

TMBA 1151

[Chapter 1151 The Night Elf](#)

"Move, how?" Matthew asked.

"Move the recliner closer to me!" Erica said, gesturing expressively. Suddenly, she shrieked and leapt in the air as if a firecracker had gone off. "Ahhhhhhh, it's the Kuman Thong!"

Matthew stared at her with wide-eyed wonder and said, "If you're so afraid of these things, why do you even want to watch horror movies?" 'Women are such strange creatures,' he thought.

"I'm not afraid. I've watched many horror movies before," she argued. Erica was only frightened because the surround sound system in Matthew's home theater was so rich and resonant that she was fooled into a sense of realism.

"Do you know the legend of Kuman Thong?" he asked in a graceful manner, sitting with his legs crossed.

"Of course I do. Do you know the legend of Kuman Thong? I can explain it to you if you want?" she smirked.

"Don't bother. I know enough. Just carry on with the movie as if I wasn't here," he suggested.

'As if he wasn't here?' she mused, feeling ridiculed. How could she possibly manage that? First of all, the powerful aura he gave off was impossible to ignore. Secondly, she wouldn't be watching this movie in this room in the first place if someone wasn't sitting next to her.

Since Matthew had refused to move closer to her, she stood up on the recliner and stretched out her arms to the man. "I want to sit closer. Carry me over to you!"

Matthew heaved a deep sigh, feeling defeated. With his dark eyes staring at the girl and with the help of the light from the screen, Matthew could notice the grievance on her face.

Still, he said in a cold and stiff tone, "Stay where you are!"

Erica couldn't believe her ears. 'People always say that bossy men like Matthew could be persuaded by reason but not be cowed by force. But he just turned me down without a reason. Was it because I suck at playing cute or that trick just doesn't work on him?'

His response stung Erica's heart for a while, but she wasn't going to give up. "If you don't carry me over to your side, I'm going to call your dad," she threatened.

"That trick again?"

"I'll tell him that you would rather embrace another woman than your wife..." And then she watched with amusement as Matthew, who looked solemn, got up from his seat and walked towards her.

With hints of reluctance, he scooped her into his warm arms and said, "Don't do this again."

"Okay!" she promised readily.

When they sat down, she found a comfortable position in his arms.

HMM... Erica found a sense of security
opened her eyes open.

She looked around the spacious room, puzzled and somewhat dazed. After a while, she took out her phone and texted Matthew on WeChat. "Why am I in bed?"

"You're asking me?" he replied.

Erica squeezed the toothpaste tube from the top and brushed her teeth, while she tapped on the phone screen with one finger. "Who else should I be asking?"

Two minutes later, he replied, "You must have climbed into bed yourself. How else?"

Erica tried to recall the events from the night before. Why couldn't she remember how she got from the recliner to her bed?

After a rather short breakfast, Erica hurried outside as Hyatt was waiting for her at the school gate. He stood there with a camera hanging around his neck, equipped with a lens he would specifically use for photographing people.

Erica was just as prepared as Hyatt. She asked the chauffeur to drop her off at the school gate so she could walk inside with Hyatt with her camera.

"Erica, are you going to the live-action photographing event today?" Hyatt asked.

"Yes, of course!" It sounded like a fantastic event to learn and have fun in with fellow photography enthusiasts. There was no way Erica would pass on such an opportunity!

"But I heard that Aaron would be visiting ZL Group today. I think his schedule in Y City will conflict with our photography event. What should we do?"

It was a little known fact that Erica had many idols, but Aaron, in comparison to the others, was like a demigod to her. Everyone knew that about Erica.

"What? He is going to ZL Group?" "Wait a minute! Isn't that my husband's company?" Erica cooked up a plan in her head and made a decision.

[Chapter 1152 Illegitimate Child](#)

"Of course I'll choose to go meet my idol Aaron! It's such a rare opportunity!" Erica said excitedly. Then, she continued in a softer tone, "There will be a lot of other activities for live-action shooting in the future, so it doesn't matter if I miss this one. Anyway, is the news you got reliable? Why didn't I hear about it?"

"Now that you mention it, I'm not sure. Someone said that in a group chat on WeChat," Hyatt replied with uncertainty.

"I see. Anyway, please help me check when Aaron will arrive at ZL Group."

"Sure." Hyatt took out his phone and browsed his chat log. "It says he'll be there from 3 to 5 p.m."

"Got it!"

Just then, Erica noticed a familiar figure walking toward them.

She was still hesitating over whether to say hello when that person noticed her as well.

Their eyes met. 'Although she was cold to me last time, we used to be on good terms. I should go greet her anyway,' Erica thought. Then, she took a step forward and spoke first. "Hi, Phoebe!"

Phoebe looked at her just as indifferently as last time. "Ms. Li, please don't be so informal with me from now on. We're not that close."

Erica nodded hesitantly. "Okay, I just want to ask if I did anything to offend you."

"You are a good actress, aren't you?" Phoebe sneered.

Feeling even more confused than before, Erica asked, "Why do you say that?" It had been a long time since they had seen each other, and either way, she had never lied to Phoebe or caused her any trouble. She had no idea why Phoebe's attitude toward her had changed all of a sudden.

"You can continue to pretend. Someday, I will tell everyone what you did! Then the whole world will know what kind of person you actually are!"

Erica could clearly see a touch of loathing in Phoebe's eyes.

Beginning to get annoyed by the latter's vague words, she asked, "You say I'm pretending, but can you tell me what exactly I've done? Why am I a good actress?"

Phoebe bit her lip and said, "Well, let me ask you, what happened to my younger sister?"

At the mention of Tessie, Erica fell into silence. She had promised Tessie that she would never tell her family anything.

However, mistaking her silence for guilt, Phoebe said, "I feel sorry for Matthew for having you as his wife! He is such an excellent man, but why did he marry a bad woman like you?"

For Erica, that was the last straw. "

ok me for another woman. I said Paige's name and he didn't stop. But then when I said Phoebe's name, he immediately stopped his advances." As she narrated the incident, Erica suddenly remembered how Matthew had called her "honey" at that time. His sweet voice had melted her heart then.

"If that's the case, then... Well, it is too much of a coincidence." 'The woman in Rika's husband's heart is the elder sister of Rika's best friend? That's really too dramatic!' Rhea sighed inwardly.

"But as you said, I don't have any evidence, so I can't be sure. Forget it! The point is, Phoebe was very rude to me today! She even called Ethan an illegitimate child! She'll definitely regret this one day."

"Exactly! By the way, where's Hyatt? Is he with you now?" Rhea asked.

Erica glanced at the man walking next to her with his head down. "Yes."

"Put him on the phone!"

"Rhea wants to talk to you," Erica said to Hyatt before handing him the phone.

Hyatt smiled as he put the phone up to his ear. "Hi, Rhea."

"Hi, good boy. Remember to take good care of Rika in Y City. If she gets bullied by anyone, I will get even with you!"

"Yes, got it!"

"Good. Go to class now. Call me when you come back to A Country one day. I'll buy you a cup of U Loveit." It was no secret that this was Hyatt's favorite brand of milk tea.

He scratched the back of his head shyly and said, "Thanks. But Erica already bought me a cup last time."

"That's her treat. It has nothing to do with me. As long as you take good care of Erica, I will treat you myself someday!"

"Okay then."

[Chapter 1153 I Have Liked Him For Four Years](#)

Hyatt hung up the phone and gave it back to Erica. "So are you going to meet Aaron this afternoon?" He was worried that Phoebe's hostile attitude might have affected Erica's temper and so she might have not been in a mood to see her idol anymore.

"Yes, of course!" she answered. Erica didn't let Phoebe's behavior sour her mood as she didn't have to be unhappy for someone unimportant.

However, there was one question that was haunting her thoughts. She wondered if Phoebe was the woman Matthew loved.

Alas! She decided to set her worries aside as it had nothing to do with her. She just wanted to put on a good performance in front of Wesley, hoping to catch him in a good mood one day so he would allow her to divorce Matthew.

However, when she thought of the noodles Matthew had cooked for her last night, her heart ached again and she felt hints of hesitation within herself.

She wanted to divorce the man, but she didn't want to give up his exemplary noodles cooking skills. What a dilemma to be in!

At half past two, Erica took a taxi to ZL Group along with Hyatt. When they got out of the taxi, they saw people crowding in front of the office building. They were mostly fans, who were holding placards with Aaron Gao's name written on them.

In fact, even the security guards standing at the gate had their plates full, as they struggled to keep the crowd in order. None of them recognized Erica as they had just been employed very recently.

Fortunately, Erica spotted Matthew's assistant, Owen Jian, and with his help, she was able to enter ZL Group.

On the floor of the CEO's office, Hyatt was led to the reception room by Owen while Erica entered Matthew's office alone.

Matthew seemed busy, assigning work to Paige. Upon noticing Erica's sudden appearance, Paige greeted her politely.

Erica felt embarrassed as she didn't expect to interrupt them and said, "Please don't let me keep you from your work. I'm in no rush!"

Soon after, Paige left the office.

Matthew cast a glance at the girl who was standing in front of the French window. "If my memory serves me right, didn't you have something important at school this afternoon," he said.

"Yes! But..." Erica strode towards him with excitement and bent over his desk to look him in the eye. With a hint of fawning adoration, she said, "Matthew, I need to ask you a favor!"

He raised his eyebrows and sai

girl into his arms. "People will make irresponsible remarks behind my back if they see you with the other fans. The only way to save myself from embarrassment is to get you a private meeting, but that will depend solely on your sincerity!"

"Sincerity?" "The same trick again?"

I think he wants me to kiss him again. That won't be a problem for me!' Without hesitation, Erica wrapped her hands around the man's neck and planted two kisses on his lips.

In a sweet and obedient voice, she said, "Mr. Huo, are you satisfied with this service?"

Her seductive smile triggered his desires. "Nope! Not yet satisfied!"

Immediately, the smile on her face vanished. Glaring at him angrily, she said, "I know what you want. You are just trying to make things difficult for me, aren't you?"

Matthew was impressed by how fast her facial expressions changed. He raised her chin with his hand and said, "Let me teach you. Remember, if you need my help next time, do this to express your sincerity."

Just as he finished speaking, he lowered his head and pulled her face into a fiery kiss.

One that lasted for at least five minutes! He finally let her go before she suffocated to death.

Leaning against the man's chest, she gasped for air. "No, no, I don't think I can do that again. I'll die..."

"You can't?" The man's magnetic voice reverberated in her head.

Thinking of her idol, Erica gritted her teeth and agreed reluctantly. "I can! Matthew, I will do anything you want!" However, she kept her real thoughts to herself. 'Damn you! I'm not going to let you push me around this like!'

[Chapter 1154 Meeting Her Idol](#)

Matthew had no intentions of exposing her lie. He stroked her red lips softly with his thumb and said nonchalantly, "I know hundreds of people and they are willing to do whatever I command. You don't need to bother yourself with my burden. Just show your sincerity if you ask me for a favor next time."

A moment ago, because of his action, Erica had sat down on his lap. And now, she suddenly felt that there was something hard underneath her making her current stance uncomfortable. However, as a simple woman, she decided not to pay much attention to it.

She turned and resettled to avoid that hard thing and earnestly asked, "Okay! Then, when will you arrange my meeting with my idol?"

"Soon as I can. For now, my work is very important. Sit there and wait!" Matthew replied as he tried to constrain himself. He couldn't focus on his work with her around.

"Sure, sure! Your work is more important! Thank you very much!" Before standing up, she also blandly helped him tidy up his collars.

While she was just about to walk away from his desk, Erica turned around again and asked, "Can I let Hyatt in first? I'm afraid he is going to feel alone if left in the reception room all by himself."

For some reason, the question made Matthew frown. Not only was Erica asking to see a man she had admired for four years, but had also arrived at the company with yet another man. Was he being too nice to her? He cast a cold glance at her and said, "Let him stay there."

'Is he angry? For what?

Didn't we settle everything a moment ago?' she wondered.

But she didn't dare ask him about it. She plumped down on the sofa, took out her phone and sent a message to Hyatt. "I'm waiting for Matthew to get free; wait there. Rest assured, though. I'm sure we'll get to meet Aaron!"

Within moments, the response to her message popped up. "Alright. Talk to Mr. Huo nicely and don't lose your temper."

'I lose my temper easily?' Truth be told, she did have a short temper, but she had seemingly found someone whose temper was even shorter: Matthew! "Okay."

Waiting and bored out of her wits, just as Erica was about to doze off on the sofa, Matthew called the assistant in.

Paige walked into the office. "Yes, Mr. Huo!"

Matthew cast a sideways glance at Erica, who was groggily trying to stay up on the sofa. "Take my wish in A Country the day you were born. It has since been kept in the National Museum for display."

Matthew's words embarrassed her so much that Erica lowered her head and covered her face with her hand. However, her ears pricked when she heard Aaron greet her husband.

"Hello, Mr. Huo. I'm Aaron Gao." The superstar stretched out a warm hand at the CEO.

With a stiff look at the fair and strong hand in front of him, Matthew merely nodded at the young superstar as a greeting. However, he didn't shake hands.

Aaron awkwardly looked at the other two people from the corner of his eye. It looked like no one had noticed this rejection. He felt relieved, withdrew his hand hurriedly, and went back to his seat.

When Hyatt saw Matthew, he became very nervous and shot up to his feet instantly. Under the CEO's cold gaze, he greeted in a timid voice, "Hello, Mr. Huo."

Matthew took the seat next to Erica, and cast a glance at the boy who was flushed with nervousness. "Hyatt Li?"

"Yes, yes, that's me." To Hyatt's surprise, Matthew was aware of his name. This made him as excited as Erica had been when she had met Aaron just now.

With an embarrassed but polite smile, Erica raised her head and whispered to her husband, "What are you doing here?" She had just been joking with Aaron when he had walked in.

Casting a glance at her, Matthew answered, "I'm here to see what you two were talking about."

"Nothing. We were just joking." As Erica was speaking, she rested her chin on her hand, and her gaze turned towards her idol once again.

[Chapter 1155 Watch Your Attitude](#)

Aaron put on a bright smile and confirmed, "Yes, Erica was just joking with me. Even though she is two years my senior, she is still very cute and adorable."

'Erica? From total strangers to first name basis in just a few minutes? Just what is going on?' Matthew sulked inwardly.

He deliberately slid his long arm on the back of Erica's chair. From the front, it looked like he was holding her, but his hand was merely resting on the chair. Then, with a soft look at Erica, he replied, "You're right. She is quite cute and adorable. That's one of the reasons she's my wife."

'What?' Erica was confused at this sudden declaration. She turned her eyes towards Matthew, who was now sitting very close to her. 'Is he deliberately showing off?' she wondered.

Aaron also realized that the CEO was declaring his marriage with Erica in an imperious manner. It was clear that the man had felt angry about them getting so close so soon. He immediately echoed, "Mr. and Mrs. Huo, you are such a perfect match for each other. I can see you love each other so much. I'm so envious of your relation."

'Love each other very much?' It made Erica feel guilty and embarrassed. "Well...thank you. Aaron, you..."

Right at that moment, there was a knock on the door. Ms. Wang walked in and, after greeting Matthew politely, reminded Aaron that it was time for him to leave.

Erica was disappointed that her idol was leaving so soon. She asked with a blush, "Aaron, can I hug you?"

Aaron looked at the expressionless man sitting next to her from the corner of his eye. "Sure," he nodded hesitatingly.

Erica stood up happily and was about to run towards him who had stretched out one of his arms.

However, a powerful hand grabbed her waist and she was soon pulled out of the meeting room before she could understand just what the hell was going on.

When Erica finally came back to her senses, they had already entered the elevator.

Matthew didn't let go of her until they had reached his office.

In there, she was thrown on the sofa rudely. Her head hit the armrest. Luckily, the sofa was very soft, so it didn't hurt much.

But she was still infuriated by his inhumane behavior and darkened face. "What's wrong with you? Why did you push me?"

To her surprise, Matthew didn't apologize. Instead, he responded in a harsh roared.

"Dad, mom! I'm back! Hey Ethan!" Erica greeted them with a smile.

With the little boy in her arms, Blair stared at the man standing beside her daughter. Not because the man was so handsome that she couldn't take her eyes off him, but because... he was obviously a foreigner!

After a long time, Blair came back to her senses and asked, "Who is...?"

Hearing that, Erica lowered her head and pretended to be shy. "Dad, Mom, I have decided to divorce Matthew Huo. This is your new son-in-law. His name is... Wait, Dad, why are you holding a feather duster? Let's talk!"

The events that had transpired the previous day made Erica feel furious. The more she thought about what had happened, the angrier she felt. When Matthew had come back to the villa in the evening, they hadn't talked to each other. Therefore, she had decided to go back to her parents' house early in the morning.

And to show her determination of leaving Matthew, she had even hired a foreigner to pretend to be her new boyfriend.

At first instinct, Wesley had looked around to find a feather duster. Now, he was raising the duster and running towards the girl.

Erica ran immediately. "Dad! Can you hear me? Matthew doesn't love me and even got mad at me... It's true, Dad! Ouch! Dad, you hit me. It hurts..." The girl made a crying face as she rubbed the spot where the feather duster had landed.

Shocked, the foreigner stood still. All he could do was look in shock at Wesley chasing Erica.

Ethan thought the duo were playing and burst into laughter.

[Chapter 1156 Yvettes Boyfriends Visit](#)

Wesley chased Erica around the living room. She begged, "Dad, please stop chasing me. Please!"

This was a day in the life of Erica—being her father's smelly socks.

A few minutes later when Erica realized that she had nowhere else to go, she opened the gate and ran out of the house.

Wesley ran after her and didn't stop until she was out of sight. He took the feather duster and walked towards the foreigner. When Wesley waved the duster in front of him, the young man immediately raised his hands, gesturing surrender and said, "I'm sorry! I'm very sorry!" Then he disappeared from the Li family's living room as fast as he could.

That evening, Erica sat at the main gate of the Li house, cupping her chin, and lazily shouted, "Dad, let me in! Mom let me in! I'm going to die out here if you don't let me in!"

A moment later, the gate squeaked open and revealed Wesley standing in the doorway.

"Dad!" Erica jumped to her feet and looked at her father expectantly.

What her father said next was just the words she had been hoping to hear. "Come in," he said.

"Really?" A sudden burst of happiness made her feel ecstatic.

"Yes," he confirmed.

She ran towards her father and hugged him tightly. "Dad, I knew you still love me."

Wesley tried his best to suppress his giggle and said, "Just get inside. Your mom's waiting for you in the dining room with pork ribs. Your sister will be back soon."

"Boohoo..." Erica hugged him harder and burst into tears, wailing like a spoiled child. "Dad, even if I'm a pair of stinky socks, I'm your stinky socks. You can't just throw me out."

Wesley sighed and pulled Erica away from him. "Don't be so dramatic. Go inside and have dinner. Then, go straight to bed. I don't want you staying up late!"

"Why not?"

"I'm taking you back to Y City tomorrow!"

Erica's eyebrows shot up in bewilderment and she immediately pleaded, "Dad, no!"

See? She knew she was just a pair of unloved, smelly socks to him!

Erica walked into the dining room and picked up Ethan from the baby chair. She kissed him so many times that the baby's cheeks started showing a tinge of pink. Blair didn't want her daughter disturbing the baby, so she pushed Erica into the bathroom.

Fortunately, Erica had come back at a good time because Yvette was supposed to bring her boyfriend home to talk about the engagement with her

n you still be so attached to your mother? If you need to hug someone, call Matthew and ask him to keep you company. Don't come to my wife!"

Still, Erica managed to squeeze into the room. She held Wesley's arm and pleaded, "Dad, I love you the most. Considering the fact that I married Matthew for you and moved to Y City with him, you should sleep on the couch tonight. Please! You're the greatest dad in the world!"

Wesley squinted his eyes at her and said, "Why don't you sleep on the sofa?"

"Dearest father, do you have the heart to let your sweet daughter sleep on the couch?"

"Of course I do."

Erica pouted her lips and feigned anger. "Dad, if you keep acting like this, I'll get angry with you."

Wesley snorted, "You're getting more and more stubborn. Matthew must have been spoiling you too much."

Erica muttered, "He doesn't spoil me. He always makes me angry!"

As soon as Blair made the bed, Yvette slipped into the bed and said, "Rika, if you keep talking to Dad, there won't be any space for you in bed here."

Erica ran past Wesley who was blocking her way, climbed into the bed and lay down next to Yvette.

Yvette quickly covered her with the quilt while Erica put Ethan in bed as well.

Blair shook her head with amusement and looked at Wesley with a smile on her face. "If you don't want to sleep on the couch, go and sleep in Gifford's room."

Wesley snorted and left the room angrily.

In less than two minutes, Wesley walked back in the room with a quilt and a pillow in his hands while Blair and his daughters giggled at his misery.

[Chapter 1157 Heading Home](#)

The evening hours passed by, slow and subdued. At eleven o'clock, Ethan finally fell asleep.

Erica carefully tucked him into his crib.

Pausing, she looked at his smooth and round face. He seemed so peaceful and innocent that she couldn't help but give him a little pinch on the cheek.

"You'll have to soothe him if you wake him up," warned Blair softly.

Only then did Erica leave the baby alone and go back to the bed. Her mother gave her some of the quilt, and she made herself comfortable.

She yawned into her palm, then said, "Mom, I want to take Ethan to Y City for a few days so that you and Dad can have some time to relax."

"I don't think that's a good idea," answered Blair. "You have classes to attend to, and Matthew is a busy man. I'm sure the two of you have your hands full already without a baby to look after. Besides, we have servants to help take care of Ethan. We don't need to relax."

"I'm not that busy with classes," urged Erica. "I can take care of him for two or three days."

Wesley, who was lying on the couch and staring up at the ceiling, injected himself into the conversation. "Your mother is right. Your priority right now should be to study hard and to build a good relationship with Matthew. If Ethan stays with you, you two will have conflict because of him."

"Dad, Matthew is not that petty," protested Erica. "Trust me. It's only three days. Nothing will happen!"

At last, pestered by Erica's various arguments, Blair was swayed. She agreed that Ethan could go with Erica when she left the next day.

The minutes ticked by. Ethan was already sound asleep, and soon Blair was as well. Experimentally, Erica called to her father. When Wesley didn't answer, she thought that he was asleep as well.

But her sister was still awake. The two hid under the quilt and whispered to one another. "Is Matthew being good to you?" Yvette asked.

"Well, sort of," Erica answered. Realizing how she sounded, she added, "I mean, he's great. He just has a bad temper."

"Well, if he treats you well, stop fighting with him," Yvette said earnestly. "Go back to Y City tomorrow and just live a happy life with him, okay?"

Erica sighed. "I don't think it will be that simple. After all, he doesn't really love me, and I don't love him. A marriage without love will never be happy."

"Then what's your plan? Do you still want to divorce him?"

"Hush!" Erica hissed immediately. Even though they'd been whispering, she still feared that their father might hear them. Sure enough, Wesley, whom they had thought to be asleep, broke the silence. "If you dare to divorce Matthew, I'll skin you alive!" he threatened.

"Dad! You were eavesdropping on us!" Erica complained, outraged.

"You two

me on out of the car! We don't have all day!"

Slowly, with obvious reluctance, Erica emerged from the car and handed the sleeping Ethan to her father.

Wesley indicated Matthew and in a serious tone said, "Rika, you need to apologize to your husband."

"Why should I apologize to him..." Erica's voice was low, as if she were talking to herself just as much as to Wesley.

"No, Dad," Matthew broke in. "I'm the one who should apologize." Then he looked at Erica, his tone gentle. "I'm sorry, Erica. This is all my fault. I apologize to you in front of Father."

Erica stared at him, taken aback. 'His tone is suddenly so soft. What is he up to?' she thought. 'I must be careful not to fall into his trap.'

Wesley was very satisfied with his son-in-law. "All right, Erica," he said. "Since Matthew has apologized, you'd better behave yourself now, okay?"

Erica paused, but in the end she could think of nothing to say or do but give in. "Okay," she said at last.

With that, the three of them went into the villa together. At first, Erica had planned to carry Ethan upstairs and put him to sleep in the bedroom. However, Matthew took Ethan from her arms with a smoothness that caught her off-guard. "Here, let me help you," he said.

Then, under Wesley's approving gaze, he took Ethan upstairs, holding the baby as naturally as if he were his own.

Laden with luggage, Wesley cast a burning glance at Erica before following his son-in-law upstairs.

Erica stood still for a long moment, stewing in her confusion and frustration. She could not fathom her father's disapproval toward her, or his incredible admiration for her husband.

After a long time, she reluctantly followed them.

On the third floor, she found Wesley situating her luggage in the bedroom, and Matthew already putting Ethan to bed.

[Chapter 1158 She Just Made That Up](#)

Wesley went to the bathroom, leaving the couple and the baby in the room.

Matthew walked up to Erica and said, "You're still a kid, running home every time you throw a tantrum."

"What did I do this time?"

"Nothing. I said I was the one in the wrong."

Erica looked at him suspiciously. "You almost never apologize. I'm surprised. How can I be sure you're not trying to trick me?"

"Really? You think I'd do that?"

"Not really. But as I said. You never say anything's your fault. So I have to think you're up to something."

Just then, Wesley came out of the bathroom.

He happened to hear Erica telling Matthew, "My dad told me to stay away from a guy if I don't love him. What you did—"

Hearing that, Wesley quickened his pace and cleared his throat. "Matthew, I never said that. She just made that up!"

Erica was too frustrated to fire back. Wesley was always on her case about something. And he never took her side.

Matthew was amused as he watched Erica lower her head to avoid eye contact.

Wesley returned home that same day. He told Erica that he would be by to pick up Ethan three days later.

Before dusk, two or three more servants reported for work in the villa. Later that day, Erica discovered they were all hired by Matthew to take care of Ethan.

At dinner, Erica tried her best to be a mother. Since she brought Ethan back home, she had never taken care of him. Blair did all the work for her. So at dinner, Erica dismissed the housemaid and tried to feed the baby herself. They had just started him on solid food, so he had iron-fortified baby cereal mixed with formula to thin it out.

But after feeding the baby a few bites, she got lost. She didn't even have time to clean the food dropped on the baby's bib. Ethan wasn't able to control the food spooned into his mouth yet.

He was a good boy, too. He didn't cry, but waited quietly when he had no food to eat.

At last, the servant couldn't stand it anymore and offered, "Mrs. Huo, please let me do it! I brought up two kids, and have been through this before."

Sweat dripping from her forehead, Erica nodded and said, "Okay. Thank you!"

"My dear lady, you are welcome!"

The maid sat where Erica had, and began to offer Ethan spoonfuls of baby food. She was a natural at it. Seeing that, Erica breathed

down..."

"Where? Have you nailed down a time yet?"

"Like an hour from now. I don't really know where to meet, though. Any ideas?" Erica raised her head to look at him.

Matthew didn't know about Ethan's true identity. He was taken aback by her question. She was going to meet her old lover and asking him to choose a spot for them to do that? "You think I'm a fool, Erica?"

"What?" Erica wondered where that came from.

"Nothing." He looked at Erica and thought for a bit. Then he began to set a trap for her. "Aren't you afraid that he'll take your son away?"

"Yeah, why didn't I think of that? What if he pushes me over and runs off with Ethan?" Erica's face twisted in anger as she thought about it.

"I'm off work tonight," Matthew announced. He was waiting, waiting for her to ask him for help.

"Okay. When did that happen? You're always working and never come back till late," she said.

"I got done early today."

Erica hesitated and reminded him, "Remember what you said to me?"

"I said a lot of things. What are you talking about?"

Erica said blushing, "You said you'd protect me and Ethan."

"Yeah, I remember."

"How about you go with me? You can meet Tam." Erica figured no matter how powerful Tam was, he wouldn't mess with Matthew. Besides, Matthew was a black belt. He was the best person to protect her and Ethan.

But Matthew wasn't done playing. He got what he wanted, but he still needed to hammer it home. He cast her a scornful glance and said, "What do you think I am? Your bodyguard?"

CHAPTER 1159 ETHAN'S BIOLOGICAL FATHER

"Of course not. Are you or aren't you my hubby? Aren't you the least bit curious who the father is? This isn't weird."

'Am I hearing things? She wants me to go with her to meet her lover, and claims it's normal husband-like behavior?' Matthew thought. He found Erica weird but adorable. While she was waiting for an answer, he turned around and declared, "I don't know about you, but I'm hungry! Let's grab a bite first!"

Erica was surprised. 'Huh? What does he mean? Was that a yes or a no? Whatever! He has to go with me no matter what!' Thinking of that, Erica walked up to him and said, "Okay, go wash your hands. I'll get you a bowl of soup."

She was always like that. When she wanted his help, she would call him Matthew in a sweet tone. And when she was not happy, she would refer to him as "Matthew Hilton" or "the guy whose surname is Hilton."

He said nothing and went straight to the bathroom.

The corners of his mouth lifted into a cunning smile.

During dinner, Erica was very enthusiastic. She not only got him a bowl of soup, but she also picked up food for him and put it on his plate.

When Matthew was done, Erica rested her chin on her hand and asked sweetly, "So, you're going with me, right, Matthew?"

He had eaten his fill, and was still getting what he wanted. Matthew feigned an indifferent tone and answered simply, "Yes."

Erica was very happy to hear it. "Got an idea of where we're going?"

The smile on her face annoyed Matthew. He threw the used napkin in the trash. "You can't wait to see him?"

"Who? You mean Ethan's biological father? You're kidding, right? I couldn't care less if I never saw him again! But he's right. He's the biological father. That's why I'm doing this." Erica hated Tam's guts. How could she possibly want to see him?

And for a moment, she regretted her decision. Apparently, it was annoying Matthew.

The disgust in her eyes satisfied him. He didn't need to worry.

At Orchid Private Club

When the door to the private room was opened once more, Erica sat on the sofa, playing with Ethan.

A man in a long dark blue overcoat walked in. He looked like a modest gentleman.

By all appearances, he appeared around thirty years old, but in fact, he was already over forty.

After taking a few hesitant steps, he saw the baby on the sofa, who already had a single, lower incisor. Excitement glinted in his eyes, and the man said, "My son!"

He was usually calm, cool, and collected, but this was a happy occasion. He strode quickly up to Erica, and held out his arms to hold his son.

Erica was quicker. She stood up, Ethan in her arms. She glared at Tam and demanded, "What's the rush? Where were you when Tessie was pregnant, nursing swollen feet and a bad case of morning sickness? Where were you when she was pushing this lovely human being out of her? That's right. You weren't there. I called you a million times, but you didn't answer. You blocked my number!"

A trace of guilt appeared on Tam's face. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I told you I can explain everything..."

Erica shut him down. "Save it. I knew you didn't want to endanger your marriage."

Yes, he was married, and had a daughter, Julianna Watts, who was about the same age as Erica. Julianna, Tessie, and Erica were good friends.

This time, Tam didn't say anything, which meant that she was right.

Erica spoke again. "If Julianna knew her dad had an affair with her friend, had a kid with her... what do you think she'd do? She's always been proud of you. Do you think she'd be as proud if she knew the truth?" Luckily, Erica and Julianna hadn't seen each other for a long time, so she didn't have to worry that she'd bring it up, even accidentally.

Tam had kept his eyes on Ethan. He didn't even turn his head until he heard his daughter's name. "Don't tell her—please! I'll do whatever you want. Can I hold my son now?"

The eager look on his face was so obvious. That was why Erica reluctantly gave the baby to him.

In fact, when Ethan smiled, he looked a lot like Tam, especially the eyes.

Blair always wondered why the baby's eyes never looked like Erica's. The reason was that Ethan had his father's eyes.

"I'll be in the other room. My husband brought his men along. I'm just giving you some time alone with Ethan. No tricks! Understand?"

"I know. Don't worry. I just want to see my son!"

Erica couldn't help sneering. She ignored Tam and went to the inner chamber.

Inside that room, Matthew stood at the window, deep in thought. He heard Erica enter the room, so he turned to her, a meaningful look in his eyes.

Erica closed the door and said, "I forgot to ask him how he knew Ethan was with me. I wonder if he's been spying on us. But he never called when Ethan was at my parents' house."

Matthew remained silent.

Erica didn't notice the change in Matthew's mood and continued talking. "What if he wants to take Ethan away from me?"

Matthew asked instead in a low voice, "What would you do?"

"I don't know. Anyway, I won't give up without a fight!" Erica would never let that happen.

"Then don't give him up."

With her chin against her hand, Erica sat on the bed beside Matthew, seeming distressed and stumped. "I have to do something. He'll call and ask to see Ethan again. Maybe I need to get him away from here. It'll be harder to see Ethan if he stays with Mom and Dad."

Tam had lived in Alorith a long time and almost never went to Askor. Even if he chased Ethan there, the Leonards wouldn't let him in.

Erica thought it was a good idea. That was it. She made up her mind.

Matthew sat down next to her and asked, "How do you feel when you see him?"

Erica's answers were consistent. "I want to twist his head off and kick it like a ball!"

"Go ahead, twist away. I'll take the heat if you want!" Matthew said seriously.

The seriousness in his tone frightened Erica. "You mean that? So what were you planning? Would ya do the time for me?"

"Don't worry about it."

"Didn't you say you'd take responsibility?"

Casting her a glance, he replied, "Do what you want. I'm here for you, and I won't let them put you in jail."

'He really means it, ' she thought. She smiled awkwardly. "I was just venting. I'd never do that. Forget I said anything. He'll get what he deserves someday! Karma's a bitch."

Twenty minutes later, Erica left the room.

"I think it's time to go. Ethan needs to get to sleep," she said to Tam.

Tam kissed his son on the cheek before giving Ethan to Erica. "You should be happy," he said. "I made up my mind. I'm going to talk to my wife so I can take care of him at my place. That way you won't have to feed him or change his diaper all the time."

Rocking Ethan gently, she rolled her eyes at Tam and said, "No. You're not taking him anywhere. My parents have gotten pretty attached over the last few months. Did you ever think about that? How can you be so selfish?"

"I know, I know. It's all my fault. But Ethan's not a member of the Leonard family. It's not fair to them to have to raise a stranger's kid..."

Erica suddenly raised her voice. "Fair? You're a fine one to talk about fairness! Where were you when Ethan was born? Get out! I don't want to see you again, you jerk! "

"I'm sorry!"

Erica stretched out a hand to stop his apology. "No! I'm not the one wanting an apology. You know who to apologize to! If you have time, you'd better go to her gravesite to visit her. Burn some incense while you're at it, and ask for forgiveness! Get out! Now!"

CHAPTER 1160 DIED OF A DIFFICULT LABOR

"What did you say? She's dead?!" Tam's eyes opened wide in shock as he heard something his ears weren't willing to believe. His lips began to tremble.

"You don't even know about it. She's dead! She died while giving birth to Ethan. So tell me, Tam! Where the hell were you when she was crying out your name painfully in the hospital?" Erica bellowed. Tears welled up in her eyes as a painful memory came back and hit her along with the anger.

"But, that's impossible!"

"And yet it happened! So if you still have even an ounce of conscience left, go visit her tomb. I don't even know where she was buried. You can go to the Campbell family and ask them yourself; they were the ones who took care of her funeral." Not long after Ethan was born, Erica had left with the baby.

She was too young to manage a funeral. Unaware of what to do, she had merely sent people to inform the Campbell family.

"There must be some misunderstanding. She can't be dead!" Tam was still in denial.

"There is no misunderstanding. She is dead! You can go to the Campbell family's house and ask. Whatever you do, don't bother me anymore. I don't want to see you ever again, you hear me? Never!" Erica hated Tam so much, but he had still been pestering her with questions. Finally her patience had run out after a short while.

Tam still wanted to ask something, but the disgust in her eyes made him shut his mouth at last. He hesitantly kissed Ethan's soft little hand and then walked away dejectedly.

In retrospect, the man had looked rather calm and composed the whole time he had been talking to her, save for a little moment of excitement upon seeing Ethan for the first time.

It wasn't so impossible when one thought about it for a young girl to fall in love with him. He was rich and handsome, gentle and considerate, and seemed wise. But he was still a married man. It was morally wrong for Erica's friend, or anyone for that matter, to have an affair with this man.

The door was partially soundproof, which meant that although Matthew could hear someone speaking outside the inner chamber, he couldn't make out exactly what they were talking about.

However, he didn't come out of the inner chamber until the conversation outside had subsided completely.

As expected, the man had left. Only Erica was standing there, with the baby in her arms, as if lost in some thought.

Matthew strode towards her and took the baby from her. "Let's go," he said.

"Okay!" The duo left together.

Outside, Tam was still sitting in his car and waiting for Erica to come out. But when he saw Matthew, who was now holding the baby, get into the car with Erica, he finally left.

At the moment, he drew home-wards. He didn't know if he could confront the Campbell family. At home, his wife, Yanny Perry, was mopping the floor. "Honey, you're back! You must be very tired. It

looks like you had a really busy day," she greeted him as enthusiastically as a wife waiting all day long. "Come on! I made some desserts for you. Go wash your hands."

Just as Yanny was about to enter the kitchen, her husband grabbed her hand.

Tam tried to adjust his emotions and as usual, began talking with a faint smile on his lips. "I need to tell you something!"

"Sure? What is it?" She tucked her hair behind her ears and looked at her husband in confusion. This had never happened before.

"When I was on a business trip in Askor two days ago, I went to the welfare house for some charity-related work. There, I saw a little boy who had just been brought in. He's very cute and seems to be completely healthy. We wanted to have a boy in the past, but since you can't get pregnant, how about we adopt him?"

'Adopt a boy?' Yanny was shocked. Her mind went blank for a moment. "But we already have Julianna... I think it's alright to have just a daughter. We're happy so far, right?" Although she couldn't give birth to a baby anymore, they already had a daughter who was grown up now.

She had desired to have a boy as well in the past, but she had given up on the idea after finding out she couldn't. She had never thought of adopting one though.

Tam let go of her hand, patted her on the shoulder and said, "Okay then. It doesn't matter. We won't adopt him if you don't agree."

He gave up so soon all the doubts in Yanny's heart disappeared. She smiled, "Actually, I never thought of adopting a child before today. I wasn't prepared when you mentioned this all of a sudden."

"Yeah but. It doesn't matter. It's just that my mother is so annoying; she insisted on us having a boy. I thought that if we adopted one, at least they won't nag you about it. But let's don't talk about it anymore if you don't want to." Tam nonchalantly took off his coat, handed it to his wife and went into the kitchen.

As she was taking his coat, it suddenly occurred to Yanny that her parents-in-law's desire for a grandson had taken some pretty weird shapes in the past. Once, her mother-in-law had even found a young girl to be their housemaid. On the surface, she had been a simple hired helper for the house. But in fact, her mother-in-law had just wanted to set the girl up with Tam, so that she could give her the grandson she wanted.

Luckily, the young girl had been driven away by Tam at last, but ever since then, Yanny's relation with her mother-in-law had become strained at best and non-existent at worst.

Remembering those efforts, Yanny hung Tam's coat on the hanger and went back to the kitchen. "Hey

honey, that boy... Just how cute is he?"

With his back still to her, Tam breathed a sigh of relief. Then he pretended to answer indifferently after a moment, "I hugged him before leaving; he was that cute! He's slightly chubby, and just has a single tooth at the moment. He looks adorable."

After a moment's consideration, Yanny suggested, "How about... Well, since you like him so much, I'm sure I'll like him too. And since I don't have a job anymore now, why don't we go ahead and adopt him? I'm sure I'll be able to take care of him."

Tam turned around. "The child was very popular, and I saw him two days ago. I wonder if he has been adopted already. But if you are okay with it, then I have no problem as well. I will send for someone to contact the welfare house."

"Alright. Let's do that tomorrow!" Yanny was eager to see the boy too since her husband liked him so much. Who wouldn't want a cute baby?

"Okay."

Hiding the excitement in his eyes, Tam held her in his arms and gave her a soft kiss on the forehead.

In the Pearl Villa District

Matthew had wanted to have a baby cot bought for Ethan, but Erica had stopped him. When asked why, she said that Ethan was only going to stay there for a couple of days so there was no need to buy one. Ethan could just sleep with them.

At midnight, Matthew came back to the bedroom from his study and saw Erica and the baby lying on the bed in a crooked manner.

He came towards the side of the bed and saw that the baby had woken up. Ethan was lying on the bed, looking around with his eyes wide open. The thin quilt on his body had been kicked far away.

When he saw Matthew, he began to kick his legs excitedly and smiled at him.

Matthew cast a glance at Erica, who was sound asleep, and thought, 'If the baby had run away, I daresay she wouldn't even feel it.'

He helplessly lifted Ethan up and put him in the middle of the bed. Then he lay down beside him and covered him with the quilt. That way, the baby boy was sandwiched between the two and could not run away.

As Matthew lay down, Ethan turned over and started babbling at him.

Matthew was experienced in taking care of kids since he had witnessed the birth and growth of Gwyn, Godwin and Godfrey. He was quite familiar with kids and knew how to engage them.

He put his big hand in front of Ethan, on which there was a bite mark.

The boy reached out a dainty little hand to grab Matthew's big hand, but only managed to grab the man's ring finger.

After playing with him silently for a while, the little boy finally began to get tired and drowsy and soon nodded off into a deep slumber.

Matthew turned the boy over and covered him properly once again to make sure the boy was comfortable.

The next day, Erica received a phone call from Tam early in the morning. "Erica, thank you for taking so good care of my son. I thought about it last night for the whole time and have decided to take Ethan to my home and take care of him by myself. I know it's unfair to you, but I hope you understand my feelings as a father."