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Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 156 - 160

Michael's ebony eyes were fixated on me, his gaze glinting with barely banked fury. Seeing that, I knew that he was on the verge of blowing his top.

"You're the only one who knows whether you're a libertine, and that has nothing to do with me."

Hastily averting my gaze, I screwed my eyes shut after saying that and feigned sleep because I didn't want to debate that matter with him anymore.

Despite my closed eyes, I could sense that Michael's gaze remained pinned on me. Nonetheless, I didn't dare open my eyes and could only pray that he would go to sleep quickly.

A long time passed before he finally shifted his gaze away and closed his eyes to sleep. Perhaps it was because I had angered him earlier that he slept with his back to me without touching me.

While a sliver of distress slithered into me, I felt that it was a good thing at the end of the day. After all, it was far better than being thoroughly ravished by the man.

In the next few days, Michael was rather cold to me. To top it off, he hadn't been to Birchwood in two consecutive days, making me wonder whether he had gone to the other woman's place.

It was presently late at night, and it was the third day he had been absent. I was at sixes and sevens, held captive by the dread that he had truly gone to seek other the other woman.

I wanted to phone him, yet I dared not do so. Instead, I agonized over the matter all alone.

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Argh! This is so frustrating!

Just when I had finally snapped and started pacing in the living room, my cell phone rang out of the blue. I swiftly snagged it up in hopes that it was a call from Michael.

But when I glimpsed the caller ID, dejection settled in because it was a call from my mother. On second thought, thrill flooded me.

“Mom, you’re finally giving me a call!”

Ever since Steven’s incident, she had never once phoned me. And every time I did so, she always rejected the call. Hence, I was over the moon when she suddenly rang me up right then.

“Are you free now? If you’re not tired, come over and help to take care of your brother. Your father and I are both up in years, so we can’t overtax ourselves.”

On the other end of the phone, my mother’s voice was still a touch frosty, but it was already a great improvement from before. Elated, I promptly replied, “Sure! I’ll go over right away!”

Even after hanging up the phone, I was still feeling very much excited. Striding to the hallway, I grabbed my jacket and left in a hurry.

I hailed a taxi to the hospital. It was very late by the time I arrived at the hospital, so a deathly silence hung in the corridors. My mother was sitting at the head of the hospital bed when I reached Steven’s ward, wiping his face with a towel.

“I’m here, Mom,” I greeted cautiously after walking over to my mother.

Trepidation gripped me that she would again treat me to a frigid expression as she did a few days ago.

Upon hearing my voice, my parents’ eyes alighted on me in concert. After Stevens’s incident, uneasiness consumed me whenever I was confronted with their gazes.

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After casting me a placid glance, my mother expressionlessly handed the towel to me and ordered, "Since you're here, come and wipe your brother's face."

Her reaction surprised me, but I was inwardly glad. While she was apathetic toward me, she no longer flew into a rage the moment she saw me.

Taking the towel from her, I sat down in front of Steven and carefully wiped his face.

"Aren't you tired to come over to the hospital at this hour after having worked the entire day?" Steven queried.

The look in his eyes as he stared at me was detached, but his animosity of the past was gone.

"Nope. My weariness doesn't matter as long as you recover speedily."

It was the first time my family was ever so amiable to me. To that end, I actually felt a tad perturbed and uneasy. Their drastic change of attitude was so sudden that I couldn't shake off the feeling that something was amiss.

"Just visiting Stevie today is sufficient. You should go back earlier to rest. During the weekend, you can come over and help to take care of him."

My mother then came up behind me. It was the first time she ever showed concern for me.

Surprised, I jerked my head back to gape at her as I wondered whether I had misheard her. Is she really showing concern for me? And is she really not going to push all the blame on me anymore?

All these years, I had only ever heard grumbles and reprisals from her. For that reason, I was both jubilant and incredulous upon hearing such regard all of a sudden.

"I'm not tired. You must be tired after taking care of Stevie in the hospital for so many days. How about you find a place and rest for a bit? I'll take care of him tonight."

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My mother had begun showing regard for me, so it was good news to me. As I clocked her haggard face of late, my heart clenched.

Just when she was about to reply, the door to the ward was abruptly pushed open. I thought it would surely be a nurse who was here making her rounds considering the late hour, but my expression instantly froze upon glimpsing the person who came in.

Michael? Why is he here? And why would he come to Steven's ward?

"Mr. Shaw."

The instant Michael appeared, my mother immediately greeted him with a smile, hurrying over to him with a fawning expression on her face.

Shock besieged me when I saw that she was acquainted with Michael. It was his secretary who came on his behalf back when he gave my family money then, so I couldn't figure out how she would know him. As such, I grew all the more bewildered.

"How do you know Michael, Mom?" I stared at my mother and asked in puzzlement, snapping back to my senses after a long moment.

"Anna, I didn't know that you're acquainted with such an affluent friend like Mr. Shaw. He came to the hospital today and told me that he'll bear your brother's hospital bill and also help him find the best physiotherapist."

While saying that, my mother's eyes shone as her smile grew even wider.

It wasn't until after I had heard that did the puzzle slot together. I finally realized that my family's radical change of attitude toward me was all because of Michael.

At the end of the day, it was because Michael was my friend and only offered to help my brother financially for my sake. Ultimately, my parents only cared about Steven and were amiable to me to secure the funding for his subsequent treatment.

My eyes turned red, and my heart twisted in agony. If that's truly the reason, then I'd rather that she'd never changed her attitude toward me!

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“Mom, is that why you changed your attitude toward me?”

I regarded my mother with tears shimmering in my ears. Inwardly, I still harbored a glimmer of hope, hoping against hope that she truly cared about me instead of it all because of my brother.

“Well, you wanted me to treat you better, no? Why are you so fixated on the reason when you’ve now gotten your wish?”

Confronted by my scrutiny, my mother’s gaze became shifty. She didn’t answer my question directly, but the meaning of her words was plain as day.

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After having received confirmation of my guess, my lips curved into a mocking arc. And as I looked at my mother, disappointment showed in my eyes.

Well, well... It turns out that I’ve been looking at things through rose-colored glasses! My family isn’t sincere in being amiable to me. At the end of the day, they’re only putting on a show for Steven’s sake so that his subsequent medical expenses will be taken care of.

“Mom, I really wonder whether I’m your biological daughter. Why are you so cruel to me? What exactly have I done wrong?” I roared as I stared right into my mother’s eyes, trembling all over.

Those words had been bottled within me for a very long time, and I truly couldn’t suppress them anymore. I really wanted to know why there was such a huge disparity between Steven and me in her affections.

After bellowing that, I spun around and left in a flash. I didn’t want to listen to a single word further.

“What nonsense are you spouting, Anna?”

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My mother's infuriated bellow rang out behind me when I fled the room. Nonetheless, I ignored her and quickened my pace instead.

I sprinted to the yard behind the hospital with tears streaming down my face, my heart a mangled mess in my chest. Only then did I know that my mother would truly do anything at all for Steven, yet she couldn't spare me even a smidge of love.

I plopped down on a bench in the yard. Many people coming and going stared at me, but I wasn't bothered at all. I only wanted to cry my heart out so that I would feel better.

After crying for what seemed an eternity, a packet of tissue suddenly appeared before me. Taken aback, I looked up at the person in front of me, only for the rage within me to surge once again when Michael's countenance greeted me.

Pushing Michael's hand away, I shot to my feet.

"What are you doing here? Just why did you come to the hospital? And why did you say that you'll bear all of Steven's medical expenses?" I lambasted at the top of my lungs.

If he hadn't said such a thing to my parents, I wouldn't have learned that my mother only changed her attitude toward me because of Steven! I'd rather they keep being indifferent to me than to know the truth!

At that moment, my heart had truly shattered into a million pieces.

Upon seeing my emotional state, Michael frowned and glowered at me indignantly. His dark eyes were stained with a hint of anger.

"Stop being so ungrateful, Anna! I'm helping you!"

While saying that, Michael's gaze was chilly and his expression grim.

"Helping me? How have you helped me? Should I be thanking you for telling my parents that you'll bear all of Steven's medical expenses?"

Having caused such a dilemma, he's actually claiming that he's helping me! What a joke!

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I eyed him scornfully, my voice heavy with sorrow.

“Didn’t you want your family to treat you better? I’ve already made that happen, so why are you angry?”

Michael stared at me in bafflement, his expression flinty. The fury in his voice became all the more distinct.

All of a sudden, a light bulb went off in my head. Oh, so this is him keeping the promise he made to me back then! It turned out that such was the method he employed so that my family would treat me better.

Initially, I thought that I could surely mend my relationship with my family as long as he helped me. But from the look of things now, it was all wishful thinking on my part.

“Have you? You merely twisted the knife deeper! Michael, you don’t know what I want at all! You have absolutely no idea how I wish that they’ll treat me sincerely!”

I want them to love me from the bottom of their hearts and not because of money!

Shellshocked, Michael stood rooted to the spot. The wrath on his face faded, but he seemed somewhat confused.

“You know nothing. You have no inkling of what I truly want.”

Suddenly growing subdued, I turned around to leave after saying that weakly. At that moment, I didn’t want to argue with him.

Someone like him can never understand my feelings right now. After all, he has never known how it feels to have both his parents detesting him.

Out of the blue, I sensed a restraining force on my arm. With a yank, Michael pulled me into his embrace and hugged me tightly without saying anything.

Still feeling resentful toward him because of the incident just now, I struggled wildly. But still, he cradled me against him tightly and refused to let go of me.

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He said nary a word, engulfing me within his strong arms. Tired from my struggles, I finally yielded and allowed him to simply hold me. While shielded in his embrace, a sense of peace infused me.

All this while, I felt as though I had been abandoned by the whole world, for even my closest and beloved family only harbored resentment toward me. Aggravation and grief built within me, but I had nowhere to vent and could only bottle everything.

“Why must they treat me so unjustly? Am I not good enough?” I muttered, resting against his chest.

“You’re too soft-hearted, Anna,” Michael remarked without answering my question.

Naturally, I knew what he meant by that. I indeed wanted to be more ruthless, but I simply couldn’t harden my heart against them at the thought that they were my family.

“I’m tired. I want to go home.”

I changed the subject, not wanting to dwell upon my family issues anymore. Right then, I only wanted some peace.

Michael remained silent. Taking my hand, he headed toward the parking lot.

Huh? He’s actually not keeping a distance from me in a public place such as this? Is he not afraid of being recognized? Isn’t he most worried that our relationship would come to light and ruin his reputation?

With Michael driving, we arrived back at Birchwood shortly. As soon as we were home, I shut myself in the bedroom.

Michael didn’t get up in arms or bother me. After a long time had passed, I slipped into a deep slumber on the bed. Having wept and vented, I inwardly resolved that I would still be the same person when I wake up tomorrow after a good night’s sleep.

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While groggy with sleep, I seemingly heard Michael getting into bed. There was barely a rustle as he lay down beside me, as though he was afraid of waking me. Then, he even thoughtfully tucked the covers around me.

Astonishment washed over me, for he would never do such a thing from what I know of him.

Inwardly, I mused, How could he possibly be so gentle with me? Besides, he has never been afraid of rousing me in the past. I must be dreaming. I'm asleep, so this must be a dream!

Nevertheless, it felt so real that it could be construed as reality.

I slept until I woke up naturally. When I roused, the sun was already overhead. Rubbing my eyes, I fumbled for my cell phone. The instant I glimpsed the time, my eyes instantly went wide.

What the hell? It's actually eleven o'clock in the morning? Oh God, how did I oversleep? Damn it! I'm already late for work today! I'm sure I set my alarm, so why didn't I hear it ringing?

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I raked a hand through my hair in frustration. Argh! I wonder how much Mr. Doyle is going to penalize me since I'm late to work today!

I then flipped through my contacts for Harry's number to give him a call and explain things. But before I had even pressed the dial button, a call came in.

At the sight of Michael's name flashing across the screen, my heart pounded wildly.

Shit! Could he be calling at this time to question why I'm not in the office yet? Oh God, what should I do? How should I explain it to him? I can't say that I overslept, can I? After all, such an excuse isn't valid to him!

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Throughout my internal monologue, my phone continued ringing. Inhaling deeply, I finally answered the call uneasily.

“Hello, Mr. Shaw...” I murmured after the call was connected.

Sheer anxiety ricocheted within me, for I was terrified that Michael’s apoplectic voice would suddenly blast out from the other end of the phone.

“You’re awake?”

To my surprise, Michael didn’t rage at me. Instead, his voice was placid with a trace of warmth.

My heart skipped a beat at once, and a strange feeling pervaded me. I shook my head forcefully, telling myself that I had to be hearing things since he would never speak to me so tenderly.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Shaw. I overslept this morning.”

Well, regardless of whether he’s calling to reprimand me, I can’t go wrong with an apology right off the bat. Even if he’s irate, he won’t be too angry when I apologize so sincerely.

“I was the one who turned off your alarm. I’m giving you the day off, so just stay home and rest up. Perhaps I went about things wrongly yesterday.”

Michael’s deep and alluring voice was still as detached as ever as it drifted over, yet my heart fluttered.

What? He was the one who turned off my alarm? How could he simply fiddle with my cell phone? Doesn’t he know what privacy means?

My anger was piqued at his admission, but when I registered the meaning of his final utterance, my heart hammered wildly. He actually admitted that he was wrong before me? Has hell frozen over today?

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“Mr. Shaw, I...”

It was a long while before I snapped out of my stupor. I opened my mouth to say something else, but he had already hung up on me.

Hearing the disconnect tone from the other end of the phone, I curled my lips in chagrin. Good grief! That was the first time he admitted to having made a mistake, yet he only uttered that meager remark. How insincere!

After putting down the phone, my emotions remained turbulent for a very long time. Why would an arrogant man like him simply apologize? Has he gotten his wires crossed today?

Despite my puzzlement, I forced myself not to think about anything remotely related to Michael. His mind was wired differently from others, after all, so I could never comprehend his thoughts even if I were to rack my brains.

I stayed at Birchwood the entire day without going anywhere. When hunger pangs hit, I made a cup of instant noodles, determined to relax all day.

I simply allowed myself to be unkempt without washing up or changing my clothes, I was so sloppy that I was no different from a bedraggled vagabond.

When Michael came home at night, he was so shocked at my state that his eyes almost popped out of his head. Never once had I been so blasé about my image before him.

“Anna, did you just fall into a trash can?”

Putting down the briefcase in his hand, Michael eyed me with utter contempt as his striking brows creased deeply.

“Is it necessary for you to be so harsh, Michael? I merely didn’t wash up or doll up today. You’re making things sound worse than they are!”

Upon hearing that, I frowned in consternation. Jeez, he’s really exaggerating things. Although I’m a bit disheveled, I don’t look as bad as having fallen into the trash can, do I?

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“Aren’t you afraid that I’ll lose interest in you when you’re showing me such an unsightly side of you?” Michael commented after a long while, looking me up and down.

“That’s your problem.”

How I wish he would lose interest in me since I wasn’t in the mood to entertain him recently. I was already annoyed by my own problems, so I hadn’t the mental capacity to bother about him.

Michael regarded me in vexation. In the next second, his commanding voice rang out.

“I’m giving you half an hour to take a shower and change.”

All at once, my brows scrunched together. While I was disgruntled at his order, I still ambled to the bathroom for a shower.

Meanwhile, Michael’s sharp brows furrowed deeply as his gaze fell on the empty cup of instant noodles on the dining table. He was a clean freak, so he was definitely hopping mad to see that I had messed up his house in a single day.

When I came out after showering and changing into a set of clean pajamas, Michael was sitting in the living room with a terrifyingly grim expression.

“I told you to relax at home today, and you made such a mess?”

He pointed a long and slender finger at the empty cup of instant noodles on the dining table, his voice colored with barely suppressed anger.

Following his gaze, I murmured guiltily, “I’ll clean it up right away.”

I’ve got to return this place to its pristine condition before he blows a gasket. Otherwise, he definitely won’t forgive me so easily, considering his temperament.

Quickly tossing the empty cup of instant noodles into the trash can, I then wiped the dining table clean with a piece of tissue.

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After cleaning everything up, I went back to Michael.

Looking at him, I urged softly, "It's late, so go and take a shower before going to bed."

He again threw the dining table a look before getting up without a word and heading to the bathroom.

The entire night passed without incident. Perhaps Michael was also tired, for he foregone our usual bout of passion that night. He merely hugged me from behind and fell into a deep slumber.

It was a rare occurrence for us to lay on the bed together without passion consuming us. Feeling safe, I drifted off in no time.

After learning that Michael had fiddled with my cell phone without permission, I deliberately changed my screen lock to my fingerprint.

Although he only turned off my alarm out of concern, I disliked having someone else simply manipulating my things. I just couldn't shake off the feeling that my privacy had been violated, albeit having nothing much to hide in the first place.

When my alarm rang in the morning, I blinked open my eyes. At that time, Michael had just gotten dressed. He looked at me strangely upon seeing me get out of bed before pivoting and leaving without a word.

Glimpsing the time, I quickly changed and hurried to work with no time to spare for breakfast.

I had to hurry since the subway was particularly crowded during the morning rush hour. Otherwise, I would definitely be late.

By the time I arrived panting at the office, I only had a few minutes to spare. I breathed a sigh of relief and made my way to my table. But before I had even settled down, Millie leaned over to me.

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“You’re something else, Anna! When did you get so familiar with Mr. Shaw? Tell me everything! What’s your relationship with him?”

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My heart lurched at Millie’s suspicious look, and panic struck me. Oh God, what’s the meaning of this? Why is she asking me such a question? Don’t tell me she has learned about my relationship with Michael?

“W-What do you mean? What kind of relationship could I have with Mr. Shaw?”

I regarded her with a flustered expression, my voice tinged with a hint of guilt.

“Ah, stop lying to me! Mr. Shaw came to the office yesterday and personally applied for leave on your behalf. Everyone was shocked and wondered about your relationship with him.”

Millie eyed me nosily, her gaze radiating curiosity.

“I-I was going to phone Mr. Doyle to apply for leave yesterday, but I somehow rang up Mr. Shaw instead,” I hastily clarified while looking at her sheepishly.

Phew! I thought she has learned about my relationship with Michael, but it seems that all the uproar is just because he helped me to apply for leave.

“Anna, I just feel that your relationship with Mr. Shaw isn’t that simple. Don’t tell me the two of you are actually dating?”

Millie didn’t believe my explanation, her eyes brimming with delight as she said that.

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“What nonsense are you spouting, Millie? How could I possibly have anything to do with him? I’m just an ordinary employee. Please stop saying such a thing, for it’ll certainly bring me trouble if others overhear such speculation.”

While she was merely postulating, the panic within me snowballed. D*mn it! Now that she’s starting to suspect my relationship with Michael, it may truly come to light in the future!

“Alright, alright. I was just joking, so why are you so panicked? The more flustered you are, the more people will suspect you!”

Millie’s expression turned solemn as she stared at me. She didn’t continue pursuing the matter about my relationship with Michael, but I was inwardly freaking out. Dear Lord, if even Millie thinks that Michael and I are too close, will the others also feel the same way?

“Don’t simply say such a thing in the future. I don’t want to invite unnecessary trouble.”

After saying that coldly, I proceeded to ignore her and buried my head in my work. Truth be told, I was a little bent out of shape because of her remark earlier.

Millie stuck out her tongue at me. Perhaps realizing that she had gone overboard with her allegations, she merely cast me a hesitant glance without further comment.

My emotions were a chaotic mess the entire morning. Thanks to Millie’s comments, I simply couldn’t concentrate on my work.

After having lunch, I went to the washroom. When I entered the washroom, I accidentally bumped into two colleagues from my department.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to bump into you,” I promptly apologized.

“Are you blind? That hurts, you know!”

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Initially, I thought that everything would be fine after apologizing. However, the female colleague whom I bumped into seemed disinclined to drop the matter. She shot daggers at me, her words scathing.

I frowned as chagrin flooded me from her biting reprisal. Jeez, I only knocked into her lightly. It's not like I slammed into her. Does it warrant such pointed barbs?

"I've already apologized just now," I placidly murmured, lifting my head to stare at her.

"What's the use of an apology? Does it negate the fact that you rammed into me earlier?"

I didn't want to have any conflicts with my colleagues in the office, but her words truly had me seeing red. Raising my head, I glowered at her. Not wanting to entertain her further, I spun around to leave. Alas, she didn't seem willing to let me off so easily.

"Did I say you can leave? Why are you in such a hurry to leave?"

Hearing that, the wrath within me blazed all the hotter. I whirled around and regarded her frostily. "I've already apologized earlier, so what else do you want? It was unintentional on my part just now."

While I didn't want to make trouble, it didn't mean that others could simply pick on me. Argh! Is it really necessary for her to be so unforgiving when I just bumped into her lightly?

"Oh my, how arrogant! Anna Garcia, did you think that you can do whatever you want in the office and act as though everyone is beneath you just because of your relationship with Mr. Shaw?"

She stalked up to me, her voice turning shrill.

When I heard that, I finally realized that she was targeting me because of Michael. What the hell? Don't tell me it's also because Michael applied for leave on my behalf?

"That's your assumption!"

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I didn't want to explain things since it would only end in a deeper misunderstanding. After saying that, I turned around to leave.

"Don't think that someone like you can seduce Mr. Shaw, Anna. There are tons of beauties around him, so you don't even stand a chance!" she declared loudly behind me, her gaze burning with envy.

"If I don't stand a chance, then you're even less likely to have a shot. I'd advise you to first take a good look at yourself in the mirror before picking trouble with someone else!"

Snorting, I spun on my heels and strode away after spitting that contemptuously.

I recognized that female colleague known as Tiffany Barker. Despite being in the same department, we weren't familiar with each other. In fact, we had never spoken before.

But I did hear from Millie that she was Michael's biggest fan in the entire department. As such, she was certainly picking trouble with me on purpose earlier.

When I returned to the office, frustration slammed into me. I was pissed off at Michael since the many incidents that had transpired today were all because he had given me the day off yesterday.

D*mn it all to hell! Look what happened now! I'm probably going to be the public enemy of all the female employees in the company! But then, they're really petty, huh? Is it necessary to pick on me when he merely gave me a day off? Besides, even if there's something between us, that's our business. It has nothing to do with them!

As I looked at the closed door of the president's office, the annoyance within me grew, and I couldn't help heaping all the blame on Michael. If it weren't for him, I would never be targeted by my colleagues!

When it was time to get off work, I received a text from Michael, asking me to wait for him at the underground parking. Nonetheless, I turned off my phone irritably and ignored it.

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When the time got around to get off work, I didn't wait for him but left right away. After all, I was now being targeted by the female colleagues in the office because of him, so I would truly be the public enemy of the entire company if someone spotted me meeting up with him.

I trudged along the street after work. Before I had even reached the subway station, my cell phone rang again. Thinking that it was a call from Michael, I initially didn't want to take it. But when I saw an unknown number flashing across the screen, I frowned in puzzlement. In the end, I answered the call.

"Hello," I greeted coolly when the call was connected.

"Hello, Ms. Garcia. Do you still remember me?"

On the other end of the line, a familiar male voice drifted out. It gave off a cheerful feeling, but I couldn't place it for a moment.

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"Who are you?"

I was puzzled and could not figure out who the caller was.

"I'm Ronan. Have you forgotten me, Ms. Garcia?"

Ronan, who was on the other end of the line, was somewhat disappointed after knowing that I could not recognize him.

"Oh, it's you. I didn't forget about you. It's just that it's out of my expectations that you'll call me out of the blue."

Ronan's unforgettable looks could fight that of Michael's, so I would never forget him. But then, I did not expect that he would call me.

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I thought I would never meet him again. Who knew he would call me just after a few days.

To be honest, I disliked men who were like Ronan. Even though it was undeniable that he was handsome and had a sunny boy kind of vibe, he had always given me the impression that he was flippant.

He looked like an irresponsible young lad, which was the extreme opposite of the type of man I would like—mature and steady.

“It took me great difficulty to get your number, so how is it possible for me to not contact you? I’m very enthusiastic when it comes to calling pretty ladies.”

Ronan’s voice from the other side of the phone was starting to get frivolous.

Instantly, I frowned as I disliked the way he talked.

“Why did you call me for?” I asked plainly.

“Well, I would like to ask a pretty lady like you out for dinner.”

Ronan’s voice sounded from the other end of the line once again, but this time his words only got me more furious.

Isn’t it unchivalrous for a man to tell a lady such words when he has only seen her twice?

“I don’t have time today, so I’m afraid we can’t meet.”

In my mind, I had already labeled Ronan as a playboy. As such, I instinctively rejected his invitation.

“Ms. Garcia, you rejected me without thinking. That hurts me so much; I’m really disappointed,” continued Ronan after pausing for a while.

“I’m sorry, but I really have something on tonight.”

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Since I decided not to have any form of relationship with Ronan, I rejected him outright.

I knew this playboy's reason for calling me very well. Other than not having any interest in him, I figured I should not do anything inappropriate given my current relationship with Michael.

"All right, I won't insist since you said that. But I hope you'll not turn me down next time."

Hearing my response, Ronan did not press the topic any further.

"Goodbye then."

I heaved a sigh of relief and hung up the phone after saying that.

Apart from our first meet, Ronan had always been very frivolous. Although he was very handsome, I did not have good feelings toward him. I preferred men who had a mature and staid appearance, albeit they might not be the same on the inside. Michael was the exact example of that.

When I returned to Birchwood, Michael was not home yet. Then, I recalled the text message he sent me earlier, yet could not wrap my mind around why he had asked me to wait for him at the parking lot.

I shook my head and did not want to think about anything related to Michael. Because of him, I already had a hard time in the company, so I did not want anyone else to know about my relationship with him.

If that colleague called Tiffany knew that I had slept with Michael for more than once, won't she be so furious that she lost her mind?

I was in the kitchen busily preparing for dinner that night. After a long while, I heard the sounds of the knob twisting and the door opening, and Michael walked in after.

As soon as he saw me, his expression instantly turned grim as his gaze glinted with anger.

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“You’re at home?” he uttered as he came over to my side. There was a hint of fury in his tone.

“Of course I’m at home. Where else can I be at this hour if I’m not home?”

I forced a smile on my face as a sense of guilt rose in me while I looked at Michael.

He must’ve asked me that because of that text message.

“Didn’t I tell you to wait for me at the parking lot? Why did you come back first?”

After hearing my reply, Michael’s expression froze. He strode toward me as his eyes were blazing with growing rage that it was as though he wanted to burn me to ashes.

“Message? What message?” I pretended to be confused as I felt a shiver down my spine.

“What do you mean? Anna, don’t tell me you didn’t receive the message I sent you?”

I thought I would be able to bluff my way out. However, Michael appeared to be even angrier after I said that.

“I really don’t know what message you’re referring to. When did you send me a message?”

Faced with his stern looks, I could not bring myself to look into his eyes. I was panicking deep inside.

“Don’t try to use your petty tricks on me, Anna!” Michael snorted before leaving for the room.

I was flustered when I saw him leaving. Hesitated at the thought of how I was the target of my colleagues in the office that morning, I called and stopped him from heading out.

“Umm... I have something to tell you.”

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To avoid being constantly targeted by my colleagues, I decided to clear up the air with Michael.

“What?”

He stopped in his tracks and turned to me while still looking cold and indifferent.

“From today onward, can we not have any other contact or meet up outside this house? I don’t want to let too many people know about our relationship.” After a moment of silence, I decided to tell him what was on my mind.

The reason I could put my words out in a tone devoid of guilt and shame was that I thought Michael would agree to my suggestion since he was just unwilling to let others learn about our relationship as well, just like me.

“Is this what you wanted to tell me?”

He narrowed his eyes as he stood in his original spot. The surge of coldness sprang from the depth of his eyes that I instantly felt a drop in the room temperature.

“I know you don’t want others to know about our relationship too. Since we have the same thought in mind, we should act like we don’t know each other when we’re outside,” I reiterated while looking into Michael’s eyes, even though I could not decipher why he was so furious.

“To you, my presence is really that embarrassing?” He stared at me and popped the question after a long time. I was confident that those words I had said were out of goodwill for both of us. However, his reaction to my reply seemed to show that he was really annoyed.

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