

# Love from My Dominant Boss

## Chapter 216

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I breathed heavily and looked upon Michael with displeasure. The time was exceeded by just that teeny bit, so was it necessary to be this calculative?

His unhappiness with the situation surrounding Ronan was understandable, but this? I was not in the wrong so I was not going to apologize for it.

“You are increasingly demonstrating your disregard for me, Anna.”

He spoke casually while he eyeballed me dispassionately. However, that still managed to make me feel enormously pressurized and fearful even when nothing had been done anything to me yet.

Meeting his gaze, I could not stand the way he looked at me. No one could understand how it felt to be misunderstood and distrusted by someone one loved.

“What do you want me to say, Michael? What will it take for you to believe that there’s nothing between Ronan and me?”

It might be that Michael was bothered by the things Ronan said, but the crux of the issue was that he still did not trust me.

“Ronan is a serial playboy, so you’d do well to steer clear of him,” Michael said after he took one glance at me.

I could sense the simmering rage which he had been keeping in check, but I could not, for the life of me, figure out why he was acting out of character today. On any other occasion, he would have told me outright that I was his woman and ordered that I keep other men at arms’ length. But not today.

Perhaps it was in consideration of his cousin’s position that he did not say that to my face.

“Ronan’s your cousin...” I reminded him of that in my squeaky voice—not in the defense of Ronan, but out of a feeling that there were no similarities between them.

“That guy’s always canoodling around beautiful women and never one to turn any away. Describing him as such is already putting it mildly,” Michael snorted.

That was what I thought in the beginning as well, but I was not in the opinion that Ronan could be the amorous type after spending some time getting to know him better. It was kind of hard to explain this sentiment of mine either, so I held my silence and kept my head bowed.

“Between me and him, you could only be mine. So stay away from him from now on, you hear?”

Seeing how unresponsive I was, Michael furrowed and hardened his stance, and I exhaled helplessly before I walked towards the man who had fallen back into his possessive ways.

Settling down next to him, I wrapped my hands around his arm and spoke softly, “Right now, I’m not interested in any guy apart from you, so I hope that you would be able to have a little more faith in me and not doubt me all the time.”

I looked straight into his eyes in earnest, like I could see none other.

Michael probably had not expected that. There was a sparkle in his eyes, and the fiery aura surrounding him swiftly dissipated.

“I’ll trust you only if you stay away from other men,” Michael said, his emotional state indecipherable. But what followed left me shuddering.

“Can’t tell what’s so good about you that got me worried that someone else might snatch you up.” Michael then laughed in a self-deprecating manner that was previously unheard of from him.

My eyes lit up while his words sent ripples through my heart.

People would only fear losing those whom they loved. Could it be that Michael had also fallen for me?

The more I thought about it, the more my heart was set aflutter. For the first time ever, I was sure that Michael did like me.

I put my lips to his without hesitancy. After all, what could not be put into words was better expressed through action.

Even though my kiss could only rouse Michael’s carnal desires without bringing his attention to my emotional depths, that was still what I did.

Michael's eyes widened at my sudden advances before he closed them and reciprocated.

Before a gifted kisser, my own effort could still be lacking finesse, so Michael very quickly took over and pulled me into his arms.

His kisses were intense, and his hands were wrapped so tightly around me that they threatened to meld me into him.

My cheeks became flushed, and we were quickly becoming delirious after some furious making out. Clearly, our senses had been awakened.

Every time I initiated, it always yielded a strong reaction from Michael. Once this kiss wound down, he swept me up into a cradle and strode into the bedroom.

That night, we gave ourselves to each other, and he was indefatigable like an unbridled stallion.

When I woke up the next morning, I realized that he had left a whole bunch of hickeys running all over my body up to my neck. Those sitting on my nape were unambiguously conspicuous even after I got dressed.

I examined them in front of the mirror and exhaled, knowing well that they were going to stick out like a sore thumb if I were to show up at the office like this. However, it could not be helped as I could not possibly miss work just because of a few love-bites.

Meanwhile, Michael was already fully dressed when he came up beside me. His lips curled into a smug grin while he let his eyes linger upon the reflection of my neck in the mirror.

"Those actually don't look half-bad up here."

I knew what exactly he was referring to, and if my mood was not bad enough, hearing Michael's words made me roll my eye at him.

As if doing it was not enough for this man, he had to leave such an embarrassingly large mark behind on me.

"Would you think the same if I left the same thing on you?"

He could be as blasé as he wanted because I was the one who was branded, but I reckoned that he would not have the roles been reversed.

"I won't mind it if you want to." Michael's stylishly arched brow perked up while he spoke.

His equanimity was starting to wear on me. Since he said he was amendable to it, I should stamp one on him and see how much he enjoyed that.

With that in mind, I elevated myself onto the tip of my toe before he could react and sucked hard upon his neck, withdrawing in satisfaction only after I had left a very prominent impression behind.

“It seems more like you’re drinking blood rather than creating a love-bite, Anna.”

Michael looked upon me in derision before turning away and out of the bedroom. The man was long gone just as I was beginning to catch his drift.

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“Hold it right there, Michael! Who’re you calling a vampire?”

I couldn’t believe he was disgusted by the fact that I did not know how to plant a hickey.

Today, Michael offered me a ride to the company. I did not refuse because that meant I did not have to take the subway and could save a few pennies.

I then got into Michael’s car. Glancing sideways, I spotted the hickey I had planted on his neck. I felt a sense of accomplishment as well as the satisfaction of revenge.

The CEO of the company had a hickey on his neck, one that was more obvious than mine. I wondered if Michael would be worried that other people could see it.

“Are you done yet? I don’t mind if you want to plant a few more.” Michael spoke.

He eyed me when he noticed that my gaze was still fixated on his neck.

“No. I think one is obvious enough. Not everything is a number’s game.”

I was looking forward to seeing how he would react once he stepped into the office. Would he be overcome with embarrassment? After all, I planted that thing in plain sight.

However, Michael merely peered at me. Keeping his eyes on the road, he said nothing.

Soon, we reached the office. Right then, the coast was clear in the underground parking, so I quickly got out of Michael's car.

The two of us basically arrived at the office one after the other. Michael was the Prince Charming in the eyes of most of the women working there, so naturally, his presence attracted the most attention. My gaze followed him as well.

With a blank expression on his face, he walked towards his office. Right at that moment, everyone gasped when they spotted the hickey on his neck—some widened their eyes in shock, while others expressed disbelief.

After all, this had never happened before.

Everyone returned to their senses only after Michael entered his office. And right after that, chaos ensued.

"Did you see that? There's a hickey on Mr. Shaw's neck!"

"I saw it! I saw it! It's so obvious!"

"Has Mr. Shaw spent the night with a woman? If so, it must have been quite exciting!"

"Oh my gosh, how did it end up this way? I thought Mr. Shaw's not interested in relationships. I'm so heartbroken."

"Who do you think Mr. Shaw's spent the night with? If I ever find out who she is, I'll never forgive her."

"You said it! How dare she steal Mr. Shaw from us, and right under our noses too! She's got a death wish!"

Everyone present had started gossiping about, many of whom seemed disappointed.

Although I knew Michael could not possibly be inexperienced with women, he was just too good at keeping secrets. Even if he had dated or slept with anyone, there was no chance we would find out about it.

I just never expected that me leaving a hickey on his neck would cause such an uproar.

Besides, what those women said somehow made me anxious. If they find out that I'm the one who planted the hickey on Michael's neck, will they come after me?

I was starting to regret what I did and began to worry about myself. I worried that they would come to trouble me the way they did before.

"Anna, did you see that? Mr. Shaw's got a hickey on his neck."

While I was indulging in my thoughts, I heard Millie calling me. She, too, had not snapped out of the shock.

"What? Oh... so there is," I mumbled, somewhat ashamed.

"Who do you reckon could pull off a stunt like that?"

Millie turned around to look in the direction of Michael's office, seemingly in deep thought.

"How would I know? I'm not very close to him."

Perhaps it was because I knew what I did, I was beginning to feel guilty. I could not bring myself to look Millie in the eye.

"True. We're just regular employees. How could we possibly get a handle on Mr. Shaw's private life? I'm guessing the woman who managed to sleep with him must be absolutely gorgeous. Oh dear, the girls here are going to have their hearts broken."

After she got my reply, Millie stopped pursuing the matter. I then heaved a long sigh of relief.

However, what she said next made my heart leap to my throat.

"Hey, Anna, what's that on your neck? Is that a hickey?"

Millie's gaze fell upon the hickey on my neck, while a surprised look crossed her face.

She saw it! In a panic, I covered my neck with my hands while guilt flashed across my face. "What do you mean? I was bitten by a mosquito. There were lots of those in the room last night."

"A mosquito? Anna, what do you take me for? I'm not a kid, you know. Do you think I can't tell a hickey from a mosquito bite?"

Apparently, Millie did not buy my explanation; she pursed her lips, doubt written all over her face.

Sometimes, Millie was just too smart for her own good. If only she could apply her cleverness to her work, she would become more than just a regular employee.

"It's really a mosquito bite." I insisted.

Even though I could not convince Millie, I would not want to admit it either. After all, having a hickey on the neck was not exactly glorious.

"Whatever, you can't fool me! We're all adults here, so there's nothing to be shy about. So things got a little too intense last night. That's totally normal."

Unlike me, Millie did not think that hickeys were embarrassing. She had, in fact, spoke of it quite generously.

I looked at her and gave an awkward smile, not sure how to get the conversation rolling.

"Well, this is a coincidence. You and Mr. Shaw got a hickey at the same time. Don't tell me you two spent the night together..."

Millie seemed to have thought of something when she suddenly linked Michael and I together. Although she was just making a guess, my heart skipped a beat. After all, one could not help feeling guilty after committing a bad deed.

"N-Nonsense! How could I have gone out with Mr. Shaw? You can't joke about stuff like this!"

Driven by my guilty conscience, my heart kept thumping. Deep down, I was scared, but I still put up a false pretense of calmness and composure.

I could not let anyone know that I was the one who spent the night with Michael. Many female coworkers were currently speculating about the mystery girl who slept with him, and they made it clear that if they found her, they would make her pay. Knowing what was at stake, I would never admit it.

"Alright, fine. What's the matter with you? It's just a harmless joke. You should see how nervous you looked, almost like you're the one whom Mr. Shaw spent the night with last night," Millie said with a smile when she saw how flustered I got.

“Don’t ever make these kinds of jokes, okay? Don’t you know that those people,” I pointed at the women around the workplace, “won’t think twice about sinking their teeth into the girl who slept with our boss? If they think it was me, I’m dead meat!”

I knew a lot about women’s jealousy and what the ladies could do because of it. Hence, there was no way I would want to stick a target on my head.

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“Alright, alright. I’ll shut up about it, okay? Look how frightened you are! Anybody else would have jumped at the chance to be known as the last person Mr. Shaw had slept with. But you’re something else. You’re so scared.”

Every time Millie talked about me and Michael, I would try my hardest to draw a line between us. Apparently, Millie thought I was just being a scaredy cat.

But I did not care what anybody else thought as long as no one knew whatever was going on between Michael and I. At the end of the day, I would not want to become the public enemy of every other female employees here.

“I just want to work and earn a living in peace. I don’t want to think about anything else. Mr. Shaw and I? No way.”

What I said was only half true. Of course I wanted to be with Michael, but I did not have faith that it would last.

“You’re right. Every woman here knows that Mr. Shaw won’t fall for us, but we just can’t help fantasizing about it, you know? It’s not going to happen, but a girl can dream.”

Actually, my coworkers were well aware that a relationship with the boss was impossible. Michael would never pick them, but they would still dream about the possibility. In that aspect, I was no different from them at all.

I did not reply Millie. Instead, I dipped my head and went back to work.

Michael’s hickey might have caused a great sensation but, as work got busier, the news slowly slipped away from everyone’s mind. Eventually, people stopped talking about it. At that, relief washed over me.

After an entire day at work, I was pretty exhausted. At that moment, I just wanted to get home, have a shower, and catch some well-needed Z's. Last night with Michael was absolute madness! Deprived of sleep, I felt dizzy the whole day. Hence, there was only one thought in my mind right then, which was to get some sleep!

When it was time to leave work, I cleaned up my desk and was about to go when my phone rang just as I rose to my feet. I looked at the caller ID and saw that it was my mom.

I hesitated for a while and eventually answered the call. "Hi, Mom."

"You're off work, right, Anna? Why don't you come home? I'd like to talk to you."

I heard her voice coming from the other end of the phone. She did not sound as cold and distant as before, but somehow it lacked emotion.

Thus, I was a little surprised by the shift in her attitude. Although she was rather indifferent whenever we talked, I felt inexplicably happy to have received her call.

"All right, I'm on my way."

I had no idea what my mom wanted to tell me. But I ended the call right away and headed straight to the rented house I got for them some time ago. I guess sleep would just have to wait.

When I got there, the door was not shut tight, so it opened with just a light push. At that time, I could see Mom preparing dinner in the kitchen. She sent a faint greeting my way when she saw me.

"You're here, Anna."

"Yes, I'm back."

I responded just as faintly. There was nothing else to say since I still could not grasp heads or tails of her change in attitude towards me.

"Why don't you sit at the table, or go say hi to Stevie? Dinner will be ready soon."

Mom's voice rang from the kitchen again yet again, her tone unchanging.

For the first time in forever, Mom did not fire up when she saw me, just like she used to in the past whenever I returned home. Touched by her

perceived change in behavior, my eyes reddened. Has Mom finally got it to her head not to be mad at me anymore?

“Okay. I’ll go check on Steven first, then I’ll come to help you.”

I sniffled with a grin spread across my face. The next thing I knew, I was walking into Steven’s room.

Steven was leaning against the headboard, playing on his mobile phone. Although he had been discharged from the hospital, his legs were still in casts, making it inconvenient to walk.

“Hi, Steven. How have you been doing lately? How are your legs?”

I sat down in front of him. From the fruit bowl, I randomly selected an orange and began peeling it.

“Still hurts, but I feel a lot better than before.”

Oddly, Steven’s animosity toward me had faded. He did not look at me, for his eyes were glued to the phone, but at least he responded.

Well, what do you know... My family’s attitude toward me seems to have changed. That’s a huge relief.

“Oh, okay. But you still ought to be careful and take lots of rest. We don’t want any lingering side effects.”

I threw in a reminder as I handed the peeled orange to Steven.

Steven gazed at the orange. He blinked once, shot me a glance, and accepted the fruit.

“Okay. Anyway, you can leave now. Don’t distract me from playing my game.”

After Steven ate the orange, his patience dwindled, and he was already asking me to leave.

Compared to how he behaved in the past, his attitude toward me had certainly changed for the better, so I had nothing against that. I rose to my feet and left the room.

Then, I came to the kitchen. Mom was still busy making dinner, so I approached her and helped to clean the vegetables. That evening, the whole family was at peace. I felt content, so much so that I allowed another smile to form.

“So... Mom, why the sudden call today? What is it you want to talk to me about?”

I remembered the phone call—Mom said she wanted to talk to me about something. Right then, I wondered what it could be.

“We can talk at the table.”

Mom was still cooking, so she did not spare me a look.

The fact that she had gone silent only made me wonder even more, but I said nothing about it.

Dinner was especially lavish tonight. Mom had prepared a few of my favorite dishes, and a few more of Steven’s. He could not walk on his own for the time being, so I pushed him in his wheelchair whenever I could.

“Have some more. It’s your favorite.”

In the past, Mom would give the tasty ones to Steven first, but today was different. She placed some braised pork ribs into my bowl, and when she spoke to me her tone was soft, albeit not quite affectionate.

I looked up at her in bewilderment. This was the first time she gave me good food on her own accord. An indescribable feeling swept through me, close to bittersweet.

“Thanks, Mom.”

Tears were brimming in my eyes. I smiled at Mom, filled with gratitude.

Then I dipped my head and savored the ribs she got me. It was a touching moment as I had finally experienced homely goodness.

“Anna, I called you home today because I need to ask you something.”

I was halfway through the ribs when she brought it up.

“What is it?”

I stopped eating and turned to face her.

“What’s going on between you and Michael? Are you two dating?”

I panicked at the sudden mention of Michael. Mom can't possibly be that persistent, can she? Does she still view Michael as some sort of money-spinner?

The last time Mom asked Michael for money, it had been embarrassing. I did not want something like that to happen again.

"Mom, you're thinking too much. Michael's my boss, not my boyfriend."

I looked into her eyes as I explained.

I was telling the truth. Indeed, Michael was not my boyfriend, and he would never be.

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"But I feel that whatever there is between the two of you is not as simple as an employment relationship. I'm your mother, Anna. I've raised you since you were a baby. Don't you think I know how you tick?"

Mom chose to ignore my explanations. Besides, I could see that she had more to say as she bored into my eyes.

Confronted by her incessant questioning, I averted her gaze guiltily. I did not have a good answer for her. After all, I could not very well say that Michael and I were friends with benefits, could I?

Mom and Dad had a more traditional mindset. Thus, if I really said that out loud, I would probably never see the light of day again.

"Mom, Michael's really not my boyfriend..."

I might not know what else to say, but I most definitely could not let Mom and Dad assume that Michael was my boyfriend. Otherwise, they would just keep asking Michael for money, devoid of any shame or guilt.

"If Michael's not your boyfriend, then... is it true? Is it true what they say, that you're his mistress?"

The conversation suddenly took an ugly turn. I froze when she called me a mistress. I looked at Mom with a pained expression, and my heart ached.

Mom actually called me a mistress. I was well aware that my relationship with Michael was not something that could be discussed openly. If other people had called me that, I probably would not have minded. However, out of all people, it had to be my mother who used that word.

I'm your daughter, Mom. How can you call me that? It's such a demeaning term! Have you ever considered my feelings?

"Mom, how can you say that?"

My eyes turned misty as I stared at her, feeling upset.

"Anna, we are decent people. How could you let yourself be someone else's mistress? Do you have any idea the shame you've brought to your father and me? What are we supposed to do the next time we meet our relatives?"

Mom did not give me a straight answer. But instead, she had basically decided that I was Michael's mistress.

"I'm not! I'm not anybody's mistress!"

Mom always jumped to her own conclusions. She never listened to me, and even if I did elaborate, she would not believe me anyway.

It was then that Dad, who had been eating silently while Mom and I were bickering, announced his stance on the matter. "I don't care what you are. From now on, I want you to cut ties with Michael. Don't ever see him again."

He spoke harshly. My dad was never much of a talker, but whenever he opened his mouth, his words were intimidating.

"Dad, he's my boss. I work there. How can we not meet? What's up with you guys today? Why are you telling me this all of a sudden?"

I was very confused. In the past, Mom and Dad had never asked me about my relationship with Michael. Today, out of the blue, they called me to come home and then proceeded to ask about whatever was between us. It was all too weird.

"Then quit your job! Go work at another company! There's bound to be one that will take you!"

Dad's stern voice sounded again, but he did not answer my question.

“Why? Why must I quit my job? For your information, Joyful Success offers the highest salary in the entire design industry, and it’s a company with the most promising future for me. How can I give that up so easily?”

Without having to think, I rejected Dad’s demand. Getting the opportunity to work in Joyful Success was not an easy feat, and I would not let it go to waste!

“High salary, you say? Then how long will it take for you to earn one million?”

It was Steven who spoke this time. He looked at me with contempt.

“What do you mean by one million?” I stared at him quizzically.

I had no idea what he meant, but I had a bad feeling that I was about to find out.

“To tell you the truth, a woman came to us a couple of days ago. She told us that as long as you stay away from Michael, she’ll give us one million.”

Steven could be quite a thoughtless person. With no effort at all, he had voluntarily spilled the beans.

Hearing that, I suddenly felt like I was struck by lightning. Instantly, I understood why Mom and Dad wanted me to come home, and why they deliberately brought up Michael.

Their eyes are on a prize all along!

This was ridiculous. I thought my family had changed their attitude toward me. I thought Mom had forgiven me. However, I had just come to realize that she was putting up a pretense all this time. She was good to me because she wanted the reward money.

“Mom, you’re doing it for the money, aren’t you?”

I looked into my mother’s eyes, holding onto what little glimmer of hope I had left. I hoped she could give me a good explanation and tell me that it was not the money she was after.

All that, despite the fact that I already had an answer. I knew what kind of person Mom was. For a moment, I just did not want to believe it.

She glanced at me, and I could see the guilt in her eyes. Then, she avoided my gaze but remained silent. Her actions only verified what I feared to be true.

"I guess Steven's right. You just want the money." I sneered.

A chill spread throughout my veins. I thought I had finally felt what it meant to fit right at home, but it turned out that I had only been fooling myself.

Facing Mom, I snickered. As I laughed, tears began to flow down my cheeks. What kind of world is this? The people I consider dearest to me can't seem to stop conspiring against me.

"Come off it! Michael's not your boyfriend anyway! Just quit your job, and we can get one million! Think about it! One million is a very large sum! It's just waiting to fall into our laps! It's a blessing, I say!"

Mom was becoming desperate. She knew I would not do it, and she was getting flustered.

"A blessing? By sacrificing me and my future? What do you plan to do with that money? Can you really bring yourself to spend it, knowing what you did to get it? Which one is more important to you: Me, or one million offered by a stranger?"

Between the three of them, they would probably choose the money and get me away from here. They would rather get their "blessing" in exchange for my suffering.

Is money that important to them? So important that family means nothing?

"There's nothing to compare! I don't care what you are to Michael! I want you to leave that man! And this city as well!"

They paid no mind to the pain they had caused me. The only thing they cared about was to get me to leave so that one million would be theirs.

"I'm not leaving him, and I'm not resigning my post. You'd better give up that thought!" I shouted as I wiped away the tears with the back of my hand, all the while glaring at them.

However, I would never give in. I would not leave, and I would not let them have the money because they had the gall to put a price on my pain and suffering.

"You... How dare you speak to us like that? You've become rebellious, that's what you are! We're your parents. You must obey us!"

Dad slammed the table and rose to his feet. He was purple with rage.

“Oh, I’m surprised you’re aware that you’re my parents. But as parents, shouldn’t you be supportive of your child? Look at you! Time and time again, you’re the ones forcing me to do what you want. Have you ever seriously thought about what I want?”

All these years, just because they were my parents, I had compromised time and time again. There were many times I wanted to fight back, but I relented because I felt indebted to them for raising me. But not anymore!

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Probably because of Michael, I was firm with my stance this round. In an instant, my parents’ faces turned grim. Even though they were gazing at me with an unmissable sense of guilt in their eyes, I could foresee that they would not easily change their minds.

“Let me put it this way. As long as you are willing to cut ties with that man, we won’t be bothered no matter where you intend to go for your career advancement in the future. After we receive this one million, you don’t have to transfer us money again. By then, your burden will be eased as well. It’s a win-win situation for us, isn’t it?” My dad voiced his opinions and negotiated with me in a way. All this while, he was the core decision-maker at home as the patriarchy concept was deeply ingrained in our family.

“I won’t leave him, so you won’t be able to get that one million as well.” I took a firm stand by emphasizing my decision. I had made up my mind to turn a deaf ear to them this round and would not give in to them no matter what. They could only blame themselves for letting me down.

“Anna, you are really adamant! Since Dad and Mom have made themselves clear, why are you still so persistent? What’s the point to continue staying by his side? Will he give you one million because of that? Fine then, if you insist, get him to give us one million first. By then, I’m sure Dad and Mom won’t force you again.”

I had had enough bickering with Dad and Mom, and now Steven was adding oil to the fire. All of them were forcing me to leave Michael!

“Is money all that you care about—that you would rather sacrifice everything else just for the sake of money?” I scoffed.

They are all the same. Their minds are preoccupied with one million, and they never spare any thoughts for me! At that very moment, I felt dejected like a deflated balloon.

“Money is the most important thing in the world! Tell me—what can one do without money? Do you think you can survive without a single penny?” My mom refuted in great displeasure, and my heart fell upon hearing her words.

Undeniably, we can't survive without money. Even so, money can't buy everything in this world. Don't they know that there's a price to pay for everything? If they get that one million but ruin my future, won't they feel guilty about it?

“I can work hard to earn that money. As long as I maintain my good work performance in Joyful Success, I foresee that I can earn one million within a few years.” I retorted.

Even though one million was a large sum, as long as I had good career growth, I was sure it was a gainable sum within just a few years.

I refused to leave Michael mainly because I did not wish to end my relationship with him. Apart from that, I could not let go of my current job.

“Hmph! By the time you manage to earn one million, we might've already starved to death! Anna, do you even hear yourself!” Steven mocked with narrowed eyes. He had apparently lost his patience in me.

“No matter what, I won't give in this round!” I lashed out at them and stood up at once. Deep down, I knew that they would not consider my words, what's more, to change their minds. Thus, there was no point for me to waste time arguing with them. Without hesitation, I stormed out and slammed the door.

The moment I stepped out of my parents' house, tears started to roll down my cheeks. Right that instant, it struck me that I was worthless in their eyes.

Taking a deep breath, I tried my best to hold back my tears. It's not worth shedding my tears for them!

Since my family members were treating me inconsiderately all this while, I talked myself into behaving more selfishly for the rest of my lifetime. From now onwards, I will not be soft-hearted and give in to them again! Of course, I will continue to play my part well as a filial daughter, but I won't force myself to do anything beyond my capability. On top of that, I will not sacrifice myself for anyone's sake anymore.

Recalling what my parents had mentioned to me earlier, my gut instinct told me that it must have something to do with Emma.

Talking about a well-to-do woman who intends to let me leave Michael, I can't think of anyone else but her. Hmph! This manipulative woman even thinks of bribing my parents. She has apparently investigated me earlier on and knows well about my family issues!

After taking a few more deep breaths, I managed to cool down and cheer myself up. Then, I took out my phone and gave Emma a call.

"Ms. Garcia, what a surprise to receive your call! Is there anything that I can help you with?" The moment my call got through, Emma answered it almost at once languorously.

A wave of fury surged from within me at the thought of how she set me up by bribing my parents. I tried to cool my head off by tamping down the rage within myself. "Stop putting on a show! I'm sure you know the reason I call you now, don't you?"

"How would I know? Ms. Garcia, if there's nothing else, I will hang up now. I'm too busy to entertain you," she replied insolently.

Infuriated by Emma's insolence, I could not hold back any longer and snarl, "You're the one who bribed my parents with one million so they can talk me into leaving Michael, aren't you? How could you do this?"

"Oh, I see, so it's about this. Yeah, you're right, I was the one. So what about it?" she admitted without any sense of guilt.

"You despicable woman! How could you stoop so low? Your main intention is to force me into leaving Michael. But, why do you have to drag my family members into this mess?" I gritted my teeth and bellowed at her.

I was already having a strained relationship with my family members lately. Yet, her sudden strike was adding fuel to the fire, causing me to burn the bridges with my family members.

Even though I rejected them on the spot and left immediately after that, I knew that things had not come to an end. I was pretty sure that my mom would not easily let go of the opportunity to gain such a large sum of money.

"Me? A despicable woman? Hah! If I'm despicable, then you are definitely shameless! Anna Garcia, who do you think you are? May I remind you that you're just Michael's f\*ck buddy, whose only job is to satisfy him in bed! So don't you dare think too highly of yourself!" Emma retaliated with oppressive words. My anger was exacerbated by her harshness, yet I was at a loss for words to refute.

“Emma Jones, watch your manners! The more you provoke me, the more I’m determined to be with Michael. It doesn’t matter if I’m only his f\*ck buddy, ’cause at least we’re f\*cking each other, unlike you with him! He’s not even interested to even touch you at all... And I was the one who thought too highly of myself! Hah! Just look at you!”

No matter how badly I was chided by others, I would never let my weaker self be exposed to them. Furthermore, I wasn’t good at pretending to be innocent, and I didn’t have to do that as well. I would rather defend myself, especially when I was facing Emma, and retaliate her provocations firmly.

“Anna Garcia, you watch your mouth! After all, I’m still an heiress, and you—you’re just a nobody!” Emma raised her voice in agitation. I had apparently triggered her emotion with my words. Ah! As expected, she is upset because Michael is not keen on sleeping with her!

“I’m not interested in this bicker with you, Emma. But let me get one thing straight—no matter what kind of plots you are scheming, I won’t let you succeed!” I scoffed while glaring at her coldly. I hated those who set me up and those who exploited my family to threaten me even more.

“Anna, even if your parents fail to talk you into giving in to them, don’t be complacent and think that I can’t do anything to you! There are still many other methods!” Emma’s icy-cold voice sounded from the other end of the line.