

Love from My Dominant Boss

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As much as I was against the idea, he was the only one I could rely on until Steven regained his ability to walk. Pursing my lips, I lost myself in a train of thoughts.

Michael broke the silence and repeated himself, "You need to make up your mind soon because you're running out of time."

I was certain I was about to get on his nerves for real after remaining silent for such a long time. I looked at him and asked in return, "Before I give you my answer, can you answer a query of mine first?"

Michael stood upright and asked with a straight face, "What is it?"

"Of all the women available, why me? Why have you chosen to stay in touch with me when you can get someone else for the role?"

Michael was surrounded by a bunch of exceptional women. More often than not, many of them would try to hit on him, but he had never once taken them seriously.

Truth be told, I was way more inferior to those exceptional women who tried to hit on him. Thus, I couldn't figure out the reason why he would dismiss others without a second thought, and instead, chose to maintain a relationship with me.

Smirking while staring at me in the eyes, he remarked sarcastically, "Will you believe me if I tell you it's just because of your amazing skills in bed?"

I felt a strong urge to throw the pillow I had with me in his direction when I heard his reply.

Has he no shame at all? Is sex all he ever thinks about?

Irked by his remarks, I shot daggers at him and asked, "Michael, can you take this seriously and tell me the truth?"

"What? Are you saying that I lied to you? I am serious and I have told you the truth," he asserted in all seriousness.

I would have been deceived by him if it weren't because I knew it was just one of his many attempts to pull my leg.

Since he has no intention to tell me the truth, I guess I'll just have to leave it alone for the time being. After all, it's not like I can force him to tell me. I can't risk offending him as of now.

Once again, he urged me to make up my mind, "Anna, instead of bringing up irrelevant topics, why don't you make up your mind now because my patience is running out."

Staring at him in the eyes, I lost myself in another process of thoughts.

Coming to the conclusion that what he offered seemed to be the only viable option I had left, I announced, "It's a deal, then."

My mother had been holding a grudge against me ever since Steven was rushed to the hospital. She wouldn't forgive me if anything were to happen to him. In contrast to my relationship with my parents, my dignity and honor were nothing.

I couldn't stand my mother considering me as an outsider. Otherwise, my life would be worse than it already was.

"Great."

Michael responded with a gleeful smirk and marched his way out of the room as soon as he put on his coat.

I was frustrated by his response. He made it seem as though we weren't affiliated apart from the time we spent in bed.

In the end, I cursed him over and over again in my mind to vent my frustration.

When I thought he had departed, he entered the room once again and announced, "Since you're still not feeling well, just take it easy for the rest of the day and have a break."

"I can't. I need to check on Steven. He has just gone through a major operation, and I don't even know if he's fine or not."

I started searching for my clothes as soon as I finished my sentence.

Now that my mother was already resenting me, if I failed to show up to my brother's post-operation, she might pick on me for not being mindful.

When Michael heard me, he answered with a frown, "Just take it easy. His surgery was successful and I have gotten my secretary to send a caregiver over to look after him. Your parents will be fine without you."

Has he gotten everything sorted out beforehand?

Michael's actions had taken me by surprise. As it turned out, he had taken everything into consideration and sorted out everything on my behalf.

Humans would grow fond of those who helped them when they were at their most vulnerable. And that happened to be my case. I felt as though I could resolve everything as long as Michael was around me.

"Thank you, Michael."

I was glad he had resolved the issues on my behalf when I was in desperate need of help. However, his upcoming reply took me by surprise and sent me into a vicious cycle of despair.

"There's no need to thank me since I'm just returning the favor. At the end of the day, our relationship is nothing more than a deal."

My heart sank to the bottom of my stomach upon hearing that.

He might have deemed our relationship as just another one of his many deals, but that wasn't the case for me.

Although he might see me as just another tool to satisfy his urges and needs, he was an important figure in my life. After all, he had rushed to my rescue twice when I needed someone the most. The sort of affection I had for him was no longer the same after the series of incidents.

As a result of his reply, I felt my eyes prickling as though I was about to weep again. I looked elsewhere because I couldn't stand his cold and emotionless gaze on me.

Michael, who had always been an observant man, noticed the change in my expression, but he chose to dismiss me as though he couldn't be bothered.

"Just get some rest. I'll get my secretary to send you something to eat in the afternoon."

Once again, he marched out of the room once he finished his sentence.

I didn't hear him leaving the place. Thus, I reckoned he must be in the living room.

As I lay on the bed, I couldn't bring myself to sleep anymore. I was exhausted, but I couldn't shrug Michael's remarks off my mind.

Is our relationship nothing more than a deal for him? Doesn't he feel anything else?

I couldn't get Michael's handsome countenance out of my mind. After some time, I heard someone ringing the doorbell. My first thought was that it was Michael's secretary bringing us something to eat.

A few minutes after the doorbell rang, Michael showed up in the room and saw that I wasn't asleep. He instructed, "Come out and grab yourself something to eat. I'll be leaving for a meeting in the afternoon after the meal."

After getting dressed, I joined Michael in the dining hall. He started savoring the food his secretary brought us in an elegant manner.

It was a relatively simple meal with a few dishes. Seated opposite him, I started having my meal in silence as there was no topic of conversation that came to mind.

Perhaps it was because of his words earlier, I felt something had changed in the dynamic of our relationship.

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Likewise, Michael kept his head down and simply kept eating without any intention to talk to me.

After finishing his meal, he put on his shoes and left without even a glance.

When we were in bed earlier, he still treated me gently. As such, I was deeply disappointed by his abrupt change in behavior.

Losing all my appetite, I silently tidied up the dining table before heading to the hospital alone.

Since Michael had already left, there was no reason left for me to stay here. Besides, I was still utterly concerned about Steven.

When I arrived at his ward, Steven had already woken up while my mother was feeding him chicken stew. Even though his operation was successful, he still looked frail.

The moment I stepped into the ward, they simply glanced at me without saying a word. My mother's gaze on me was extremely cold.

Their behaviors were reasonable as Steven was in terrible shape. Thus, I forced myself to look past their icy attitude and walked over to my mother before reaching out to get the stew in her hand.

"Mom, you've been up the entire night. Let me take care of Steven. You should get some rest with Dad."

Staring at me angrily, she pushed me away without a word.

I lifted my head and stared at her, sadness engulfing me. But before I could open my mouth, she spoke in an accusatory tone.

"Why are you here? Is it not enough what you've done to Stevie?"

Evidently, she still blamed me for everything that happened to Steven. But he was the one who got into the gambling debt. How's that my fault? Why does no one try to understand my feelings?

I could no longer suppress my indignance as my eyes brimmed with tears while staring at my mother. "Mom, why are you putting all the blame on me? Steven has completed the operation, and I've paid all the expenses. So why do you still treat me like this?"

I choked on my words while saying that. I used to tolerate everything she said about me, but she had crossed the line that day. After all, I was still a human with emotions.

"Yes, you did pay for the operation, but where did you get that money? Didn't you say that you have no money? The operation cost around a hundred thousand, right?"

My complaint did not seem to touch her at all. On the contrary, she became more enraged as she began suspecting me.

"I..."

I wanted to tell her the truth, but I could not reveal my relationship with Michael. How could I be honest and say that the money came from a man because I slept with him? How could I live with dignity in front of my family in the future if they were to find out?

"Why? Nothing to say anymore? The truth is, you had the money all along, didn't you? You just didn't want to help your brother. If you have taken out the money sooner, Steven won't be lying in bed right now!"

Her words stabbed at my heart like a sharp knife, leaving it dripping blood.

I had shamelessly sold my body to Michael for the money, yet my mother still misunderstood me.

Staring at her, I started weeping. It was only then that I realized what kind of person I was in her eyes. Didn't she see everything that I've done for this family? How could she think of me like that?

"Mom, am I such a cruel person in your eyes? Do you know how much I've sacrificed in order to get this money? Why do you never care for me but instead keep on complaining about everything I do?"

I looked her in the eyes calmly. I really could not wrap my head around how she was treating me. It was as though I was not her biological daughter.

What have I done wrong? I'm your child too. How could you discriminate against me? Is it just because I'm a girl?

Ever since I was young, I had realized my parents' unfair love toward their son. Initially, I thought the care for Steven only exceeded mine just for a little. But as time went by, I found out that I was like a complete outsider in their eyes.

"Do you think it's easy raising you? Isn't it reasonable for you to help the family financially? How could you think that we've wronged you?"

Regardless of how heartbroken I was, my mother did not seem to show any sign of compassion for me. Her gaze toward me was still unyieldingly cold as if I was nobody but a stranger.

"That's not what I meant. It's my obligation to help the family, and I'm happy to do what I can. I just want you to care about me more. Is that too much to ask for?"

As I spoke, tears streamed down my face like water rushing from a broken dam. I looked at my mother like a naive kid, still anticipating her love.

I thought that after my confession and pleading, she would understand my feelings and change her stance. I would be satisfied if she just gave me a word of care.

However, it seemed that my expectation was nothing but wishful thinking. Upon hearing what I said, her expression changed to that of annoyance.

“Your brother is already in such a sorry state, and yet all you’re thinking about is yourself? How could you be so selfish?”

That was what I got after pouring out my heart.

“That’s enough. Could you two please cut it out? Don’t you see Stevie is in pain now? Stop making a fuss around here.”

My father, who was usually the quiet one, had finally run out of his patience.

Hearing his voice, I swallowed all the words I wanted to say and strode toward the bed. Gazing at Steven’s pale face, my heart twitched in pain.

“How are you feeling? Does it still hurts?”

Even though I disapproved of Steven’s way of life, he was still my brother. Looking at him in pain, I felt as though a thousand needles were stabbing through my heart.

If he did not start gambling, he would not have been in this state now.

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“Get lost. I don’t want to see you.”

In his weakened state, Steven still managed to cast cruel words toward me.

I was stunned momentarily as I thought he was the only one who would treat me fairly. Turns out, he was exactly the same as my other family members.

“Steven, I know you’re in a bad mood after your operation. But don’t worry. I’ll take good care of you.”

I responded to him with a faint smile as I tried to comfort myself that he only treated me like this because of his pain.

Even though we used to argue all the time, he was a patient right now, so I decided to look past his temper.

"I ask you to get lost! Didn't you hear me? My legs almost got crippled because of you! What kind of sister are you? Useless wench!"

He stared at me, his eyes filled with resentment.

I froze on the spot, suddenly at a loss for words.

What else can I say at this point to lessen their resentment toward me? How did things end up like this?

"Steven, it's not like what you think. If I had the money, there's no way I wouldn't have helped you. But I really didn't have the money back then. My heart ached too, you know, seeing you hurt like this."

Looking at his legs that were wrapped in a layer of thick plaster, tears started welling up in my eyes once again.

"Stop pretending. You never liked me. I guess you're happy now to see me like this! It'll be all your fault if I become a cripple!"

His face was pale and his voice was weak, but his words were chocked full of hostility, deeply wounding me.

Family should be united in times of trouble, but it seemed to me that my family had abandoned me thoroughly.

"Steven, you..."

"Leave now! I'll give you three seconds!"

Right then, Steven pointed at the door rigidly.

"Steven, can you please just listen to me?"

"One... two... three! Mom, what're you waiting for? Chase her out now!"

Seeing how I was reluctant to leave, Steven instructed my mother directly.

Needless to say, she was on his side. Without even an ounce of hesitation, she started pushing me toward the door.

"Mom... don't. Please..."

I tried to break free from her grasp, but at the same time, I was worried about hurting her. In the end, I was pushed out of the ward.

"Leave now! None of us want to see you. I'll just take it as I never had a daughter before!"

Upon saying that, she pushed me out forcefully and shut the door right in my face.

Losing my balance, I thought I would fall to the ground, but someone caught me from behind.

"I'm sorry..."

I pulled away from the stranger's arms immediately as I apologized profusely. Wiping the tears off my face, I tried to make myself look less miserable.

"Miss, are you alright?"

A gentle male's voice traveled into my ears, and it sounded somewhat comforting.

I lifted my head and saw a handsome face. Although he wasn't as handsome as Michael, he did seem like a well-educated gentleman.

"I'm fine. Sorry for bumping into you."

Trying to recollect myself, I looked into his gentle eyes and apologized once again.

"Don't worry about it. It was an accident." He flashed a casual smile.

"By the way. Did you just get pushed out from..."

He stopped in the middle of his sentence after probably realizing that it was rude to ask.

"It was nothing. Sorry again for bumping into you. I'll take my leave, then."

He did not seem to be a bad guy, but telling a stranger about my personal matter hardly seemed appropriate.

After I left, the man gazed at my retreating figure for quite a long while with a smile on his face.

Walking out of the hospital, I suddenly felt like an abandoned child. I felt like there was not a place in this world that I belonged. Although I could go to Natalie's house, it was not my home after all.

My heart felt like it was being squeezed by an iron vice when I thought of how all my family members hated me.

In the end, I did not get to Natalie's place. Instead, I headed for Birchwood. Right now, all I wanted was some quiet time alone, and I knew for a fact that Michael would not go to that place during the day.

If I went to Natalie's place, I would only cause her to worry about my current condition. The last thing I wanted now was to become a burden to my friend.

After I arrived at Birchwood, I sat down on the balcony decadently, gazing at the scenery. My heart was filled with despair, but there was no one I could talk to alleviate my pain.

I had no idea how things became like this, and I was out of ways to make my family forgive me.

Without realizing it, I sat there for the whole afternoon. As the day began to darken, I felt reluctant to leave the seat. All I wanted was to sit there dazedly nary a thought going through my mind.

It was becoming dark in the room, but I had no intention to switch on the lights.

I did not know how much time had passed until I heard the door opening and footsteps approaching.

A few seconds later, someone switched on the lights in the house. The sudden brightness pierced through my eyes, and I responsively covered them with my hand.

Regaining my sight, I saw Michael staring at me in total befuddlement. "What are you doing in the balcony in complete darkness? You're not thinking of suicide, are you?"

Michael put down his suitcase abruptly and walked toward me, his gaze filled with displeasure.

"Am I such a pathetic person in your eyes? I'm not the type that gives up easily, okay?"

I rose from the seat and stepped toward him. Why on earth would he think that I was thinking of suicide? What a joke. I still have great plans for my future. Why would I end my life?

Michael did not question me further. A moment later, He sat on the couch in the living room and pulled me toward him before making me sit on his lap.

He leaned close to my ears and asked gently, "Did you go to the hospital today?"

"Yes."

I tried to answer calmly, but his question reminded me that my family chased me out and despair once again filled my heart.

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Michael, being the keen observer that he was, noticed the change in my expression.

"Why the sad face? What happened at the hospital?"

He caressed my back gently as he spoke. Although his tone was placid, I could feel a hint of genuine care for me.

"I got chased out by them."

I spoke as a wry smile etched itself on my face. Hah! What a joke to be rejected by my own family!

Upon hearing my answer, he paused for a few seconds before resuming to caress my back.

"Why?" He looked at me with a face devoid of emotion.

"They think that I'm the one who caused Steven to become like this. Every one of them is blaming me..."

I wasn't sure why I told Michael everything that happened back at the hospital. After all, he had nothing to do with it, and there was nothing he could do to fix it.

Michael did not say a word after that, but I could see his expression darkening.

“Since you got chased out, there is no need for you to go back anymore. Just stay with me from now on.”

He held me tightly in his embrace and said in a low voice.

Even though his tone sounded extremely possessive, I felt touched by his words.

I hugged him tightly as tears rolled down my cheeks uncontrollably. I intended to suppress my sadness, but I soon realized I could no longer take it on my own. What I needed at that moment was someone to confide in and someone to rely on.

“Why do they treat me like this? What wrong have I done? Why must they blame it all on me?”

My tears could not stop as I spoke. I was simply too exhausted from all the burdens and grievances I had been carrying.

Michael furrowed his brows without a word, but I could feel his arms wrapping around me more tightly.

I wept inside his embrace for a long time, until I finally fell asleep.

Even though our relationship was not that close for me to confide in him, I was still grateful and touched that he did not push me away when I was crying my heart out or when I had soiled his shirt with my tears.

After I dozed off, Michael carried me to the bed, and he slept beside me.

The following day when I woke up, my eyes were so swollen, it looked like I was stung by a bee. I turned my body and noticed that Michael was still sleeping by my side.

Seeing that, I recalled that I had cried in his embrace for a long time the previous night. I guess he must be exhausted.

I snaked an arm around him and hugged him. With him by my side, I could feel a rare sense of security. Even though I had already known that there was no future for our relationship, I could not help but keep falling deeper into it.

Apparently, Michael was not in a deep sleep, as he opened his eyes not long after.

After waking up, he hugged me again and asked with a slightly hoarse voice, “Have you finished crying?”

Hearing that, my face flushed red with embarrassment as I recalled how pitiful I must have looked when I was crying the previous night.

“Sorry I got your shirt dirty last night.”

I knew Michael was a clean freak, so I was certain it must have been difficult for him to tolerate me crying all over his shirt.

“So you still remember.”

Michael frowned slightly, scrutinizing me. Displeasure flickered in his gaze.

“I’ll wash it for you later. Anyway, can I take leave for today? I plan to go to the hospital again later.”

I had taken leave for two days already, but I was still not in the mood to work. Even though I knew my family did not want to meet me, I could not let go of my concern for Steven.

“Haven’t you had enough of your family taking it out on you?”

Michael stared at me, his expression was that of puzzlement.

“I’m still worried about Steven...”

It was true that every word that my mother said hurt me deeply, but that pain was incomparable to the physical pain Steven must have been enduring.

“I forbid you to go! You’ll only be humiliating yourself even more.”

Michael sat upright and commanded me tersely.

Baffled by his sudden outburst, I wondered if I had accidentally offended him with my words or actions.

“But...”

“You don’t need to worry about your brother. I’ll arrange the best doctor and the best medical care for him. You’re free to go anywhere, just not the hospital!”

He did not give me the chance to finish my sentence.

I was a little pissed off as he always dominated my life, yet there was no way I could disobey his decision.

Nonetheless, he would be heading to work shortly. By then, he would not know even if I went to the hospital secretly. All he could do was merely giving me a warning.

Michael seemed to have guessed my mind. He locked his eyes upon me for a moment and said flatly, "I have my men in the hospital. If you try to go there behind my back, I'll definitely know."

Upon hearing that, frustration filled me. It was somehow terrifying how he seemed to know what was in my mind every single time.

"I got it. I won't go to the hospital."

I lowered my head and answered, sounding utterly despondent.

Even though I was worried about Steven, I knew that nothing would change even if I went there. I reckoned the outcome would be no different from yesterday if I were to go... Michael is only doing this for my own good.

Satisfied with my response, Michael got up and started getting changed.

I sat on the spot, looking utterly dispirited. It was difficult for me to accept that my parents had forsaken me as I used to rely heavily on them emotionally. The treatment I got from them ever since I was a kid had always been one of indifference. As such, I had been working hard to prove myself ever since. But the more I tried, I realized that something was meant to be and would not change with effort.

I had come to a point where I had no idea what would make them happy.

Just when my thoughts were running wildly, a bank card appeared in my line of sight. Coming back to my senses, I saw Michael looming over me with his gaze riveted on me.

"What's this?"

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I looked up at him in confusion.

“There’s a hundred thousand in this card. Go buy yourself some new clothes or something. You can throw all of your old clothes away if you want.”

Michael’s tone was neutral when he said that, but I felt uncomfortable at how he was treating me like a sugar baby.

“Thanks, but I can afford to do my own shopping, so you can keep your money.”

I refused his offer and placed the card on the nightstand.

After all the money Michael had given me so far, I couldn’t bring myself to accept any more from him. Although he had paid for Steven’s surgery bills because of our deal, I had cost him hundreds of thousands in just a few months.

“You’re my woman now, so don’t worry about it and just take whatever money I give you. I don’t mind giving you money as long as you don’t have any ulterior motives for being with me.”

I knew Michael was a generous man capable of offering insane amounts of money like it was nothing, but that last sentence he said hurt me deeply.

What does he mean by ulterior motives? Is it because all the women around him are after his money, so he finds it suspicious that I’m refusing his offer?

“Relax, I know what you mean. You and I are merely f*ck buddies, and nothing more.”

It wasn’t the first time Michael had reminded me of our relationship, and I was well aware that we had nothing between us outside of this house.

Right as I thought he was about to leave, he turned around at the door and said coldly, “Oh, and you’d better take care of Yuval as soon as possible. I don’t like my women being in messy relationships.”

I looked up in a panic when I heard him mention Yuval, and my gaze was met with a firm look in his eyes.

“I will. I’m going to talk to him about it today.”

I knew exactly what he meant. Whatever it was that I had going on with Yuval had to stop now that I was back with Michael.

Knowing how possessive he was, there was no telling what he would do if he found out that I'm still seeing other men.

Michael left after getting a satisfactory reply from me, and the room fell into silence once again.

I felt my chest tighten as I stared at the door and thought about what he said earlier.

Michael had a tendency to touch my heart with his words, only to send it back to rock bottom immediately after.

I made myself a very simple breakfast and gave Yuval a call afterward to explain everything.

We could no longer be together as I had decided to continue my relationship with Michael, so I had to make it clear to him.

Yuval was a little surprised when he got my call and seemed hesitant in his response. I assumed he thought I was calling him to borrow money or something.

We agreed to meet up at a café, and I had arrived ahead of time. It was usually Yuval who would arrive early for our dates, but he showed up thirty minutes later that day.

"I'm so sorry for being late, Anna. Have you been waiting for long?" Yuval apologized profusely as he sat down in front of me.

"That's okay. You've always been the one waiting for me, so it's only fair that I wait for you this time."

I didn't really mind him being late as I had made up my mind to tell him the truth anyway. I had agreed to date him in the first place because I thought our personalities complemented each other, but I neglected the fact that he wasn't the kind of guy I wanted to be with.

"So... Why did you want to see me all of a sudden?" Yuval asked after ordering a cup of coffee.

I looked up at him and said calmly, "There's something I need to talk to you about."

"What is it?" he asked softly while looking me straight in the eye.

"Yuval, I came to break up with you. I don't think we should be seeing each other."

I cut to the chase without any hesitation as I knew Michael would get mad at me if I didn't cut ties with Yuval.

"Huh? Why do you want to break up with me?"

Yuval looked at me in shock and panic as what I said was completely beyond his expectations.

"I just feel that we're not suitable for each other. I've been giving it a lot of thought and decided to tell you about it today."

I had actually planned on breaking up with Yuval a long time ago. Whenever those thoughts surfaced, I would remind myself of how hard it was to find someone suitable for marriage and convince myself to stay with him.

"What's gotten into you today, Anna? Why are you breaking up with me all of a sudden? Did I do something wrong?"

That was the first time I had seen Yuval look so anxious.

"It's not you, it's me. I agreed to date you at first because I thought you were a decent match for me, but I recently realized that I only see you as a friend instead of a boyfriend."

I knew what I said was hurtful, but I had to make a choice between the two of them, and Michael was the only one capable of helping me out.

"I think we're doing pretty fine, so I find your explanation a little hard to believe. Is this because I didn't help you out with your family situation?"

He's bringing up my family, so that means he has been thinking about it. He thinks I'm mad at him for not helping me.

"You're overthinking it, Yuval. We aren't all that close, so you have no obligations whatsoever to help me out."

Despite what I said, I did actually mind as I was completely helpless at the time, and all he did was give me some useless advice.

Of course, those feelings had disappeared completely after Michael took care of my problems for me, so I didn't feel sad about breaking up with Yuval at all. If anything, I simply found it a shame that I had to let go of a decent guy like him.