

TMBA 1421

CHAPTER 1421 I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU ANYMORE

Before going home, Erica sent a message to Matthew in advance. "Honey, I've sent you a package. It should be delivered to you this afternoon. Could you sign it yourself when it comes?"

"What is it?" 'Why do I need to sign it myself?' Matthew wondered.

Erica smiled full of mystery even though he couldn't see her. "It's a secret! I'll only tell you that I bought it for you. Now please, spare a few minutes to go downstairs and sign to get it, okay?"

With a helpless sigh, he yielded, "Okay."

Around four in the afternoon, Matthew received a call. Picking up the phone, he heard a man's voice. "Hello, is this Matthew?"

"Yes."

"I have a package that needs your signature. I'm on the ground floor of your company."

After hanging up the phone, Matthew stood up and walked out of his office.

Once the busy Owen saw his boss, he interrupted his work and asked, "Matthew, are you leaving for the Glory Group now?" According to the CEO's schedule, they would leave for the Glory Group in ten minutes.

However, Matthew shook his head and replied, "No, I'm going downstairs to get a package."

'A package?' Owen looked at him in astonishment. Yet he wasn't the only one. All the special assistants on that floor seemed shocked.

Why would the CEO personally sign and fetch the package? Paige followed him in panic. "Matthew, allow me to go and get it for you."

Unexpectedly, Matthew refused her, "No, thanks. You guys may carry on with your work."

Paige didn't know what to say. Stopping in her tracks, she watched Matthew get in the elevator by himself.

On the ground floor of the company, Matthew felt a bit lost.

He had never taken an express package himself, so he had no idea where to pick it up. With no other choice, he asked the security guard about it and was quickly guided to the mailroom.

By the time he got there, Matthew saw no sign of the postman.

He looked around and all but didn't see anyone who resembled a mail carrier.

Taking out his phone, he was about to call back the number which he had picked up in his office when someone unexpectedly rushed towards him.

"Honey!"

With no time to put his phone away, his first reaction was to hug the woman who had her arms around his neck.

Holding her tightly, Matthew couldn't help laughing. "Is this the package you mentioned?"

"Yes. Are you surprised? I'm giving myself to you as a gift. Are you happy?" Erica stuck out her tongue naughtily. All she wanted was to surprise Matthew.

After kissing her head, he answered, "Yes." In fact, he missed her a lot.

"Did you miss me? I missed you so much that I had to come! I was afraid to disturb you during your work, so I didn't call. But I'm not going to lie and say I didn't notice that you never told me you loved me when I texted you!" She pouted, still in his arms.

Followed by a chuckle, he teased her, "Didn't you record my love confession to you the last time? You can listen to it whenever you are free."

Letting go of him, Erica curled her lips sadly. "I lied to you. I never recorded it." At that time, she was so overwhelmed with a mix of anguish and excitement that there was no way she would remember recording anything.

He caressed her hair and put his arms around her shoulder. "Let's go to my office first."

Erica refused to move but didn't release him either. "I won't go! You haven't said you love me yet! If you don't tell me now, I won't go!" It was way too rare to hear him say that he loved her.

Therefore, that day, no matter if she had to threaten him, she would hear him confess his love.

She didn't care whether he was willing to do it or not. She just had to hear him say those words.

Matthew wasn't really good at saying sweet nothings. So with his eyebrows pinched, he begged her in a suspiciously flattering tone, "Rika, let's change this request of yours, okay?"

"No way!" She stood her ground.

But Mathew's lips remained sealed.

Furious, Erica saw herself forced to do something outrageous. "It's okay if you don't want to tell me..." she said, causing Matthew to feel instantly relieved.

However, when he was about to praise how considerate it was of her to say that, she suddenly turned her back at him and added, "But if you don't, I'll go find another man who will. I don't care about you anymore!"

The next moment, she felt a hand grabbing her wrist as a male voice whispered in her ear, "Rika, I love you, and I miss you very much!"

The woman grinned largely. Turning around, she threw herself into his arms. "Honey! I love you too! Muah!"

Helplessly, Matthew closed his eyes and warned her in a low voice, "I'll teach you a lesson later!"

The next moment, the couple headed to the CEO's exclusive elevator and only got off when they reached the floor where the CEO's office was on. Once they saw Matthew coming with Erica, the special assistants immediately understood why their boss insisted on going downstairs in person. It turned out that his package was his wife, after all.

As soon as they got into his office, Matthew kicked the door closed and held the woman in his arms as he kissed her. Matthew felt he was much better in expressing his longing for Erica through his actions.

A few minutes later, Owen received a call from his boss demanding that his schedule was canceled for the rest of the day.

Looking at his phone, Owen shook his head in resignation. 'Matthew loves his wife more than his business.'

At the weekend, the weather was clear when Matthew was forced to take the children to the zoo so they could see the pandas.

In the car, looking at the man's scowl, Colman brought a hand to his own chin and made a face. "Dad, aren't we cuter than Mom?"

The corners of Matthew's mouth twitched. "Yeah, you're very cute."

The little boy smiled narcissistically and said, "I also think so."

Matthew couldn't believe the boy's audacity but didn't say anything.

At that moment, Boswell came over and grabbed his dad's arm. "Dad, don't blame Mom. She didn't

mean to spill the beans!"

Last night, while Erica was telling the four children a story, she spilled out that Matthew had taken her to see the pandas. The kids, of course, rushed to Matthew and protested immediately. How could their father not take them to see the pandas?

Therefore, Matthew had no choice but to bring his four sons to the zoo early this morning.

Damian told him gently, "Dad, we just want to have a look at the pandas. It won't take you too long."

Trying his best to calm himself down, Matthew lowered his head and explained, "I never blamed your mom. Don't worry. Come with me now. I'll take you in."

"Okay!" Relieved to hear that their father wasn't angry, the four kids surrounded him promptly.

In the living area of the pandas, they came across the words carved on the stone board.

Looking at it, Boswell muttered, "Lili, Riri, Kaka... Dad, your name is on the board. Are these three pandas yours?"

The man nodded in response.

Upon learning the truth about the pandas, Colman ran over to his father. "Dad, we like them so much. Can we go in and have a look? Can we hug them too?"

Matthew shook his head and answered in a serious tone, "No matter how cute a panda is, it still belongs to the bear family. These are three adult animals, and they can be aggressive. But I'll take you to see the baby pandas. They are more docile, and you'll be able to hug them."

The boys were looking forward to having a panda in their arms. Whether it was a baby or an adult one, it didn't matter. So, with a nod, they agreed in unison, "Okay, okay!"

At the end of their visit, Matthew did as he promised and took his four sons to another house, where the baby pandas were. Standing aside, he watched as the kids played with the cubs.

Adkins walked up to his dad, a little panda in his arms. "Dad, can we assume the responsibility to raise pandas?"

"No," Matthew refused directly.

Boswell asked in confusion, "Dad, the man over there said all we need is money. A lot. So why not?"

"Because you don't have any money," Matthew replied bluntly.

The brothers looked at each other. Adkins said, "I can give you an IOU. It's only a million. C'mon, say yes!"

"I'll pay you back double!" They had asked the staff member. He said that if they wanted to raise a panda, they needed to pay a million dollars upfront. That ensured they could keep the panda, and not have to surrender it when it got old.

Their father shook his head vigorously. "When you can earn your own money, then you can save up for a panda." Erica advised Matthew to set aside some funds for their sons to marry. So, he couldn't waste money now.

At this moment, one hand in his pocket and the other holding a baby panda munching on some bamboo, Colman came over. "Hey Boswell. What are you talking about?"

"We want to raise a panda. Dad said no, because we don't have the money," Boswell explained.

A disdainful smile appeared on Colman's face. "I see. That's not hard, you know? It's just money. We don't need him! We can make money on our own!"

Matthew was too rich. The boys thought it was better to spend more time with their grandparents and there was no need for them to make money. But now it seemed they had to.

Colman called Damian over. "Damian, come here. We got something to talk about!"

Matthew raised his eyebrows and sat next to them, listening to his kids discussing how to make enough money to get a panda.

Colman spoke first. He told his brothers casually, "I'm not worried. I can make tons of cash. Uncle Sheffield taught me. He makes tens of millions for a few lines of code. I can do that. It can't be that hard, right?"

Boswell let go of the panda and rubbed his chin. The panda ran off to go play. "I spent my allowance money on stocks. They shot up in value since then. If I sell now, I'll have enough for two pandas."

Pandas were endangered, thanks to humans destroying their habitat. So one was probably enough.

Crossing his arms across his chest, Adkins smiled mysteriously. "I have some ideas too!"

Looking at his three brothers and the panda in his arms, Damian nodded as well.

The other three boys thought Damian meant he had his own way to make money too, so they clapped their hands in approbation. "Okay! That's settled."

They'd have money to adopt pandas soon enough!

This time, everyone was gobsmacked—Matthew, the staff members of the Panda House, absolutely everyone. Never in his wildest dreams had it occurred to him these kids might be able to make millions

so quickly. When he was their age, he was able to make only a little money.

That night, the four brothers began to put their plans in motion. Boswell sold one of his stocks, which netted him eight million.

On the weekend, Colman started coding an app on his laptop at home and called Sheffield to ask him questions from time to time.

Sheffield really treated Colman like his own kid. He taught him everything he knew, and Colman was an eager learner. Sheffield was even more patient than when he taught his own son to learn Chinese herbs.

While Colman and Boswell were working with their computers at home, Adkins had his own schemes. He snuck into the offices of Hilton Group. He asked Paige for a phone number. When Matthew was away from his office, the boy dialed the number with his father's office phone. "Hello, is this Jennifer? I'm Matthew's kid, Adkins. You free for dinner?"

Jennifer Fairfax had a thing for Matthew. She was the general manager of Season Group, and thought she'd mix business with pleasure. Getting together with Matthew would provide benefits for her company as well as for herself.

Adkins knew her secret because Matthew once took him to a dinner party and he sat next to her. He could see Jennifer flirting with his dad. She'd place her hand on the table near him, smile incessantly, laugh a little too hard at his jokes. Meanwhile, she'd shower him with flattery.

'Matthew's eldest son just invited me to dinner?'

Jennifer stood up from the chair excitedly, but she quickly got control of herself. The boy had only met her once. Why was he asking her to dinner?

She smiled and asked tentatively, "I'm flattered, but why are you doing this? I mean, is there anything I can help you with, Adkins?"

Sitting cross-legged on Matthew's chair, Adkins answered, "Nothing. Dad and Mom are too busy. I'm bored here and need to talk to somebody."

'He's bored, but he thought of me? Why? That's too weird.' Although she knew there was something fishy, Jennifer was still very excited. "Okay, Adkins. What do you want to eat? I'll take you there."
'Maybe if his kid likes me, that's my "in" with Matthew. Get close to his son, get close to him. If only...' she thought happily.

"I'm not picky. How about the nearest restaurant, the one on the fifth floor of the Alioth Building?"

"Sounds good. But you know, it's not easy to get a table there. Are you sure..." Jennifer and her associates had to reserve a table at least two weeks in advance. Otherwise, they had to choose some

other place to eat, instead of the restaurant in the Alioth building.

That rule had never changed since the restaurant opened.

Adkins promised, "I'll take care of it. We'll get a booth. I'll have someone let you know which one."

"Okay! See you tonight, Adkins!"

"Bye, Jennifer," replied Adkins in a sweet voice.

The voice made the woman's heart melt.

No matter how mature the boy was ordinarily, he was still a child, and his voice was sweet and lovely when he played cute.

Besides, Adkins was not an ordinary child. If it was necessary, he could change personalities at the drop of a hat. Like here, he had pretended he was cute and innocent.

Because he had to ask for a favor, his silent personality had completely disappeared, replaced by the cuteness of a three-year-old child.

On the fifth floor of the Alioth Building

It was dinner time. Adkins asked the bodyguards to wait at the door. He pushed the door open and entered the VIP private room.

Jennifer had been there for more than ten minutes, and seven or eight cold dishes already adorned the table.

Watching the boy walk in, Jennifer was astonished. For a moment, she almost thought she was really looking at Matthew! When she came to her senses, she stood up and greeted him with a smile, "Hi, Adkins. How are you?"

The boy nodded politely, "Good evening, Jennifer! I'm happy."

She sighed in her mind, 'He's definitely a Hilton. He's got the looks, and really is a polite little gentleman.' "Good evening, sweetie. Come and sit down!"

Without hesitation, Adkins sat down next to her.

She smiled and asked, "Adkins, would you like anything to drink?"

"Lime honey water, please." He ordered this every time he came to this restaurant.

"Okay."

During the meal, Jennifer took good care of him. She picked fish bones out of his bowl for him, picked up food, and asked him about school.

Finally, he was full, his little belly bulging. He put down his chopsticks and wiped his mouth. Chin in his hands, he looked at the woman gloomily. "Jennifer, can I ask you a question?"

She put down her chopsticks and wiped her mouth elegantly with a tissue. "Sure!"

"Do you know how much it costs to raise a panda?"

CHAPTER 1423 HE WOULD HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR I

Jennifer thought for a while and then shook her head. "I haven't paid much attention to it, so I don't know the details. Adkins, do you want to raise a panda?"

"Yes, but I'm a little short of money at the moment. I've used the sum my father gave me in another investment, and he had already been generous with my pocket money. So, I didn't want to ask him for more. You know, my father has been working so hard to earn money lately..."

Of course, Jennifer wasn't stupid. Although she was stunned for a moment, she quickly recovered and understood what she had to do. Taking out her phone, she dialed a number. As soon as the call was connected, she asked, "How much does it cost to raise a panda?"

After a while, she hung up the phone and pulled a check out of her purse. As she wrote a number on it, she said, "So, I've asked, and you need about one million to raise a panda. Since you like it so much, I'll give you two million to raise a cub. Take it, my good boy!"

Staring at the check, Adkins pretended to be embarrassed. "Jennifer, I can't accept it!"

Indeed, two million was a lot of money for Jennifer, but she still could afford it. "It doesn't matter. It's a small sum of money. As long as you're happy, Adkins, it's fine."

Adkins was Matthew's eldest son, and as she heard, all the four Hilton boys were highly gifted children. There was no doubt that they had a promising future ahead of themselves.

Therefore, if she could become friends with any of them, she would have much more than two million in return when the time came.

Taking the check from her hand, Adkins looked at it seemingly touched. He then told the woman in front of him, "Jennifer, when I go back, I'll tell my father that you took good care of me and helped me a lot. I was short of money, and you've lent me some. Rest assured that I'll ask Dad to help you, too, in one way or another."

That was exactly what Jennifer wanted to hear. It didn't matter if he didn't pay the money back. As long as Matthew owed her a favor, spending two million was definitely worth it! "Good boy, you're so polite. If you have any difficulties in the future, you can tell me. I'll be glad to help you!"

"Thank you, Jennifer. I know it's not easy for anyone to make money. I'll borrow this two million from you now and ask my father to return it to you later!"

Amused, she giggled but had to hold back her urge to rub the boy's head once she remembered he behaved like a neat freak during their meal together. Putting her hand down, she said with a smile, "Little cutie, you're such a good boy. Auntie likes you a lot!"

"I like you too. You're the best woman I've ever known!" Discreetly, Adkins put the check into his pocket, and then something occurred to him.

Taking out a business card, he handed it to Jennifer and told her, "This is my father's private phone number. You can contact him whenever you need help with your work. But if it's about any personal affair, please don't bother him. For that, there is Mom!"

'Matthew's private number? Oh my God! Only a few people in Alorith knows about it besides Mathew's best friends!'

Jennifer got even more excited now that she had Matthew's private phone number. Carefully, she took the gilded business card from the boy's hand and nodded, "Of course, I understand. Don't worry!"

'This meal and two million dollars were really worth it!'

She wanted to drive Adkins back to his home, but the boy already had his own car and driver waiting for him, so she had to content herself with escorting him back to his vehicle. However, she didn't leave the place until she saw the car disappear on the road.

Adkins had handled everything quietly, but, sooner or later, he would have to account for it. Secrets always had a way of coming out.

One night, except for Damian, the three other boys were discussing when to raise a panda.

Meanwhile, Matthew had just got upstairs when he saw the door to Damian's room half-open. Stepping inside, he found the boy sitting on the balcony as he painted something.

He approached his son quietly and saw the picture on the drawing board.

The outlines of several pandas were sketched along with a few children who were playing with the animals. Next to them, Damian was now drawing an adult.

The man had long and slender legs, wore a suit and a tie, and had his hands in his pockets... 'That should be me, ' Matthew thought.

Not wanting to interrupt the boy's concentration, Matthew stood there in silence as he watched.

In the living room, Adkins suddenly looked all around.

Then he asked, "Where is Damian?"

"Dad is missing, too," Boswell noted after searching for them in the kitchen and the balcony.

Colman guessed, "They should be upstairs. Let's go and have a look!"

Putting their toys aside, the three children agreed and rushed upstairs.

In his room, Damian had finally sensed he wasn't alone anymore.

He turned around with the oil pastel in his hand and looked at the man standing beside him. Damian was slightly taken aback when he saw his father. "Dad, why are you here?"

Rubbing his head, Matthew said, "Your brothers are all downstairs discussing when to raise a panda. Why don't you join them?"

At that instant, three little boys poked their heads through the door after hearing their father's voice and became all ears to the conversation taking place in the room.

A trace of disappointment flashed across Damian's face. Although it disappeared as soon as it came, Matthew took notice of it and felt sorry for the boy.

But the next moment, with a smile on his face, Damian replied, "Despite liking the pandas, I don't want to raise them. I can't make that much money now, so I will just stay at home and draw my brothers with the pandas! I think that's good too."

Damian didn't have Adkins' social skills, Boswell's business acumen, or Colman's talent for writing programs. It seemed that all he had was two capable hands. He thought all he could do was play the piano and paint.

Matthew looked at the painting and thought for a moment. "How about this? Since I like your painting very much, I can buy it after you finish it. But I have one request..."

"What's that?" Damian looked up at him in surprise.

"I'm your client now. If you want me to buy your work, you must continue to paint according to my preferences." As much as he wanted to encourage his child, he also wanted him to know that making

money wasn't that easy.

Tilting his head to one side, the boy became thoughtful for a while. Finally, he understood what his dad meant. "Dad, you want me to draw according to your requirements so I can sell my work to you for one million dollars?"

"Yes!" Matthew nodded.

At then, something crossed Damian's mind, and he said, "In that case, it makes no difference. It's you who is going to give me the money. My brothers earned their money by themselves, but I'll get mine from my father. What if my brothers get mad?"

"You are wrong. Even if you don't sell this painting to me, someone else will buy it. You could earn two million by selling it at an auction. I'm just getting the benefit of buying it for one million. You see, I'm saving money but also saving you a lot of trouble. Anyway, whether you want to take it out for auction or sell it to your father, the choice is yours."

Evidently, the Hilton family's influence added to the painting's value. As long as it was about Matthew, the drawing could even sell for ten million dollars.

What was valuable was not the painting itself, but its connection to the Hilton family.

At that moment, the three boys standing at the door exchanged looks and shared the same thought. How could they leave their youngest brother behind now that they had the money? Determined, the three children jumped out and walked into the room together.

CHAPTER 1424 MATTHEW FOUND OU

"Damian, that is one sweet painting! I want it. Would you give it to me? I'm serious. I'll pay you for it," Boswell offered. He really liked the painting on the easel. It depicted a pleasant memory of the kids with their dad. Damian had just put the finishing touches on it, and was standing back, admiring his work.

"Hey, I like it too. A lot. Maybe you should give it to me. I'll double whatever Boswell offers you," Colman said with a wicked grin. Of course he liked it. He thought he looked quite handsome in it. The painting would look nice hanging on his wall.

When he heard his brothers discussing this, Adkins' spirits fell. He also wanted it. He had cash, but he lost half of his money when he adopted a panda. Pandas were not cheap. He was sure he didn't have as much as his brothers did. He had to use his wits to acquire the painting, not his wallet. "We all want it, but there's only one. Why don't we go in on it? Say, five hundred thou each?" he offered.

With an offer like that, Damian's mind was blown. He almost dropped the oil pastel in his hand. The boy had resigned himself to just buying a single panda. But now he'd have the money to buy more than one.

As their dad, Matthew felt left out. Shouldn't he have some kind of say in this? He cleared his throat and

said, "What about me, boys? I saw it first."

Boswell craned his neck to look up at his father. Matthew towered over all of his sons, because they were so young. "So? Stay out of it, Dad. You've got too much money. There's no way we could match up. Besides, you like Mom the most, huh? Just get Damian to paint a picture of Mom. Then you can drop as much cash as you want on it."

Matthew was floored by this. He didn't know exactly what to say. 'Rika's my wife. I see her every day. Why should I spend any money at all on a portrait of her? Never mind. As long as the boys are happy, I'm good.'

He decided to give in and said, "Yeah, Boswell's right. Damian, after you finish up here, take a good look at your mom. I want to see how true to life you can paint her. Deal?"

Damian was on cloud nine, since his brothers and even his father liked his work. He was so excited he couldn't contain it. He nodded his head like a chicken pecking rice. "You got it, Dad," he said with a sweet smile.

"I knew you'd come through!" Matthew patted his head.

The four kids were too young to have bank accounts, so they asked Carlos to apply for four exclusive VIP bank cards in the bank owned by Hilton Group.

As soon as they got their money, they couldn't wait to ask Matthew if they could buy more pandas. Technically, they had the money, but Matthew had to arrange it.

Soon enough, the money changed hands, and they all had pandas. They even named them.

And now everyone know what Adkins did for money—he sold his dad's phone number. There were any number of people who wanted his money. And the women who might pay Adkins had more earthy pleasures in mind.

At night, watching a freshly-showered Matthew walk out of the bathroom, Erica carefully placed her camera on the nightstand, yawning. She crawled into bed, ready to sleep.

Matthew lay in the bed with her, held her in his arms and kissed her forehead. "I should be content. I have a wife, great kids, more money than God. But I've always felt like something was missing..."

"What is it?" Erica asked in a weak voice.

"I think—" Before Matthew could finish, his phone on the table next to him started to buzz insistently.

The man picked up the phone and looked at it. It was an unknown number. 'That's weird.' He didn't remember giving his number to anyone he didn't know.

Even so, he still pressed the answer key. "Hello!"

"Good evening, Matthew. It's Jennifer. Sorry to call so late." The voice on the other end of the line was clear in the quiet night.

It was a woman! A woman called Matthew in the middle of the night! Erica, who had been sleepy, opened her eyes wide. She stretched and snuggled closer to him, trying hear his conversation.

"What's up?" he asked. Matthew knew what Erica was doing. But he had nothing to hide. He tilted his head and drew the phone closer to her so that she could hear it more clearly.

Jennifer's voice was very gentle and sweet. "Nothing serious. I just want to ask if you'd heard anything more about the case we worked on together. Everyone else is here. You free now, Matthew? Come on, have drinks with us. We can catch up."

Matthew's eyes turned cold. He didn't answer the woman's question. Instead he asked, "Why do you have my private number?"

Jennifer faltered, "It's okay if you don't have time. Tell you what, forget I asked."

"I have no time. I need to sleep. Bye!" he refused coldly and decisively.

Jennifer was a little frightened. She said nothing more and hung up the phone in a hurry.

After the call, silence returned to the bedroom. Erica glared at her husband, but he was lost in thought. "How could another woman get your private number?" she asked in a jealous voice.

"You tell me and we'll both know," said Matthew flatly.

The woman got up from his arms and sat up straight. "Humph! And now you make jokes! I think you gave that number to her yourself!"

She didn't believe that another woman would be able to get it if Matthew hadn't given his number to her.

Matthew put his phone aside and pulled her back into his arms. "I really don't know, honey," he said in a helpless tone.

"Think I'm buying that?" Erica snorted. In the same gentle voice as Jennifer's, she mocked, "Matthew, do you have time? Come on, have drinks with us. We can catch up... Matthew, a woman invited you out for drinks in the middle of the night."

Matthew's eyes darkened as he watched her continue her tirade. She never failed to make him angry by

referring to him as Matthew. "I heard it this time. Let me guess, she's called before, when I'm not around. Am I right? I never asked you that before. But since I happened to listen in on your phone call this time, tell me honestly, how many women call you every day?"

"It's my private number. No one should have it. Nobody calls me on it except who I want to," he answered.

Erica caught the loophole in his words. "So you want her to call you?"

Matthew didn't know how to respond. In order to set Erica's mind at rest, he took out his phone and dialed Paige's number. "Hi, Paige, it's me. I have a problem for you to solve. Why does Jennifer, general manager of Season Group, have my private number?"

"I don't know, Matthew. But I'll get on it right away," Paige answered without asking why.

But Erica still wasn't convinced. She snorted and cuddled up to him again. "You'd better get the evidence to prove your innocence. If you can't, I swear I'll tear you apart!" Well, she was just bluffing. She would only tear his clothes off of him. Then she'd sit there and drool over his manly chest.

A smile curling the corners of his mouth, Matthew didn't take her threats seriously. Instead, he moved on top of her. She could feel his interest in his pants. "Honey, I just wanted to say I need a lover in my life..."

Erica's face changed dramatically. "Okay?" she teased. "What does this have to do with me?" "So is he involved with this mystery woman? He didn't seem happy to hear from her, though, ' she thought.

"Listen to me. I need a little lover... Don't they say a daughter is her father's lover in a previous life?"

Matthew asked. Erica glared at him, patted her chest and said decisively, "Gross. Don't go there. Besides, no. And hell no. I was scared to death when I gave birth to four boys! But you want another kid?"

They were born early. She had a C-section so every child would have a chance at life. If it weren't for Chantel and Tessie keeping her company, she wouldn't even have had the courage to do that.

Matthew stretched out his arm, his big palm gripping her pajama top. He touched the light scar on her lower abdomen, and kissed her lips lovingly. "Okay, we don't need a baby!"

His quick promise made Erica a little uneasy. She whispered, "If you really want a daughter, let's have another baby. I just don't want four more of them."

The man was amused by her. "I don't think I have the power to control that." Having her get pregnant with four children was already quite the achievement. But another four kids? They'd hear the laughter of their kids all day long.

"I'm just putting it out there!" "What if I did have another four? Oh my God! That would be something to tell the grandkids!" she thought to herself.

CHAPTER 1425 THE HILTON FAMILY'S PUNISHMENTS

Matthew kissed his wife's red lips for a long time. When he finally let her go, he said hoarsely, "Honey, we won't have another baby. Four sons are enough for us!"

"Okay!" Erica wrapped her arms around his neck and added innocently, "Then let's go to sleep!"

The man chuckled at her words. "I said we wouldn't have another baby, not that I wouldn't make love to you."

After that, Erica got tortured in bed for a while. Still, Matthew was very kind to her that evening. The moment he saw how tired she was, he let her go before she would begin to beg for mercy.

The next morning, Adkins was sleeping soundly in his bed when his father unexpectedly woke him up.

The little boy had no idea of the disaster that was coming his way. Sleepy, he looked at Matthew and rubbed his eyes before he asked in a daze, "Dad, what time is it?"

With his arms crossed in front of his chest, Matthew stood still and didn't say anything as he stared coldly at his eldest son.

In less than two minutes, Adkins' eyes widened. "Dad, why are you looking at me like this? Have you found something out?"

Matthew sneered. His son was quick to think! "I know what you've done!" he stated coldly.

How did a three-year-old kid dare to borrow money in his name? In fact, not only he did that, but he also gave his dad's phone number to another woman.

He wanted to show Erica what her treasured son had done behind their backs.

With this plan in mind, the man stretched out his long arm and caught the little guy. Then he strode out of the bedroom with the boy under his armpit.

Along the way, Adkins shouted desperately, "Help! Help! Colman! Damian!" Colman and Damian were good at playing nice boys. If his two younger brothers managed to say anything loving to their father, maybe Matthew would let go of him.

Upon hearing that, Matthew patted him on the hip and ordered, "Just shut up!"

Adkins shushed immediately after being hit on the butt.

Anyway, his cries had already woken up the other three boys, who had all promptly hurried out of their rooms.

They came to find Adkins in their father's bedroom in time to see the man tossing him on his big bed. Quickly, Adkins took the opportunity to crawl into Erica's quilt and hide himself in his mother's arms.

"Get out!" Matthew ordered in a harsh voice.

The only reason for him to bring Adkins to his room was to let Erica know what her dear son had done behind their backs. No way, he would allow the boy to ask for her protection now.

Erica had been awakened since Matthew took the phone call in the morning. However, before she could ask anything at then, he had already left to get Adkins from his room. At last, she asked, "Matthew, what happened?"

Turning around, Matthew glanced at the other three kids in their identical pajamas and messy hairs. "Since you are all awake, you'll watch the lesson I'm going to teach your brother today. If you ever make a mistake in the future, that's how you'll all be treated!"

His stern gaze made the other three kids nod immediately.

"Get out!" Matthew turned to Adkins and ordered one more time.

Under his dad's stern glare, Adkins had no choice but to get out of the quilt.

"Get out of the bed!" Matthew specified.

Reluctantly, the boy obeyed once again.

"Kneel down!"

Adkins, however, didn't move this time. "Dad, you're insulting me. Only a coward will kneel, and I'm a man. I won't kneel!"

"I'm your father! A man can kneel to heaven and earth, or to their parents!" Matthew said.

Biting his lips, Adkins glared at his father. "No matter what, I won't kneel."

Fury was written all over Matthew's face. "Do you want to have a taste of the Hilton family's punishments?" Everyone always said that his eldest resembled him the most, but Matthew didn't think so. A three-year-old Matthew wouldn't have the guts to borrow two million dollars in his father's name.

As soon as Erica realized the situation was only getting worse, she rushed over and hugged Adkins. Looking at Matthew, she asked, "What on earth happened? If you have something to say, just say it. It's not appropriate to simply hit someone." She didn't want to stop her husband from disciplining their son, but she wanted to know what Adkins did first.

Matthew glanced at her and explained in a low voice, "Your son borrowed two million from someone in my name!"

The other three kids all gasped. It turned out that their brother's money was borrowed after all.

Erica was shocked to learn that. After requesting the boy to look at her, she asked him seriously, "Is that true what your father said?"

Adkins didn't deny. "Yes, it is. Mom, I didn't steal anything. I used my own skills to borrow this money, and I never said that I wouldn't pay it back. Why should Dad punish me for it?"

At that moment, Erica felt a headache coming. Still, she patiently explained to the child, "That's right, but how can you go out and borrow money at such a young age? You should come to your parents if you need money."

"Mom, you don't know the whole story. Dad knew we needed money from the beginning, but he didn't give it to us. Instead, he said we should earn money on our own!" the boy explained.

Matthew snorted, "You think that borrowing money makes you capable of earning it?" Looking at Adkins, Matthew could finally understand why Carlos was more loving towards his daughters than his son. He realized now how annoying having a boy could be at times.

His son had sold his phone number to a woman and asked that same woman to call him, causing his wife to be mad.

Adkins looked back at his father in disgust and answered, "Indeed, I feel capable. But since you doubt my skills, you can pay the money back for me. If I'm going to be punished like this, I won't accept it!"

Trying to calm down, Erica asked gently, "Adkins, tell Mommy, why did you borrow the money?"

"We want to raise pandas. But since Dad wouldn't give us the money, the four of us had to get one million by ourselves. Mom, don't you feel sorry for us?" The little boy sniffed and added in sorrow, "Dad's clothes are worth hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars, depending on which. But he wouldn't give us money to raise some cute pandas. Mom, I'll take you back to Tow Village, okay? I can support you. We don't need Dad..."

Slap! Suddenly, he got spanked in the butt again. This time a little harder than before.

Of course, Matthew was the one who beat him.

Adkins cried even louder. "Mom, we can't be his biological children. Dad is a stingy man. He's so rich, and yet he doesn't give us money. I'm going to run away from home and find Grandpa so he can teach his son a lesson. Boo...hoo..."

Erica was rendered speechless. 'He's going to find his grandpa? Wow, the little guy really knows how to deal with the situation,' she thought to herself.

However, Adkins was really in the wrong this time. It wasn't a matter of how much money he had borrowed, this just shouldn't have happened at all. Therefore, Erica wouldn't interfere if Matthew taught the child a lesson.

Pulling Adkins out of Erica's arms, Matthew told him to stand straight in front of him. "Don't cry! You are a man. Why are you crying like a woman?"

"I'm still a child! It's okay for me to cry," Adkins responded loudly. "I haven't even graduated from kindergarten yet, but you're always bullying your children. Are you not ashamed of yourself? Mom's an adult, but you never bully her. Why is that? You can't blame me for using my skills to borrow money."

'He wants me to bully Erica? Not a chance!' Matthew decided to beat his son up.

With a frown, he said, "Stop crying first!"

Adkins snorted twice and stopped crying.

"Go back to your room, wash yourself and go to school. I'll teach you a lesson when I come back home tonight!" Matthew ordered expressionlessly.

Upon hearing that, Adkins turned around and ran out of the bedroom without hesitation.

CHAPTER 1426 AREN'T YOU AFRAID THAT DAD WILL GET MAD AT YOU

Adkins left his parents' bedroom as fast as he could, leaving behind a group of dumbfounded younger brothers. They turned around to look at their father, who was wrong a long time, and then at their mother, who was also stunned by Adkins' disappointing figure. Eventually, they turned around and retreated to their respective rooms.

After the kids went back to their rooms, Matthew took out his phone and called Owen. "Transfer three million to Jonno's account from Sooson Group," he ordered.

'Wow! Adkins borrowed two million and now Matthew is going to pay it back with three million.' Owen shook his head and sighed, "It's so good to have money!"

As Matthew put his phone back into his pocket, he lifted his eyelids and glanced at her. "That's your son. He is the same as you when it comes to being unreasonable."

Thos tomo, ot was oroco's turn to bo ongy. "Whon hovo o over boon unroosonoblo? Huh? You'ro just mod bocouso you foolod to tooch odkons o losson.

ond now you'ro dumpong oll of thot mosplocod ongor onto hos mothor! Who do you thonk os boong unroosonoblo horo?" Motthow, soghod on dofoot, ond docodod to rotroot onto tho bothroom on solonco os ho dodn't wont to orguo woth hor.

Whon oroco wont downstoors, tho four choldron woro hovong brookfost quootly os boforo, ond Motthow was sottong opposoto thom.

Notocong hor prosonco, Motthow wopod hos mouth woth o tossuo ond oskod, "How como you'ro up so oorly? Do you hovo somothong to do today?"

"Yos!" Sho wontod to sond hor choldron to school ond hor husbond to tho compony.

os usuol, tho four choldron pulled out tho choor for hor ond sorvod hor brookfost. odkons soomod o lottlo obsont-mondod, porhops bocouso ho was worrood thot hos fothor was stoll mod ot hom.

Moro ofton thon not, odkons would bo tho most onorgotoc omongst hos brothors whon oroco was around. Today, howovor, ho was just quootly sulkong on hos soot ond hovong brookfost.

oroco lookod ot hor oldost son ond thon ot tho mon bosodo hor, but sood nothong.

oftor brookfost, tho fomoly of sox got onto tho monovon. odkons ommodootoly jumpod onto tho soot next to oroco, hold hor hond toghtly ond whosporod, "Mom, moy o borrow your phono plooso? o nood to coll Grondmo."

Confusod, oroco oskod, "Why do you wont to coll your grondmo?"

odkons gosturod to Motthow woth hos oyes ond thon shook hos hood. "Nothong."

Hovong sonsod hos roluctonco to spook, oroco dodn't forco hom to oxploon homself. onstood, sho took hor phono out ond hondod ot to hom. "Horo you go."

"Thanks, Mom!" odkons govo hos mothor o glooful gron ond thon collod Dobboo's number.

Tho lono was connocted soon ofter ond Dobboo's choorful vooco como through. "Good mornong, Roko. Hovo you hod brookfost?"

"Grondmo, ot's mo, odkons!" sood tho boy on o swoot vooco.

"Oh, ot's you, odkons! My door boy, dod you moss mo?" Dobboo was glod to hovo rocoovod hor grondson's coll.

"Yos, Grondmo. o moss you ond Grondpo vory much. Con you ond Grondpo pock mo up oftor school thos oftornoon?" ho oskod.

"odkons!" Motthow wornod hom on o cold vooco.

Tho lottlo boy shook ot tho soght of hos fothor's oyos, but ho kopt tho phono gluod to hos chook. Ho turned hos bock to Motthow ond contonud to talk to hos grondmother on tho phono.

Dobboo, on tho othor hond, was throllod by hor grondson's roquost. "Suro! Your grondpo ond o would lovo to soo you. Wo moss you too! Bo good ot school. Your grondpo ond o woll pock you up thos oftornoon!"

"Okoy, Grondmo. o lovo you!"

oftor tho coll, odkons noncholontly roturnod tho phono to oroco. "Mom, oro you goong to Grondmo's houso woth us tonoght?"

Ho was ofrood that ho hod also gotton hos mother on troublo woth hos dod.

"o'm not goong, honoy. o hovo some stuff to fonosh ot work ond o'll bo bock o lottlo loto tonoght."

ovortong Motthow's oyos, odkons whosporod on oroco's oor, "oron't you ofrood that Dod woll got mod ot you? Bo coroful. Ho os on o bod mood!"

omusod by hor son's words, oroco dodn't know whothor to cry or to lough. Sho grobbod Motthow's hond ond sood, "Don't worry. Your fothor osn't loko that!"

odkons undorstood whot sho was doong ond ho shronk bock on foor. 'Forgot ot.' Tho lottlo boy loonod bock on hos soot ond lookod out tho wondow.

Colmon soomod to hovo como up woth on odoo ond ho nudgod odkons. "Hoy, oro you goong to Grondpo's oftor school?"

"Yooh."

"Thon o'll como woth you!" Colmon was also tryong to ovoid Motthow for tho next two doys ond whot bottor ploco for hom to do that thon hos grondporonts' ploco.

Domoon ond Boswoll followod on ono vooco. "ond mo!"

oroco chucklod ond whosporod on Motthow's oor, "Look ot whot you hovo dono! You'vo scorod our sons out of thoor own homo."

Motthow gloncod ot thom coldly ond sood, "ot's good that they won't bo homo. o'm glod that wo con spond somo tomo olono."

The four boys lookod ot Motthow woth toory oyos, clutchong thoor chosts dromotocolly. 'Boo...hoo... Dod's words oro so hurtful!' they oll thought.

on the ovonong, Corlos ond Dobboo pockod up the boys oftor school just os they hod promosed, loovong oroco ond Motthow on the company of ooch other.

Motthow roolly put o lot of offort onto govong hos wofo o romantoc noght. ot forst, ho took oroco to o lovely rostouront for o condlologht donnor. Then, they drovo oll the woy to the top of the mountoon to soo the stors scottorod oll ocross o volvot block sky. How romantoc!

Whon the cold wonds onnouncod the onsot of wontor, oroco sporod ono doy to toko hor sons shoppng for somo now clothos.

The mothor ond hor sons woro olways occomponod by two bodyguards.

Sonco the choldron wontod stook for lunch, oroco took thom to o populor rostouront that servod outhontoc Wostorn cuosono along woth the two bodyguards who sot ot the toblo next to thom.

Durong the mool, Boswill put down hos fork ond sood, "Mom, o nood to go to the bothroom."

The wootross who was sorvng the doshos smolod polotoly ond sood, "Tho bothroom os ovor thoro. Lot mo show you the woy."

Domoon also stood up ond sood, "Boswill, woot o monuto. o wont to go woth you!"

Sonco they woro ot o Mocholon stor rostouront ond ovory employoo of that ostobloshmont, stortng from the wootors ond wootrossos woro oll trooned to provodo nothng but forst-class sorvoco, oroco sow no rooson to bo worrood whon the wootross offerod to toko the choldron to the bothroom. oroco smolod ot the wootross ond polotoly sood, "Thank you!"

"Mo'om, you oro wolcomo!"

The wootross hold the two boys' honds ond wolkod towards the bothroom. Ono of the two bodyguards stood up ond followod thom.

ot the cornor of the corrodor, o cloonor occodontolly pushod o cloonng trolley, sondng ot towards the bodyguard who somohow monogod to dodgo the trolley on the nock of tomo. Unfortunotoly, howovor, ho foolod to dodgo the wotor that hod sploshod onto hos trousers.

"Sor, o'm sorry. o dodn't moon to..." The cloonor opologozod to hom on o ponoc ond took out o towol to wopo hos trousers.

The bodyguard looked up at the doorknob of the bathroom and stopped her. "No, thanks!" He brushed off the incident as a mere accident. Besides, his priority was the safety of the boys, not his trousers.

The cleaner, however, didn't intend to let him go. She grabbed his clothes and continued to wipe his trousers. "It doesn't matter. I'll clean them for you."

The bodyguard looked at the cleaner's face, who seemed to be a little nervous, and realized that something was wrong. The first thought that formed in his mind was, 'Oh, no!' He pushed the cleaner away and rushed to the bathroom, completely disregarding her screams.

The restaurant was on the first floor and the two children were not in the men's room. He turned around and went to the women's room without a second thought.

While the woman in the bathroom screamed, he shouted, "Boys?"

Having found no response, the bodyguard became so anxious that cold sweats started to form on his forehead. When he saw an open window, he quickly ran over and looked out.

Just as he had feared it, he saw two men covering the mouths of the children and pushing them onto a minibus.

Without hesitation, he jumped out of the window and contacted his colleague in the restaurant with his Bluetooth headset. "Tell Orco that something happened to the two boys. Don't let her and the others get out of your sight. I'll call for backup and go after the boys right away!"

When Orco found out that Boswell and Domino had been kidnapped, Adkins had just cut a piece of steak and put it into his mouth.

The suddenness of the news shook Orco and she almost choked on that piece of meat inside her mouth.

Adkins left his parents' bedroom as fast as he could, leaving behind a group of dumbfounded younger brothers. They turned around to look at their father, who was wearing a long face, and then at their mother, who was also stunned by Adkins' disappearing figure. Eventually, they turned around and retreated to their respective rooms.

After the kids went back to their rooms, Matthew took out his phone and called Owen. "Transfer three million to Jennifer's account from Season Group," he ordered.

'Wow! Adkins borrowed two million and now Matthew is going to pay it back with three million.' Erica shook her head and sighed, "It's so good to have money!"

As Matthew put his phone back into his pocket, he lifted his eyelids and glanced at her. "This is your son. He is the same as you when it comes to being unreasonable."

This time, it was Erica's turn to be angry. "When have I ever been unreasonable? Huh? You're just mad because you failed to teach Adkins a lesson."

And now you're dumping all of that misplaced anger onto his mother! Who do you think is being unreasonable here?" Matthew, sighed in defeat, and decided to retreat into the bathroom in silence as he didn't want to argue with her.

When Erica went downstairs, the four children were having breakfast quietly as before, and Matthew was sitting opposite them.

Noticing her presence, Matthew wiped his mouth with a tissue and asked, "How come you're up so early? Do you have something to do today?"

"Yes!" She wanted to send her children to school and her husband to the company.

As usual, the four children pulled out the chair for her and served her breakfast. Adkins seemed a little absent-minded, perhaps because he was worried that his father was still mad at him.

More often than not, Adkins would be the most energetic amongst his brothers when Erica was around. Today, however, he was just quietly sulking in his seat and having breakfast.

Erica looked at her eldest son and then at the man beside her, but said nothing.

After breakfast, the family of six got into the minivan. Adkins immediately jumped into the seat next to Erica, held her hand tightly and whispered, "Mom, may I borrow your phone please? I need to call Grandma."

Confused, Erica asked, "Why do you want to call your grandma?"

Adkins gestured to Matthew with his eyes and then shook his head. "Nothing."

Having sensed his reluctance to speak, Erica didn't force him to explain himself. Instead, she took her phone out and handed it to him. "Here you go."

"Thanks, Mom!" Adkins gave his mother a gleeful grin and then called Debbie's number.

The line was connected soon after and Debbie's cheerful voice came through. "Good morning, Rika. Have you had breakfast?"

"Grandma, it's me, Adkins!" said the boy in a sweet voice.

"Oh, it's you, Adkins! My dear boy, did you miss me?" Debbie was glad to have received her grandson's call.

"Yes, Grandma. I miss you and Grandpa very much. Can you and Grandpa pick me up after school this afternoon?" he asked.

"Adkins!" Matthew warned him in a cold voice.

The little boy shook at the sight of his father's eyes, but he kept the phone glued to his cheek. He turned his back to Matthew and continued to talk to his grandmother on the phone.

Debbie, on the other hand, was thrilled by her grandson's request. "Sure! Your grandpa and I would love to see you. We miss you too! Be good at school. Your grandpa and I will pick you up this afternoon!"

"Okay, Grandma. I love you!"

After the call, Adkins nonchalantly returned the phone to Erica. "Mom, are you going to Grandma's house with us tonight?"

He was afraid that he had also gotten his mother in trouble with his dad.

"I'm not going, honey. I have some stuff to finish at work and I'll be back a little late tonight."

Averting Matthew's eyes, Adkins whispered in Erica's ear, "Aren't you afraid that Dad will get mad at you? Be careful. He is in a bad mood!"

Amused by her son's words, Erica didn't know whether to cry or to laugh. She grabbed Matthew's hand and said, "Don't worry. Your father isn't like that!"

Adkins understood what she was doing and he shrank back in fear. 'Forget it.' The little boy leaned back in his seat and looked out the window.

Colman seemed to have come up with an idea and he nudged Adkins. "Hey, are you going to Grandpa's after school?"

"Yeah."

"Then I'll come with you!" Colman was also trying to avoid Matthew for the next two days and what better place for him to do that than his grandparents' place.

Damian and Boswell followed in one voice. "And me!"

Erica chuckled and whispered in Matthew's ear, "Look at what you have done! You've scared our sons out of their own home."

Matthew glanced at them coldly and said, "It's good that they won't be home. I'm glad that we can spend some time alone."

The four boys looked at Matthew with teary eyes, clutching their chests dramatically. 'Boo...hoo... Dad's words are so hurtful!' they all thought.

In the evening, Carlos and Debbie picked up the boys after school just as they had promised, leaving Erica and Matthew in the company of each other.

Matthew really put a lot of effort into giving his wife a romantic night. At first, he took Erica to a lovely restaurant for a candlelight dinner. Then, they drove all the way to the top of the mountain to see the stars scattered all across a velvet black sky. How romantic!

When the cold winds announced the onset of winter, Erica spared one day to take her sons shopping for some new clothes.

The mother and her sons were always accompanied by two bodyguards.

Since the children wanted steak for lunch, Erica took them to a popular restaurant that served authentic Western cuisine along with the two bodyguards who sat at the table next to them.

During the meal, Boswell put down his fork and said, "Mom, I need to go to the bathroom."

The waitress who was serving the dishes smiled politely and said, "The bathroom is over there. Let me show you the way."

Damian also stood up and said, "Boswell, wait a minute. I want to go with you!"

Since they were at a Michelin star restaurant and every employee of that establishment, starting from the waiters and waitresses were all trained to provide nothing but first-class service, Erica saw no reason to be worried when the waitress offered to take the children to the bathroom. Erica smiled at the waitress and politely said, "Thank you!"

"Ma'am, you are welcome!"

The waitress held the two boys' hands and walked towards the bathroom. One of the two bodyguards stood up and followed them.

At the corner of the corridor, a cleaner accidentally pushed a cleaning trolley, sending it towards the bodyguard who somehow managed to dodge the trolley in the nick of time. Unfortunately, however, he failed to dodge the water that had splashed onto his trousers.

"Sir, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to..." The cleaner apologized to him in a panic and took out a towel to wipe

his trousers.

The bodyguard looked up at the direction of the bathroom and stopped her. "No, thanks!" He brushed off the incident as a mere accident. Besides, his priority was the safety of the boys, not his trousers.

The cleaner, however, didn't intend to let him go. She grabbed his clothes and continued to wipe his trousers. "It doesn't matter. I'll clean them for you."

The bodyguard looked at the cleaner's face, who seemed to be a little nervous, and realized that something was wrong. The first thought that formed in his mind was, 'Oh, no!' He pushed the cleaner away and rushed to the bathroom, completely disregarding her screams.

The restaurant was on the first floor and the two children were not in the men's room. He turned around and went to the women's room without a second thought.

While the women in the bathroom screamed, he shouted, "Boys?"

Having found no response, the bodyguard became so anxious that cold sweats started to form on his forehead. When he saw an open window, he quickly ran over and looked out.

Just as he had feared it, he saw two men covering the mouths of the children and pushing them into a minibus.

Without hesitation, he jumped out of the window and contacted his colleague in the restaurant with his Bluetooth headset. "Tell Erica that something happened to the two boys. Don't let her and the others get out of your sight. I'll call for backup and go after the boys right away!"

When Erica found out that Boswell and Damian had been kidnapped, Adkins had just cut a piece of steak and put it into her mouth.

The suddenness of the news shook Erica and she almost choked on that piece of meat inside her mouth.

CHAPTER 1427 SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THE KIDS

Erica simply swallowed the piece of steak whole and drank a mouthful of water to bring it down. As she stood up in a hurry, she grabbed the two boys and said to the other bodyguard, "Watch over them, I'll be back!"

"Erica, please, I can't let you get out of my sight..." Before the bodyguard could finish his words, however, Erica had run out of the restaurant almost instantly.

The bodyguard sighed, standing beside the two confused boys and called the police first before he informed Matthew what had happened.

"Did the bad guys take my brothers away?" Adkins asked the bodyguard.

The bodyguard didn't know what to say to them, so he nodded and said, "Boys, I've called the police. They'll bring them back soon, I'm sure. Right now, I need to bring you two back home because I need to ensure your safety first."

Although the two brothers were worried about the safety of their brothers and mother, they knew that they were too young to be of any help, so they obediently followed the bodyguard out of the restaurant.

When Eric came out of the restaurant, she saw the other bodyguard rushing out of the alley nearby and chasing after a minibus that was speeding away.

Her intuition told her that the children were inside that minibus. Without wasting another second, she found her own car and jumped into the driver's seat. She pushed down the accelerator and sped after the minibus.

Just then, her phone rang. She controlled the steering wheel with one hand and found her phone with the other. It was Matthew. She answered the call and put it on speaker. Then she threw it on the passenger seat and apologized guiltily, "Honey, I'm sorry. Something happened to the kids!"

Eric felt as though it was her fault as she had failed to watch over the kids properly. If only she had taken the boys to the bathroom, none of this would have happened.

Matthew had already left the company. He drove out of the parking lot as they were talking. "Don't blame yourself. It's not your fault. I've spoken to the bodyguard. This was all a premeditated plan. I have my people on this, don't worry. Just tell me where they are heading."

Holding the steering wheel tightly with both hands, Eric took a few deep breaths, adjusted her thoughts and calmly said, "They are now heading for Abby Road. It is a silver grey minibus without license plate number. I'm following them. They are turning to the Spring Road now."

"Okay. Be careful. Don't drive too fast. I've already asked someone to locate them," said Matthew.

"Okay! They turned the corner again. Now they are driving towards Sunset Road. I've taken the turn to Sunset Road as well." Eric skillfully controlled the steering wheel, and kept stepping on the gas, putting a distance of almost ten meters between her and the minivan.

About ten minutes later, the minibus drove into a suburb and then suddenly disappeared from the road after taking several turns.

Eric broke down in tears. There was only a row of old houses in front of her. There was no road on the left and an endless rice field on the right.

All of a sudden, she received a call from an unregistered number. She ended the call with Matthew and answered the phone calmly. "Hello."

"Eric? Your sons are with me." A young man's voice came over from the other end of the line, which sounded strange to Eric.

Eric slowly stopped the car and stifled her throbbing heart. "What do you want?" she asked.

"Have you seen the houses ahead of you? Keep moving forward!"

the men ordered. Eric looked around, but there was no one around. "Okay, I'll do as you say. Just don't hurt my children. I can give you as much money as you want!" she said hurriedly.

"Stop talking! Go forward first!" the men said impatiently.

"Okay!" She started the car again and drove ahead.

Meanwhile, the boys' hands were tied up and their mouths were sealed with tape, but neither of them cried or made any noise. They lay on their sides in the back seat and listened to the phone call between the men and their mother.

There were two other fierce-looking men inside the minibus with them.

The minibus finally stopped at a deserted forest. Rolling his eyes, Boswell tried to attract the attention of the people in front of him.

A man turned around and screamed at him angrily, "What are you doing?"

He clamped his legs tightly. "Mmmph..."

The man tore the tape off his mouth mercilessly. "Ouch, it hurts!" Boswell cried.

Demien grunted in anger and the tape on his mouth was torn off too.

"Uncle, we need to go to the bathroom. We are going to wet our pants!" Boswell said.

Demien nodded in agreement. "We were just going to the bathroom, but that cunt took us away. We haven't had time to pee yet!"

It seemed as though they were the only ones there, apart from the mountains that stood tall around them. The gangsters saw no reason to doubt them as they were just children. Besides, they were in the middle of nowhere. Where could the boys run to if they were allowed to pee? He quickly untied the ropes and sent only one person to follow the two children out of the minibus.

After getting out of the minibus, the two brothers looked at each other and came to an agreement without saying a word. As they were in no real hurry to pee, they looked around, carefully observing their surroundings and finally walked towards the small intersection at the same time.

The gangster behind them shouted, "Why are you dawdling? Hurry up!"

The two brothers were so frightened that they stood by the road and began to pee.

"Let me do it," said Demien in a low voice.

Boswell took a look at the leaf Demien was aiming at. The shape of it was similar to that of a lotus leaf, except it was not as big in size. The leaf was about the same size as an adult's face and now it was filled with a lot of urine.

After tidying up his pants, Boswell turned around and glanced at the minibus. The two men who had been sitting inside the whole time also got out of the minibus. They stood by the door of the minibus, smoking and glancing at them from time to time.

Suddenly, an idea came to Boswell. He shouted at the gangster in front of him, "What's that behind you?"

The gangster looked back in confusion and found nothing.

When he looked back, however, his face was met with a splash of something liquid that had a strange smell.

"Hehehe!" The boys burst into laughter, and the sound of their giggling voices seemed to be fading into the distance.

Before he could remove the leaf from his face, he heard another man shouting, "Berry, the twerps are running away! Hurry up!"

Berry Wolfson cursed and looked at the leaf on the ground with a long face. He finally understood what it was. "Damn it! How dare you throw pee on my face! When I catch you two little rescels, you'll be sorry..."

Thwack! Berry received a hard blow to the back of his head. The two men who were smoking beside the minibus rushed over, while Berry was still standing there, scratching his head.

"Fuck! You're an idiot, Berry! Hurry up!"

"Okay!" Berry followed the two men and ran into the forest.

Suffice it to say, the two brothers were very cunning. They knew that they should run along the trail in

the forest so that the gangsters wouldn't be able to catch up to them by the minibus. They might have inherited this from Erice. They ran as fast as they could, scuttling through the forest quickly. They knew that as long as they kept off road, the kidneppers wouldn't be able to come after them in the minibus.

If they had taken the road, the gangsters would have caught up to them in no time.

Fortunately, they had lived in Tow Village before, a place fortified by mountains in the south, west and north. This wasn't the first time they had found themselves inside the woods which was why they didn't feel frightened or lost.

Erica simply swallowed the piece of steak whole and drank a mouthful of water to bring it down. As she stood up in a hurry, she grabbed the two boys and said to the other bodyguard, "Watch over them, I'll be back!"

"Erica, please, I can't let you get out of my sight..." Before the bodyguard could finish his words, however, Erica had run out of the restaurant almost instantly.

The bodyguard sighed, standing beside the two confused boys and called the police first before he informed Matthew what had happened.

"Did the bad guys take my brothers away?" Adkins asked the bodyguard.

The bodyguard didn't know what to say to them, so he nodded and said, "Boys, I've called the police. They'll bring them back soon, I'm sure. Right now, I need to bring you two back home because I need to ensure your safety first."

Although the two brothers were worried about the safety of their brothers and mother, they knew that they were too young to be of any help, so they obediently followed the bodyguard out of the restaurant.

When Erica came out of the restaurant, she saw the other bodyguard rushing out of the alley nearby

and chasing after a minibus that was speeding away.

Her intuition told her that the children were inside that minibus. Without wasting another second, she found her own car and jumped into the driver's seat. She pushed down the accelerator and sped after the minibus.

Just then, her phone rang. She controlled the steering wheel with one hand and found her phone with the other. It was Matthew. She answered the call and put it on speaker. Then she threw it on the passenger seat and apologized guiltily, "Honey, I'm sorry. Something happened to the kids!"

Erica felt as though it was her fault as she had failed to watch over the kids properly. If only she had taken the boys to the bathroom, none of this would have happened.

Matthew had already left the company. He drove out of the parking lot as they were talking. "Don't blame yourself. It's not your fault. I've spoken to the bodyguard. This was all a premeditated plan. I have my people on this, don't worry. Just tell me where they are heading."

Holding the steering wheel tightly with both hands, Erica took a few deep breaths, adjusted her thoughts and calmly said, "They are now heading for Abby Road. It is a silver gray minibus without license plate number. I'm following them. They are turning to the Spring Road now."

"Okay. Be careful. Don't drive too fast. I've already asked someone to locate them," said Matthew.

"Okay! They turned a corner again. Now they are driving towards Sunset Road. I've taken a turn to Sunset Road as well." Erica skillfully controlled the steering wheel, and kept stepping on the gas, putting a distance of almost ten meters between her and the minivan.

About ten minutes later, the minibus drove into a suburb and then suddenly disappeared from the road after taking several turns.

Erica broke down in tears. There was only a row of old houses in front of her. There was no road on the left and an endless rice field on the right.

All of a sudden, she received a call from an unregistered number. She ended the call with Matthew and answered the phone calmly. "Hello."

"Erica? Your sons are with me." A young man's voice came over from the other end of the line, which sounded strange to Erica.

Erica slowly stopped the car and stifled her throbbing heart. "What do you want?" she asked.

"Have you seen the houses ahead of you? Keep moving forward!"

the man ordered. Erica looked around, but there was no one around. "Okay, I'll do as you say. Just don't

hurt my children. I can give you as much money as you want!" she said hurriedly.

"Stop talking! Go forward first!" the man said impatiently.

"Okay!" She started the car again and drove ahead.

Meanwhile, the boys' hands were tied up and their mouths were sealed with tape, but neither of them cried or made any noise. They lay on their sides in the back seat and listened to the phone call between the man and their mother.

There were two other fierce looking men inside the minibus with them.

The minibus finally stopped at a deserted forest. Rolling his eyes, Boswell tried to attract the attention of the people in front of him.

A man turned around and screamed at him angrily, "What are you doing?"

He clamped his legs tightly. "Mmmph..."

The man tore the tape off his mouth mercilessly. "Ouch, it hurts!" Boswell cried.

Damian grunted in anger and the tape on his mouth was torn off too.

"Uncle, we need to go to the bathroom. We are going to wet our pants!" Boswell said.

Damian nodded in agreement. "We were just going to the bathroom, but that aunt took us away. We haven't had time to pee yet!"

It seemed as though they were the only ones there, apart from the mountains that stood tall around them. The gangsters saw no reason to doubt them as they were just children. Besides, they were in the middle of nowhere. Where could the boys run to if they were allowed to pee? He quickly untied the ropes and sent only one person to follow the two children out of the minibus.

After getting out of the minibus, the two brothers looked at each other and came an agreement without saying a word. As they were in no real hurry to pee, they looked around, carefully observing their surroundings and finally walked towards a small intersection at the same time.

The gangster behind them shouted, "Why are you dawdling? Hurry up!"

The two brothers were so frightened that they stood by the road and began to pee.

"Let me do it," said Damian in a low voice.

Boswell took a look at the leaf Damian was aiming at. The shape of it was similar to that of a lotus leaf,

except it was not as big in size. The leaf was about the same size as an adult's face and now it was filled with a lot of urine.

After tidying up his pants, Boswell turned around and glanced at the minibus. The two men who had been sitting inside the whole time also got out of the minibus. They stood by the door of the minibus, smoking and glancing at them from time to time.

Suddenly, an idea came to Boswell. He shouted at the gangster in front of him, "what's that behind you?"

The gangster looked back in confusion and found nothing.

When he looked back, however, his face was met with a splash of something liquid that had a strange smell.

"Hahaha!" The boys burst into laughter, and the sound of their giggling voices seemed to be fading into the distance.

Before he could remove the leaf from his face, he heard another man shouting, "Barry, the twerps are running away! Hurry up!"

Barry Wolfson cursed and looked at the leaf on the ground with a long face. He finally understood what it was. "Damn it! How dare you throw pee on my face! When I catch you two little rascals, you'll be sorry..."

Thwack! Barry received a hard blow to the back of his head. The two men who were smoking beside the minibus rushed over, while Barry was still standing there, scratching his head.

"Fuck! You're an idiot, Barry! Hurry up!"

"Okay!" Barry followed the two men and ran into the forest.

Suffice it to say, the two brothers were very cunning. They knew that they should run along the trail in the forest so that the gangsters wouldn't be able to catch up to them by the minibus. They might have inherited this from Erica. They ran as fast as they could, scuttling through the forest quickly. They knew that as long as they kept off road, the kidnappers wouldn't be able to come after them in the minibus.

If they had taken the road, the gangsters would have caught up to them in no time.

Fortunately, they had lived in Tow Village before, a place fortified by mountains in the south, west and north. This wasn't the first time they had found themselves inside the woods which was why they didn't feel frightened or lost.

CHAPTER 1428 FALL INTO A TRAP

Those gangsters, however, weren't as dumb as they seemed. They were professionals who know how to track the two boys by following the trails they left behind.

After about ten minutes, they found themselves deep inside the forest.

At a fork on the path, Boswell grabbed Domino's hand, huffing and puffing to catch his breath. "Domino, let's split up. Remember, when the coast is clear, get back on the road and wait for me there."

Gasping for air, Domino nodded to show that he knew what the plan was.

Boswell started to worry about his brother when he sensed a hesitation on Domino's expression. "Domino, are you okay?"

Domino swallowed and answered, "Don't...worry. Just go... I can do this..."

"Well, just try to remember the rules of surviving on the wild Dad taught us!" Boswell gave his brother an encouraging pat on the back. On the afternoon some time ago, Matthew didn't go to the company, but stayed at home with the four children.

As Colman mentioned some promising forest, Matthew took the chance to teach them the survival skills on the wild. Back then, Matthew thought that he would have to coax them into listening to him, but to his surprise, the children gave him their undivided attention and listened to every instruction he gave them.

Luckily the kids were all gifted with good memory as they were able to catch all of the important information, even though Matthew only explained it to them once. Perhaps, that could explain why the four of them could speak so many words, even though they were only three years old.

Domino nodded his head with confidence. He didn't speak a word, because he had to conserve his strength.

By then, the gangsters had already caught up to them. One of them shouted, "They're over there! Hurry up!"

On a puny, Boswell pushed Domino away and shouted, "Run!"

Without wasting another second, Domino ran down the path on the right. What he didn't know was that Boswell didn't run. He stood exactly where he was and didn't move.

When the gangsters were close enough, Boswell made a feint at them and taunted, "Come on, catch me if you can!" The brave boy was trying to lure their chasers away from his brother so that he could be safe.

Hos orrogonco onfurootod the gongstors ovon moro. Ono of the mon, rostod hos honds on hos hops, strugglond to cotch hos brooth. "Borry...go ohood ond choso that ono. Wo'll go oftor thos ono horo!"

Borry could hordly spook os ho whoozod ond coughod for oor, but ho hod no chooco but to run oftor the boy. Ho corrod on the poth whoro Domoon dosoppoorod.

The two brothors, now dovodod, ron on dofferont poths hopong to loso the gongstors on the forost.

Thos unfortunoto corcumstonco, howovor, was on opportunoty for thom to show that they woro, ondood, the doscondnts of the Holton fomoly.

Moonwholo, oroco hod stoppod on front of o houso just os the mon on the phono hod onstructod. Sho pushod upon the door of the cor ond got out woth o sonso of olort wotchfulness.

The front door of the houso was wodo opon ond oroco could soo the two bedrooms ond ono lovong room from whoro sho was stondong. os soon os sho roochod the door, oroco smollod somothong strongo. Sho couldn't toll whot ot was, but ot was uttorly ghostly.

Sho shoutod, "Boswoll? Domoon?"

Thoro was pon-drop solonco ond nothong movod, olmost os though the houso was dosortod.

Foorong that sho was wolkong onto o trop, sho lookod around moro corofully. Suddonly, hor phono stortod rongong. ot was the somo unrogostorod numbor. oroco onsworod ommodootoly, "Hollo?"

"Go onsodo the houso on front of you!"

oroco lookod around, but sho couldn't soo anyono. Sho wondorod how the mon know whoro sho was oxoctly. "Suro, o'll go onsodo, but whoro oro my sons?"

"Your sons oro tood up ond goggod onsodo that houso. Why don't you go ond hovo o look!"

oroco wolkod onto the houso wothout hosototoon.

os soon os sho ontorod the lovong room, the coll got dosconnectod. Hor phono rong ogoon. Thos tomo ot was Motthow. "Whoro oro you? o'vo orrovod ot the suburb. Thoro oro o few housos on front of mo. oro you on ono of thom?" ho oskod onxoously.

"Yos, somono oskod mo to como horo," sho onsworod.

"Woll, don't do anythong. o'll bo roght thoro!" ho orderod.

Howovor, oroco was too worrood about thoor sons to woot for Motthow.

The place looked like no one had lived there for a very long time. The only occupants of the room were a few pieces of broken furniture that had gathered multiple layers of dust over the years.

Unfortunately, orco had no idea that when she entered the house, someone snuck up from behind her and threw a burning match at the wall just outside the house. As soon as the flame made contact with the wall doused in gasoline, it caught fire, roaring wildly as it threatened to consume the house.

Within the house the fire spread with ease, turning the once pretty first floor into a maze of flame. Black smoke billowed up and there was no alarm to sound.

Motthew stopped his car right in front of what seemed like a tower on fire. His heart sank almost instantly. His mind, occupied only by the thoughts of his wife and children, forced a scream out of his mouth. "Roko!"

Just as Motthew burst onto the house voluntarily, much to the surprise of the two people inside the house now, the arsonist came out and shut the iron door behind him.

Crack! The fire alarm sound forced Motthew to turn around and watch helplessly as someone locked him inside. It was made clear to him that he had just walked onto a trap.

On top of everything, he decided to look for orco and the children first. After all, he had to make sure that they were safe and sound.

Orco was rummaging around in a bedroom, but she still couldn't find the boys.

"Roko!"

As soon as his voice entered her ears, orco ran over to him and grabbed his arm. "Motthew, the boys are not here!"

Motthew held her on his arms and looked around the shabby house. It was only then that he realized that the only two windows in the house, which were originally made of wood, were both sealed with steel from the outside.

"Roko, we've fallen onto your trap." Their enemy had used the children as bait to lure orco here.

Every time, before anything bad could happen to orco, Motthew would show up without a doubt. This time their enemy trapped them both inside a burning house, sealed off all the exits and let them burn to death.

This meant that the boys had to be on some other place.

Motthew took out his phone and dialed Carlos' number. "Dad, something bad happened, but Roko

and o oro togothor. Wo hoven't found Boswoll ond Domoon yot." Corlos olroody know whot hod hopponod to tho boys, but ovon though ho vos on tho woy, ho vos stoll for owoy os ho hod rocoovod tho nows o lot lotor thon hos son dod.

Corlos' oyos dorkonod whon ho hoord about tho boys. "o'll brong tho kods bock homo. You moko suro Roko os sofo."

"No, Dod. Loston, you hovo to sond help horo forst. Tho houso wo oro on os on foro. Gofford should bo noor oloroth. o'll coll hom ond osk hom to fond tho boys," Motthow sood.

"Okoy, coll Gofford now!"

os soon os they both hung up, Corlos storted mokong phono colls, oskong hos froonds for help.

Motthow collod Gofford ond told hom whot hod hopponod. os soon os Gofford hoord that hos soster ond two nophows woro on dongor, ho loft hos work bohond ond storted tokong octoon.

Thoro vos no woy Gofford could koop thos from Vosloy, so boforo loovong, ho loft o mossogo to Vosloy's phono, oxploonong whot hod hopponod.

os soon os Vosloy sow tho mossogo, ho took tho forst floght to oloroth.

Whon Shoffoold hoord tho nows, ho vos stoll shoppng woth hos doughtor. os soon os ho got off tho phono woth Motthow, ho quockly sont Gwyn bock to tho Thompson fomoly forst, ond thon took pooplo woth hom to look for hos nophows.

Woth moro pooplo holpong thom, locotong tho boys would bo quockor ond moro offocoont. Knowong that ho ond oroco couldn't loovo tho houso for tho tomo boong, Motthow also oskod hor to onform Hormon ond Joshuo to toko pooplo to look for tho two choldron.

Moonwho, Motthow lookod around tho room for somo sharp objoets ho could uso to pry opon tho door or tho wondows.

Unfortunotoly, thoor onomy hod forosoon thos ond hod modo suro to loovo nothong of uso onsodo thot houso.

Tho smoko bollowod block ocross tho room, follong oroco's lungs os sho foll to tho floor. Tho coughong vos onstont os woro tho toors that woshod ovor hor oyos.

Theso gangsters, howovor, weren't as dumb as they soemed. They wore professionals who knew how to track tho two boys by following tho trails they left behind.

After about ten minutes, they found themselves deep inside tho forest.

At a fork in the path, Boswell grabbed Damian's hand, huffing and puffing to catch his breath. "Damian, let's split up. Remember, when the coast is clear, get back on the road and wait for me there."

Gasping for air, Damian nodded to show that he knew what the plan was.

Boswell started to worry about his brother when he sensed a hesitation in Damian's expression. "Damian, are you okay?"

Damian swallowed and answered, "Don't...worry. Just go... I can do this..."

"Well, just try to remember the rules of surviving in the wild Dad taught us!" Boswell gave his brother an assuring pat on the back. On the afternoon some time ago, Matthew didn't go to the company, but stayed at home with the four children.

As Colman mentioned some primeval forest, Matthew took the chance to teach them the survival skills in the wild. Back then, Matthew thought that he would have to coax them into listening to him, but to his surprise, the children gave him their undivided attention and listened to every instruction he gave them.

Luckily the kids were all gifted with good memory as they were able to catch all of the important information, even though Matthew only explained it to them once. Perhaps, that could explain why the four of them could speak so many words, even though they were only three years old.

Damian nodded his head with confidence. He didn't speak a word, because he had to conserve his strength.

By then, the gangsters had already caught up to them. One of them shouted, "They're over there! Hurry up!"

In a panic, Boswell pushed Damian away and shouted, "Run!"

Without wasting another second, Damian ran down the path on the right. What he didn't know was that Boswell didn't run. He stood exactly where he was and didn't move.

When the gangsters were close enough, Boswell made a face at them and taunted, "Come on, catch me if you can!" The brave boy was trying to lure their chasers away from his brother so that he could be safe.

His arrogance infuriated the gangsters even more. One of the men, rested his hands on his hips, struggling to catch his breath. "Barry...go ahead and chase that one. We'll go after this one here!"

Barry could hardly speak as he wheezed and coughed for air, but he had no choice but to run after the boy. He carried on the path where Damian disappeared.

The two brothers, now divided, ran in different paths hoping to lose the gangsters in the forest.

This unfortunate circumstance, however, was an opportunity for them to show that they were, indeed, the descendants of the Hilton family.

Meanwhile, Erica had stopped in front of a house just as the man on the phone had instructed. She pushed open the door of the car and got out with a sense of alert watchfulness.

The front door of the house was wide open and Erica could see the two bedrooms and one living room from where she was standing. As soon as she reached the door, Erica smelled something strange. She couldn't tell what it was, but it was utterly ghastly.

She shouted, "Boswell? Damian?"

There was pin-drop silence and nothing moved, almost as though the house was deserted.

Fearing that she was walking into a trap, she looked around more carefully. Suddenly, her phone started ringing. It was the same unregistered number. Erica answered immediately, "Hello?"

"Go inside the house in front of you!"

Erica looked around, but she couldn't see anyone. She wondered how the man knew where she was exactly. "Sure, I'll go inside, but where are my sons?"

"Your sons are tied up and gagged inside that house. Why don't you go and have a look!"

Erica walked into the house without hesitation.

As soon as she entered the living room, the call got disconnected. Her phone rang again. This time it was Matthew. "Where are you? I've arrived at the suburb. There are a few houses in front of me. Are you in one of them?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, someone asked me to come here," she answered.

"Well, don't do anything. I'll be right there!" he ordered.

However, Erica was too worried about their sons to wait for Matthew.

The place looked like no one had lived there for a very long time. The only occupants of the room were a few pieces of broken furniture that had gathered multiple layers of dust over the years.

Unfortunately, Erica had no idea that when she entered the house, someone sneaked up from behind her and threw a burning match at the wall just outside the house. As soon as the flame made contact with the wall doused in gasoline, it caught fire, roaring wildly as it threatened to consume the house.

Within the house the fire spread with ease, turning the once pretty first floor into a maze of flame. Black smoke billowed up and there was no alarm to sound.

Matthew stopped his car right in front of what seemed like a towering inferno. His heart sank almost instantly. His mind, occupied only by the thoughts of his wife and children, forced a scream out of his mouth. "Rika!"

Just as Matthew burst into the house valiantly, much to the surprise of the two people inside the house now, the arsonist came out and shut the iron door behind him.

Crack! The familiar sound forced Matthew to turn around and watch helplessly as someone locked him inside. It was made clear to him that he had just walked into a trap.

In spite of everything, he decided to look for Erica and the children first. After all, he had to make sure that they were safe and sound.

Erica was rummaging around in a bedroom, but she still couldn't find the boys.

"Rika!"

As soon as his voice entered her ears, Erica ran over to him and grabbed his arm. "Matthew, the boys are not here!"

Matthew held her in his arms and looked around the shabby house. It was only then that he realized that the only two windows in the house, which were originally made of wood, were both sealed with steel from the outside.

"Rika, we've fallen into their trap." Their enemy had used the children as bait to lure Erica here.

Every time, before anything bad could happen to Erica, Matthew would show up without a doubt. This time their enemy trapped them both inside a burning house, sealed off all the exits and let them burn to death.

This meant that the boys had to be in some other place.

Matthew took out his phone and dialed Carlos' number. "Dad, something bad happened, but Rika and I are together. We haven't found Boswell and Damian yet." Carlos already knew what had happened to the boys, but even though he was on the way, he was still far away as he had received the news a lot later than his son did.

Carlos' eyes darkened when he heard about the boys. "I'll bring the kids back home. You make sure Rika is safe."

"No, Dad. Listen, you have to send help here first. The house we are in is on fire. Gifford should be near Alorith. I'll call him and ask him to find the boys," Matthew said.

"Okay, call Gifford now!"

As soon as they both hung up, Carlos started making phone calls, asking his friends for help.

Matthew called Gifford and told him what had happened. As soon as Gifford heard that his sister and two nephews were in danger, he left his work behind and started taking action.

There was no way Gifford could keep this from Wesley, so before leaving, he left a message to Wesley's phone, explaining what had happened.

As soon as Wesley saw the message, he took the first flight to Alorith.

When Sheffield heard the news, he was still shopping with his daughter. As soon as he got off the phone with Matthew, he quickly sent Gwyn back to the Thompson family first, and then took people with him to look for his nephews.

With more people helping them, locating the boys would be quicker and more efficient. Knowing that he and Erica couldn't leave the house for the time being, Matthew also asked her to inform Harmon and Joshua to take people to look for the two children.

Meanwhile, Matthew looked around the room for some sharp objects he could use to pry open the door or the windows.

Unfortunately, their enemy had foreseen this and had made sure to leave nothing of use inside that house.

The smoke billowed black across the room, filling Erica's lungs as she fell to the floor. The coughing was instant as were the tears that washed over her eyes.

CHAPTER 1429 I LET SOMETHING HAPPEN TO YOU

Matthew gave it everything he had. He struck the door with mighty kicks more than a dozen times. He'd studied fight science, so he knew how to kick with maximum effect. Each of his attacks was more powerful than a car crash. But it was all to no avail. After all, the gangsters had anticipated this. The iron door was reinforced by welded steel rebar, and while he could shatter the iron lock, they had ordered a special padlock in case he tried. The modern lock had a tensile strength of more than six tons. They wanted Matthew and Erica to burn with the house.

There was no water in the house. The previous residents pumped water from the well in the yard. Even if they could get there, it took time to pump any appreciable amount of water. But because of the iron door, they couldn't even try.

The thugs were rather thorough. They didn't want to leave anything to chance. And Eric and Matthew were at their mercy.

Taking a deep breath, Matthew turned around and hugged the woman squatting on the floor, and tried to comfort her. "Don't be afraid, Rika. Dad and Owen are on their way. We'll be okay."

Leaning against his shoulder, Eric said, "I'm not afraid as long as you're with me. But the kids..."

"Don't worry about them either. They're brilliant. If anyone could survive this, it's them!" Although Matthew tried to reassure Eric that the children would be fine, in fact, he was also worried. After all, no matter how smart the children were, they were still three years old.

Matthew was never a man to sit and wait for death. He guided Eric to a relatively safe spot. Then he racked his brain for ways to escape the blazing house.

The temperature in the room was rising. It was getting hard to breathe, which made them panic. A smoky haze filled the air, obscuring their vision and stinging their eyes. Eric took off her coat, stood up and tried to smother the fire with her coat.

Before long, the material in her coat caught fire. It was devoured and quickly burnt to ashes by the hungry flames.

Soon, Eric was overcome by a coughing fit. She coughed violently and glanced at Matthew.

Even Matthew was coughing, but he fought the urge and was desperately going from one corner to the next, trying to find a way to escape.

He was also a man, not a god. He was usually good at solving all kinds of normal problems. But now he was facing an iron door and barred windows. Death loomed closer. Even though he was actively trying to find a solution, a few minutes later, he still couldn't figure it out.

Two minutes later, Eric shrank into a corner where the fire was not burning. She put her hands to her soot-covered face and gasped for breath. Matthew, on the other hand, was still studying the door and windows. She wanted to ask him to come over and hide with her, but when she raised her head, she saw a blazing beam about to fall from the ceiling.

She stared at it for two seconds and was sure that the beam was shuddering, trying to give way.

Matthew had smashed the door in the kitchen, and was using the wood, trying to put a hole in the wall. 'Oh no! If the beam falls, it'll crush Matthew!' Eric thought to herself, startled. She stood up, heedless of the danger, and sprinted towards him. "Matthew, look out!" she yelled.

But it was too late. Eric leapt at him, knocking him over. The burning beam struck her across her back. "Aaagh..."

Beng! The beam slipped from her back end fell to the floor with a loud noise.

Erice felt as if her spine was on fire. It hurt so much.

The beam was so heavy that when it struck Erice, Matthew felt it too. 'It must have been really heavy,' he thought. 'Oh God, is she...?'

Hearing the loud noise, Matthew crouched down. Then he quickly gathered the soot-covered women in his arms. "Rike, are you okay?"

Before he could see what was wrong with Erice, the women spat out a mouthful of blood. "Mmmph..."

Instantly, Matthew panicked. His thin lips trembled slightly, and his eyes were bloodshot. "Rike!" He felt that his hand on her back was wet suddenly.

He moved his hand to a different spot and looked her over carefully. Her creamy white shirt was grey from all the smoke. Her shirt was glued to her scalded skin, and he couldn't bear to look straight at her back.

"Rike!" Realizing what had happened, Matthew roared, tears falling from his eyes for probably the first time.

The injured women suddenly burst into tears as well. "Matthew, I left home for three years, hoping to become worthy of you. But apparently I hadn't gotten any smarter. I was fooled by those gangsters again, and got you killed too!" If she hadn't insisted on evening Orange, Matthew would be okay. He wouldn't be here, killed for her foolishness.

She should have taken her revenge before finding him again.

"You're not dumb. It's just that they had this all planned out. Why do you think they took the kids first? They were using our sons to get to you. You wanted to protect them, naturally." As a mother, she couldn't stay calm when she saw her children being abducted.

Even now, Matthew was still the rock he always was. Always protecting her. Erice was moved and really felt sorry for this man. "Matthew... I love you, honey..." She felt a sharp pain in her lower back and a wave of nausea shuddered through her. She didn't feel hot anymore, but instead she was freezing. "This time, I'm really going to die. Don't be sad, though, okay? Have a good life... with our kids..."

The men wiped the tears from the corner of her eye and growled at her, "Shut up! Damn it! You're not going to die. Besides, Dad would never let me hear the end of it. What do you think my family would do to me if I let something happen to you? Not to mention your family? I'd be lucky if all they did was stop inviting me around for dinner. No, you dying would suck a lot. Who would I cook for? Who would I spend money on? And could you bear to see me driven out of the family? Damn it, Erice, don't close

your eyes. You hear me?"

'Shit! Who let her rush over to save me? I'll punish whoever let her do this!' he cried inwardly.

Hearing the man's roar, Erice slowly raised her head. When she saw the grief and disbelief on his face, memories involuntarily flooded her mind.

All of his shirts were embroidered with "My Rike," the photo with "My Rike" on the back, and the note "My Rike" on the bottom of the glass jar...

He arranged a sedan chair for her, and rode the horse to their marriage ceremony. In the middle of the night, he made a bowl of seafood noodles for her, watched horror movies with her, carried her upstairs, washed and dried her hair, and did everything she asked him to do without complaint.

These memories flashed through her mind. This was how he loved her. This was how she knew he loved her.

Oh, by the way, she forgot an important detail.

Peige later told her that their wedding—from reserving the venue to the bride price, the accompanying gift, the wedding dress, even the dress she would be in when the guests raised a toast to her, the wedding candy and the wedding wine—all of it was arranged by Matthew himself. He had given her the best of everything.

In the flickering light of the fire, the men kept shouting Erice's name. It was the first time she had seen him cry.

She raised her hand with difficulty, trying to touch the man she loved the most.

Kneeling on the floor, Matthew grabbed her hand and pressed it against his cheek. His voice trembled slightly as he said, "Rike, believe me. I'm gonna get you out of here. We'll be fine!"

"Matthew, you've been the best thing in my life. If I can't have you, my life won't mean anything." She was willing to die for him, if it meant he would be safe and sound. She loved him that much.

The man was sweating and out of control. He shouted at her, "You're not going to die! You can't!" At this point, he was screaming to the gods as much as her. "I won't let that happen! You hear me? Not! Gonna! Happen!"

Matthew gave it everything he had. He struck the door with mighty kicks more than a dozen times. He'd studied fight science, so he knew how to kick with maximum effect. Each of his attacks was more powerful than a car crash. But it was all to no avail. After all, the gangsters had anticipated this. The iron door was reinforced by welded steel rebar, and while he could shatter the iron lock, they had ordered a special padlock in case he tried. The modern lock had a tensile strength of more than six tons. They

wanted Matthew and Erica to burn with the house.

There was no water in the house. The previous residents pumped water from the well in the yard. Even if they could get there, it took time to pump any appreciable amount of water. But because of the iron door, they couldn't even try.

The thugs were rather thorough. They didn't want to leave anything to chance. And Erica and Matthew were at their mercy.

Taking a deep breath, Matthew turned around and hugged the woman squatting on the floor, and tried to comfort her. "Don't be afraid, Rika. Dad and Owen are on their way. We'll be okay."

Leaning against his shoulder, Erica said, "I'm not afraid as long as you're with me. But the kids..."

"Don't worry about them either. They're brilliant. If anyone could survive this, it's them!" Although Matthew tried to reassure Erica that the children would be fine, in fact, he was also worried. After all, no matter how smart the children were, they were still three years old.

Matthew was never a man to sit and wait for death. He guided Erica to a relatively safe spot. Then he racked his brain for ways to escape the blazing house.

The temperature in the room was rising. It was getting hard to breathe, which made them panic. A smoky haze filled the air, obscuring their vision and stinging their eyes. Erica took off her coat, stood up and tried to smother the fire with her coat.

Before long, the material in her coat caught fire. It was devoured and quickly burnt to ashes by the hungry flames.

Soon, Erica was overcome by a coughing fit. She coughed violently and glanced at Matthew.

Even Matthew was coughing, but he fought the urge and was desperately going from one corner to the next, trying to find a way to escape.

He was also a man, not a god. He was usually good at solving all kinds of normal problems. But now he was facing an iron door and barred windows. Death loomed closer. Even though he was actively trying to find a solution, a few minutes later, he still couldn't figure it out.

Two minutes later, Erica shrank into a corner where the fire was not burning. She put her hands to her soot-covered face and gasped for breath. Matthew, on the other hand, was still studying the door and windows. She wanted to ask him to come over and hide with her, but when she raised her head, she saw a blazing beam about to fall from the ceiling.

She stared at it for two seconds and was sure that the beam was shuddering, trying to give way.

Matthew had smashed a door in the kitchen, and was using the wood, trying to put a hole in the wall. 'Oh no! If the beam falls, it'll crush Matthew!' Erica thought to herself, startled. She stood up, heedless of the danger, and sprinted towards him. "Matthew, look out!" she yelled.

But it was too late. Erica leapt at him, knocking him over. The burning beam struck her across her back. "Aaargh..."

Bang! The beam slipped from her back and fell to the floor with a loud noise.

Erica felt as if her spine was on fire. It hurt so much.

The beam was so heavy that when it struck Erica, Matthew felt it too. 'It must have been really heavy, ' he thought. 'Oh God, is she...?'

Hearing the loud noise, Matthew crouched down. Then he quickly gathered the soot-covered woman in his arms. "Rika, are you okay?"

Before he could see what was wrong with Erica, the woman spat out a mouthful of blood. "Mmmph..."

Instantly, Matthew panicked. His thin lips trembled slightly, and his eyes were bloodshot. "Rika!" He felt that his hand on her back was wet suddenly.

He moved his hand to a different spot and looked her over carefully. Her creamy white shirt was grey from all the smoke. Her shirt was glued to her scalded skin, and he couldn't bear to look straight at her back.

"Rika!" Realizing what had happened, Matthew roared, tears falling from his eyes for probably the first time.

The injured woman suddenly burst into tears as well. "Matthew, I left home for three years, hoping to become worthy of you. But apparently I hadn't gotten any smarter. I was fooled by those gangsters again, and got you killed too!" If she hadn't insisted on avenging Orange, Matthew would be okay. He wouldn't be here, killed for her foolishness.

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Even now, Matthew was still the rock he always was. Always protecting her. Erica was moved and really felt sorry for this man. "Matthew... I love you, honey..." She felt a sharp pain in her lower back and a wave of nausea shuddered through her. She didn't feel hot anymore, but instead she was freezing. "This time, I'm really going to die. Don't be sad, though, okay? Have a good life... with our kids..."

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'Shit! Who let her rush over to save me? I'll punish whoever let her do this!' he cried inwardly.

Hearing the man's roar, Erica slowly raised her head. When she saw the grief and disbelief on his face, memories involuntarily flooded her mind.

All of his shirts were embroidered with "My Rika," the photo with "My Rika" on the back, and the note "My Rika" on the bottom of the glass jar...

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Paige later told her that their wedding—from reserving the venue to the bride price, the accompanying gift, the wedding dress, even the dress she would be in when the guests raised a toast to her, the wedding candy and the wedding wine—all of it was arranged by Matthew himself. He had given her the best of everything.

In the flickering light of the fire, the man kept shouting Erica's name. It was the first time she had seen him cry.

She raised her hand with difficulty, trying to touch the man she loved the most.

Kneeling on the floor, Matthew grabbed her hand and pressed it against his cheek. His voice trembled slightly as he said, "Rika, believe me. I'm gonna get you out of here. We'll be fine!"

"Matthew, you've been the best thing in my life. If I can't have you, my life won't mean anything." She was willing to die for him, if it meant he would be safe and sound. She loved him that much.

The man was sweating and out of control. He shouted at her, "You're not going to die! You can't!" At this point, he was screaming to the gods as much as her. "I won't let that happen! You hear me? Not!

Gonna! Happen!"

CHAPTER 1430 A SIMILAR DISASTER

Erica said with a forced smile, "Matthew, promise me that you will marry the beautiful and gentle eldest princess of some rich family instead of the naughty youngest one that always causes trouble..." She remembered her father himself once calling her his naughty little princess.

"In my eyes, there is no distinction between the eldest and the youngest princesses. Rika, you're the only princess in my heart," Matthew told her affectionately. No matter how naughty she was, he didn't mind. His wealth, spirit, and body could withstand any torture she might inflict on him.

With some difficulty, she forced another smile. 'Did I get burned in the back? It hurts!' she thought to herself. "Matthew, I once said I would love you in my own way. In this life, I only love you. You're my heaven and my destiny." And she would love him in her next life as well.

A long time ago, her mother told her and her sister what happened the year that Gifford was born. Back then, Blair had run into a group of gangsters, who had tried to kill Wesley at the gate of their house. Blair, who had been pregnant with Gifford, had got seriously injured in order to save Wesley. With her body bleeding and spitting blood out of her mouth, she didn't think she was going to survive at the time.

Many years later, it was Erica's turn to save her beloved from the fire and get seriously injured in the process as well.

Now, her whole body ached due to the burning beam that had hit her. She wanted to keep talking but spat out blood instead.

Ironically, fate had brought mother and daughter face to face with similar disasters.

In Blair's case, she had been in a coma in the hospital for a long time before she woke up.

But what about Erica? If she closed her eyes now, would she ever wake up to see Matthew and the kids again?

Gritting his teeth, Matthew tried to calm himself down and asked, "Rika, don't you want to hear me say that I love you? So, don't close your eyes. Hold on. When you recover, I'll tell you that I love you every day. Rika, I love you very much..."

At that instant, the sound of someone kicking the iron door came from outside, but Matthew didn't seem to hear it. Instead, he continued to confess his love to his girl, "You're my heart, my lungs... If it weren't for you, every organ in my body would collapse. How could I breathe again without my lungs? Do you have the heart to let me die with you like this?"

Blood kept flowing down from the corner of Erica's mouth. However, she managed to shake her head.

She couldn't let Matthew die. There were still too many things he could do in his life. Unlike her, a useless person who could only eat, drink, and cause trouble; Matthew had a lot to accomplish.

"So, listen to me from now on! Don't close your eyes. I'll take you out of this place. The kids are waiting for us, okay?" Matthew had a hopeful look in his eyes.

Erica was too weak to nod, so she blinked slowly in response.

"Don't close your eyes. Listen, someone is coming to save us!" Matthew said hurriedly.

With his face flushed by the fire, beads of sweat kept falling from his face.

"Matthew! Rika!" It was Carlos' voice coming from the other side of the door.

Then another car screeched to a halt. It was Owen with his men. "Matthew!" He approached the door and shouted once again, "Matthew! Erica!"

Matthew had to swallow to moisten his throat before answering, "We're here! You guys need to find a way to break the door. Hurry up!" Although Matthew's lips were getting dryer and dryer, he didn't seem to notice it. From beginning to end, his whole focus was on holding Erica's hand tightly in his.

Just then, Carlos' roar came from outside. "Get away from the door!"

The fire department wasn't near enough, and there was no water around them either. The temperature on the iron door was sizzling hot and couldn't simply be broken open by the people.

Looking forward to getting out, Matthew quickly put Erica in a flat position on the floor and barked an order, "Drive! Hit the door with the car!"

Carlos was ready to drive the car himself, but one bodyguard stopped him. "Carlos, let me do this."

Looking at him, Carlos said decisively, "I'll save my son and daughter-in-law myself."

He had given his son too little in his life. The least he could do was save them himself so he wouldn't feel so guilty.

The bodyguard tipped the others with a wink, and three of them immediately pulled Carlos away from the vehicle, restricting him.

Not wasting any time, the bodyguard quickly got into the car and speeded up towards the door.

Bang! It was a success!

As half of the house collapsed, Matthew hid himself in the corner with Erica in his arms at a safe

distance from the door. When the bricks fell down with the impact, he turned over and protected the woman with his body.

Despite getting hit by the burning bricks, he didn't seem to feel any pain on his back as he told the sleepy woman in surprise, "Rika, wake up! We're saved!"

Weakly, she opened her eyes to look at him. With her lips parted, she whispered a few words before closing her eyes again. Yet Matthew didn't get anything she said.

In fact, she just told him she couldn't hold on any longer.

"Rika!" Matthew's voice exploded in her ears, but she couldn't hear anything.

Carrying her out of the house in his arms, Matthew put her in a car, which was intact, and drove her to the hospital as fast as he could.

Soon, a loud explosion sound came from behind them. Matthew didn't look back to check it out, but it was just the car used to hit the door that had exploded.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the forest, Damian kept running until he realized he would only get more and more exhausted with time. Therefore, he slowed down his pace to think of a way out of the situation.

Looking back to see if Barry was near, he realized he must be exhausted too. From that moment on, he walked onward as he paid more attention to his surroundings.

Unexpectedly, he found a large half meter deep hole and came up with an idea.

Pulling a branch from the side, he picked up a few larger leaves and did his best to cover up the hole. If one weren't looking carefully where he stepped, he wouldn't be able to see anything.

Before Barry came over, the boy jumped to the other side of the hole and bent down, pressing his hands on his knees. As he gasped for air, he waited for Barry to get close.

Barry had sweat running down his forehead once he noticed the boy had stopped. He took the opportunity to lean against a tree and regain his breath as well. "Son of a bitch, I finally caught up with you..."

Damian took a few steps back and pretended to reason with him. "Stop chasing me. Please let me go. My father is rich. I'll tell him to give you money. How about that?"

"No. If I let you go now, I'll be killed when I head back. The money will be of no use to me if I'm dead." Barry took a few steps forward, his legs visibly weak.

Suddenly, Damian turned around and ran away. Barry reacted immediately and picked up his pace to go after the boy.

But to his surprise, after a step or two, he stumbled and fell into the hole. "Ahhhh!" He screamed in pain. He had almost broken his leg with the fall.

When Damian heard Barry's cry, he knew that he had fallen into his trap. Looking back, he laughed at him and provoked, "Come and catch me!"

Barry struggled to pull his right leg out of the hole, but before he could stand up, a sharp pain came over his ankle.

It was sprained.