

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 511

Chapter 511 Love At First Sight

Alicia's gaze darted guiltily to me as she chastised Janette. I reassured her, "It's fine. She's still a kid. I'll just let it go." Indeed, I saw Janette as a kid though she was already in her twenties. It was difficult to see her as anyone other than a spoiled, immature princess.

Still, jealousy swelled in my chest when I thought of Alicia showering all her love on Janette. Nonetheless, I was not going to express my emotions.

Thank God Janette hates me, or I'd have to pretend to be some loving elder sister. I don't think I could bring myself to perform such a pretentious act.

My attempt to brush off Janette's impudence seemingly infuriated her. The younger girl strode toward me and shrieked indignantly, "Who are you calling a kid? I'm twenty-two! Why must you speak so scornfully?"

I frowned deeply in the face of her screeching. Annoyance ballooned in my chest. Just how spoilt is this girl? I can't believe she can behave so rudely to someone else!

Ronan seemed equally vexed by her prima donna behavior. He stepped forward and said sternly, "We're in a hospital ward now, Ms. Campbell. Shouldn't you watch your volume?"

Since we were in his hospital, his words held the most sway in this establishment.

Ronan speaking up to defend me must have been beyond everyone's expectations. Janette fumed, whirling around in preparation to tell off whoever had dared to reprimand her. When she saw and recognized Ronan, however, she seemed to swallow the words on the tip of her tongue.

Her gaze flickered as she stared at Ronan's handsome face. Then, she lowered her head peevishly and apologized, "I'm sorry. I lost control of my emotions."

Janette's apology sounded unnatural and stilted. I was surprised that she actually volunteered an apology. Did the Sun rise from the West today? Why is this spoiled princess apologizing to someone of her own accord?

I turned around and looked at Janette, noticing that her gaze darted to Ronan's face from time to time. Suddenly, everything made sense. Is this what people call love at first sight?

A faint smirk curved Ronan's lips as he uttered flatly, "The patient needs a quiet environment for optimal recovery. You should get a better grip on your emotions."

While I appreciated Ronan's gesture of speaking up for me, I dared not express my gratitude in front of Michael. Who knew what little thing would set off his jealousy at that time.

"I understand. I'll watch my emotions from now on and refrain from speaking loudly."

Janette continued to keep her head lowered, the perfect picture of an elegant lady in front of Ronan.

A woman's intuition was rarely off-target, and I instinctively knew that Janette had a crush on Ronan. Unfortunately for my half-sister, Ronan stared at her as though she were a stranger.

Though Ronan seemed like an easy-going person, he did not fall in love easily. I wondered whether Janette, our resident spoiled princess, would be able to win him over.

Meanwhile, Ronan averted his gaze from Janette's face and stared at me. With a faint smile on his face, he said, "I'm going off to attend to some other matters, Anna. I'll drop by your house for dinner soon!"

"Sure. I'll let my housekeeper know to prepare your favorite dishes when you come by."

Ronan had been a great help to me over the years, and I was naturally thankful for our friendship.

"Well, I'm taking my leave. Call me if you need anything."

He gestured a calling motion with his hand before turning and heading for the ward door.

"Bye, Michael!"

As Ronan walked past Michael, he clapped a hand over his older cousin's shoulder. Then, he took his leave.

Janette watched Ronan's departing figure with irritation. She appeared to be displeased about his hasty departure.

I could not help but sneer at her behavior. That was the extent of my interest in her romantic intentions. I did not particularly care if her crush on Ronan was the real deal.

Just then, Alicia directed her gaze toward me and asked gently, “Anna. Have you had lunch?”

I snapped out of my thoughts and returned Alicia’s stare. I replied, “No, I haven’t. I’ll cook a nourishing soup for you once I’m home. The doctor said that you’re suffering from mild malnutrition. You need to improve your nutrition.”

While I was no longer cold toward her like before, I was slowly warming up to the idea of accepting her as my mother. It was difficult for me to be affectionate with her, and I predicted that I would need some time to get over the emotional barrier in my heart.

Alicia shot me a fond gaze, yet she rejected my offer. “There’s no need for that. It’s too troublesome.”

“It’s not troublesome at all. Your health is the number one priority. You should get all the help you can to recover quickly.”

My face seemed impassive, but that did not diminish the genuine concern I held over her health. I merely found it awkward to act as though I was close to her.

“Thank you.”

Alicia continued to gaze at me tenderly as she clasped my hand in hers.

I asked Michael to return home without me because I wished to spend more time with Alicia in the hospital. I had been worried that unforeseen complications would arise during my absence, and Michael had dropped everything at the office to accompany me. Now that Alicia’s condition had stabilized, I was sufficiently relieved, and Michael was less concerned about leaving us alone at the hospital.

After Michael left, I chatted casually with my biological mother. Perhaps it was because we were not yet familiar with one another, but our conversations were short and brief. She no longer repeated her wish for my forgiveness, probably aware that bringing up the topic would only make our situation more awkward.

Just then, Janette approached me. She met my stare briefly before taking a seat beside me.

“Do you know that man who came into the ward earlier?” she asked stiffly. Then, she shot me an expectant gaze.

I knew she was talking about Ronan, and I was surprised that she was trying to ask me for information about him.

“Yes, I know him,” came my nonchalant reply.

I still reserved a modicum of courtesy for Janette as long as she did not behave outrageously toward me.

Janette's gaze lit up at my reply. She pressed on, "What does he do for a living?"

"He owns hospitals. In fact, we're standing in one of the hospitals that he owns."

My expression remained as calm as before. Janette's questions about Ronan confirmed my suspicions that she had begun nursing a crush on him.

"Wait. He owns this hospital?" Janette's surprise was palpable, and her gaze appeared to brighten further.

"Yes."

She immediately asked, "Do you have his contact information?"

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Chapter 512 A Stinging Lesson

Janette sounded painfully awkward as she asked me for Ronan's contact information. She probably remembered her poor treatment of me earlier.

I responded, "I have his contact information, but I won't give it to you."

While I most definitely had Ronan's contact information, I was hardly going to give it to Janette just because she asked. I did not know if Ronan liked her, and I worried that she would pester him to no end after getting his number.

Janette's eyes lit up when I replied in the affirmative regarding my possession of Ronan's contact information. However, her face fell a second later when I expressed my refusal to give it to her.

"What the heck are you doing, Anna? Are you playing a prank on me? Why would you refuse to give me his contact information if you have it?"

The spoiled girl leaped to her feet and glared daggers at me, her tone thick with anger.

My expression turned cold, and I returned her furious glare with one of my own. I retorted, "Why should I give it to you? Do I owe you anything?"

Her prima donna attitude vexed me to no end. She behaved as though everyone owed her anything she desired.

I may have Ronan's number, but sharing it is my prerogative! How is it my fault when I'm acting within my rights? The gall!

Meanwhile, Janette pointed her finger accusatorily at me and screeched, "Don't be outrageous, Anna!"

Before I could reply to her, Alicia intervened. She berated Janette, "What on earth are you doing, Janette?"

Alicia followed this up with a cross look at her daughter.

I chalked her involvement up to concern over our already-precarious relationship. Alicia probably feared that my impression of her would fall from any association with Janette's ill-treatment of me, causing our relationship to fall apart.

To no one's surprise, the spoiled princess pointed at me and bellowed, "Mom, you saw what she did! She was rude to me first! I didn't do anything wrong!"

"I don't think your sister did anything wrong. She merely refused to give you that man's contact information. How could you yell at her over that?"

Alicia stared at Janette angrily. I could tell that my mother could no longer bear her spoiled daughter's selfish behavior.

"Mom, you never treated me like this. Everything changed after you discovered her. Do you not love me anymore? You only have eyes for your illegitimate daughter!" Janette spat viciously with no regard for my feelings.

The hurtful words had barely left her mouth when a slap landed right smack on her cheek.

Janette froze, utterly stunned. Frankly, I shared her surprise. I never thought Alicia could bear to strike the precious daughter she had spoiled for the past twenty or so years.

Alicia reprimanded, "You've gone too far, Janette. Did I teach you to talk like this?"

A moment later, she glanced at her hand after absorbing the magnitude of her actions. She appeared regretful of her actions.

"How could you hit me, Mom? You've never ever struck me, and now you've slapped me for her. I'm disappointed in you!"

After her wails, Janette burst into sobs and ran out of the ward.

"Janette!"

Alicia tried to halt her to no avail. Instead, she watched Janette run out of the ward with guilt written in her gaze. Her slap had evidently been impulsive, and she now deeply regretted her actions.

I remained silent the entire time. The regret on Alicia's face upset me. How could she feel sorry for slapping Janette when Janette deserved it? She loves Janette to the point of forgiving her impudent behavior.

Alicia continued to stare at the ward door in concern. I peeled an apple and passed it to her, muttering, "Don't be angry. Have some fruit."

My birth mother shot me a remorseful stare and hastily replied, "Don't take your younger sister's behavior to heart, Anna. It's my fault for spoiling her. She's not a mean person."

Here she was defending Janette again.

Flatly, I returned, "It's fine."

I did not like Janette at all. Consequently, I did not wish to talk about her with Alicia. Janette was nothing but a selfish, ill-mannered princess. She had been raised in a comfortable environment as the apple of everyone's eye, which turned her into the prima donna she was today.

Alicia received the apple from my hands, looking at me as though she had more to say.

Sensing that our situation had grown awkward, I piped up, "I'll make you some soup once I'm home. Do you need anything else? I'll bring them over when I drop by with the soup."

I made a move to leave.

"I don't need anything else. I'm already counting my blessings that you're willing to visit me."

She spoke cautiously despite her joy at my hours-long visit. I supposed it would take some time before we could get over our aloofness around each other.

"Well, I'm leaving then. Have a good rest. I'll come by at night."

I bid her farewell with an expressionless face. Then, I promptly got up and left the ward.

Actually, I would have loved to stay in Alicia's ward and continue taking care of her. Witnessing her coddling of Janette, however, was both stifling and upsetting. I knew it was only natural for Alicia to love Janette as a daughter, but I could not dispel the feeling that I had somehow lost my mother's favor.

When I returned to the Shaw residence, I saw Josephine and the housekeeper bustling about the kitchen. In contrast, I looked utterly dispirited.

Josephine saw me, and she walked toward me, asking lightly, "Anna, you're home?"

"Why are you in the kitchen, Mom? Did you make something delicious for me again?"

My mood was poor, but I refused to take it out on others. I managed to muster a weak smile for Josephine when I met her gaze.

"I was cooking chicken soup. I heard about Mrs. Campbell's hospitalization from Michael, so I guessed that you would come home to prepare something nourishing for her. That's why I went ahead and prepared something with the housekeeper to save you some time."

Josephine met my gaze, and she did not beat around the bush as she explained her actions.

Her considerate gestures regarding even the smallest things moved me. I said gratefully, "Thank you for being so thoughtful, Mom."

Ever since Josephine woke up from her coma, I had strongly suspected that she was my biological mother instead of Michael's.

"You don't need to stand on ceremony around me, you silly girl. I asked the housekeeper to prepare extra soup for you too. You've lost a lot of weight recently, so I want you to drink some soup later too. All right?"

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Chapter 513 Testing The Waters

Faced with Josephine's kind "orders," I replied, "I will. Let me change upstairs first, Mom. I'll return to drink some chicken soup later."

I shot my mother-in-law a small smile before heading upstairs. Josephine's thoughtful actions had taken a weight off my mind.

Once I returned to my bedroom, I took a quick shower in the attached bathroom. Though there was little for me to do at the hospital, I felt more exhausted now than after a full day's work.

Michael was home by the time I came out of the bathroom. His gaze traveled up and down my body before he approached me.

He wrapped me in his arms and asked gently, "How was your day at the hospital? Were you very uncomfortable?"

"It was fine. Other than the fact that I didn't click with Janette, everything else was bearable. Still, I'm not sure if I can completely forgive my birth mother," I answered him gloomily as I leaned deeper into his embrace.

He placed his chin on my head and coaxed, "Take things slowly. Everything has its own course. Even if you're planning to forgive her, it won't come so quickly or naturally to you."

I sighed in resignation, realizing the wisdom in his words.

After resting at home for slightly over an hour, I set off for the hospital. Michael wanted to send me, but I firmly denied his offer. He was undeniably exhausted after a day at work, and I did not want him to expend more energy on my matters.

I understood and appreciated his concern, but I eventually emerged triumphant in our little disagreement. He conceded and allowed me to drive to the hospital alone, but not before reminding me multiple times to be careful.

I reached the hospital in no time. When I got to my mother's ward floor, I was surprised to bump into Ronan. I had not seen him in a long time, and meeting him twice in a day felt rather odd.

"When did you become so hardworking, Ronan? Why are you still at the hospital this late at night? This sort of behavior seems entirely out-of-character for you!"

To be fair, he had matured a great deal, yet he was hardly going to be considered a workaholic. That was why I could not resist teasing him when I saw him at the hospital past working hours.

Ronan stared at me in displeasure. He rebuked me, "Can't you give me a break? I know I can hardly compare to Michael's dedication when it comes to work, but I'm not that bad. You're making it sound as though I'm a slob."

Still, the twinkle in his eyes told me that he was not angry at my words.

"You know I'm just pulling your leg. Why do you need to be serious?" I pouted before heading for Alicia's ward.

Ronan followed me. He asked with a face of confusion, "What happened just now? You still haven't explained anything to me. That's the whole reason I'm still at the hospital. Why did you suddenly have a birth mother? What about your parents? Are neither of them your biological parents?"

Frankly, that was the last thing I wanted to talk about. However, Ronan was a dear friend to me, and I did not plan on hiding the truth from him forever. I glanced at him before changing direction and heading to a nearby balcony.

My prolonged silence on the balcony prompted Ronan to say, "If you don't want to talk about it, Anna, it's fine. I would never force you to answer my question."

"That's not it. It's not that I don't want to tell you about it; I just don't know how to put the situation into words."

After what seemed like an eternity, I lifted my head and met Ronan's gaze. Then, I explained everything that had happened recently to him.

He positively gaped at me after I ended my story. A long moment passed before Ronan finally spoke up.

My friend exclaimed, "That's so dramatic. I could write a novel out of your life story. I can't believe your background is so complicated. You practically went from Cinderella to Snow White. What a surprise."

He appeared to find my predicament more amusing than it was upsetting.

His cheeky response annoyed me. I chided him, "What kind of logic is that? Don't you pity me? I'm almost thirty years old, and I just uncovered my true origins. I can't believe I didn't know I was an adopted child or that my birth mother would suddenly reappear in my life. I'm still struggling to come to terms with all these revelations."

Here I am fretting over my dilemma, and Ronan's already teasing me instead of comforting me. I wouldn't have told him anything if he was going to react like this.

As though sensing my misery, Ronan hastily explained himself, "I know you're feeling upset right now. That's why I was trying to lighten up the atmosphere. As your friend, I'm also upset when I see you worrying over your situation."

I rolled my eyes in response, having decided to brush off my earlier frustration at Ronan. Instead, I deadpanned, "Why, thank you. Thank you for making fun of my situation to lighten up the atmosphere."

"All right. Stop worrying about your situation. In time, everything will come to pass. I know you'll come to terms with the truth eventually; it's just too much for you to accept right now. Why don't you think about it from another angle? You can feel thankful that you now have a birth mother to cherish you on top of your adoptive parents. That's not such a bad thing now, is it?"

He patted my shoulder encouragingly as he seriously doled out some words of comfort.

His attempt at coaxing me caused me to purse my lips in frustration. I wished he kept his advice to himself. My mood's going down the drain instead of improving.

"Never mind. I'll head to the ward for now."

I dropped the topic and prepared to leave for Alicia's ward.

Rather than leave me alone, Ronan said, "I'll come with you. She's your mother, after all. I should be more attentive as both hospital staff and your friend."

He continued to follow me, and I paused in the middle of walking. I turned around and stared at him.

"Are you sure you want to follow me to the ward? Did you notice the girl who spoke to you in the ward this afternoon?"

I recalled Janette's eager attempt at wangling Ronan's phone number out of me earlier, and I decided to gauge Ronan's feelings toward my half-sister.

"Girl? What girl?" My question confounded Ronan.

He appeared to have forgotten his earlier exchange with Janette.

I tried to jog my forgetful friend's memory. "Her other daughter? The one who was challenging me in the ward the entire afternoon?"

"Oh, do you mean that fierce girl? I forgot her face. What's going on? Why are you suddenly telling me about some random stranger?"

Ronan's confusion was evident. In all likelihood, he was clueless about my motives for bringing up Janette in our conversation.

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Chapter 514 Do You Have A Girlfriend

"If I told you that she has fallen for you and wants to pursue you, would you believe me?" Instead of telling him directly, I hinted at it in a joking manner. Then, I looked at his face carefully while waiting for him to respond.

He looked me in the eye and answered with just one word. "Yes." "Are you that confident?"

His answer amused me. He hasn't changed one bit. I still remember how he rejected a woman the first time we met after I returned to the country.

Detecting the sarcasm in my voice, he flicked back his flaxen hair with a conceited expression. "Of course. After all, someone as handsome and wealthy as me is a rare specimen. It's only natural for women to swoon over me. It'd be strange if they didn't."

"You truly are a narcissist! That aspect of your character hasn't changed in the slightest."

It's always so easy to talk to Ronan. The way he talks makes one feel relaxed. If I'm being honest, it's a blessing to have a friend like him.

At that, Ronan turned to face me and began bad-mouthing Michael. "Do you want me to change? In comparison, you much prefer the quiet and reserved type like Michael. He always looks like the whole world owes him something with that infuriating expression of his that's just begging for a good beating."

I could not help giggling when I heard that. I can't believe this guy has the nerve to say that about Michael. If Michael were here, someone might just end up getting a good beating.

Although I knew Ronan had only said that because he wanted to make me laugh, I could not help feeling amused.

In all the years that I've known Michael, no one has ever dared to say anything like that about him. Ronan is the first one. Oh, how I wish Michael were here. I can almost imagine the grim expression on his face after hearing Ronan's "glowing" assessment of him.

"Aren't you afraid I'll tell Michael what you said about him? Who knows whether he'll beat you up because of it," I said with a chuckle. Feeling in much better spirits, I could not stop myself from cracking a joke too.

"What the heck! You won't tell him, right? I was only trying to keep you entertained, yet you're thinking of selling me out. We're best buddies. You can't do that to me," Ronan replied, feigning a terrified look. Then, he slung an arm around my shoulder as he tried to cotton up to me.

I knew his exaggerated response was merely a deliberate act. Although he always gets the short end of the stick when he's with Michael, his innate sense of fearlessness means that he isn't afraid Michael will try to do anything to him. On the contrary, he always stirs the pot by provoking Michael.

“You know, I think I might give it a try after seeing how anxious you look. I’m dying to know how Michael will react after hearing what you commented about him. I wonder whether he’ll show up at your house in the dead of night and give you a sound thrashing,” I replied, putting on a threatening tone. Then, I pushed away his arm around my shoulder and quickly walked off.

“Come now, Anna. We’ve been friends for so long, so you can’t throw me under the bus like that. How am I supposed to hook up with the ladies if Michael does beat me up until I’m blue and black with a swollen face? You wouldn’t want to disfigure me so that I end up a lonely bachelor for the rest of my life, would you?”

Ronan followed behind me as he prattled on. I shook my head in resignation as I listened to his ramblings and made no reply.

This guy can always make me forget my troubles and sadness. Indeed, I had completely forgotten about everything that had happened for a moment.

When we reached the door to the ward, a grave expression replaced the mischievous look on his face moments earlier. I have to hand it to him. The speed at which he switches his facial expressions is quite impressive indeed.

I opened the door and walked in with Ronan close behind. The only person in the ward was the housekeeper, and there was no sign of Janette. I guessed she must have run out after getting slapped and had yet to return.

Such is the behavior of a willful and spoiled brat. She can’t even take getting slapped by her own mother. I can’t believe she ran out just like that and hasn’t returned until now. Her mother is lying in the hospital, for goodness’ sake!

But since I was not fond of Janette and had no desire to talk about anything related to her, I completely ignored the fact she was not in the ward. I turned to Alicia and said, “I’ve brought you some chicken soup. Why don’t you have some?”

She gazed at me lovingly and broke into a smile when she saw me. Taking the bowl of soup from me, she said tenderly, “You must be tired after running around all day because of me.”

“It’s nothing. I’m used to it. When Dad had that heart surgery previously, I stayed in the hospital for a few consecutive days.”

I blurted out that remark without thinking, completely forgetting about our mother-daughter relationship at that moment. But as soon as the words left my mouth, I could not help feeling awkward.

Perhaps feeling unsettled by the mention of my foster parents, the expression on her face froze, and she looked at me with a hint of sadness.

She hung her head slightly and said in a voice filled with remorse, "You must've gone through a lot all these years."

"It's nothing. Didn't I say that I'm already used to it? So, you don't have to feel guilty about that anymore. We shouldn't live in the past."

I could not help feeling a pang in my heart when I saw the guilt in her eyes. Regardless of what had happened, she was still my mother. Hence, there was no way it would make me feel good to see her so upset.

Perhaps sensing the awkward tension in the air, Ronan stepped forward and spoke to Alicia in an attempt to change the subject. "Mrs. Campbell, allow me to introduce myself. I'm Ronan Moore, a good friend of Anna's."

Successfully diverting Alicia's attention, her gaze shifted toward him. She appeared pleasantly surprised after getting a good look at his face.

"Are you the person Janette was talking about earlier this afternoon?"

The way Alicia was gazing at him seemed to indicate that she had not expected to see him at the ward.

"Um, maybe..."

Ronan began looking a little embarrassed too. I could tell what Alicia was thinking from the look in her eyes.

She's still guilty about slapping Janette. And since Janette showed interest in Ronan earlier today, she must be plotting something.

"Your name is Ronan? That's a nice name," Alicia murmured.

She had a pleased look on her face after gazing at Ronan up and down. "Are you married? Do you have a girlfriend?"

She looked at him expectantly after asking the question. It was immediately clear to me what she was thinking, and uneasiness stirred within me.

"Er... Not at the moment."

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Chapter 515 Getting More Information

It was the first time I had seen Ronan looking so embarrassed. If it were anyone else, he probably wouldn't give them the time of day. But because she's my mother, he has to put up with it for my sake if not hers.

I lowered my head and listened to their conversation expressionlessly. It was natural for my mother to care about Janette, but it still bothered me a little.

"You don't have a girlfriend yet?"

Ronan's answer pleased Alicia even more, and she gazed at him with a smile in her eyes.

"Yeah. I don't," Ronan replied with a rather stiff smile. Clearly, he had also realized something.

"Janette seems to have a favorable impression of you after seeing you earlier. It's a pity she's not at the hospital now. Otherwise, you'd be able to meet her, and the two of you could get to know more about each other."

A look of concern flashed across Alicia's eyes when she brought up Janette, worried about how the latter had disappeared since noon.

"Oh... You're very humorous, Mrs. Campbell. I don't know your daughter, so why would she have mentioned me?"

When I mentioned Janette to him earlier, I sensed that he didn't harbor any interest in her. Hence, he's probably saying that as a subtle hint about his disinterest.

"You met her earlier this afternoon, but you probably don't remember because there were too many people today. She's Anna's younger sister. Since you're so close to Anna, I'm sure you and Janette will be able to become good friends."

After mingling with the wealthy and upper class for years, there's no way she wouldn't get Ronan's hint. It's just that she doesn't give a hoot. In fact, she's confident Ronan and Janette will get on like a house on fire!

"When it comes to matters of the heart, I believe that one should just let nature take its course. As an elder, you only have to give your blessings without interfering," I said.

Ronan was a good friend. Since he had no interest in Janette, I did not want anyone to try and force him into anything. And from what I knew about his character, it did not matter how much Alicia sang Janette's praises. If he had no feelings for Janette, nothing anyone said would change his mind. In fact, it would only make things much more uncomfortable for everyone.

Alicia must not have expected me to foil her attempt. She looked at me, a little surprised, and her expression stiffened for a split second. However, she quickly agreed with me by saying, "That's true. It was only a casual remark on my part."

"You're right. In terms of relationship matters, one can only go with the flow. There are too many imperfect relationships in the world. Take me, for example. I've had feelings for someone for over two years, but we weren't fated to be together. Hence, I have no plans of finding myself a girlfriend in the near future. It's enough for me if I can watch her lead a happy life," Ronan piped up.

His gaze fell on me as he spoke, and his earnest tone caused me to panic a little.

I knew those words were for my ears, and the person he mentioned was me. I could not bring myself to meet his gaze. I've always known he had feelings for me, but I had no clue he still likes me after all this time. After my return, I thought we'd be able to get along like normal friends.

He used to openly show his feelings for me, which made me avoid him. But after my return, he had never tried to confess his feelings to me or anything. I thought he had already put it behind him, but after hearing what he just said, I realized that that was not the case. He had not put it behind him. He was only keeping his feelings buried.

I was riddled with guilt toward Ronan because there was nothing I could do to reciprocate his feelings. I'm already with Michael, and I love Michael deeply. That makes it even more impossible for me and Ronan to be together. Falling for me must've brought him a lot of unnecessary hurts. Sometimes, I have the urge to make it up to him. But I don't know what I can do because I can't give him what he wants.

Alicia glanced at Ronan, then at me. She did not say a word. She must have read the situation but did not think it appropriate to say anything at that moment.

Not wanting to prolong the awkward atmosphere, I raised my head and looked at Ronan. Forcing myself to keep my tone steady, I said, "Ronan, it's getting late. You should head back and rest."

"Okay. I'll be leaving, then. Call me if anything crops up."

To my surprise, Ronan did not utter a single word of protest. He was probably also feeling embarrassed. After saying his piece, he turned and left.

I sat by the head of the hospital bed, my face impassive. "Hurry up and drink the soup. It'll get cold if you don't."

"Okay," Alicia answered calmly while shooting me a glance. Then, she began drinking the soup.

I did not know whether it was because I was the one who had brought the soup, but Alicia drank almost the entire bowl. I felt much more at ease after seeing that. She had gotten ill because of low blood sugar and lack of nutrition, so getting her to eat more would be helpful in her recovery.

After setting down the bowl, Alicia looked up at me and asked carefully, “Anna, are you very close to Ronan?”

I was momentarily stunned, not expecting she would suddenly mention him. A beat later, I said, “Yes. We’re good friends.”

“I could tell that the two of you share a special bond, and the way he looks at you isn’t anything like how one would look at a normal friend. I also have experience in these things, so naturally, I know how he feels about you.”

She had not believed a word I said. And now that Ronan had left, she did not have to be careful about what she said. I could not help feeling a little taken aback. How could she have seen through the relationship between Ronan and me in such a short time? What should I say? I can’t possibly admit that Ronan likes me, can I?

“I know how much you like Michael and how happy you are together. Hence, Ronan’s feelings toward you will no doubt make you feel pressured. You saw how your sister behaved today. She has a crush on Ronan. Can you pull some strings for her sake?” Alicia turned to me and spoke in a hesitant and pleading voice.

“I have no sister. I’ve never recognized Janette as my sister. As for Ronan’s feelings toward me, that’s his business. I’ve already mentioned Janette to him today, and he didn’t seem the least bit interested in her. That’s why I think it’s better if you don’t poke your nose into the affairs of others.”

Alicia’s intention was for me to set Ronan up with Janette. That much was clear. However, no matter how pressured I felt by his words, I could not arbitrarily force another woman onto him. In my eyes, someone like Janette did not deserve Ronan. Hence, I had no intention of intervening in the matter at all.

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 516

Chapter 516 Janette Is Missing

Alicia paled at my response, and she looked hurt. I realized I must have spoken a little too harshly. She gazed at me with a trace of sadness in her eyes and said, “I know you don’t really like Janette, but she’s still your sister.”

“Let’s not talk about this anymore. I don’t feel like discussing this topic. You should drink more of the soup. I’ll leave after you fall asleep.”

She hopes I can get along well with Janette, but that brat is bossy and domineering. I don't like her, and I don't want to waste my breath on this topic.

"Anna, can I ask you a favor as your moth—"

She stopped abruptly, realizing it was probably unwise to refer to herself as my mother. She looked at me warily, seemingly worried that she had angered me.

"If there's anything you need my help with, just tell me. I'll do whatever I can," I said.

Now that she was unwell, I would surely help her with whatever she needed as long as it was within my means.

"Janette dashed out at noon and hasn't been back since. I'm a little worried about her. I called her many times, but she didn't pick up. And now, her phone is switched off. I'm worried sick. Can you help me to look for her?" Alicia asked, looking at me with concern etched across her face.

I knew it. When I saw the look of distress on her face, I knew it had something to do with Janette. I frowned slightly. It had gotten to the point where the mere mention of Janette's name was enough to annoy me.

Seeing that I remained silent for a long time, Alicia became even more distressed. She tugged at my arm anxiously and pleaded in a tone full of urgency, "Anna, I know you don't like Janette. But, she's all alone in an unfamiliar place. If anything does happen to her, I don't know what I'd do. Since you don't like her, I'll send her home in a couple of days. I won't let her come to Avenport again."

"All right. I got it. I'll go and look for her later."

I could not bear to see her looking so anxious that I relented despite my disdain toward Janette. Sometimes, I really hate that about myself. When will I ever change?

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" Alicia thanked me profusely after hearing that.

The formal way in which she expressed her gratitude felt a little strange, but I refrained from saying anything.

"Get some rest. I'll go and look for her now. I'll give you a call if I find her. Don't worry."

After saying that, I got to my feet, picked up my coat, and left.

As I drove out of the hospital's compound, I pondered how I should go about searching for Janette. I don't have any way of contacting her, and I have no idea whether she had any friends here. Avenport is a big city, so it'll be challenging to locate her.

Feeling irritated, I had just stopped the car a short distance from the hospital when Michael called. I answered my phone without hesitation.

"It's late. Aren't you coming back yet? Do you need me to pick you up?"

Michael had a soothing and steady voice. Although I was feeling a little irritated, listening to his voice inexplicably put me at ease immediately.

I sighed softly and muttered, "I can't go back yet, and I don't know what time I'll be able to go back."

He sounded worried as he quickly asked, "What's the matter? Did something happen? Didn't the doctor say that she fainted because of low blood sugar and lack of nutrition?"

Knowing he was worried the worse had happened, I quickly explained how Alicia had slapped Janette, causing the latter to run off in a fit of anger. I also told him that Alicia had not been able to reach Janette and that I had given in and agreed to help look for her.

Michael breathed a sigh of relief after hearing my explanation and said reassuringly, "Don't worry. It'll be fine. She's not a little girl, so she won't let herself get into any danger."

"I hope so. I can't believe how stubborn and spoiled Janette is behaving. It's so inconsiderate of her to disappear for such a long time."

I glanced at my watch and saw that it was almost eleven o'clock at night. Thinking about how I still had to run around looking for Janette, I could not help grumbling to Michael, and my impression of her dipped even lower.

"Where are you now? I'll go over and look for her with you. I'll also call a few other people to help with the search."

Michael's tone was as gentle as ever. He's usually a man of few words. But when he talks to me, he speaks in such a soft and gentle tone. That's what I like about him.

"I'm just outside the hospital's entrance, but you don't have to come over. You've had a long day at work, so you must be exhausted. You should rest early. I'll look for her myself."

He's so busy with his work, so I don't want to have him deal with my problems too. When I'm with him, I always feel like I'm troubling him. At times, I hate myself for that.

“I don’t feel comfortable with you driving alone at such a late hour. Just wait for me at the entrance. I’ll be there soon,” Michael responded in a firm and commanding voice that showed he would not take no for an answer.

Knowing that it was pointless for me to protest, I finally agreed. “All right. I’ll be waiting for you.”

I sat inside my car, waiting at the hospital’s entrance. Soon, Michael’s car came into sight. As I got in, I said, “You didn’t have to come. You’re always so tired from work. If I even have to trouble you with things like these, then what else can I do on my own?”

Michael is so protective of me that, occasionally, I get the feeling that I’m useless. I thought I had become much stronger after staying abroad for one year, but I’m still a weakling in front of him. I can’t do anything at all.

“It’s only natural for me to take good care of my wife. What if you didn’t manage to find her and wound up in an accident?” Michael asked while arching an eyebrow, completely ignoring my concern for him.

Nonetheless, I felt happy to have him with me.

Changing the topic, Michael turned to me and asked solemnly, “Do you have any clues on where to look for her?”

“No. We can’t get Janette on her phone, so I don’t know where she could be. All we can do is look around blindly,” I responded with a sigh, feeling slightly frustrated. Without any clues to aid our search, it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

“Do you have any idea how big Avenport is? If you’re planning on searching without any clues, you’ll be looking for a long time.”

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 517

Chapter 517 Tragic Fate

Furrowing his brows, Michael’s expression darkened. “I know. But there’s nothing I can do about that. After all, I can’t really bring myself to reject Alicia’s request after seeing that she’s worried sick of Janette,” I lamented resignedly.

Naturally, I was well aware of how tough it was to track down anyone without any clue. Nonetheless, I had no choice but to keep on trying my best as there was no other way.

“Let’s call it a night. I’ll seek help from the police tomorrow. I bet it’s a piece of cake for them to trace her whereabouts with their advanced tracking system,” he reassured me.

I could only give in to him and nodded. "All right. It looks like that's the only way."

Deep down, I knew it was pointless for us to waste time trying to trace Janette's whereabouts aimlessly that night.

Back at the Shaw residence, I drifted off not long after flinging myself on my bed. What had transpired earlier had worn me down. It was indeed a lot more tiring than a working day.

Preoccupied with Janette's disappearance, I woke up early the following morning. Feeling uneasy, I could not sleep well the previous night.

Surprisingly, Michael woke up even earlier than I. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he wrapped his arms around me and uttered gently, "It's still early. You can still sleep for a while more. I've called the police station to lodge a report, and they've taken prompt action. I believe they'll be able to find a clue soon."

The sheer gentleness in his tone was able to put me at ease almost immediately. Initially, I was worried that Janette might be in danger as she was completely unfamiliar with the city.

"I'm thankful that you're alongside me. Regardless of any hardships that I encounter, you're always helping me to get the matter resolved," I mumbled, wrapping my arms around Michael's waist with my eyes closed in relief. As long as Michael was with me, there was nothing unsolvable. Unequivocally, having him by my side was the most blissful thing in my life.

"Oh? You've just realized it now?" Michael teased me. Gazing at me with a glint of affection in his eyes, his lips contorted into a charming smile.

Numb to his narcissism, I chuckled without uttering any words. Snuggling against his chest, I felt like having some sleep again.

After quite a while, Michael's ringtone suddenly rang out, waking me up in an instant. At the same time, he answered the call.

Within seconds, his face fell. Perplexed, I wondered what the caller had informed him. Nevertheless, he managed to regain his composure seconds later and hung up without uttering any words.

I lifted my head to look intently into his eyes, piping up as anxiousness surged within me, "Who's that? Is there any news about Janette?"

"Yes. The police officer informed me that they've managed to locate her phone, and they've sent me the location," Michael replied placidly. However, I could sense an unmissable change in his countenance instantaneously. My gut instinct told me that

there was something awry. Even so, I did not dwell on it. The most important thing right now is to track Janette down as soon as possible.

“Then what’re we waiting for? Come on. Let’s go and look for Janette now! Alicia’s worried stiff about her!” I said, eager to get into action.

Without a second thought, I got down from the bed and dashed out of the room. I was convinced that only by finding Janette would my mother be relieved.

Michael only threw me a glance and trailed behind me silently.

Later, he remained silent while driving. Seated next to him, I was on pins and needles. I kept calling Janette, but it could not get through.

After what seemed like an eternity, he finally broke the silence. “There’s something I need to tell you. Janette might be in a state worse than your expectation.”

“Why do you say so? Did something happen to her?” I asked in bafflement, uneasiness started to well up within me. Why is he telling me this suddenly? Could it be that something really did happen to her? What am I supposed to do if any tragedy has befallen her?

Michael knitted his brows when I got all worked up. He consoled me, “Don’t overthink it. I’m just making a wild guess here.”

“Michael, can you cut to the chase? I’m going to go crazy with anxiety if you keep beating around the bush like this!” I urged him.

I knew he would not say something like this for no reason. Hence, I had a hunch something must have befallen Janette. Subsequently, I could not help being a bundle of nerves. Even though I disliked her, she was still my maternal sister. Thus, I kept my finger crossed that she would be safe and sound.

Flashing me a glance, Michael explained after a pause, “Based on the location sent by the police officer, she’s at a tattered house that will be demolished soon. It’s in a secluded area where others hardly pass by. I have a feeling that she wouldn’t be there by herself.”

Hearing that, my heart skipped a beat, fearing that Janette might be in danger while she was in the dilapidated house the previous night. News of younger ladies disappearing and getting murdered has been in abundance lately. What if...

At that thought, I was overcome by another surge of uneasiness.

Silence ensued as Michael sped all the way to the location. Half an hour later, he stopped in front of a deserted building. When the dilapidated building came into view,

we could not help but grimace. Evidently, this building will be demolished soon. Not to mention, hardly anyone passes by this area on usual days. Why was Janette here last night? Could it be something had really happened to her?

Unable to tamp down my simmering apprehension, I quickened my pace to enter it.

About twenty minutes later, I finally found Janette lying unconscious in an old bed in one of the shabby rooms. Her clothes had been ripped apart, exposing her chest, and her skirt was lifted high.

My heart thumped at the sight of her disheveled state. It struck me at once what had occurred.

Seeing this, Michael turned his gaze away hastily. He then took off his jacket and handed it to me.

I took it from him and covered Janette's body with it. She only regained her consciousness gradually when I touched her arm.

"Ahh! Go away! Don't touch me!" Janette got all riled up. Looking shell-shocked, she waved both her hands frantically.

"Janette, it's me! Take a look at me!" I tried to calm her down.

At the moment, my dislike for her was prevailed by sheer sympathy. My heart wrenched at what she must have gone through. Poor girl. She must be feeling traumatized after being sexually assaulted.

Janette lifted her head and cast me a look. I flashed her a faint smile, hoping to appease her fear.

No woman could remain unfazed by such a devastating experience. I had forgotten about my abhorrence toward her in an instant, racking my brain on how I should console her to soothe her pain instead.

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 518

Chapter 518 Bring Janette For A Checkup

However, it seemed that Janette did not share the same sentiments as me, for the moment she saw me, she became hysterical.

"Get lost! Go away! I don't want to see you!" she shrieked, pushing me away with all her strength. It looked as though she was on the brink of an emotional breakdown.

I guessed she must have thought that I was the few men assaulting her earlier. Grabbing hold of her arms, I yelled at her, “Janette Campbell, take a look at me! I’m Anna!”

“I don’t want to see you! I only ended up in such a pathetic state because of you! I hate you! Anna Garcia, I won’t let you off!” Janette snarled at me.

No words could describe how unkempt she was at the moment. Her hair was ruffled, and her clothes were torn. She looked exceptionally piteous with hickeys all over her neck and exposed chest.

Even though we had been loathing each other all the while, I tried to exercise restraint after her tragic fate. Sitting next to her, I could not refrain from placating her. “Janette, try to cool down. I’m here to bring you home!”

“Why? Why did you show up out of the blue? I wouldn’t have ended up in such a pathetic state if you never appear! It’s all because of you!” Janette hissed in a high-pitched tone. Grabbing hold of my shoulders, she shook me hard, intense hatred flashed in her eyes.

Irked by her oppressive words, my brows deepened into a scowl. “Enough! I don’t feel like wasting time arguing with you. Let me accompany you for a checkup at the hospital. Your mom has been worried stiff about you ever since you’ve been gone missing yesterday!”

Since it was understandable for her to be emotionally distressed after enduring a horrific night, I talked myself into relenting.

“No! I’m not going! I don’t want to go anywhere! How will the others think of me when they see me in my current state! How could I face them again as if nothing has happened?” Janette unleashed her wrath, the thin thread that was holding her reason together finally snap and she broke down. Burying her face between her legs, she started bawling her eyes out.

Obviously, no woman could remain emotionally unscathed after going through such a traumatic moment. I could fathom her anguish and sympathize with her. However, the fact remained that nothing could be changed regardless of what I said. It was useless to cry over spilled milk.

“Try to cool your head off. There’s no point dwelling on something which has already happened. You must pull yourself together,” I advised her patiently after heaving a deep sigh.

Nevertheless, Janette continued to cry her eyes out, paying no heed to me. I was at a loss for words to enlighten her. Even after I had mentioned every consolable word that I could think of, she continued to turn a deaf ear to me.

At that moment, Michael was getting impatient. He strode toward us and wrapped his jacket tightly around Janette's exposed body. Without hesitation, he lifted her and strode toward the exit.

After being seated in Michael's car, Janette finally stopped crying. Nonetheless, she stared blankly out the window into the distance as if she had lost her soul.

I could not help but worry seeing her dejected state. Even so, I did not know what else I should say to console her.

Initially, I thought of giving my mother a call, but I decided not to do so when something came to my mind. In the end, I decided to send her a simple message instead, telling her that we had found Janette. After all, I did not know how I should inform her about what happened to Janette the previous night. I foresaw she would not be able to take it if I told her the truth.

Michael stopped the car after he caught sight of a women's boutique on the way to the hospital. He asked me to go down and buy a new dress so Janette could change into it. I thought that his suggestion made sense since it would surely result in turmoil if Janette were to step into the hospital in her ripped clothes.

Moments later, I assisted her in changing into a new dress and combed her ruffled hair so nobody would sense anything amiss. After that, Michael continued to drive toward the hospital.

We headed for another hospital to keep the incident under wraps from my mother. After carrying out a comprehensive checkup for Janette, the doctor assured us that she was fine other than sustaining a vaginal laceration.

I remembered I caught sight of blood between Janette's thighs when I spotted her in the tattered room earlier. Thus, I knew on the spot that she still had her virginity before that. I shuddered uncontrollably at how much pain she must have endured when those men forced themselves on her.

My heart wrenched even more for her unfortunate encounter. She has kept herself a virgin for more than twenty years only to have it taken away unwillingly in a single night...

We only left the hospital after the doctor performed a series of checkups for Janette as requested and ensured that she did not sustain any other injuries. During the procedure, she continued to stare blankly, which was a stark contrast to her usual insolent self.

I would be more relieved if she screamed to vent her exasperation, but since she remained silent, I felt even more petrified, fearing that she would have depression due to the extreme emotional agony. I was aware of the fact that mental issue was the root cause of depression. Many patients diagnosed with depression tended to commit suicide when their conditions deteriorated drastically.

Thus, I coaxed her, "I'm thinking of finding a place for you to have a good rest. I hope you can take the opportunity to cool yourself down these few days."

I dared not take the risk of bringing Janette to the hospital to visit Alicia at the moment. Since she was not her usual self, I reckoned Alicia would be able to tell that something was wrong at once.

Janette remained silent. It was as though she could neither see nor hear me.

Low in spirits, I furrowed my brows and let out a sigh. After shifting my gaze away from her, I uttered in determination, "Let's send her to the house at Birchwood for a few days. The environment there is relatively quiet, which is what she needs at the moment."

I could only make a decision on behalf of Janette since she refused to utter a single word.

"Okay," Michael replied flatly.

I could see that his forehead had creased into a frown when he heard I was planning to send Janette to Birchwood. Nevertheless, he still gave in to my request.

The house in Birchwood was filled with memories of us. As such, he did not wish to have outsiders stepping into such a special place. However, since Janette needed intensive care at the moment, there wasn't much we could do about it.

Upon stepping into the house at Birchwood, Janette went and sat on the couch right away. Devoid of expression, she looked exactly like a mute.

She used to mock and sneer at me whenever we talked. Now that she remained silent, I could not get used to the sudden change in her.

Usually, there would only be a drastic change in one's behavior after going through something traumatic. As such, I knew she was only being like this because she was still struggling to accept the reality of her situation.

I could only hope that she would gradually think it through after a few days and get over the harrowing incident. No one wanted this to happen, but since it did, she could only rely on herself to snap out of it.

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 519

Chapter 519 Disheartened Janette

At first, I wanted to stay back and accompany Janette. However, when it occurred to me that my presence would only make her feel worse, I left with Michael after preparing some food for her.

As I sat in the car with my eyebrows knitted, I wondered how I was going to tell my mother about what happened to Janette.

In fact, I began to speculate if I could have prevented the incident from happening by finding her earlier. Even though there was no news from her and the chances of me locating her were close to zero, it didn't stop me from feeling guilty.

When Michael noticed the frown on my face and how silent I was, he turned toward me and asked plainly, "Are you still thinking about Janette's matter?"

"Yeah. After what happened to Janette last night, I really don't know how to explain it to my mom. Tell me, how could something like that have happened?"

As I spoke, I could feel the frustration grow within me.

"She has no one to blame but herself for leaving on her own accord. After all, she's an adult and needs to bear the consequences of her own decisions."

It was clear from Michael's indifferent expression that he didn't feel any sympathy for Janette at all.

Despite the fact that he had a point, my female instincts still told me that being raped was something no one could accept.

"What happened last night was the equivalent of destroying her reputation. Going forward, it will affect her chances of getting a boyfriend. Given how realistic everyone is nowadays, no one would wish to have a wife that had been gang-raped before."

In modern society, most people wouldn't be able to accept a wife with such baggage.

Since Janette was still young, the incident would negatively affect her search for a partner in the future.

After hearing my words, Michael glanced at me before changing the topic.

"What's done is done. There's no point crying over spilled milk. The most important thing now is to file a police report once she has managed to calm down."

“File a police report? I don’t think Janette would agree to that, for the news would spread once the police start their investigations.”

The mere mention of going to the police station to report the matter caused me to worry with a frown.

If our roles were reversed, I would definitely not make a report for fear of spreading the news any further.

For a woman, being raped was considered a massive humiliation. Therefore, there was no way Janette could accept having the humiliation magnified in public.

“But if you don’t report it, those scum would still be free to harm other innocent girls. So, I feel that it’s necessary to file a police report still.”

Obviously, Michael would’ve already taken into consideration what my concerns were. His words usually contained the best course of action, for he was always able to see the big picture clearly.

By filing a police report, the perpetrators would be caught, saving more girls from their horrendous acts in the future. In spite of that, the decision required a lot of courage from Janette which I wasn’t certain she had enough of.

“Let’s revisit the matter in a few days. Considering how unsettled she is right now, bringing up the matter would only cause her further distress.”

In contrast to going to the police, I felt the priority right then was for her to regain control of herself.

When I saw the listless look on her face earlier, I was truly worried that she would do something stupid.

“Okay, let’s talk about this later. Anyway, are you going to the hospital today? If you are, I can send you there right now.”

“Sure, please do so. Now that we’ve found Janette, I should at least let my mom know.”

After saying that, I wondered how I was going to explain Janette’s situation to Alicia.

Upon arriving at the hospital, I stopped in my tracks and hesitated at the entrance. It wasn’t until I took a few deep breaths that I gathered myself and entered.

Alicia greeted me with a smile the moment I stepped in. “It’s a surprise to see you. I thought you weren’t coming today.”

“I won’t be going to the office for the next few days. Just as I told you, I’ll be taking care of you in the hospital until you’re discharged.”

I walked up to her after breaking into a faint smile.

However, when she noticed that I had arrived alone, she knitted her brows slightly.

“Where’s Janette? Didn’t you mention in your message that you have found her? Why isn’t she with you?”

Unlike how worried she previously sounded, her voice was calm this time, likely because she knew that I had found Janette.

“She... She had too much to drink last night. So I arranged a place for her to rest in. That’s why I didn’t bring her with me.”

Despite my initial plan of telling her the truth. I was worried that she couldn’t accept it after seeing the look on her face. Hence, I found an excuse and muddled through the matter.

Even though I was cognizant that she would find out sooner or later, I couldn’t bear to tell her when I saw how weak she still was.

“I see. Anna, I didn’t expect you to treat Janette so well after the horrendous attitude she has shown you. I truly don’t know what to say.”

After listening to my explanation, Alicia was so deeply moved that I could see tears welling up in her eyes.

“There’s no need to thank me. How are you feeling today?”

I felt uncomfortable when she spoke to me cordially. Even though I had yet to acknowledge her, we were still mother and daughter at the end of the day.

As such, whenever she said anything polite, it would make me feel as if there was a huge distance between us in our relationship.

Alicia said, “The doctor came by this morning for a checkup and gave me a clean bill of health. If nothing untoward happens, I’ll be discharged tomorrow.”

She didn’t have any serious illnesses. The reason she fainted was due to malnutrition. After a few days of rest, she had naturally recovered.

The thought of her finding out about Janette once she was discharged drove me to remind her, “After you leave the hospital, you have to take good care of yourself since your health is paramount regardless of what happens.”

Compared to my indifferent attitude, the incident of Janette getting raped would definitely devastate her. As a result, I was worried that she wasn't able to take it.

"Don't worry, I'll definitely take good care of myself. The last thing I want is to end up in the hospital and trouble you to watch over me again. Even if you have the time, I still couldn't bear to let you do it."

Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 520

Chapter 520 Waking Up Early

Throughout my time with Alicia in the hospital, I was tempted to tell her about what happened to Janette, as waiting to do so after she was discharged wasn't going to make a difference. Unfortunately, the words just refused to leave my mouth.

Even when I left at night, I didn't bring the matter up. In fact, I told her that I wouldn't be there to pick her up the next day due to how busy I was at work.

Even though Alicia was disappointed, she didn't express it. After all, she should have been more than satisfied after I took care of her for two whole days in the hospital.

By the time I reached home at night, I felt utterly drained. Despite barely doing anything at the hospital, it felt as if the day was unusually long.

When Michael came down after taking a shower, he shot me a quick glance before handing me some ice water from the fridge.

"Thank you," I grunted meekly as I received the water.

"You haven't told her about Janette yet."

Staring into my eyes, Michael spoke with a nonchalant yet certain tone.

"How did you know?"

I was surprised that he guessed it without me telling him.

"It's just a wild guess. Knowing you, you must have chosen not to tell her for fear that she couldn't take the news."

Michael pulled me into his embrace as he said that.

I was stumped by his words. Evidently, Michael was the person who understood me the most. Regardless of what my thoughts or decisions were, there was no way I could hide

them from him. Sometimes, I wonder if he could actually read my mind. Or else, how did he know what I'm thinking all the time?

Raising my gaze to look into his eyes, I asked in an anxious voice, "Michael, tell me what I should do? Do you think she would be devastated upon learning what happened to Janette?"

"You don't have to feel so conflicted since there's no changing the past. Besides, she will find out eventually. Whether she can take the shock or not isn't something you can decide. What you should do now is to get a good night's sleep. After all, you didn't manage to get any rest since last night. At the rate you're going, my 'benefits' are at risk of being rescinded."

Getting to his feet, Michael held my hand and led me upstairs.

Obviously, I was well aware of what he meant by "benefits." Gosh, why is he still thinking about sex at this point? His mind is always filled with dirty thoughts. Nevertheless, I figured that it was just his way to distract me from my problems.

Although Michael seemed apathetic most of the time, he actually cared about many things. It was just that he wasn't good at expressing himself.

After going upstairs with him, I took a shower before lying down in bed. Regardless, I just couldn't sleep, as the matter continued to eat at me. All I could do was toss and turn in frustration.

At that moment, Michael wrapped his arms around my waist and placed his chin on my shoulder. With a mesmerizing voice, he murmured, "If you can't sleep, why don't we do something else?"

With my heart skipping a beat, I grew nervous instantly. Naturally, I knew that Michael was hinting at sex, but that was the last thing on my mind given how troubled I was feeling. His timing couldn't have been more terrible.

"I think it's better if I get some sleep. I'm terribly exhausted after spending two whole days in the hospital."

After answering nervously, I closed my eyes and pretended to sleep. Even though I wasn't sleepy at all, I just wasn't in the mood to get it on with him that night.

Michael didn't force me and simply responded, "All right. In that case, you should just close your eyes. If you still can't sleep, we can have a 'workout' to tire you out. After that, I'm sure you'll have no problem sleeping."

With that, he hugged me from behind and didn't bring up sex anymore.

Suddenly, I wondered if his suggestion was just a ruse to get me to sleep. After all, he clearly knew that I wouldn't agree to make love that night.

With that thought in mind, my heart warmed as I grew increasingly certain that that was his true intention.

After turning around to face him, I snuggled tightly into his arms where I finally felt a sense of calm.

"Anna, are you trying to seduce me on purpose?"

Michael's voice rang out above my head and sounded a little raspy.

"No, I just feel like hugging you," I replied as I nuzzled my face against his chest.

Upon my reply, Michael held me tightly in his arms before closing his eyes.

Due to the sense of security I felt in his embrace, I fell asleep very quickly as if I was cocooned from all my worries.

The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes the next morning was Michael's exasperated look.

"What is it? Why are you up so early?"

I began to grow nervous when I saw how intently he was staring at me. Hence, I wondered what had gotten into him and if there was something on my face.

"I didn't sleep a wink the entire night," Michael remarked coldly as he continued to stare at me.

"Why? Aren't you sleepy?"

Upon hearing his answer, I gave him a confused look and wondered why.

"How am I supposed to sleep with you in that position? Anna Garcia, did you do it on purpose?"

When Michael pulled the blanket aside in exasperation, I realized that I was sprawled on top of him like an octopus.

Not realizing it a moment ago, I panicked and let go of him the moment he pointed it out.

"Why didn't you wake me up? I slept so deeply last night that I didn't notice," I mumbled while turning my head away as a blush crept upon my face.

“Given how hard it was for you to fall asleep, how could I have woken you up?”

Michael sounded frustrated. In fact, his frustration seemed to have stemmed from the fact that his lust wasn't satisfied the night before.

At that moment, Michael's arms had threaded around my waist, causing me to panic. Hence, I suggested at once, “Why don't you go take a shower to cool yourself down?”

“I don't want a shower. I want you. After having you, not only is the cold shower unnecessary, but I will also feel even better than from having one.”