to move. With trembling hands, he took out his phone and dialed Gifford's number. He didn't have anyone else from the Leonard family in his contacts.

Gifford had given Hyatt his number after returning the money for Erica; he'd said Hyatt could call him if he ever needed help.

Hyatt pressed the call button and held the phone up to his ear, his face bloodless.

It started ringing. Afraid of being heard, Hyatt frantically stepped away from the corner.

A stone's throw away, he heard Gifford's voice on the line and came to a stop. "Hello, Hyatt?"

"Giff... Gifford..." He was so nervous that he could barely talk.

Gifford was immediately worried. He said, "Hyatt, what's going on? What happened? Calm down. Take your time and tell me!"

"T-they..." Hyatt stammered, trying to form a coherent sentence. "They cornered Erica. They're right outside the bathroom. Hurry up and get here! Help!"

Gifford frowned, wondering who he was talking about. "All right, where are you? Tell me the address."

"Alorith, No. Eighteen..." Hyatt choked, then swallowed in an effort to moisten his throat. "No. Eighteen Primary School, the teaching building—Ah!" As he said this, he nervously turned around, and screamed hoarsely. He was face to face with a very unfriendly-looking figure.

His voice failing him, Hyatt reflexively put the phone behind his back. Staring in horror, he recognized the figure as one of the boys he had just seen in the hallway.

"Who are you? Why are you here?" snarled the assailant.

Hyatt simply wheezed in fright, unable to say a word.

But as the boy grabbed him by the neck and dragged him into the hallway, Hyatt managed to pocket his phone without it being noticed.

The hallway was deserted. Dragging Hyatt into the bathroom, the young man threw him roughly to the

floor in front of his friends and Erica. "This guy was snooping around behind the corner," he explained. "I bet he knows Erica!"

Staring down at him, Erica cried, "Hyatt!" before she could stop herself.

"They do know each other!" said one of the assailants. "Hey, keep an eye on him! And take his phone so he can't call anyone."

They had already snatched Erica's phone and turned it off.

One of the taller boys came over and stared Hyatt down while another searched his pockets.

But it so happened that Hyatt's phone had shut itself off because it had gotten wet in his pocket, so they didn't see the call log.

These people didn't think too much. As long as Hyatt wasn't able to call anyone then, they thought they'd be safe from interference.

With that taken care of, the two men kept Hyatt restrained.

On the other side of the room, two girls were forcibly dragging Erica to the sink. One of them turned on the tap and said, "Lenora, get her over here! We'll soak her head, sober her up!"

Lenora grabbed Erica by the neck as they came closer.

Without the other girl holding onto her, Erica jerked back and forth and was able to loosen her grip. At the last minute, she clasped Lenora's head and pressed her under the tap instead.

Lenora sputtered and flailed, bumping her head against the faucet once or twice. "Damn it! Ah! Let me go! Let me go, you bitch!"

Staring down at the girl and giving her head a shake or two, Erica sneered, "You want to deal with me? Go home and practice martial arts for two years first!"

The rush of exhilaration she felt was short-lived, however—the longer the moment lasted, the more Erica began to think something was wrong. There were ten-odd people around, not counting the two holding Hyatt, but none of them were doing anything to stop her.

Erica looked at the closest one, the girl who had turned on the water. Their eyes met and, as if she had been cued, the girl threw her arms up as if in dismay and cried, "Let go of Lenora! Let go of her, Erica!"

Feeling something was very wrong, Erica did as she was told and turned off the tap.

Shivering, Lenora gave Erica a ghastly look and backed away from her.

Still confused, Erica glanced at Hyatt, but he wasn't going to be of any help. The boys holding him were keeping his mouth covered, so he couldn't even speak.

The situation grew even stranger when Lenora, still in the process of retreating, was suddenly pressed to the ground by her companions. They began to take off her coat, and then her sweater. The whole process was surprisingly efficient, with a clear division of labor. Three or four people handled Lenora's clothes, quite immune to her yelps and shrieks, while three others were taking photos with their phones.

Erica stared, mortified and wondering what Julianna was up to. Clearly Erica had been suckered, but whatever was going on was worse than she'd originally guessed.

Glancing around, she caught sight of another person in the far corner, their phone held up—taking more photos or videos, no doubt.

Erica was sure that this person had not been in the group before.

Without thinking, she started toward the person, reaching for the camera, but several of the bystanders came between them.

Meanwhile Lenora, still on the ground, quite abruptly stopped screaming and began to tidy up her clothes. Those nearby left her alone. After sending the pictures they'd taken to their WeChat group, they put their phones away.

Lenora glanced at them, then gave Erica a murderous look. "Guys, are you done with the pictures? If so, let's show Erica what campus violence is!"

Several people blocked the door, while the rest surrounded Erica, who was forced to step back all the way to the sink.

With a ferocious look on her face, Lenora said, "Grab her. I'll give her a dunk myself! Give her a taste of her own medicine." If it weren't for money, why would she be willing to suffer this on such a cold day?

#### CHAPTER 1206 IN LOVE WITH HIM

This time, Erica was held down by three boys in front of the sink. She couldn't move an inch. She angrily warned, "If you dare lay a finger on me today, I will definitely make each of you— Mmmph..." The rest of her words dissolved into the cold running water.

Regardless of her warning, Lenora pushed Erica's head under the tap, just as she had done to her earlier. She removed the rubber band on Erica's long hair.

It was late September, and besides that, it was raining heavily. The temperature was dangerously below 12 degree Celsius.

The cold water pierced Erica's face and head, chilling her to the bone. She couldn't breathe normally anymore. She struggled for air.

The boys turned the tap to its maximum limit. Erica tried her best to break free, but she was fighting alone, against four people holding her down.

Hyatt, who was also struggling with all his strength, was being trampled under one of the boys' feet. He wanted to cry out loud for help, but two other men had covered his mouth. Only muffled sounds came out of his forcefully shut lips.

When she thought that Erica's head might freeze over, Lenora finally asked her companions to let go of her. She was afraid that she might end up killing Erica by accident. That was not her purpose.

But this did not stop her from bullying Erica even more. Lenora grabbed Erica's collar and threw the girl into the rain. Her lips had already turned purple at this point.

Lenora stared down at the girl on the ground. Her long black hair was dripping wet, and clung over her cheek and shoulder. Her small face was pale and her purple lips were trembling from the cold.

The boys saw the pitiful state she was in already and one of them whispered, "I think this is enough. Look at the state she's in..."

Lenora, who had earned the most money from this deal, refused, "No way! She didn't show any mercy when she pushed me under the tap! Why the hell would I stop now? I want to see her suffer." Still fuming in anger, she walked up to Erica and slapped her across the face.

Erica's head tilted to one side due to the force of the slap, and she closed her eyes in pain.

Lenora laughed. "I am going to beat the shit out of you today!"

When she raised her hand to hit the girl again, Erica quickly grabbed her wrist and used the momentum to get to her feet.

Slap! Erica hit Lenora square in the face. While the latter was still in shock, Erica growled, "No one has ever dared to do such a thing to me. Before coming here to bully me, you should have asked around about what I had done in Askor before coming here. Do you know how easily I brought a five-star hotel to its knees? I burnt down a villa worth millions of dollars! Can you even imagine doing something like that?"

Lenora was frightened by the fury in her eyes. She covered her cheek and took a step back, her lips trembling, unable to say a word to the enraged girl in front of her.

Slap! Erica stepped forward swiftly and slapped the other side of Lenora's face. "Do you know who my

parents are?"

Lenora took a step back, while Erica took another step forward. Slap! "Do you know who my husband is, you worthless bitch? Does the name Matthew ring a bell in your dumb brain?"

Slap! The fourth slap echoed through the building, shocking everyone around them. "I'll teach you a lesson on your mother's behalf, so that you finally understand that not everyone is easily bullied. There are some people in this world you just cannot mess with!" Erica threatened.

Slap! Lenora cried in pain this time. Erica stepped closer to her. "If you don't beat me to death here today and let me out of this place alive, I swear I will make you pay for offending me—for laying your filthy hands on me! I will lock you in the deepest cave in the primeval forest of the deserted parts of Deplua for at least half a month! I'll make you eat all kinds of worms!"

She had used up all of her remaining strength and could hardly stay on her feet.

Lenora's face was swollen. She was on the verge of a breakdown. "How dare you! How dare you hit me like this?!" She gritted her teeth and pushed Erica down once again. Erica had no energy left to fight back.

She struggled to get up, but felt dizzy.

Lenora got on top of her and rained her ruthless fists on the girl's cold body.

When she raised her hand to hit Erica for the third time, she heard a cold, angry roar. "Stop it!"

The cold voice which terrified everyone else, sounded like music to Erica's ears.

Tears welled up in her eyes in an instant. She was half lying on the wet ground awkwardly, looking at the man approaching her. He threw away the umbrella and rushed towards her. She felt a strong sense of security at the sight of him.

Her heart was like a lonely boat that had been drifting at sea for the longest time. And now, finally, she found land and felt a sense of belonging.

The man's deep eyes reflected pain, and the cold aura surrounding him made the people around them retreat at once. Since Matthew had always held a high position in life, he naturally had the aura of a king. Lenora and the boys stood frozen to the spot.

When he came closer to where Erica lay, Matthew kicked Lenora off his wife without any hesitation. He didn't care why the girl's face was a swollen mess; he used all his strength and kicked her in the chest, sending the girl flying to the ground.

Lenora landed several feet away. "Aargh!" she screamed, as she landed in the pool of rainwater

awkwardly. She held her chest tightly where the man had kicked her mercilessly.

She coughed violently, and her chest hurt even more. Blood spurted out of her mouth and quickly merged with the rainwater around her. It dyed the ground in front of her red.

This scene was horrifying, to say the least. The others were rooted to the spot in fear. This man just kicked a woman and sent her flying; what was he going to do to the boys next?

Matthew took off his expensive custom-made suit. Raindrops fell on his white shirt, but he didn't heed any attention.

He squatted down and wrapped the suit around his wife to protect her from the cold rain.

His suit not only warmed Erica's body, but also her heart.

In that moment, she fell in love with him...forever.

The man's eyes were filled with concern. He picked her up from the wet ground and gently kissed her forehead. "I'm sorry, Rika, for being so late!"

When he said "Rika," his voice became tender.

When she saw the affection in his eyes, tears streamed down her cheeks, mixed with the rain droplets.

For the first time, she felt so lucky to have married Matthew.

Owen held a black umbrella over their heads, and a dozen bodyguards in black stood in a neat line behind them.

Matthew held back his worry and looked at Lenora viciously. She recoiled in fear; it felt as if the man was Death itself. "Don't let any of them go! Especially her! She hurt Erica."

Matthew had no intentions of letting them get away with hurting his wife, no matter who they were!

"Yes, Mr. Matthew!" the bodyguards answered in unison.

The rain stopped and it got darker. The city was ablaze with the night lights.

Matthew took Erica to the hospital. He was drenched, but he didn't bother to change them. He made sure that his wife received all kinds of examinations.

Half an hour later, Erica was admitted into the VIP ward. She lay on the bed in a daze, and the doctor started an intravenous drip for her. She fell asleep after the doctor gave her a final check up and left the room.

Matthew followed the doctor out of the ward and listened to his report.

"Mr. Matthew, Mrs. Hilton has a high fever right now. She has a slight bruise on her hand, but everything else is fine."

The gloom in Matthew's eyes didn't fade. He said lightly, "Thank you, doctor."

"You're welcome, Mr. Matthew. Let Mrs. Hilton get some good rest. After the infusion, you can take her home if her fever goes down by then."

"Alright."

After the doctor turned around and left, Matthew's phone vibrated in his pocket. It was Gifford.

CHAPTER 1207 A VILLAGE GIRL

Matthew answered the phone. "Gifford?"

"What happened to Rika? How is she now?" Gifford asked anxiously.

Through the glass window of the ward, Matthew gazed at the sleeping girl in the hospital bed and said in a low voice, "Some people bullied her on campus. She has a high fever. She just fell asleep."

"Bullied on campus?" There was a trace of disbelief in Gifford's voice. 'How dare someone treat Rika violently! Did they do this realizing who she was?' he wondered angrily.

"Don't worry. I will look into it." Matthew wasn't going to rest until he punished all those who were involved in this incident.

"Okay. Call me if you need any help."

"I will."

At Leonard family residence in Askor

As soon as Gifford hung up the phone, his father asked, "Did Rika bully someone?" Wesley had heard Gifford say something about bullying. He just assumed that Erica was up to no good again.

Gifford sighed and answered, "She was bullied."

Blair gasped and Wesley froze. He gritted his teeth and snarled, "She was such an arrogant brat when she was with us. And yet, she has become a victim of bullying in Alorith. Who had the audacity to touch my daughter?" Grumbling something seemingly dangerous under his breath, he started to head upstairs.

Blair grabbed his arm and asked, "Where are you going?"

"To get my weapon and kill the bastards who hurt my daughter!" Wesley doted on his daughter. He wanted nothing more than to beat the shit out of those who had bullied his precious girl.

"Dad, relax. Do you think Matthew will just sit by and let them go?" Gifford said calmly. Matthew was not a man to be trifled with. He wouldn't sit by and watch after something like this happened to his wife.

Wesley calmed down and told Gifford, "Tell Matthew not to go easy on those assholes. I'll take responsibility for anything that happens!"

Gifford stood up from his chair and said, "You don't have to take any responsibility. If Matthew can't handle even this, why did you marry Rika to him? Just stay with Mom and take care of Ethan. Although she was bullied, I'm guessing your daughter wouldn't have suffered much, judging from her character."

Saying that, he whistled at the little guy in Chantel's arms. The boy immediately giggled and called out in a cheerful voice, "Un...cle..."

Gifford loved Ethan more than he had done before. He took the boy from Chantel's arms and let him sit on his shoulders. "If only you were a Leonard family member! We should thank Erica for finding such an adorable child."

Gifford now knew that Ethan was not Erica's child. He and Wesley wanted to beat her up when they found out. The joke had been too big to handle.

Wesley thought about what Gifford had said. It made sense. Erica should be fine. Some mere amateur bullying wouldn't hurt his baby girl. With Matthew by her side, Wesley didn't need to do anything.

But he had to ask Matthew who was behind it. He had to know who had dared to oppose the Leonard and the Hilton families.

Gifford didn't stay for long because he still had work to do. After playing with Ethan for a while, he left.

Chantel hurried to follow him. "Let me walk you out!"

Gifford turned around and smiled at her. He said, "Study hard, alright?"

"I will!" Wesley and Blair treated her so well. She wanted to do her very best to repay them.

The two walked out of the living room. Chantel told Gifford what she had meant to say to him for a while now. "Gifford, I'm sorry for what happened last time. I was such a fool. Just focus on your work, and don't worry about your parents. I'll take care of them."



Gifford smiled and patted her on the shoulder. "Good girl. Thank you."

After he left, Chantel was lost in thought.

Last time, she had said that she wanted to marry Gifford. She had not considered her position, and her lack of self-awareness made her look like a fool. She was just an ignorant village girl. If it weren't for Gifford, she would have remained a village girl all her life.

As for him, he had gained power at such a young age, something that no one else his age could easily achieve. He had a bright future ahead of him and his future wife could only be a well-educated lady from a renowned family. A woman who could proudly stand beside him, as his equal.

Disappointment flashed across Chantel's eyes. She had been overconfident.

'Ah Chantel! All you can do right now is study hard. And maybe one day, you will become someone important, and then you may be able to at least stand beside him, ' she thought to herself.

In a hospital of Alorith

It was two o'clock in the morning when Erica opened her eyes. The infusion bottle had been removed, and a dim light was left on in the ward.

As soon as she opened her eyes, Matthew leaned over to her before she could even recall what had happened to her. "You're awake! Are you hungry?"

Matthew asked.

Erica remained silent as she stared into Matthew's concerned eyes. She was trying to recall what had happened to her and why she was lying in the hospital bed.

Then in a flash, she remembered everything that had happened. She had fallen into Julianna's trap. Matthew had appeared out of nowhere and saved her from their cold attacks.

Remembering how he had come to rescue her, she stretched out her arms to the man and whispered, "Hug."

Her gentle voice softened the cold expression on his face.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Matthew held one of her outstretched hands and asked, "You just woke up. Why are you so restless?"

Erica pouted. She just wanted to hug her prince charming. Why was that so wrong?

Seeing the disappointment in her face, Matthew sighed silently. Pretending to be slightly annoyed, he

pulled her up from the bed and let her lean against his chest. "You are such a naughty girl."

He had never met such a hard nut.

Erica wrapped her arms around his waist and pressed her face against his chest. "Matthew."

"Hmm?" She was so obedient at that moment. He was not used to it.

"I realized something important," she said.

"What is it?"

Without his noticing, Erica's eyes turned slightly red and her lips trembled softly. "You have done so much for me, but I have done nothing for you." Ever since her marriage to Matthew, he had done everything in his power to keep her happy, and she had been enjoying every second of it.

The man was stunned. He touched her smooth forehead to make sure that her fever had gone down. "Don't worry about it. I have only done my duties as your husband."

With Erica by his side, his life had become so much more colorful.

She was a barrel of laughs. She didn't need to do anything to make him happy. Just her presence was more than enough.

Erica sighed. The word "husband" had a strange effect on her. But when she heard his words, she realized once again how wonderful it was to have a husband like Matthew.

After a moment of silence, Matthew asked her again, "Are you hungry?"

Before Erica could nod, her body responded promptly.

A low rumble resonated from her stomach, and both of them stared at each other in astonishment. Blushing, Erica cursed her belly for betraying her.

With a smile in his eyes, Matthew smoothed her long hair and said, "I'll get some food for you. Sit up."

Erica nodded and leaned against the bed with his help. She watched the man as he heated up the food which his men bought on his orders.

Soon, four particularly exquisite vegetables and a pot of soup were placed on the table in front of her.

Matthew sat on the edge of the bed. He picked up the soup, blew on it and raised it to her lips. "Have some."

Erica was starving. She ate most of the soup before having the vegetables.

#### CHAPTER 1208 QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

Erica wasn't going to talk about what happened this evening, and Matthew wasn't going to force the issue.

She wanted to go home, but he insisted she stay in the hospital overnight. He wanted to make sure she got a clean bill of health before they released her.

Erica was not happy about that. She'd gotten drenched in the heavy rain, and all she wanted was a hot shower and a soft bed. And she certainly didn't need to stay here. She needed to rest up, so she had enough energy for tomorrow. Tomorrow would be when she got her revenge. Someone had to pay for today's events!

The couple were fighting over this, and it looked like neither would relent.

The girl was forced to lie on the hospital bed. Looking at the man, she said in a pitiful voice, "All that's going to happen is that I won't get any sleep. You really want me glaring at you all night?"

"Don't worry. You'll fall asleep very soon." Matthew was sure of it, because she slept like a log every night. She was a pretty sound sleeper, and sometimes her eyes closed the moment her head hit the pillow.

"Aren't you afraid of the ghosts in the hospital?"

"No. I have you with me!" Besides, he was not a superstitious man. He didn't believe in ghosts.

The girl began to howl, "I want to go home, go home..."

"Not until tomorrow!"

Suddenly, something occurred to Erica. She looked at Matthew and demanded, "Let me see your phone for a minute."

She didn't forget that Matthew had been acting funny at lunch. She had to make sure that she wasn't just imagining things.

The man's expression changed when she asked him for his phone. After a moment of silence, he tried to distract her. "I changed my mind about the hospital. Let's get out of here."

Without saying another word, he picked up the girl from the bed and walked out of the ward.

That was really suspicious. Why would he all of a sudden take her out of the hospital when she asked

about his phone? The more she thought about it, the more curious she became. What was he afraid of? The chat logs he had with another woman?

'He's hiding something. I know it! Is he having an affair? Is that it? It has to be!' Erica thought to herself.

Back at the villa, she took a hot shower. When she came out, she was sleepy, but her hair was still wet, so sleep would be denied her till she could dry it.

She had some regrets, coming back home at this hour. If she'd had more time to think about it, she would have stayed the night in the hospital. Right now, she could barely keep her sleepy eyes open, but she still had to dry her hair.

In the bedroom, when Matthew saw her come out of the bathroom, he put down the documents he was working on and said, "If you hadn't come out yet, I would have come in."

Erica's eyes widened. "Come in? Why would you do that?" 'Did he want to take a bath together?' she wondered. It was not that she didn't want, but that she hadn't been mentally prepared for that yet. She needed some more time to accept that kind of intimacy with him.

Matthew cast a cold glance at her, unsatisfied with her reaction. "You've been in there for an hour. I was wondering if you'd fallen asleep."

"Well...I see." She breathed a sigh of relief.

She couldn't help yawning and said, "Your turn to take a shower."

Matthew went straight into the bathroom and when he emerged a minute later, he was carrying a hair dryer. The girl sat at the vanity, going through her skin care routine.

He put the hair dryer aside and waited for her.

Realizing that he wasn't in the shower yet, Erica turned and asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take a shower?"

"No rush."

"Okay." She put on the face cream casually and stood up to grab the hair dryer.

But Matthew put out his arm to stop her. "Not now. Just lie on the bed."

Remembering that he had helped her blow dry her hair last time, Erica reacted quickly this time. "You going to dry my hair?"

The man glanced at her indifferently. "Of course! Why waste time with stupid questions?" He had the

hair dryer in his hand. Wasn't his intention obvious?

Erica pouted her lips. He was helping her and she should thank him.

But the word "stupid" made her not want to say thanks to him at all. She glared at him instead.

Erica lay on the bed, her long, wet hair hanging over the edge of the bed. She let him do whatever he wanted as long as he didn't hurt her.

It turned out that Matthew was better at drying her hair than he was the first time. More caring, savoring every moment.

A moment later, Erica was about to fall asleep, but she didn't forget to thank him. "Thank you, Matthew." 'Thank you for saving me today and drying my hair at this late hour.'

She didn't notice but, the man's eyes were full of affection. "Sleep tight, Night Elf."

"I'm not a night elf anymore. I've upgraded. I'm Queen of the Night now..."

"What?" He was confused.

Erica gave him a simple explanation before dozing off. "Queen of the Night sounds a lot cooler than Night Elf."

Matthew rolled his eyes at the childish girl.

After drying her hair, he gently tucked her in and walked back into the bathroom.

At noon the next day, Erica rushed downstairs like a gust of wind. She was dressed quite nicely, ready to head for Tam's company after lunch. The young woman could hardly wait.

Matthew had already looked into Tessie's situation. Erica had read the files he left upstairs, and finally got the whole story.

'Tessie lost her memory? Rescued by the doctor after the shock? Everything she told me was a lie! All lies!' Erica thought angrily. It turned out that Tessie was safe and sound after the childbirth. She then told everyone that it was Erica who had beaten her, and done various other terrible things to her on campus! She said she was so afraid that she couldn't take it anymore, so she transferred to Alorith University!

And Tam knew about this. But instead of coming clean, he chose to side with her to deceive Erica!

'Tessie bullied me, Tam bullied me, and even Julianna bullied me! When did I, Erica, get to be such a pushover?' Erica was pissed off!

The girl didn't know how she finished lunch. Through sheer force of will, she kept telling herself that she had to eat enough. If she ate well, she might have the strength to stand up to those who wronged her.

She devoured a large bowl of rice, a couple steamed buns, and a bowl of hot spicy soup before leaving home.

She asked the driver to take her to the Champion Group, the company where Tam worked. Before getting out of the car, she called Matthew. "Hi Matthew. I'm at the Champion Group. Can you get me past the gate and inside security? I'm right out front of their offices."

Three minutes later, Erica stormed into the office building of Champion Group alone.

She went straight to the department where Tam worked. The other employees stared at her, but she ignored them. She knocked on the door of Tam's office and shouted, "Tam Watts, get out here, now! It's Erica Leonard!"

They couldn't fail to hear what she said; they burst into an uproar. So this was Erica.

Hearing her voice, Tam knew he couldn't hide anymore, but he wasn't about to open the door for Erica, so he had to pretend he was not there.

"Tam, I know you're in there. Come out! Not so brave anymore, are you? I'll deal with you first, and then with Tessie. All of you are in for it now!" Tam and Tessie were both rotten people. Of course she had to start with this man!

Erica knocked on the door again and again, but Tam was still a no-show. She became more and more furious.

She felt like a villain in a TV drama, pounding and yelling incessantly at someone's door like an evil drama mama. 'No! I won't put up with this!'

She walked to the secretary's desk closest to her and yanked out the cords that connecting the monitor and tower. With her teeth gritted, she walked over to Tam's office door, lugging the screen with her.

The crowd was agape as Erica lifted the monitor over her head. "Tam Watts, my parents helped you raise your son, and how do you repay me? You're all a bunch of dickbags! Get out here now, or I swear to god I'll smash every machine you own!"

To prove she was not joking, Erica hurled the monitor into the door. It made a mark on the formerly immaculate door, and tumbled to the ground. It landed on the built-in stand, breaking it off. One of the corners of the device was also smashed in, and cracks began to form on the screen.

Bang! A loud noise startled Tam inside the office.

'Wow, she's really pissed. I guess I should have known better than to mess with the wife of a Hilton, the youngest daughter of the Leonard family, ' he thought.

"Come out here, coward! You have the courage to take a mistress, so why are you hiding from the responsibility? Get your ass out here! I want answers!" The girl's clear, angry voice continued to echo through the operations department.

#### CHAPTER 1209 DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF THE HILTON FAMILY

Tam's secretary was about to dash over to stop Erica, but one of her colleagues grabbed her hand and said in a hurried whisper, "What are you doing?! Even Tam has locked himself inside his office. Don't get yourself into trouble!"

The secretary was pissed seeing her smashed computer, lying on the floor. "This woman is crazy!" she said angrily.

The lady holding her back was shaken by her words. She almost covered the secretary's mouth. "Shh! You are the crazy one here! You'll get us all into trouble if you don't shut your mouth! Mrs. Hilton can do whatever she wants; she has the Leonard and Hilton families backing her up. Whatever trouble she creates, there will still be many people willing to support her! But who will take care of us? All we can do is stay out of this."

"But whatever her problem is, she has no right to damage our property and destroy our work!" the secretary said indignantly.

"Calm down. Let's just stay silent and watch the show! Haven't you noticed that none of the security guards has come forward to stop her? Why are you trying to be a hero? Do you want to get fired?"

Erica, who paid no attention to the talks behind her, continued to bang her fists on the door to Tam's office. The man inside was a real coward and refused to show his face.

Erica stopped pounding on the door and turned to look at the employees gathered around in the operations department. She raised her voice and said, "I've heard that sixteen people in the operations department had followed Tam here from another company. Who are those people?"

The employees looked at each other, but no one dared to speak up.

Seeing the angry look on Erica's face, one of the female employees pointed to a portion of the office to her left because she was afraid of being implicated for their mistake. Erica counted the employees in that area and found that there were exactly sixteen people over there.

While this was going on, a security guard, who had earlier dozed off in the lounge, heard the commotion and rushed in with a baton. "Who is causing trouble here?" he shouted.

Erica snorted, "That would be me. You got a problem?"

Ignoring his disbelief, she grabbed the baton from his hand and smashed another computer nearby.

Seeing that she was serious and really bad-tempered, the security guard stepped back without saying another word.

Erica smirked and walked over to the other area where the woman had pointed earlier. She smashed all sixteen computers, one after the other. She had the whole company's attention now.

After smashing their computers, she raised the baton and warned the sixteen employees who were loyal to Tam, "If you don't make your boss come out of his office right now, my husband will make sure that you are fired from this job and you will never again be able to find another job in Alorith."

The employees gasped in unison. They knew how powerful Matthew was. Terrified about the prospect of indefinite unemployment, the employees pushed each other and rushed to Tam's office. Some of them knocked on the window and some banged on the door. They were ready to do anything to get him out of the office.

Amidst this chaos, a group of people suddenly walked into the operations department.

"What the hell is going on here?" a middle-aged man, who seemed to be heading the group, asked furiously.

Erica turned around, completely irritated now. She replied loudly, "I'm the one raining hell here. What are you going to do about it?"

The employees recognized the group of shareholders. They had just finished their meeting. The man who had spoken earlier was the president of Champion Group, Neville Cruz, and he was followed by more than a dozen smaller shareholders.

Neville and Erica had never met before that day.

But the young man behind Neville, who was in a light blue casual coat, saw Erica and greeted her immediately, "Erica!"

Following the voice, Erica looked at the young man who was smiling and waving at her. 'Watkins?' She was surprised to see him there. She smiled politely as a greeting.

Neville looked back at Watkins and questioned, "You know her?"

"Yes, Father. She is a friend of mine." Watkins passed through the crowd and approached Erica.

She obstinately looked at the gloomy-faced Neville and stated downright, "What's going on here has



nothing to do with you. I was the one who wrecked this place. If Tam doesn't come out, I won't pay a penny for the damages. But if you can make that coward walk out of there, I'll pay for all your losses."

Neville loosened his tie and took a deep breath. His face darkened and he looked quite frightening to the others. "Who the hell are you, girl? How dare you create a ruckus in this place? Where do you think you are standing, huh? Guards, hand her over to the police!"

Watkins rushed to his father's side. "Dad! Wait! This is probably some kind of misunderstanding!"

Erica snorted and glared at Neville. He was trying to intimidate her, but she had seen worse. She turned around, ignoring the man, and banged on the door again. "Tam Watts, if you don't come out right this moment, I'll seal this door shut! I'll starve you to death, you coward!"

Neville was shocked by her attitude. This was the first time that he had seen such a defiant girl. Very few people in Alorith dared to look down upon him.

Sensing that his father was about to lose his cool, Watkins immediately walked up to him and said, "Dad, ask Tam to come out."

The man glared at Watkins. It was obvious that his son was protecting the girl. "Why should I? Call the police first!"

Watkins hurriedly waved his hand. "Father, you can't call the police on her! She..." 'She is married to Matthew!'

Before he could say it out loud, a dozen bodyguards in black rushed in and stood behind Erica.

While the crowd was still confused by their sudden appearance, one of the bodyguards said to Erica respectfully, "Mrs. Erica, Mr. Matthew sent us here to support you. He said we are to follow your orders without question."

The crowd gaped. Matthew spoiled his wife too much!

Neville was taken aback when he heard the bodyguard address the girl as Mrs. Hilton, but he regained his composure quickly. Then he asked Watkins in a low voice, "Is she the daughter-in-law of the Hilton family?" He figured that since she had the guts to break into their office and smash things up, she must have someone of high status backing her up.

The Hilton family was the most powerful family in Alorith, and Carlos and his son, Matthew, were the two most important and influential men running the city from behind the scenes.

Some time ago, Neville had heard that Matthew married the youngest daughter of the Leonard family, a renowned military family in Askor. The marriage alliance made the two originally powerful families even stronger. He assumed that this bad-tempered girl in front of him must be the youngest daughter of the

Leonard family.

He turned to his son and it seemed like he was right. Watkins was vigorously nodding at him.

Erica stepped back from the office door. She pointed at the locked door and ordered the bodyguards, "Tear this door down!"

"Yes, Mrs. Hilton!" the bodyguards replied in unison and rushed forward to fulfill her order.

As they were getting ready to bring down the door, it was quickly unlocked from the inside and Tam showed his face.

He looked a little haggard and quickly apologized to Erica, "I'm sorry."

Erica had no intention of accepting his apology. "What's the use of being sorry now? Tam, I want you to tell everyone who the father is of the child I had brought home long back."

Tessie and Tam had done so many awful things to her. She couldn't continue covering up for them and as a result, be misunderstood by the public. She wanted to clear her name, once and for all. Being a pushover wasn't in her nature.

Tam shivered. "It's me. The kid is mine and Tessie's," he admitted.

Satisfied, Erica turned to the bodyguard beside her and asked, "I need you to contact a reporter right away. Ask him to get here soon."

This had to be published by a proper news outlet. The news that she had a child before marriage was public knowledge now, and she had been judged miserably by everyone when she married Matthew.

And the irony was that, since she married Matthew, even more people knew about the child.

Almost everybody who paid attention to their wedding ceremony knew that she had a bastard son. They claimed that she didn't deserve Matthew.

The bodyguard replied, "Mrs. Erica, Mr. Matthew has already arranged the reporters. They are here, waiting for your orders."

Following his gaze, Erica saw two men standing at the best location for shooting and recording what was happening there.

Erica was once again blown away by how efficient Matthew was. He had known in advance that she would need reporters. 'Can he read minds? He gives everything I need without having to ask.'

Erica grabbed Tam's collar and dragged him to the reporters. "Come here and tell the reporters all about the child I had before marriage!"

#### CHAPTER 1210 ERICA THE VIOLEN

Tam tidied up his clothes, stared at the camera with an embarrassed look, and slowly said, "I'm Tam Watts. You've probably heard the rumors. Two years ago, Erica Leonard became a single mom, right? But that's not true. You see, Erica's good friend and I are the kid's parents. Erica's raising the child now. I just wanted to say I'm sorry I hurt everyone. I hurt Erica by ruining her reputation. I hurt my family with this affair. I apologize!"

After getting what she wanted, Erica calmed down and told the reporters, "Please keep the recording and photos safe. Don't release them yet. There will be still more." She hadn't confronted Tessie yet!

"Okay, Mrs. Erica."

Then, Erica walked over to Neville and Watkins. She knew she needed to apologize to Neville. "I'm sorry, Mr. Neville. I got so mad I smashed some computers in your operations department. I'll pay for all the damage I did. But I hope you can fire Tam. He's going nowhere but down, and I don't want him to drag you down with him."

Right now, Erica was acting all sweet and polite, completely different from the raging berserker who left piles of wreckage at Tam's company.

But still, Neville sensed the implied threat in her tone. How could a fifty-something-year-old man be threatened by a young woman not even out of college?

Neville was intrigued by Erica, but also a little miffed. He couldn't be mad at her if he tried, but he could be annoyed. "Tam's private affairs are his own business. Walking into a corporate office and destroying computers is another matter. You come to my company and make trouble, and then you try to bully me into firing an employee you have a personal problem with. Who do you think you are?"

With an innocent look on her face, Erica said in an even more innocent tone, "I don't know where Tam's home is, so I had no choice but to come to his workplace to let everyone know I was mad. Don't worry, Mr. Neville. As long as you fire Tam, I'll make sure you get the money to replace what I destroyed. I'll even tell my husband you helped me today. Helping me means helping my husband. He will definitely thank you!"

Neville had never seen such a charming woman. She knew just what to say. He laughed, "You and Mr. Matthew are a perfect match. Mr. Matthew is a cold man. You're not. I have to imagine you bring a lot more variety to his daily routine."

Erica nodded with a smile and stated, "I think so. So does my husband. We're both lucky to have found each other."

Hands behind his back, Neville said, "Ha ha, if you weren't married, I would definitely bug my son to ask you out. But you got married before I met you. Watkins, Mrs. Hilton is the gold standard of a good wife. You should find yourself a girl like her."

Watkins nodded helplessly, "Got it, Dad."

The smile on Erica's face froze. 'Someone like me? Isn't he afraid that I'll tear the Cruz family's house down around their ears?' she thought in surprise. Nevertheless, still, she replied in a sweet voice, "You're too kind, Mr. Neville."

How things turned out shocked the employees of the Champion Group. It was the first time that they had seen someone destroy company property and still talk with the boss. Usually, those people got fired, or jailed. What was so amazing about this girl?

Erica waved at Watkins. "I need to jet. Bye, Watkins."

Watkins trotted over and said, "Let me walk you out."

Hearing this, the employees were surprised again, wondering how all this was possible. Was it just the fact that she was part of the powerful Hilton family? Or maybe Erica had a presence all her own. This girl had just engaged in what amounted to sabotage—blatant sabotage—and she got off scot free. Not only that, the boss' son was going to escort her out of the building. This was just too incredible.

Erica didn't turn Watkins down. On the way out, she said to him, "Thank your dad for me when you go back in. He's the most generous man I've ever met. I wanna pay him back every cent of damage that I caused. Tell him to write up an invoice and give it to my husband." She knew Matthew would definitely solve her problem.

Watkins smiled at her words.

And his dad was right. He found her absolutely mesmerizing. She didn't seem like a troublemaker. This despite the fact that she went rampaging through his dad's company. "Don't mention it. You saved me last time. This is nothing."

"I just did what I could last time. It's no big deal."

Standing still, Watkins looked at her and said, "I thought you were going to kick the crap out of Tam after he came out of his office. You just made him clear up the rumors. That's not like you."

"Not like me? You think I'm a violent thug or something?" Erica looked back at him in confusion.

Watkins shook his head with a smile. "Well, you did ruin a fair amount of computers all by your lonesome—"

"Watch it," Erica laughed. "I'm paying for it anyway."

There were several cars parked near the gate of the Champion Group, all of which belonged to Erica's bodyguards. One of the bodyguards quickly rushed over and opened the door for her before she reached the car. Another one extended his hand to cover the roof of the car for her and closed the door after she was comfortably inside.

Erica rolled down the car window and waved to Watkins. "Bye!" she called.

"Have a safe drive!" Watkins didn't walk back into the office until the car disappeared.

Back in the day, before Erica married Matthew, she had trashed a five-star hotel in her home country, and she just did the same to a listed company in Alorith.

She really was the boldest and most arrogant girl in the world!

In fact, Watkins hadn't been in the office for a long time, but today was the monthly shareholders' meeting. As one of the company's shareholders, he came to attend the meeting.

As soon as the meeting was over, the secretary jogged over to him, reporting that someone was making trouble.

When he saw Erica causing all that commotion, his interest and affection for her grew stronger and stronger.

But Matthew moved faster than he did. She was already married. That really sucked, as far as he was concerned.

As soon as Erica left, Champion Group terminated their contract with Tam.

Before Erica could track down Tessie, she was already a hot item on the news. It had gone viral already.

She hadn't had time to check the headlines, but Rhea called her to tell her all about it! "Erica, something happened. You're on the news!"

'I'm on the news? What for? Is it about me trashing computers at Champion Group?' Erica wondered. "Is this about Champion Group?" she asked.

"What are you talking about? Someone published an article about you getting violent on campus. Check it for yourself. It's spreading like crazy online!" Rhea sounded really anxious. She called Erica as soon as she found out, but by then she was already a trending topic. She thought her friend might want to know so she could do damage control.

'I used violence on campus?' Erica was surprised.

She immediately hung up the phone and logged into her Weibo account.

She clicked on the trending news and sure enough saw her own name, followed by a word all in red—hot!

With trembling hands, she tapped on her name. The first headline of the news read, "Mrs. Hilton (Erica Leonard) Hit a Female Classmate on Campus. Her Behavior Was Outrageous!"

In the picture over the link, she held Lenora's head under the faucet inside No. Eighteen Primary School. Due to the angle of the shot, only her profile was shown in the picture, but it looked enough like Erica that someone might think it was her.

In the third picture, Lenora's clothes were being torn from her by a group of people, and her classmates were taking photos of her.

Next to the sixth picture was a video where Erica slapped Lenora in the face several times in just one or two minutes. It was most likely a looped GIF, but the article didn't say that.

When these maliciously edited photos and videos were posted, everyone was convinced that Erica was an out-of-control psycho!

And that was where the netizens came in, doing what they did best—posting malicious comments and mockery. The comment area of her Weibo was filled with all the vitriol of an outraged fanbase. Everyone demanded an explanation.

Before she could finish reading the news, Matthew gave her a ring. "Come to my office!" he said. He didn't sound happy.