

TMBA 1341

CHAPTER 1341 HAVE SOME PEACE OF MIND

'Matthew is a man who excels in everything. How could a fool like me deserve him? Only those elegant women or those who are outstanding in business like Terilynn or Evelyn suit him,' Erica thought to herself.

Perhaps other people would call her silly and crazy. She felt like she was different from other women. For example, most women would run away in fright when they saw snakes. On the contrary, she was happy to see those animals. She would even hold them and play with them.

When she came back to her senses, she dialed Gifford's number. However, no one answered, even after she tried to call many times.

It was only on her fifteenth attempt that he finally answered. He asked in a low voice, "Rika, is there any problem?" He was on a mission, but when he saw Erica's persistent calls, he had no other choice but to find a place to answer his phone secretly.

"Gifford, I need to tell you something."

"Is that really urgent?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Okay, tell me," he said with a sigh.

"Long time ago, I saved a man and took him home to treat his wounds. At that time, Matthew happened to come back home from a business trip. When he saw the man, he got so angry." She paused as Matthew's enraged face flashed in her mind.

She couldn't help sobbing as she thought, 'Did Matthew already like me at that time? If he didn't, why did he get furious when he found out that I brought a man back home?'

"Rika, what is happening to you? Why are you crying a lot recently?" This time, Gifford regretted not coming to Alorith a few days ago to confront Matthew.

"I'm fine. I just discovered something that shocked me. I just found out that Matthew really loves me," she replied while wiping the tears on her face.

Gifford was rendered speechless. He was surprised that she found out about it just now.

Erica continued, "Since then, that man has started to appear in my life more often. And every time we were together, Matthew would always appear and get furious. One day, Matthew beat him black and blue. When I went to the hospital to visit him, he confided to me that he liked me, and he was the one

who sent me the roses." Although intermittently, she had finally told Gifford about Watkins.

She had always considered Watkins as a friend. A kind of friend that she was willing to fight for with her husband.

After listening to her narration that lasted for more than ten minutes, Gifford thought for a while before decisively told her, "There's something wrong with that man. Judging from the fact that every time he was with you, you would run into Matthew, I'm sure he's not that simple. Perhaps everything was preplanned. And he was even with you when Phoebe had a miscarriage. Do you think it was just a coincidence? Then he deliberately sent you the roses and confessed to you in the hospital. Obviously, his main purpose was to ruin your relationship with Matthew. Rika, I think you have been fooled." Thinking how his sister was tricked by a man, he couldn't help but sigh.

Erica was stunned upon hearing her brother's conclusion. 'Oh, my God! My brother can see through everything, even merely from my narration. Why haven't I realized it from the start?' she thought.

Gifford continued, "I suggest you ask someone to investigate what happened to you in the Blessing Palace. For me, it's too coincidental that he suddenly appeared in such a critical moment to save you. It might also be one of his plots."

'If Gifford is right, then Watkins is not only hateful but also too terrifying, ' Erica thought to herself again.

Sensing her disappointment, he comforted her, "Don't overthink things. Since you have treated him as a true friend, it's only normal that you can't see through him. But it's not too late yet to know his true colors. Tell me who he is, and I'll help you investigate. As for Phoebe, I'll send someone to bring her here tomorrow."

Even though Gifford couldn't see her, she shook her head and said, "I've already asked someone to send Phoebe away. And that man, he has left too. They are all gone."

"You sent Phoebe away just like that? Don't rush things with her. Send her to me and let me teach her a lesson first." He had a set of special tools that could make that woman suffer in pain.

"You can talk with Matthew about it. Gifford, I just want some peace right now. Thanks for your time. Bye!"

Since her childhood, she had never felt so lost like today.

She was sad and angry at the same time.

After a long while, a black Emperor car stopped in front of Erica, and Matthew got out.

He was wearing a dark tailored suit with a white shirt underneath, and a dark blue, polka dot tie.

He walked towards her in his dark brown leather shoes, with his usual expressionless look. But when their gazes met, tenderness suddenly appeared in his eyes.

After sitting next to her, he held her in his arms and gently called her name, "Rika."

Erica, who had already stopped crying a while ago, burst into tears again upon hearing his soft voice.

She had never seen his gentleness before. It was only now that she realized, he was so gentle that her heart melted in an instant.

She buried her face in his arms and sobbed, "Matthew... boo...hoo...!" She wanted to add, 'My Matthew...

I feel so sad. My heart aches so much.'

Seeing her in this state saddened Matthew too. He kissed her hair and said, "Don't cry."

He took his phone out with his free hand and called Owen. The gentleness in his voice disappeared as he spoke to his assistant. "Send Phoebe to a remote mountain in the deserted area now. Build a new tombstone for Nathan there and ask her to face his tombstone every day to confess all her sins. Make her promise to never come back to Alorith ever! As for Camille, take her to a small village and find her a husband there. Make sure that you choose a family that is special enough for her."

Owen immediately understood what he meant, so he answered, "Yes, Matthew." He must find a family that Camille couldn't afford to offend, especially her husband and parents-in-law.

"Don't let Watkins escape abroad. Disable him and send him to the village where Camille is," Matthew added.

Watkins should witness the woman he loved so much being married to a stranger, and that he couldn't do anything but suffer in pain.

"Got it, Matthew!"

"Put the plan of acquiring the Campbell family's company on the agenda for the next meeting. I want their company to disappear in Alorith in half a month."

"Yes, Matthew."

Kaitlyn was sent to the cave where Lenora had once stayed.

According to the rumors, Lenora went to see a psychiatrist after coming back from that cave. Many people in Alorith knew about it. So when she found out that she would be sent to that cave too, Kaitlyn was so scared that she almost went crazy.

But no matter how much she tried to struggle, she was still taken away.

This time, Matthew was really furious. He didn't pass up anyone related to the Campbell family who plotted against Erica.

After giving all his orders to Owen, he carried Erica into the car and went back to Pearl Villa District.

Knowing that she was in a depressed mood, he didn't work that night and stayed in bed with her.

She was awake but remained silent the whole night until three o'clock in the morning. When Matthew was about to fall asleep, Erica suddenly spoke up. "Matthew, I want to go somewhere to have some peace of mind."

Matthew suddenly opened his eyes in the darkness and asked uncertainly, "What?"

"I want to go on a trip."

When it finally dawned on him, he hugged her and said, "Okay. I'll go with you."

But to his surprise, she shook her head. "I want to go alone. If you are worried about me and the babies, you can send more bodyguards to protect me." As long as Matthew wasn't there, getting rid of even ten bodyguards would be easy for her.

Matthew fell silent. He couldn't immediately agree to her because he was worried about her safety if he wasn't there to protect her personally.

CHAPTER 1342 MATTHEW LOVES ME

Matthew didn't speak. Unlike before, Erica neither naughtily urged him nor coquettishly forced him to answer immediately. After half an hour, he finally agreed, "Okay."

The corners of her mouth lifted in a brilliant smile. She kissed the man's face with tear-filled eyes, and said softly, "Thank you, Matthew."

'You are the man I love most. I love you, Matthew, ' she confessed in her mind.

Matthew acted quickly. First, he confirmed a destination for Erica's trip—a country named Cass. The country was in the opposite direction of the slum.

Then he arranged for six bodyguards to follow her. Two of them—a man and a woman—were assigned to follow her closely, while the remaining four bodyguards would protect her in secret.

He also ensured that bodyguards were available for every scenic spot she visited.

While his arrangements were extreme, they helped reassure Matthew of Erica's and their two children's safety.

As soon as Debbie learned that Erica would be traveling, she offered to accompany her daughter-in-law. Erica, however, refused. Although she always listened to her elders, this time, she expressed her desire to be alone.

Debbie tried to persuade her, but the pregnant woman's decision remained unshakable. Eventually, Debbie gave up.

Her concerns only settled when she learned from Matthew the steps he'd taken to ensure Erica's safety.

After all three sisters of the Campbell family had been sent away, Fanya tried her best to sue Matthew and Erica, but no lawyer dared to take her case.

Finally, a small-time lawyer offered to accept the case for the money. However, he disappeared inexplicably when he went to meet Fanya.

Before leaving for Cass, Erica visited the Leonard family house in Askor.

In the evening, Blair drove Wesley out of their room as she wanted a heart-to-heart talk with her daughter. "Rika, I feel as though you are in a bad mood after returning this time. Tell me what's wrong. Maybe I can help."

The smile on Erica's face didn't lessen. On the contrary, her tone was as cheerful and naughty as always. "I'm fine. I just wanted to see you and Dad before I leave for my trip!"

Blair wasn't convinced. "Although I want you and Matthew to get along, if you have been wronged, you have to tell me. You know that I won't forgive him if he's done something awful, right?" Blair liked Matthew as her son-in-law, but on the condition that he was kind to her daughter, and that he would not betray her.

Erica was moved by her mother's concern. She leaned forward, hugged her mother, and rested her head on Blair's shoulder. "Mom, I'm fine. Really! I finally understand why you always said that I was lucky to have married Matthew. I know that I will live a happy life with him."

Blair patted her hand and said, "I'm glad that you have started to feel this way. Remember, you're going to be a mother of two children soon. So, don't do anything stupid. Travel safe and think of your babies, okay?"

"Yes! Don't worry!" She would protect the two babies in her belly just as Matthew would protect her.

When Erica left Blair's room, she saw that the door to the study was open and that Wesley was writing

calligraphy.

She stood by the door and watched her father for a few moments. Soon, she teased, "Colonel Wesley, you can go back to your room to sleep now!"

Wesley glanced up, and when he saw his daughter, he smiled and waved her in. "Come in. See if your dad's calligraphy is good."

She walked closer to the table. In front of Wesley was a piece of Chinese art paper on which he had written a poem. "In the northern forest lived a pack of wild geese, with feathers as white as snow. Against the icy wind, they flew toward the south, wing to wing. As the rain poured and broke her wings, she couldn't do anything but mourn her lost dreams. Waiting in the gust of the howling wind, he vowed to never forsake or leave."

Wesley's handwriting was impeccable.

However, Erica's attention was focused on the poem. "Dad, you know this poem too?"

It was then that she remembered having asked Matthew to investigate Can't Do Anything. She decided to ask him when she retired to her room for the night.

"Yes. Do you still remember that year when you stained Matthew's shirt, and your mother asked you to buy him a new one?"

"Yes, I do. Why do you ask?" She was confused. What did this poem have to do with Matthew's shirt?

Wesley put down his brush and smiled. "I know this poem because I overheard Matthew recite it that year. It was so meaningful and poignant that I learned it by heart."

Later, he'd found that the poem was about love at first sight.

'Could it be that Matthew... knows this poem? Is all this a coincidence?' Erica wondered.

Since she didn't react the way he'd hoped, Wesley continued, "As you seem to be in a bad mood, I'll tell you a secret that should make you feel better."

"What secret?"

Carlos and Wesley often teased each other about their children. During one such conversation, Carlos had divulged to Wesley that Matthew's Weibo username was Can't Do Anything. This seemed like an appropriate time to tell Erica. "Matthew's Weibo username is Can't Do Anything," he said.

"What?!" Erica was stunned when her father told her. She couldn't believe what she heard. 'Matthew is...Can't Do Anything?'

Wesley couldn't imagine the impact of this revelation on his daughter. "Yes. I know that you are unaware of this. In fact, I didn't know either. It was Carlos who told me. Now, do you understand how much Matthew loves you? You're always disobedient and make him angry!"

Erica was at a loss for words. She stood still with tears in her eyes as she thought about what her father had said. A long time passed before she could speak.

The old man smiled helplessly when he saw her expression. His silly daughter had met a man who was incapable of expressing his feelings. They had been married for a long time, but she still didn't know how Matthew felt about her.

Erica was naughty and senseless, while Matthew was reticent and didn't like to express himself. It was normal for her to have doubts.

After a while, Erica finally found her voice. "Dad, you've known that Matthew loves me for a long time, haven't you?" That was why he insisted on her marrying into the Hilton family.

"Well, that's not entirely true. I only found out a bit earlier than you did."

Wesley had hoped that after their union, Erica would figure things out. However, his daughter was a little slow in realizing such things. He had waited for this day for a long time, let alone Matthew.

Wesley felt sorry for Matthew. The young man must've hoped and prayed for this day ever since their marriage. Even though he believed that Erica had given birth to another man's child at that time, he still tried to get close to her and make her accept him little by little. Didn't this patience mean true love?

That was one of the reasons why Wesley always sided with Matthew.

It was understandable that Matthew would do so based on his personality. Many people did the same. They first lured their "prey," and then captured its heart. Gradually, they made it belong to them willingly.

Erica was confused. 'Did Matthew fall in love with me after he fell out of love with his goddess, Phoebe?

Or...could it be possible that I've been the goddess in his heart all this while?'

This realization sent a shiver through Erica. If it were true, didn't it mean that Matthew had hidden his feelings too well?

He was indeed, good at acting. She didn't know that he was Can't Do Anything until today.

No wonder he hadn't allowed her to touch his phone! He was afraid that she would find out his Weibo username.

Erica's mood should have lifted after this revelation. However, complex emotions surged through her as she believed that she knew very little about the man she had married. Matthew was a mysterious figure shrouded in mist, who had waited for her to see him clearly.

That night, Erica and Chantel shared a room. The two pregnant women touched each other's belly and smiled. How happy they were!

It was late night when they finally fell asleep.

CHAPTER 1343 IT'S ME

Erica only stayed in the Leonard family's house for two days. She then set off from Askor to Cass.

Matthew had already calculated her arrival time. So, as soon as she got off the plane, she received a call from him. After telling him that she arrived safely, she hung up and went straight to the hotel.

At Orchid Private Club

In the dim VIP room, Matthew was seated silently, staring at the wine in his glass.

With a dissatisfied expression on his face, Sheffield sat down opposite him and said, "Just because you don't have a wife to sleep with tonight, we have to put aside our work and leave our wives to go out with you."

Joshua chuckled, "Don't provoke him, man. Be careful. He might have a life-and-death battle with you later." Everyone could tell that Matthew was not in a good mood.

"Then let's fight it out! Who says I'm afraid of him?" Sheffield poured wine into his glass leisurely.

Harmon echoed his joke and said, "Why not? Matthew has a lot of money anyway. Even if we smash his private room right now, he can have it decorated more luxuriously." They all knew that Matthew had a brawl with Watkins in this room last time. After the fight, he had it renovated, and it looked more luxurious than before.

Matthew shifted his gaze from his glass to Sheffield. His brother-in-law used to be a ladies' man, and he should understand women better, so he asked him, "Why Rika doesn't want me to accompany her?"

He felt like Erica had changed a lot recently. He couldn't even guess what she was thinking.

Sheffield grinned mysteriously and replied, "Look at your poker face. Why don't you learn from me? You should smile more."

"Fuck off!" he cursed ruthlessly.

Sheffield just crossed his legs casually and said, "If I leave now, who can you ask for advice? Joshua? Harmon? Do you think these two can help you analyze Erica?"

Unfortunately, Matthew had to admit that Sheffield was right. He took a sip of his wine. The burning sensation when the liquid passed through his throat was too stimulating.

Joshua and Harmon refuted their so-called ladies' man friend discontentedly. After all, they had been in love and married. They knew how women think too.

But Sheffield just ignored their interruption and said to Matthew, "Tell me what happened recently."

"I have nothing to tell." Too many things had happened recently, and he wasn't in the mood to narrate everything to him.

Sheffield shook his head helplessly and drank the wine from his glass. He thought of annoying Matthew deliberately, so he said to Joshua, "Joshua, do you know that Rika is a goddess to someone?"

Joshua took a glance at Matthew and nodded but didn't dare to say a word.

"Do you know who dotes on her and loves her so much?"

Joshua nodded again. This time, Matthew cast them a malicious glance.

Sheffield felt his sharp gaze but pretended not to notice it. Instead, he continued talking to Joshua. "Do you know who wants to give all the best things in the world to her?"

For the third time, Joshua nodded again.

"Do you know who wants to spoil her to be the most lawless woman in the world?"

Joshua gave him his fourth nod.

"And do you..."

Bang! Matthew slammed his empty glass on the marble table and looked at Sheffield coldly. "Yes! Yes, it's me. The answer to all your questions is me. But that is my biggest secret. How dare you expose it now! I feel naked in front of you now. Sheffield, are you humiliating me on purpose?" He was annoyed that all the feelings he had hidden for so long were suddenly exposed.

Sheffield rolled up his sleeves and said threateningly, "Come on, let's have a duel. I am your brother-in-law, and I am older than you. What's your attitude towards me? Do you want me to beat you to death tonight?"

"Fine! Let's fight to death!" A murderous look flashed across Matthew's eyes.

Seeing the fury on his face, Sheffield chickened out at once. "No, no, no. I'm just kidding. We both have to live, so you can continue spoiling your Rika, and I can continue spoiling my wife too." He didn't want to do something that was not worth it. He had a wife and two children, and he didn't want to die.

Matthew ran his fingers through his short hair annoyingly. 'My Rika, ' he thought inwardly.

Fortunately, as soon as Sheffield mentioned his wife and Erica, the tension in the air instantly disappeared. Matthew continued to drink irritably. He was still in a bad mood because his wife was not at home.

Joshua and Harmon just ignored them and continued chatting happily.

A few moments later, Sheffield suddenly clicked his tongue and asked abruptly, "Matthew, does Rika know your feelings for her?"

Matthew fell silent.

One of the bodyguards had reported to him that Camille had already told Erica about it, but she hadn't mentioned it to him yet. He wasn't sure what she felt after knowing his true feelings for her.

Sheffield sighed and asked again, "Do you intend to let her discover it all by herself? Are you not going to tell her that you love her from the very start?"

He hit the nail on the head. Indeed, that was what Matthew had really planned.

With a smile, he added, "Based on her IQ, I think you may have to wait for at least ten more years."

It might even take more than ten years. Actually, he wasn't confident that Erica would find it out by herself if Matthew wouldn't confess his love for her directly.

But it was also possible that she would understand through time. After all, people changed as they grew older, and experiences taught them to comprehend things around them easily.

Matthew remained silent, so Sheffield continued, "Anyway, she's only twenty-two years old. She has not experienced the real harsh world yet, so it's normal for her to be naive. When she finishes her studies and exposes herself to the outside world, she will definitely change. So, if you are not in a hurry, you can wait for ten years or more. But if you think it's too long, you better take the initiative to confess to her. You can't treat her the way you treat other people. If you have something to say to her, say it straightforwardly."

"How can I wait for that long? If I'm not in a hurry to confide my feelings for her, I won't be drinking here with you tonight," Matthew said angrily.

"So what are you waiting for? Go home and confess your love! Who knows? Rika may also have the same feelings for you," Sheffield concluded.

After a while, Matthew drank his last glass of wine and decided to go home.

He would wait for Erica to come back and confess his love for her. This time, he would tell her everything.

If she didn't love him, he would accept it. Anyway, she already couldn't escape from him forever.

But if she loved him too... he would be the happiest man in this world.

It was a beautiful night in Cass.

Afraid that it might not be safe to go outside, Erica brought her camera on the balcony of the hotel and took pictures of the night sky.

After a while, the female bodyguard came to her and said, "Erica, it's time for your midnight snack."

"Okay."

She washed her hands and sat at the table. There was a bowl of bird's nest and some desserts. Although she was in a different country, everything she had been eating was exquisite.

When the female bodyguard was about to leave, Erica suddenly stopped her. "Wait a minute!"

The female bodyguard turned around and looked at her in confusion. "Yes, Erica?"

"I'm going to take photos in the Reed Mountain tomorrow. Please go downtown and buy me some rubber bands, a hairpin and a new backpack outside. I spilled water on my backpack just now, so I need a new one. Don't worry about me. I'll be just fine with the other bodyguard here." Her tone was natural and casual.

The female bodyguard hesitated for a moment. But after thinking that it would be awkward for the male bodyguard to buy what she needed, she nodded and said, "Okay, Erica."

However, not long after the female bodyguard went out, Erica was gone too.

She went missing.

The male bodyguard reported to Matthew, and he immediately sent a lot of people to look for her even in the Reed Mountain. Unfortunately, they failed to find her.

Matthew had already transferred all his work in the next few days to Evelyn. He had planned to go to

Cass to look for Erica and accompany her for the rest of her travel.

CHAPTER 1344 I DON'T DESERVE TO BE A WIFE

Although Matthew had already booked a plane ticket for himself, he didn't expect to receive a call from the bodyguard informing that Erica was missing.

Immediately, he changed his flight to the earliest one and flew to Cass.

When he got to the hotel room that Erica was supposed to be staying, he sat down and quietly listened to the bodyguard's report about his wife's disappearance. "Erica ordered the female bodyguard to get her some lady supplies from downtown. In the meantime, another bodyguard and I stayed and did the protection for Erica. When she complained about having a stomachache, we accompanied her to the bathroom and waited nearly half an hour outside the door. But then we realized that something was wrong. We called her several times, but there was no response. After we broke in, we found out that she had climbed over the wall and left."

The bathroom in the mountain area wasn't as luxurious as the one in the city. It was only a simple toilet built of bricks.

Behind it, there was a small forest. So when the bodyguards checked the surveillance footage at the entrance, they saw Erica leaving through the woods in a hurry.

They managed to track her from the screen until she reached a blind spot and disappeared without a trace.

After the bodyguard told him everything, Matthew closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. He could still smell her scent in the room.

For a long time, he didn't say anything, nor did he make a move. He was so calm that it didn't seem as he had just lost his beloved wife. The bodyguards were in cold sweats, beginning to wonder if the man had fallen asleep. But slowly, he opened his eyes again.

Matthew then stood up and walked around the room as if he was looking for something.

Finally, he spotted a letter and a box above Erica's suitcase.

Sitting on the head of the bed, he casually opened the letter.

It didn't seem very long. The girl's handwriting was neat, unlike her naughty character, and in the very first word, Matthew noticed that the letter was indeed for him.

"Matthew, first of all, I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry.

Yes, I'm leaving. After what happened recently, I've realized how much of a problem I am. It turns out that I am a big fool. For so many times, I've allowed those messed up people to get between us that I would often misunderstand you because of it. I was so blinded by my own stupidity that I failed to see how good you were to me!

I thought a lot about it and came to the conclusion that a stupid woman who is always causing trouble like me doesn't deserve to be a wife, much less the title of Mrs. Hilton and an excellent husband like you. You were always so good to me, and I know how much you love me.

Matthew, in fact, I also love you. I love you very much. You were the first man I fell in love with since I became an adult.

I like how gentle your voice gets whenever you speak to me, your eight pack abs, the way you grab the bed sheet every time I initiate the sex between us, the way you cook for me, the way you roll up your sleeves and work in a white shirt... Ah! I really like everything about you. You are so charming! How can you be so charming? Oh, my God, I'm already drooling in the mere thought of you.

It's also because I like you so much that I made this decision. I've decided to give up the comfortable life I have with you to find a place that I can struggle a bit more. Perhaps this will allow me to grow and be more worthy of you. So promise me that you won't send anyone after me, okay?

You can rest assured that I will take good care of our sons and bring them back after they are born. Oh, I mean, if you still want to see me, I'll bring them back. But if you don't, I'll let them come back to you on their own.

Also, don't get involved with other women while I'm away. Remain the stoic and cold CEO that you are and hold yourself back, please! After all, we aren't divorced yet. I'm just leaving to the deep forest to grow as a person in seclusion.

If you ever meet a wonderful woman, who is very kind and good to you, well, you may abandon me and be with her. I think maybe...I'll be fine after crying my eyes out.

Aside from this letter, I also left you a strand of my hair. You can hold it during your sleep every night.

I already wrote more than I intended to, and my hand is sore. It's sorer than that time I did you a hand job. Oh! And there I go again, remembering how good you look in bed! I better stop now, or I'm afraid I will change my mind.

Honey, if we are destined to meet, we will see each other again in the future!

Your beloved wife, Rika Leonard Hilton."

After reading the letter at least three times, he finally put it back into the envelope.

'Did she apologize to me in this letter?

Who said she had to say she was sorry? Did I ever ask her to apologize? No. But why would she think she should apologize if I've never asked her that?' Matthew thought, his heart broken.

Despite her foolishness and her poor judge of character, she had never betrayed him. Neither physically nor morally. Why would she apologize to him then?

He didn't care about the misunderstandings caused by the Campbell sisters and Watkins. He wasn't even angry at her.

He never stopped his wife from doing anything that she wanted. So why would she apologize to him so humbly now?

If his theory was proved right, it must have been what the Campbell sisters told Erica the other night that provoked this.

But he didn't mind his pregnant woman throwing a tantrum at him. Why did the two sisters have to criticize his wife that way? As long as Erica was with him, he didn't care if she misunderstood him. He didn't even mind if she slapped him in the face!

'Erica, you fool. Things do not always run smoothly in people's lives. The two of us need to go through a period of adaptation, that's all. But how can we work through our relationship if you fled after such a small setback?' Matthew sighed wistfully.

In fact, he shouldn't have trusted her when she told him she wanted to go on a trip to get some peace of mind. How could he let her slip through his fingers so easily?

Obviously, she had everything planned. Otherwise, she wouldn't have written a goodbye letter to him. And how could he forget about the strand of hair that she left behind? Now was he simply supposed to hold it in his sleep? What was this? In his opinion, dumping her husband didn't qualify as the behavior of the good woman she said she wanted to be at all.

To make matters worse, did she say she wanted to struggle while she was pregnant? Was there something wrong with her brain?

Although Matthew thought his head was about to explode, in the end, he agreed to let her go.

After checking her luggage, he made sure that she didn't bring any of the bank cards he had given her. He couldn't wait to see how the pregnant woman planned to survive out there.

Bearing this in mind, Matthew didn't feel anxious anymore. Afterward, he took his men and left the country as soon as possible.

By the time he returned to Alorith, he ordered his men to keep an open eye on any movement in Erica's bank accounts. Raising children required a lot of money, so he believed that she would surely need to withdraw some cash sooner or later.

Meanwhile, in Askor, Chantel was taking the day off at Leonard family's house.

It was rare for her to take some time to rest. But at that moment, she was playing the game of Go with Wesley, while Blair was knitting a sweater for her grandchild.

The family was having a good time together when Wesley's phone unexpectedly rang. With his mind focused on the game, he didn't feel like answering it.

However, Chantel warned him, "Dad, it's Carlos calling."

Nodding, Wesley put down his stone piece and picked up the phone. "Hey, old man!"

At the other end of the line, Carlos was smoking in his study when he said gloomily, "Wesley, Rika is missing!"

CHAPTER 1345 WAIT FOR ME

"What? Are you shitting me? She ran away again?" Wesley asked in disbelief.

"No, I'm afraid this piece of news is poo-free. Rika dumped her bodyguards and went AWOL when she was on holiday in Cass!" Carlos answered.

Wesley stood up abruptly and asked, "How'd that happen? Did she run away by herself?"

It had only been a month since Carlos told him the good news that Erica was pregnant with twins. Why did she run away?

"No one knows. She did leave a letter to Matthew, asking us not to look for her." As an elder, Carlos felt guilty after Erica took off.

Matthew must have done something again.

When Blair heard someone ran away, it didn't take her long to figure out it was Erica. It was always Erica.

She immediately dropped what she was working on and approached her husband. She asked anxiously, "What's going on, Wesley?"

Wesley didn't answer her; he was still listening to Carlos on the phone.

On the other hand, Chantel lowered her head and clenched her clothes nervously. 'She did it! Rika got

away from her bodyguards!

"My daughter is impossible!" Wesley was so pissed off his blood pressure skyrocketed. He paced back and forth in the living room like a tiger in its cage. "I really don't think it's Matthew this time. I know what kind of person my daughter is. It can't be his fault. She's gone too far this time! She didn't even think about her two babies at all!"

A moment later, he told Carlos, "Blair and I are heading your way now. We need to put our heads together and bring Erica back! Bring yourself and your ideas!"

Then Wesley hung up the phone and urged Blair to pack her things before leaving for Alorith.

Chantel stood up from the chair and asked, "Dad, where's Rika? Is something wrong?"

Wesley took a deep breath and answered gently, "She ran away again. I'm off to Alorith with your mom. You hold down the fort here. I'll get Yvette to come and take care of you for a couple days."

"No need for that, Dad. That's what maids are for. Don't bother Yvette. Besides, I'll be at school all day. Don't worry about me." Chantel didn't dare to look into Wesley's eyes because she felt guilty. Her eyes darted from place to place.

Wesley was so pissed off he didn't pay much attention to her. Otherwise, he would have figured out she was involved. "I wish Rika was an awesome girl like you. She is such a drama queen! It seems she'll always keep me on my toes, old as I am," he sighed.

"Rika's too much of a free spirit to be tied down. We'll find her," Chantel comforted him.

"Of course we will. Together again with Carlos! It'll be like old times. She can't hide from us both," Wesley said through gritted teeth.

Meanwhile, a lone figure reached the shore. The pregnant girl, the one who had turned the households of two powerful families upside down. She crouched down and put her hands on her knees, out of breath. Excited, she stepped onto a rock and stretched out her arms to embrace the freedom.

'Ahhh! Finally free! I'm all by myself. No family, no husband! No one to be accountable to. Smell that fresh air!'

At last, she put her hands on her bulging belly and smiled happily. "Little ones, I will definitely bring you into this world safely," she told herself.

She had already gotten a lot done. Before her trip, she withdrew a hundred thousand dollars, and had the cash in her bag.

She had calculated that if she was smart and budgeted well, she wouldn't have to withdraw any more

money for several months.

When she really ran out of money later, she could take photos for people and make money that way.

The pregnant woman found a place to rest for a while so she could get her energy back. Finally, she got the address of the dock and boarded a ship to cross international waters, and get away from Cass.

Erica looked out at the sea, and swore inwardly, 'Matthew, I don't deserve you. When I come back, I will be worthy of your love. I was a little girl; when I find you again, I'll be a woman. Wait for me!'

At Hilton Group

Matthew stood in front of the French window smoking a cigarette. Three days ago, he was in Cass. Two days ago, he'd come back home.

Right now, he was wondering if the pregnant woman had suffered any setbacks.

Knock, knock, knock! There was a knock at the door.

It was Owen. He walked right in when he was bidden to do so. He wasn't surprised that Matthew was smoking more nowadays. "I found something, Matthew. The 'accident' in the Blessing Palace was no accident. Someone set that up deliberately..."

The photo shoot activity and the mental patient were arranged in advance by Watkins.

"After we looked into it, we found a murder case. In fact, the mental patient had been dead for some time. She kept trying to escape from the mental hospital and finally had a confrontation with the security guard. The guard accidentally killed her!"

'Dead?' Matthew suddenly turned around and frowned slightly. "Then the patient Rika met..."

"The one Erica met was someone else in disguise," Owen answered. It was obvious that Watkins had asked someone to cosplay as the mental patient, trying to frighten Erica. Then he conveniently showed up and saved her. That would make her want to believe him even more.

Watkins had gotten lucky that day. Erica dismissed her bodyguards. If the bodyguards followed her in, Watkins' plan wouldn't have a snowball's chance in hell.

It was all arranged by Camille and her cohorts. Even Matthew couldn't help but marvel at the simple complexity of Camille's plans.

"What's going on with the Campbell Group?" Matthew asked.

"The acquisition is proceeding as planned. Fanya is focusing on suing you. Lyman knew there was no way

out, so he signed all the documents," Owen answered briefly.

"How about the Champion Group?"

"Since you cut ties with them, Neville has been running himself ragged. Everybody's following Hilton Group's example. Eight of the ten companies that were considering partnerships have pulled out, or declared their contracts null and void."

Matthew said nothing more. Having delivered his update, Owen left the office.

On the third day after he came back from Cass, Matthew sat lazily in his office chair, resting his forehead on one hand and staring out the window.

'Rika, I miss you.

Come back to me. I know how hard it is to make in this world. But I can help you with that.'

On the fourth day, the man lay in the bed, his wife's scent lingering in the sheets. He began seriously thinking about a question. 'When did you become such a heartless woman, Rika? You left without saying goodbye, leaving me only a lock of hair and a letter. Why didn't you take me with you?'

On the fifth day, it rained heavily in Alorith. Matthew was holding the strand of hair in his hand. 'I hate you, Rika. I hate you for abandoning me and leaving with our sons.'

The sixth day, he thought to himself, 'Rika, I love you.'

Matthew had been waiting for a month, but he still couldn't figure out what kind of money she was living on. There were countless dollars on her bank card, but she hadn't used a penny since she disappeared.

The man threw the cup against the wall. It shattered, the pieces falling to the floor, and a dark stain cascaded down the wall.

'Does money mean anything to you, my one and only? You saved so much money, why didn't you use it?'

In fact, it would be better if she did use her money. She wouldn't need to live a hard life with the money he gave her. He really didn't want her doing hard work. She had money to live on.

But she didn't use any money from her bank account.

He didn't know how she could make it. No money, pregnant, he just couldn't figure it out. And the longer he thought about it, the worse it made him feel.

Besides, she had won the first and second places in the photography contest.

The photo that got first place was a group photo of the two of them, which named $1+1=3$. The second one was his portrait.

CHAPTER 1346 HUGO LEONARD

The first and second prizes for the photo contest were one hundred thousand and fifty thousand respectively. Erica won both for her entries, so the money was immediately transferred to her bank account. The certificates were also sent to the Hilton Group. Matthew received them, but he couldn't celebrate her victory with her.

It had been one month and ten days since Erica left. Chantel received a call from Gifford. Before she could get the chance to greet him, he immediately asked, "You were with Rika for two days before she went to Cass, right?"

"Yes. Why?" she answered. Her voice was a little shaky as if afraid of something.

"Did she tell you anything about her plans, like where she wanted to go?" he asked again.

She heaved a sigh of relief first before she answered calmly, "No, she didn't." It was true. She knew that Erica was going to run away from home, but the latter didn't tell her exactly where she was going.

"Really?" He sounded unconvinced. If only he wasn't busy today, he would go back home to ask Chantel in person.

"Yes, really."

There was a moment of silence from the other end of the line before he spoke again. "If she contacts you, let me know immediately."

"Okay." But Erica had not contacted her yet since she left.

Then Gifford hung up the phone.

Chantel was in a daze as she stared at her phone. All of a sudden, her heart felt empty. It was as if she lost something important.

Meanwhile, in the slum located in the opposite direction to Cass, a skinny woman in plain clothes carried a bowl of freshly-cooked noodles into a shabby small room. She then said to the other woman, "Erma, I bought eggs and tomatoes to make these noodles. Eat them while they are still hot."

Erma was currently six months pregnant, but her belly was so big that some people thought she was about to give birth.

She was Erica. When she came to this slum, she decided to change her name into Erma Hilton so people wouldn't recognize her. Without minding the shabby surroundings, she took the bowl of noodles and wolfed them down.

The woman who made the noodles for her was Tessie. Looking at her dirty face with a smile, she asked, "Are you leaving tonight?"

Erica stopped eating and nodded. "Yes. And you will go with me," she answered.

Tessie was stunned. "But... Matthew won't allow me to go anywhere." Deep in her heart, she was hoping that Matthew would allow her to go back to Alorith after she had been behaving well.

"Don't worry about it. As long as you help me now, I will personally take you back to Alorith someday. Matthew won't mind it."

As the saying went, "The most dangerous place is the safest place." No one would ever think, especially Matthew, that Erica would come to this barren place to ask for Tessie's help.

But actually, Erica couldn't stand this place anymore. She couldn't even buy some fresh vegetables here. If she continued to live a life like this, the babies in her belly would become malnourished. So before that happened, she had to leave as soon as possible.

"Are you really going to help me if Matthew blames me?" Tessie asked carefully.

"Yes, I will." Since Erica had lived with Tessie for quite a while now, she had seen the changes in her. Perhaps she had learned her lessons, so she had changed for the better.

"Great! Thank you."

That midnight, the two of them sneaked out of the slum and headed south.

At the Leonard family's house in Askor, Chantel had already given birth to a bouncing baby boy.

But the baby was already one month old when Blair remembered to inform Gifford about it.

She immediately called him to share the good news. "Gifford, your wife has already given birth to a four-kilogram baby boy. When are you coming back home?"

Perplexity was written all over Gifford's face when he heard Blair's words. He was in a daze. It took a long while before he finally came back to his senses. "Whose wife?" he asked.

"Your wife, of course! Didn't you know that Chantel was pregnant?" Blair sensed something odd. 'Did Chantel not tell Gifford that she was pregnant?' she wondered.

She was right. Gifford had never known that his wife was pregnant. He was dumbstruck with the news that he now had a son. He hadn't seen Chantel in the past few months. When he called her before, she also didn't mention that she was pregnant. How could she give birth all of a sudden? An eight-kilogram baby boy? He didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Did he get her pregnant when she set him up?

That was the only possibility he could think of. He rubbed his forehead and complained, "Why hadn't anyone told me that she was pregnant?"

Instead of answering her question, Blair chuckled and said, "You didn't even know that your wife was pregnant. No wonder you never cared for her since you got married.

But why are you blaming us now? Have you even asked her before?" He couldn't counter because his mother was right again. He never cared to ask how Chantel was during the past months that he wasn't able to come home.

One week later, Gifford went back home to see his son.

Finally, he was able to hold the chubby baby boy in the crib. He looked around but wasn't able to see Chantel there.

He had no idea that after giving birth, Chantel had signed a contract with Global Entertainment and was currently on training.

She named their son Hugo Leonard.

Blair suddenly came to the room with Gifford's baby picture. She put it beside Hugo's face and turned to him. "Gifford, look! He looks exactly like you. He's undeniably your son. People always say that sons look like their mothers. But why does Hugo look like you? His skin is dark like yours too."

Holding his son in his arms, he sighed helplessly. "Mom, I used to have a fair skin when I was a boy. I only got tanned because I've spent too much time under the sun during my training."

Blair thought for a while and agreed. She then took Hugo from his arms and said happily, "Finally, I am a grandmother now. I have waited for so long!"

She felt like this was the happiest moment of her life. After longing for a grandchild for a long time, finally, Gifford and Chantel granted her wish.

Looking around again, Gifford asked curiously, "Mom, where is she?"

Blair knew who he was referring to, so she answered casually, "She signed a contract with an entertainment company. She will be in closed training for six months."

"What? She will be in closed training for half a year? Which company is it?" He found it quite unusual.

"I don't know the name of the company. But I know that it's under Hilton Group, so we have nothing to worry about."

He turned to look at Hugo, who already closed his eyes and asked again, "Mom, did Rika contact you?"

At the mention of Erica, the smile on Blair's face vanished in an instant. She sighed and said, "Rika is giving birth two months from now, right?"

Erica was about to give birth soon, but they still hadn't heard anything from her.

Anger surged in Gifford's heart as he thought inwardly, 'Rika is too thoughtless. If she doesn't want to tell us where she is, she should have at least called Mom and Dad from time to time to tell them she is alright.'

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The next day, Gifford brought his son to his work. When they came back, the baby boy's chubby face was full of saliva, and his pockets were full of red envelopes.

Two days later, he finally got the address where Chantel was training. He went to see her, but he was stopped by the security guard at the entrance. He was told that outsiders were not allowed to enter the building.

He didn't force the security to let him in. Instead, he stayed at the entrance, smoked two sticks of cigarettes, and left.

Three years had passed by so quickly.

The results of the Twentieth International Photography Competition were already announced. A participant named EM won both the first and the second prizes.

The photo that won the first prize was called "Childhood in Tow Village." In the picture was a calm river surrounded by green trees and plants. There was a swing in one of the trees, and four boys were seated, showing only their backs.

The second prize was called "A Nanny in Tow Village." It was a black and white picture that emphasized the sweat and wrinkles on an old lady's smiling face. She was holding a tray in her hands, and there was a very eye-catching ancient porcelain bottle on it.

CHAPTER 1347 YOU ARE IN BIG TROUBLE

The money award for the first prize was five hundred thousand dollars, and the second was three hundred thousand.

After the competition, Emma immediately bought five more tickets to travel using her money award.

Since she bought first class tickets, she spent around three hundred thousand dollars.

Two days later, at the travel airport, a video of a woman advertising a new brand dress appeared on the huge screen. She had a perfect figure and a beautiful face that attracted many people's attention.

An old man with grey hair walked out of the VIP corridor. Looking at the woman on the screen, he nodded with satisfaction. He then muttered to himself, "Wesley's daughter-in-law is indeed excellent. In just two years, she has become an international superstar. Well, it's been three years, but I still don't know where she is and my two grandchildren are. It's so disappointing!"

The old man was none other than Carlos. He put on his sunglasses and continued to walk towards the gate of the airport.

A few moments later, several kids passed by the same corridor. They stopped for a while and stood there, enjoying the advertisement on the big screen. "Aunt Chantal has become so popular in the past two years, hasn't she?" remarked one of them.

"Yes, that's right. I can see her everywhere," another boy said.

"How do you see the movie Youth on Yestoday? She is the lead actress in that movie."

"Of course, I know. Her acting skill is so good that she can beat anyone else in the same movie."

"All right, that's enough. Let's go! If we are late, we won't be able to catch up to Grandpa."

While the children were walking and talking, they also attracted many people's attention. "Wow, they look exactly the same!"

"Yes, their clothes and faces are exactly the same. They are so handsome."

"They are too small to travel by themselves. I think they are only about four or five years old. Why are there no adults with them?"

At that moment, the boys that they were talking about ran to the exact hand on hand and stopped on old man.

A black man halted in front of Carlos outside the exit. He was about to get on the car when suddenly, some cute little boys rushed to him while calling out loudly, "Grandpa! Grandpa!"

Carlos turned around and saw some handsome boys in black T-shirts and jeans running towards him.

Before he could react, the boys pushed his assistant aside and surrounded him. "Grandpa, I'm the oldest child!"

"Grandpa, I'm the second!"

"Grandpa, I'm the third!"

"Grandpa, I'm the fourth!"

Then, the four of them looked at the last one of the same man.

The last one, who was a black kid, swallowed nervously and greeted Carlos in non-standard Mandarin, "Grandpa, I'm the youngest."

Looking at the four boys who looked the same and a black-skinned boy in front of him, Carlos was on a doze for a long time. When he finally came back to his senses, he asked, "Boys, who are you?"

The five kids answered in chorus, "We are your grandchildren!"

"W-what?" he blurted out. Unbelievable! How could he have so many grandsons? Still stupid, he wondered where those boys came from.

The oldest boy smiled and said, "Grandpa, you don't have to doubt us. Our mother is Mrs. Holton. Oh no. I mean Mrs. Loonard."

Then the second oddod polotoly, "Grondpo, Mom can't afford to rooso us onymoro."

Woth o playful smolo on hos foco, tho thord sood, "Grondpo, Mom told us to como bock ond look for you ond Dod."

The fourth smolod swootly. "Grondpo, don't worry. Wo woll bo folool to you ond Grondmo."

The lost chold, who obvoously couldn't fot on, was so onxoous that ho swootod. Tho only thong ho could shout was, "Grondpo! Grondpo!"

Corlos suddonly felt suffocotod. Whot was hopponong now was too overwholmong. Of curso, ho know that oroco was prognont whon sho left throo yoors ogo.

Ho hod ovon boon longong for hos grondchildron. But why woro thoro fovo boys on front of hom oll of o suddon? ond tho youngost ono was o block boy.

Whot was thos? o gono mutotoon?

Ho docosovoly took out hos phono ond doolod Motthow's number.

onsodo tho mootong room of Holton Group, tho sonoor oxocutovos woro holdong on omorgency mootong ond solomnly dossenong the dotools of tomorrow's pross conforonco.

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The plonng monogor wopod tho cold swoot on hos forohood ond sood, "Motthow, that's whot the stoff of the plonng doportmont hovo boon workong on for half o month now." Motthow's torrofyong ouro modo hom so onxoous that ho couldn't help brookong out on o cold swoot.

On Motthow's 29th borthdoy, Corlos hod fonolly transforrod ovorythong on Holton Group to hom, so ho now hod the fonol soy on the compony. Ho was now tho offocool CoO of the compony.

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the phono on hos dosk suddonly vobrotod. Ho gloncod ot the scroon ond sow Corlos' nomo flosong.

Ho concolod the coll, ond ocotong that ho was busy.

"The concept of the product os not—"

Boforo ho could fonosh hos words, hos phono vobrotod ogoon. Sonco Corlos was collong hom

persistently, it must be something important.

There had been the tacit understanding between Carlos and him for so many years.

of Matthew conceded his call, Carlos already knew that he was busy. But if he called again, Matthew knew that it was something urgent and important.

So he answered the phone immediately. "Dad, what's up?" he asked in a calm voice.

Carlos' voice was so excited that even Owen, who was sitting next to Matthew, overheard it. "Son, you're in big trouble!"

'Son? He doesn't normally call me that. What happened to him? Why does he sound so excited?' Matthew wondered inwardly. "What is it?" he asked indifferently.

"Son, come to the airport right now and pick up your sons. By the way, one car is not enough. Bring at least three cars."

"What did you say?" Upon hearing the word "sons," Matthew, who had always been calm, couldn't keep his cool anymore. He suddenly stood up from his seat, which stunned everyone. The meeting room fell silent. Everyone wondered what had happened to make their cold CEO so excited.

Carlos held one of his grandsons on his arm and said with a broad smile, "Your sons are here."

'My sons? as Roko back?' excitement wrapped his handsome face at the thought of orco coming back. But when he realized where he was and that there were more than ten pairs of eyes staring at him, he adjusted his mood and suppressed the excited emotions that rose on his heart. Soon enough, he regained his usual calm. "Why do I need to bring three cars?" he asked.

His mind was occupied by the thoughts that the woman he had been looking for more than three years had finally appeared.

"Because you have so many sons," Carlos answered excitedly.

Matthew motioned for his subordinates to continue the meeting as he walked towards the door with his phone without saying anything. "I have two sons, right?" he asked again.

"No, no, no. Listen, I will count them for you. One, two, three, four. They are quadruplets. and there is also the fifth one." 'The Holton family have so many grandsons now, ' Carlos thought happily while counting the kids.

He was already imagining the minor bump turned upside down by those kids soon.

Matthew was dumbfounded. 'My sons are quadruplets and not twins? and what does Dad mean

thoro os o fofth ono?' Ho hod o lot of quostoons on hos mond. But ovontuolly, ho oskod Corlos tho quostoon ho hod wontod to osk tho most. "os Roko thoro?"

Corlos took off hos sunglossos ond lookod ot tho oxot of tho oorport for o long tomo. Thon ho onsworod, "Sho osn't horo."

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"Yes, that's right. I can see her everywhere," another boy said.

"Have you seen the movie Youth in Yesterday? She is the lead actress in that movie."

"Of course, I have. Her acting skill is so good that she can beat anyone else in the same movie."

"All right, that's enough. Let's go! If we are late, we won't be able to catch up to Grandpa."

While the children were walking and talking, they also attracted many people's attention. "Wow, they look exactly the same!"

"Yes, their clothes and faces are exactly the same. They are so handsome."

"They are too small to travel by themselves. I think they are only about four or five years old. Why is there no adult with them?"

At this moment, the boys that they were talking about ran to the exit hand in hand and stopped an old man.

A black limo halted in front of Carlos outside the exit. He was about to get in the car when suddenly, some cute little boys rushed to him while calling out loudly, "Grandpa! Grandpa!"

Carlos turned around and saw some handsome boys in black T-shirts and jeans running towards him.

Before he could react, the boys pushed his assistant aside and surrounded him. "Grandpa, I'm the eldest child!"

"Grandpa, I'm the second!"

"Grandpa, I'm the third!"

"Grandpa, I'm the fourth!"

Then, the four of them looked at the last one at the same time.

The last one, who was a black kid, swallowed nervously and greeted Carlos in nonstandard Mandarin, "Grandpa, I'm the youngest."

Looking at the four boys who looked the same and a black-skinned boy in front of him, Carlos was in a daze for a long time. When he finally came back to his senses, he asked, "Boys, who are you?"

The five kids answered in chorus, "We are your grandchildren!"

"W-what?" he blurted out. Unbelievable! How could he have so many grandsons? Still stupefied, he wondered where these boys came from.

The oldest boy smiled and said, "Grandpa, you don't have to doubt us. Our mother is Erma Hilton. Oh no. I mean Erica Leonard."

Then the second added politely, "Grandpa, Mom can't afford to raise us anymore."

With a playful smile on his face, the third said, "Grandpa, Mom told us to come back and look for you and Dad."

The fourth smiled sweetly. "Grandpa, don't worry. We will be filial to you and Grandma."

The last child, who obviously couldn't fit in, was so anxious that he sweated. The only thing he could shout was, "Grandpa! Grandpa!"

Carlos suddenly felt suffocated. What was happening now was too overwhelming. Of course, he knew

that Erica was pregnant when she left three years ago.

He had even been longing for his grandchildren. But why were there five boys in front of him all of a sudden? And the youngest one was a black boy.

What was this? A gene mutation?

He decisively took out his phone and dialed Matthew's number.

Inside the meeting room of Hilton Group, the senior executives were holding an emergency meeting and solemnly discussing the details of tomorrow's press conference.

The man in the CEO's seat, who was giving off a strong aura, listened to the report of the planning manager expressionlessly. However, the way he was constantly stroking the wedding ring on his finger didn't escape everyone's eyes.

The planning manager wiped the cold sweat on his forehead and said, "Matthew, that's what the staff of the planning department have been working on for half a month now." Matthew's terrifying aura made him so anxious that he couldn't help breaking out in a cold sweat.

On Matthew's 29th birthday, Carlos had finally transferred everything in Hilton Group to him, so he now had the final say in the company. He was now the official CEO of the company.

Finally, his thin lips opened slightly. He was about to comment on the planning manager's report when the phone on his desk suddenly vibrated. He glanced at the screen and saw Carlos' name flashing.

He canceled the call, indicating that he was busy.

"The concept of the product is not—"

Before he could finish his words, his phone vibrated again. Since Carlos was calling him persistently, it must be something important.

This had been the tacit understanding between Carlos and him for so many years.

If Matthew canceled his call, Carlos already knew that he was busy. But if he called again, Matthew knew that it was something urgent and important.

So he answered the phone immediately. "Dad, what's up?" he asked in a calm voice.

Carlos' voice was so excited that even Owen, who was sitting next to Matthew, overheard it. "Son, you're in big trouble!"

'Son? He doesn't normally call me that. What happened to him? Why does he sound so excited?' Matthew wondered inwardly. "What is it?" he asked indifferently.

"Son, come to the airport right now and pick up your sons. By the way, one car is not enough. Bring at least three cars."

"What did you say?" Upon hearing the word "sons," Matthew, who had always been calm, couldn't keep his cool anymore. He suddenly stood up from his seat, which stunned everyone. The meeting room fell silent. Everyone wondered what had happened to make their cold CEO so excited.

Carlos held one of his grandsons in his arm and said with a broad smile, "Your sons are here."

'My sons? Is Rika back?' Excitement wrapped his handsome face at the thought of Erica coming back. But when he realized where he was and that there were more than ten pairs of eyes staring at him, he adjusted his mood and suppressed the mixed emotions that rose in his heart. Soon enough, he regained his usual calm. "Why do I need to bring three cars?" he asked.

His mind was occupied by the thoughts that the woman he had been looking for more than three years had finally appeared.

"Because you have so many sons," Carlos answered excitedly.

Matthew motioned for his subordinates to continue the meeting as he walked towards the door with his phone without saying anything. "I have two sons, right?" he asked again.

"No, no, no. Listen, I will count them for you. One, two, three, four. They are quadruplets. And there is also the fifth one." 'The Hilton family have so many grandsons now,' Carlos thought happily while counting the kids.

He was already imagining the manor being turned upside down by these kids soon.

Matthew was dumbfounded. 'My sons are quadruplets and not twins? And what does Dad mean there is a fifth one?' He had a lot of questions in his mind. But eventually, he asked Carlos the question he had wanted to ask the most. "Is Rika there?"

Carlos took off his sunglasses and looked at the exit of the airport for a long time. Then he answered, "She isn't here."

CHAPTER 1348 PATERNITY TEST

Matthew had always been the type of man who could calmly accept anything thrown his way. However, it took him a while to take in Carlos' words this time. 'My sons have shown up, and there are four of them... Or maybe five.

And there is still no sign of that woman? Humph. She had the nerve to get her sons back here, but she's

going to remain gone.'

As Matthew's cars were on their way to the airport, Carlos took the opportunity to chat some more with the children. "Kids, how many sons have your mother actually given birth to in total?"

One of the quadruplets answered quickly, "Four. The black kid was adopted halfway."

Carlos nodded, feeling relieved for his son. "And what are your names?"

"Grandpa, I'm Adkins Hilton, the eldest child."

"Grandpa, I'm Boswell Hilton, and I'm the second child."

"Grandpa, I'm the third child. My name is Colman Hilton."

"Grandpa, I'm Damian Hilton. I'm the fourth child."

When it came to the black boy's turn, he looked at Carlos with his eyes wide open. Then he introduced himself, but his Chinese wasn't so fluent. "Grandpa, my name has fifteen characters. For your convenience, you may just call me Kenney."

A minute later, Carlos was confused again. He looked at the four children and still couldn't tell them apart. But how could he? They all looked exactly the same!

Learning their names didn't prove to be much useful either.

Noticing their grandpa's confusion, Adkins told him a secret. "Grandpa, look at our clothes. They are embroidered with numbers. Aunt Tessie did them in order to distinguish us."

"Tessie?" The name sounded familiar to Carlos.

"Yes, Aunt Tessie helped our mom to raise us," Boswell answered.

It suddenly occurred to Carlos that Tessie was the youngest daughter of the Campbell family, who Matthew had sent to the slum.

"Okay, I see!" Carlos nodded.

Getting to know their grandfather now, the kids had no idea this would be happening to them one day ago. Their mother had simply taken them by surprise when she came home the day before, waving five airline tickets in their faces. "Children, I have to be honest with you. I can't afford to support you anymore. You will have to live with your father from now on! He's a very handsome and rich man. He will definitely grant you a luxurious life by his side!"

The eldest child retorted, "We have guessed it!"

"What?" she asked.

"He is a heartless man," Adkins said. Otherwise, what kind of father would allow a mother to take care of four sons on her own?

"He's rich!" Boswell clarified. Or what else could explain why they were all so different from the other kids around? Not to mention the aura their mother would sometimes give off of someone who had definitely come from wealth.

"He's a jerk," Colman snorted. What other reason would their father have to abandon their mother?

"He's handsome," Damian said excitedly. Their good looks could only have come from their father!

The four boys then all looked at the fifth child, who said with difficulty, "He's a great man!"

Erica rubbed her forehead helplessly. "You are all correct! Your father is handsome, rich, heartless, great and sometimes a jerk."

Adkins scratched his head and asked, "So? Is Dad a good or a bad man?"

Boswell looked at his mother knowingly. "Mom, let's be honest, you're going to take on the mission, but you think it will be too troublesome to bring us with you, right?"

"That's why you want us to find Dad!" Colman added.

Damian nodded in agreement with his brothers.

Erica was speechless. Her children weren't just too smart. They were real geniuses! "I've already gotten the news that your grandpa will arrive in Alorith tomorrow. The flight I booked for you will land about the same time as his. So, kids, listen to me! Look for your grandpa first!"

The children snorted under their breaths. Erica told them that she couldn't afford to raise them anymore, but the truth was that they were the ones who couldn't support her! Among them, she had always been who spent most of their money.

And because of that, they were now in the middle of an airport, waiting for their father to arrive.

Half an hour later, eight black luxury cars drove into the airport one after the other, immediately attracting everyone's attention.

Once they were all parked side by side, one driver got out of the second car and walked around the vehicle to open its back door.

Shortly, a pair of shiny leather shoes came into the children's view, followed by two long legs. Looking down at his own inferior members, Colman assumed that they would grow to be as long as those of that person in the future.

Finally, a man in a dark suit and a crimson tie rose to his full height as he got out of the car. His intense eyes remained fixed on the faces of the children beside Carlos.

At the same time, the kids all looked him up and down in unison.

After taking a few more steps forward, Matthew stood in front of them. But the moment his eyes fell on the black boy, his face became darker, and all the excitement left his body. "Who is he?"

Instead of answering his question, Boswell said, "This is not how I've pictured it. Dad, shouldn't you hug us first?" 'Why did he ask about Kenney beforehand?' he wondered.

Matthew immediately glanced at the little boy who talked back at him like an adult. Then he said slowly, "We will need to get a paternity test to make sure you're my sons." If Erica had shown up with the kids, Matthew wouldn't have said anything. He would have simply brought their sons home with him.

However, the woman was still missing, and there was also a foreign boy amidst them. He didn't believe he had these genes in the family.

Regardless of anything that Matthew said, Colman behaved like a spoiled child, rushing over to hug his father's leg. "You're our father. Erica told us that our father is called Matthew Hilton. If you refuse to acknowledge us, we'll ask Grandpa and Grandma to teach you a lesson!"

'His tone... It sounds exactly like Erica's,' Matthew realized.

Squatting down, he picked him up. The little boy immediately wrapped his short arms around his neck and shouted excitedly, "Daddy! Daddy!"

Matthew couldn't help laughing. Even the boy's character was the same as that woman's.

Ashamed of his younger brother, Adkins pulled a long face and said, "Colman, can you come down? That man just said that we need to get a paternity test first."

Matthew raised his eyebrows at the angry boy, trying hard to suppress his smile. "That man? Didn't you say I'm your dad?"

While Matthew talked to their sons, Carlos kept observing the children thoroughly. There was no doubt that the eldest child was the one who resembled Matthew's personality the most.

The next moment, Adkins cast a cold glance at Matthew and asked, "Aren't you contradicting yourself

now? Didn't you say we need a paternity test?"

Completely ignoring the confrontation between his brother and his father, Damian took two steps forward and looked up at the giant and fearless man. "Dad, I want you to hug me too!"

For a long time, he had wanted to feel his father's embrace.

Matthew promptly held him up with his free hand, and now he had one son on each arm.

Boswell looked at his father carrying his two brothers and thought for a while before he said, "Dad, I don't want to take a paternity test."

"But aren't you sure that I'm your father? Then why don't you want to do the paternity test?" Matthew deliberately asked.

CHAPTER 1349 LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS

"I think it's disrespect to our mom," Boswell said as he shook his little head disapprovingly. Then he added, "How about this? If you don't take us to do the paternity test, I'll tell you where our mother is."

Carlos and Matthew raised their eyebrows at the same time. 'This boy sure knows how to negotiate at such a young age, ' they both thought. But of course, Matthew was interested in his proposal.

He pointed at Kenney with his chin and said, "Tell me about this foreign boy first, then you won't have to do the paternity test."

"If I tell you about Kenney, then I don't have to tell you where our mother is, do I? There can only be one condition for one question." Indeed, Boswell had the mind of a real businessman. He knew that everything must be exchanged for something of equal value.

Matthew nodded and said, "Okay." After all, his children had already appeared. It wouldn't take long before Erica showed up to see their sons.

"We picked Kenney up from the street one and a half years ago. We haven't found his parents yet, so he came to Alorith with us." Since Matthew was his father, Boswell didn't hesitate to give a lengthy explanation.

'I see. Good thing Erica didn't cheat on me, ' Matthew thought, feeling relieved.

He put the two children down, put his hands in his pockets, and said slowly, "Get in the car now. You are going home with me."

The five kids walked towards the five cars that had been waiting for them. Although it would be their first time to ride a luxury car worth more than ten million dollars, everyone stayed calm.

When they were about to get into the cars at the same time, Matthew spoke from behind. "Who will go with me?" He wanted one of the kids to ride his car so that he could ask about Erica on their way home.

The five kids turned to look at him simultaneously. "I'll go with you," Boswell volunteered.

Matthew raised an eyebrow. It seemed that this little boy had a lot of conditions to exchange with him.

Adkins hurriedly stopped him and said with a frown, "Boswell, you can't betray Mom."

"I won't betray Mom. But do you want her and Aunt Tessie to live in Tow Village forever?" Boswell was worried about Erica, who was left in the village.

Upon hearing what he said, Adkins got in the car without saying anything more.

Matthew and Boswell sat side by side inside Matthew's car.

As he was observing the kids since he arrived earlier, he could tell that both Adkins and Boswell were more mature than their age. The way they talked and thought was not like the usual three-year-old kids. On the other hand, Colman and Damian were more like typical kids of their age.

At first, they just sat quietly. But eventually, the little boy was the one who broke the silence. "I know you want to ask about Mom."

"Yes, that's right." Since this boy was quite smart, Matthew didn't intend to hide his thoughts anymore.

He turned to look at the boy beside him. He could say that the quadruplets had all inherited his handsomeness. Although they were only three years old, their facial features were already delicately carved.

"I can tell you anything you want to know. But in every question you ask, you have to promise me one condition. So, you'd better think it over first before you ask," Boswell bargained.

His son was indeed smart. Feeling helpless, he leaned back in his seat, trying to recall what kind of a child he was when he was at this boy's age. 'Well, I was not that bad. I'd learned Chinese characters, history, poems, and songs when I was three years old,' he recalled. But he was not as cunning as Boswell when he was small. He couldn't help wondering where this boy had gotten such a trait.

"You don't agree?" Boswell asked, frowning slightly. He grew a little impatient when Matthew didn't respond for a long time.

"Of course, I agree. It's a deal." Matthew conceded. 'How can I not agree to my son from Erica?' he thought to himself.

"Okay. You can ask now."

"Where is your mother?" This was what Matthew had wanted to know for a long time.

"If I tell, you have to promise to take me to your company every time I don't have school." Boswell knew that Matthew owned a big company with branches all over the world.

'To my company?' Matthew wondered why. So with great interest, he asked, "What are you going to do in the company?"

"I want to learn more about business."

Matthew was speechless with Boswell's unhesitating answer. He almost couldn't believe his ears that a three-year-old kid was interested in learning about business. "Let me ask you first. What are those words?"

He pointed at the big words on a billboard outside.

Boswell took a look at the billboard and read the words out loud. "The pictures are for reference only. Take practicality as standard."

Raising an eyebrow, he asked the boy wonderingly, "Do you know all the words in the dictionary?"

"Not yet. I only know those common words and those words I need to know." There were still many unfamiliar words that the child didn't know.

Now, Matthew was certain. Boswell had inherited his intelligence. Still curious about his answer, he asked, "Why do you want to learn about business?"

"You have already asked me a lot of questions. And since you are my father, I answered all of them. But you haven't agreed to any of my conditions yet. One question is equivalent to one condition, right?" the little boy protested. He was very dissatisfied with Matthew's behavior.

Matthew couldn't help laughing. Patting the boy's head, he said, "Of course, I should be careful. If you want to come to my company and let me teach you how to do business, shouldn't I ask you clearly before making a decision?"

'Well, he makes sense, ' Boswell thought. So, he replied, "I want to learn about business because Mom likes businessmen."

"What?" Matthew was stunned for a moment. But the boy's answer somewhat made him happy. He didn't expect to hear it from his son. 'I am a businessman. Does this mean Erica is indirectly expressing her love to me?' His heart jumped for joy with this thought.

His mood lightened up in an instant, so he agreed unhesitatingly, "Okay, I promise you. I will take you to the company every time you are free."

'He is only three years old but he already thinks about the company. If I train him well, he will have a bright future in the business world.' Matthew kept it in mind.

"Mom is in Kuflya," Boswell said.

"Where exactly?" Kuflya was very big, so he wanted to know Erica's exact location.

But to his surprise, Boswell just gave him the cold shoulder and said, "Aren't you very powerful? Why don't you find out yourself?"

Matthew was at a loss for words.

In the Hilton family's manor

Debbie cried with excitement upon seeing her four grandchildren. The four boys immediately comforted her one by one. Adkins first said, "Grandma, Mom and all of us are good. Please don't cry."

"Grandma, we can be together every day from now on," Boswell said.

"Grandma, Mom said that every girl's tears are precious. You shouldn't cry," Colman said with a sweet smile.

Damian echoed, "Yes, Grandma. And as long as you don't mind us eating too much, we won't leave you again."

Carlos and Matthew looked at Debbie with envy in their eyes. 'Why are the four boys more sensible and considerate in front of her?' they wondered.

Adkins took out a tissue from his pocket and wiped Debbie's tears.

She actually cried because she was thrilled to have four grandchildren all of a sudden. But when she saw how considerate they were, she couldn't help bursting into tears again.

When Colman made faces to make her laugh, she got amused and eventually stopped crying.

Later that day, the Thompson and Martin couples rushed to the manor with their children. Joshua and Terilynn's second child was also a boy, but he was only two years old.

In an instant, the manor was filled with nine children, including Kenney. And among them, Gwyn was the only girl. The atmosphere became so lively. And since the eight boys were quite naughty, the whole manor was almost turned upside down.

Carlos, who always preferred girls to boys, didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Matthew was his only son, but he gave him four grandsons at one go. He couldn't help wondering if this was his kind of revenge on him.

'Never mind. I'm sure Matthew has a worse headache than me, ' Carlos laughed in his mind.

Fortunately, both the Hilton family's manor and Matthew's villa were large enough to accommodate a group of children. Each of them could have their own bedroom in both houses.

CHAPTER 1350 THE WIDOW

The next day, Wesley and Blair brought Hugo to the Hilton family's manor to meet their grandsons.

Now, there were ten children in the manor. Everyone was laughing and talking, and there was so much love that the scene was spectacular.

The Hilton family and the Leonard family were prosperous not only in the success of their business, but also because of their growing families.

In a village of Kuflya

As the night grew darker and darker, the village became quieter. Soon, only the sound of chickens crowing and dogs barking could be heard.

A woman in tight black clothes, with a camera around her neck, slipped along the wall and quickly rushed forward. She had completely integrated herself into the darkness.

Finally, she stopped at the gate of an old yard, where a few men were drinking, eating meat, and talking about disgusting topics.

She quietly went to a corner, tied the rope that hung from her waist to the big tree beside the wall, and began to climb up nimbly.

But... "Woof, woof, woof!" Suddenly, a dog began to bark.

'Oh, crap!' She had not expected that a nearby dog would discover her and ruin her plans!

The woman was so frightened when she heard the sound that she almost fell from the wall. As suspected, the noise attracted the attention of the men who were drinking and eating meat inside the yard. They dropped their chopsticks and ran toward the sound.

Her heart thudded in her chest as she grabbed the rope and slid down.

Before the men caught up with her, she retrieved and coiled the rope, and then ran into the safety of the darkness.

"Pike! Someone is over there. Hurry up!"

"Let's go!"

The woman ran through the village with ease. At last, she climbed over a low wall and entered a courtyard without being noticed.

The first thing she did after entering her room was to hide her camera in a box. Then she took off her clothes, threw them under the bed, and climbed under the quilt, half-naked.

Barely had she settled her wildly beating heart, a loud crash dispelled the silence in the house. The men had kicked open the front door to the courtyard! A split second later, they were pounding on the door to her room.

"Erma! Open the door!" A man's rough voice came from outside.

The woman in the bed scattered her hair, grabbed a nightgown, and put it on. After tying it around her waist, she walked toward the door.

She swung open the door and pretended to stifle a yawn. "Who is it? Oh, it's you, Pike. Why don't you go to bed instead of knocking on my door?"

Pike looked at her suspiciously. The woman's long black hair was a little messy, and her nightgown appeared crumpled. "What are you doing?"

The woman yawned. "I was asleep. What time is it now? Why haven't you slept yet?" She also glanced at the men behind Pike. When the men saw that the woman was only wearing a nightgown, their eyes widened.

Countless men had been attracted to this widow and her friend ever since the two women had come to their village half a year ago.

The widow was exceptionally beautiful. She had already given birth to four sons, but motherhood hadn't changed her figure at all. All the married and unmarried men in the village yearned for her.

The matchmaker had come to her house many times, trying to introduce men to her, but she had never agreed to remarry.

Soon, the sound of soft footsteps echoed in the hall. When the men turned, they saw another woman dressed only in pajamas. She asked in a gentle voice, "Pike, what are you doing here?"

Pike found himself unable to take his eyes off Tessie. After what seemed like an eternity, he shook off the fog of passion and focused on the task at hand. He turned to Erica, shoved her away from the doorway, and said, "I'm going to check your room today!" He didn't believe that their rooms would not have any clues!

The woman, who had been leaning against the door, kicked him as soon as he placed one foot in the room.

The other men gasped with astonishment when they saw that Pike, a man weighing nearly one hundred kilos, lay on the ground.

Humiliation coursed through Pike. His face reddened as he placed a hand over his injured chest and roared at the woman who had hit him, "Damn you bitch! I'll kill you today!"

Erica, who now went by the name of Erma, straightened her nightgown and crooked her finger at him. "Come!"

After his men helped him up, Pike rushed to the woman again. But, before he could get close to her, the strong man was sent flying in the air again!

He spat out a mouthful of blood. The blow had been intense enough to give him a minor internal injury.

"Pike, let's leave! This woman has four sons that are difficult to handle. Let's go!" The man who spoke had been tricked and bullied the most by the four Hilton boys.

Erica stepped out of the room, smiled at the men in coarse clothes, and said, "My sons aren't returning to Tow Village again. You don't have to worry about them. It's just you and me now. Bring it on if you dare!"

'Oh, my sons have gone home to enjoy a comfortable life, but I don't know when I can leave here, ' Erica thought.

The group of ruffians laughed as relief coursed through them. The four naughty boys of the Hilton family had troubled them for so long that the thought of never seeing them again pleased Pike and his men. After all, it was shameful that a group of grown men couldn't handle a few boys!

A man in a floral shirt asked, "Where did they go?" As soon as he heard that the four little boys had left, reluctance surged in his heart. Strangely enough, he didn't want to part with them.

Erica answered as she patted the dust from her hands, "They have gone to search for their dad."

"Hey, Erma, didn't you say that their father had died?" That was why everyone in the village called her widow.

Even though the lie had been exposed, there wasn't any embarrassment on her face. "He's not dead. I just said that to deceive my sons." In the end, she had to confess everything to her children as she didn't have enough money.

Everyone was speechless at this revelation. 'What kind of mother is she?' they wondered.

"Get out of here, all of you! Pike, I'll tie you on the mountain for three days and three nights if you break into my house like this again!"

The woman's warning echoed through the quiet building as Pike fled with his men.

Silence returned to the courtyard. Tessie walked closer to Erica. Concern reflected in her expression as she asked, "How did they know it was you?"

"Alas, those people kept a dog in the yard. I didn't see it, but the dog discovered me and barked!" Erica explained. Her tone was indifferent as she walked back into her room, found her camera, and locked it in the cabinet.

Tessie sighed, "Well, they have suspected you for a long time. I'm worried that they will kill you one of these days. You need to lie low for a while!"

"No, I can't. We just need some evidence to expose their crimes." Erica shook her head. She couldn't give up now. If only she could take a few incriminating photos of them, her mission would be over.

"They have been hiding in this village for more than ten years. With your ability, do you think you can root them out easily? Erica, it's not that I underestimate your capabilities. Please understand that I feel this is too dangerous," Tessie tried to rationalize with her. Pike and the others hadn't gotten any evidence to prove that there was something suspicious about Erica. Once they had the evidence, they would definitely kill her!

There were at least a thousand people in Pike's gang, and they were spread across several nearby villages as well. There would be no way for her to escape them all.

Considering tonight's incident, it seemed challenging for Erica to get pictures of them without being found out.

Erica gave her friend a reassuring smile and patted her on the shoulder. "Go back and rest. I won't let Pike find any clues."

Tessie had no choice but to return to her room. She knew there was no point in persuading Erica. She had been stubborn and determined ever since her sons were born.

In a basement of a house in the village, regardless of his injuries, Pike reported to a man, "Boss, we still

haven't found the evidence."