

## Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 521

### Chapter 521 Workout In Bed

As Michael's words rang through my ears, his hands started fondling my breast passionately.

In response, my nervous body clammed up. Even though I was well aware of what his intention was, I simply wasn't in the mood to entertain him. Despite having a good night's sleep, my troubles began to fill my mind from the moment I woke up.

"Erm, why don't you take a bath still. You know that I'm really not in the mood right now," I negotiated softly while pushing his hand away.

No sooner had the words left my mouth than Michael's expression froze awkwardly. Subsequently, he looked at me with displeasure.

"Anna, I'm your husband, but you have never considered my feelings before. Instead, you spend your time concerning yourself with others. Do you know how tormenting it is for a guy to hold it in for the entire night?"

Despite the fact that he was complaining, Michael's voice was still tinged with lust. In the face of his words, I was rendered speechless. My gosh, how could a single night of abstinence cause him so much grief? He's obviously exaggerating his predicament.

Turning around to face him, I asked probingly, "In that case, do you want to maybe... solve it yourself in the washroom?"

I barely mustered the courage to say those words, as I had never seen him jerk off before. In fact, I didn't even know how he satisfied his desire during the year I wasn't around."

"Solve it myself? Are you expecting me to use my hand?" Michael responded in a hoarse voice with a darkened expression. "Well yeah... You can get yourself off in the washroom, can't you?" I meekly suggested again.

"Do I look like someone who does that?"

As the scowl on his face deepened, I could see his eyes burning in rage. At that moment, he was visibly furious at me.

Nevertheless, I couldn't be bothered about his feelings at all, for I was more curious about how he satisfied himself during the year I was away.

"Do you mean that you never jerked off before?"

Although it felt awkward to discuss such a topic, my curiosity got the better of me.

“No!” he snapped, glaring at me angrily.

“I don’t believe it!” I declared with conviction because that was what I truly felt.

“Why don’t you?”

Upset at the fact that I didn’t trust him, Michael broke into a frown.

“A man’s lust is extremely strong. Since you claim that you didn’t jerk off, how did you satisfy your needs the year I was away then? Don’t tell me that you engaged the services of an escort?”

With that possibility in mind, I looked at Michael doubtfully. I would definitely kill him if that was what he did.

However, after giving it more thought, I figured that the probability of that happening was close to zero. Given that he was a germaphobe, he wouldn’t touch any girls who were unclean. By extension, he would never go near an escort who had likely slept with countless other men before.

“Anna, are you doubting me?”

Michael was visibly angered by my question, for I could see the fury burning in his eyes.

“No, I’m just curious as to how you dealt with my absence during that year. Did you really not sleep with anyone else?”

Despite sensing his anger, I couldn’t help pressing on with my questions.

“No!” he asserted coldly with rage written all over his face.

Raising my brow, I looked into his eyes and probed further, “In that case, how did you satisfy your needs for that year without using your hand?”

“I told you, I didn’t! The year you were away, I just endured it. Are you satisfied with that answer?”

At the moment, the fire in Michael’s eyes felt as if they could burn me to crisp. Evidently, he was utterly infuriated.

“It must have been really tough for you, huh?”

When I finally got my answer, I felt as if I was on cloud nine. However, Michael was already in a very sullen mood.

“Anna, if you ever ask me such questions again, I will make sure you won’t be able to climb out of bed!” Michael threatened through his gritted teeth. It was understandable since this topic was considered taboo for men.

“I was just asking out of curiosity. Why do you feel the need to be angry? Being angry first thing in the morning is bad luck for the rest of your day, you know.”

Pursing my lips, I ignored Michael’s anger, for I knew that he was making empty threats and wouldn’t bear to do that to me. To be honest, he was someone whose bark was worse than his bite.

“Anna, it seems that I really must teach you a lesson today!”

Michael had already pounced on me while he was still speaking. Before I realized what was going on, my legs were spread and I could feel him inside me.

Moaning by reflex, I glared at him when I finally regained my senses. However, since he was already in, there was no more stopping him.

Just like that, we began to make love. After entwining ourselves together for a long time, he finally came. People used to say that a man’s libido was strongest in the morning. After what happened, I had no reason to doubt it. When Michael finally got off me, I was utterly drained, whereas he had an invigorated look on his face.

When he saw how exhausted I was, Michael leaned into my ear and whispered in a deep voice, “The next time you ask such questions, you will not get off lightly. Instead, I’ll make sure you won’t even have the energy to lift a single finger.”

What a petty man! All I did was ask a few questions. Am I not allowed to do so? Is there a need to be so angry?

In spite of that, I didn’t dare voice my dissatisfaction for fear of being ravaged a second time.

“You’re so petty!” I snapped before turning my face away.

After getting out of bed, I had some breakfast before heading to Birchwood. Even though I didn’t feel like seeing Janette, she was in need of counsel after yesterday’s tragedy. Given that I could tell no one else about it, I had no choice but to visit her.

Since her condition yesterday was cause for me to worry, I felt that I had better check on her for fear of any accidents.

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When I arrived at Birchwood, I saw Janette sitting on the living room couch the moment I entered. Given that she was sitting in the same spot when I left the day before, I suspected that she didn't move at all since then.

As I laid out the breakfast I brought from home on the table, I invited her in a gentle voice, "Janette, I brought you breakfast. Come and have some."

However, she didn't even look at me. It was as if she didn't hear me at all. With a listless look in her eyes, it felt as if she had lost her soul.

Cognizant that she was still affected by what happened, I sighed with resignation before taking a seat by her side.

Looking at her side profile, I suggested softly, "Your mom will be discharged today. Do you want to go back home and stay there? I'm worried about you staying here all alone."

Just as I spoke, Janette turned to face me and yelled emotionally, "No, I don't want to go back! If Mom finds out that I was... How am I going to face everyone?"

Her sudden outburst gave me a fright which I took some time to recover from.

Evidently, she did hear me but had chosen to ignore me instead. It wasn't until I asked her to go home that she began to rebut me.

"I know how difficult it is for you to face what happened. Every woman in your position would be equally devastated. However, since what's happened has happened, you will need to learn how to deal with it. Avoiding it just isn't the way to go."

Patting Janette on her shoulder, I gave her a sympathetic look. At the end of the day, she was still my mother's daughter. Although I resented her, she was still closer to me than the average stranger.

"That's easy for you to say. If you were in my shoes, can you pretend as if nothing happened? Can you bear the fact that everyone knows you've been sullied?"

As she glared at me intensely with her bloodshot eyes, her face had lost all color. At that moment, she looked absolutely terrifying.

Trembling as she spoke, it was obvious that she was suppressing her own emotions and fear.

"No, but you can't change the past. Other than facing it, what other choice do you have? Do you intend to continue hiding here from everyone?"

To be honest, if the same thing happened to me, my reaction would be even more extreme than Janette's. As a woman, my honor was extremely important to me. If I was the one who was raped that night, I might not even have the courage to carry on living.

"Since you admitted to not being able to face it, what gives you the right to ask me to do the same? Anna, don't pretend to sympathize with me. I became this way entirely because of you. Why are you my mom's illegitimate daughter? If my mom didn't come here to find you, I wouldn't have come here to look for her. Naturally, all this wouldn't have happened too!"

Infuriated, Janette stared daggers at me.

When she blamed everything on me, I furrowed my brows in indignance, for I felt that it had nothing to do with me at all. It was she who ran away in anger after having a fight with Alicia. Therefore, it didn't make sense for her to blame it on me. It wasn't like I was the one who got those men to rape her.

Despite what went through my mind, I didn't reveal it to her. I just put it down to her venting her frustration on me as a result of her inability to accept what happened.

"If you think that it's my fault, then so be it. Anyway, you had better eat the food I brought before it gets cold. Unless of course, you're trying to starve yourself?"

I was certain that Janette hadn't had anything to eat since last afternoon. In fact, I even suspected that she didn't sleep a wink the night before.

Given what she had been through, I decided to look past her baseless accusation. Although it was none of my business whether she died of hunger or not, she was still staying at our place. If anything were to happen to her here, it would definitely be troublesome for me and Michael.

After shooting me a glance, Janette opened the lunchbox I brought her and began to dig in.

When I saw her finally eating, I let out a sigh of relief. Sitting by her side, I continued to silently watch her eat. While she was wolfing down her food, I could see that her eyes were reddened, as if she was trying to endure something.

Even when she finished, she didn't say a word to me nor did I to her, for I had no intention of getting into another argument with her.

Instead, I packed up the lunch box and prepared to leave.

Since she could barely eat, she probably had no mood to shower or apply medication. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but remind her when I had reached the door. "I'll come by again at night and bring you dinner. If you don't feel like meeting anyone these few

days, I'll bring you a change of clothes too. Also, there's the medication the doctor prescribed to you yesterday for... the tear in your private parts. Don't forget to apply it."

The instant she heard my words, Janette scowled at me with bloodshot eyes.

The tear in her private parts was caused by the gang rape, which was the biggest humiliation of her life. My reminder for her to apply the medication had undoubtedly triggered her memories from the night before.

It wasn't my intention to bring up the matter, and I was only acting out of goodwill when I reminded her to apply the medication. After all, she had to accept what happened.

Regardless of how serious her wound was, I didn't wish for her to suffer any side effects.

When I saw the hatred in her eyes, I turned and left without saying another word.

After leaving Birchwood, I heard my phone ring and saw that it was Ronan on the line. I still felt awkward when I thought back to what he said to me in the ward.

I was reluctant to answer at first, but the fact that I still saw him as a friend drove me to do so after a brief hesitation.

"Hello? Ronan?"

"Your mom is being discharged today. Why aren't you here?" Ronan's question rang out over the line.

"I have something to attend to today, so I couldn't pick her up from the hospital. Besides, she's already fine. It doesn't make a difference whether I'm there or not," I casually remarked.

I could gather from Ronan's tone that he was currently in the hospital.

"And here I was hoping to run into you in the hospital. But sadly, You're nowhere to be found. Can't say that I'm not disappointed."

## **Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 523**

### **Chapter 523 Getting In My Way Of Picking Up Girls**

When I heard Ronan's cocky voice on the line, I could detect his regret over the words he had blurted to me in the hospital previously. Consequently, he was now embarrassed by it.

"I can't be at the hospital because I'm tied down with something. Janette is having some trouble," I simply explained, not wanting the awkwardness between us to worsen.

"What happened to her?" Ronan's curious voice rang out at the mention of Janette's name. "I'm not at liberty to say, but it certainly isn't something good."

I didn't tell him about the rape, for I was cognizant that the lesser people who knew about it, the better. "Sheesh, despite being friends for such a long time, you actually refuse to tell me. You know, I couldn't be any more disappointed."

Much to his dismay, Ronan didn't expect me to refrain from telling him about it.

"It's just inappropriate as it relates to a lady's reputation. Besides, it's not like you're interested in her, so why are you being such a busybody? Unless, of course, you intend to pursue her?"

Worried that Ronan would press on with his questions, I quickly changed the topic. Upon hearing my accusation, Ronan anxiously denied it. "Of course not. I'm sure you're well aware that I only have feelings for you. Moreover, why would I fall for such a rude brat like Janette?"

His words rendered me speechless. Even though I've long known of his feelings for me, I had been avoiding the matter ever since. Consequently, I was caught off guard by his sudden confession. At that moment, the atmosphere began to grow awkward.

"Ronan, you know full well that it's impossible between us. So, don't ever bring this up again."

After a momentary silence, I admonished him sternly, for he had always been one to speak without any discretion.

In the past, I would only feel awkward and not be angered at all. But now that I was considered the wife of his cousin, it was no longer appropriate for him to make such suggestive comments.

When my scathing words silenced Ronan, I knew that I had hurt him. Nonetheless, I had to draw the line to avoid any unnecessary awkwardness in the future.

"I understand. I was just pulling your leg. There's no need to take it so seriously. Besides, I didn't make any moves over the last two years. So there's nothing for you to worry about at all."

When Ronan spoke, his tone was tinged with a rare sense of solemnness. I had almost never heard him talk to me in such a serious manner before.

Feeling guilty upon detecting the disappointment in his voice, I had no idea how to comfort him.

Meanwhile, silence continued to fill the line. Given how talkative he usually was, it was an indication of how devastated he felt.

“Ronan, no matter what, I still thank you for liking me. To me, you truly are an indispensable friend!”

Even though we could never be lovers, he was still someone extremely important to me. Furthermore, I would never forget how much help he had extended to me in the past.

The very next second, Ronan gloated over the line, “I’m well aware of how important I am to you. So, you should show me a better attitude when you speak to me instead of sounding cold all the time.”

Even though his tone sounded casual, it didn’t escape my notice that he was just trying to ease the tension in the air.

“Okay,” I plainly agreed with a curl of my lips.

“All right, if there’s nothing else, I’m ending the call now. Anyway, I’m going out on a date with some pretty girls who have been calling me up non-stop, so I’ll talk to you again. Bye!”

Just as he finished, Ronan ended the call without giving me time to react.

Listening to the call end tone over the line, I sighed in resignation. Obviously, I didn’t believe Ronan when he claimed to be going out to pick up girls.

All this while, he never had a girl by his side, just like Michael. In fact, those not in the know even speculated that he was gay. A philandering playboy of old had now become a paragon of abstinence.

After returning home, I felt the tension within me being released as I lay on my bed and fell asleep. Despite how complicated Janette’s situation was, it was still necessary to get it resolved.

Over the next few days, there was no change in Janette’s condition. She continued to behave just like a puppet. Whenever I brought food over, she would finish it without saying a word to me. Furthermore, she had no intention of returning home still.

At the rate she was going, her family would definitely begin to worry, which was something that concerned me.



I had planned to persuade Janette to go home over the next two days. Unfortunately, Alicia called before I could get to it.

When I saw her name on the caller ID, I was reluctant to pick up, for I had no idea what to say even if I did.

In the end, I still chose to answer on the account that I had already decided to try and forgive her.

“Hello?”

As of then, I had no idea how to address her yet, for I couldn't bring myself to call her Mom.

“Anna, am I disturbing you by calling?”

Assuming that I would still show her a frosty attitude, she sounded visibly tense.

“No, what is it?” I answered in an indifferent tone.

“I just wanted to ask you if you know where Janette is. I'm beginning to worry since she isn't picking up my calls. After all, it has been a few days since the last time you found her, but there's no sign of her yet.”

I could hear the concern in her tone when she mentioned Janette.

“Something happened to her that I hadn't managed to tell you yet. She might need some time to accept it, hence the refusal to take your calls.”

Given that it was inevitable for Alicia to find out about the rape, I decided to reveal it considering how worried she was.

“Janette is in trouble? What happened to her?” Alicia asked anxiously upon hearing my answer. She clearly cared a lot about Janette.

After relating Janette's gang-rape incident and how I subsequently found her, Alicia fell into a deathly silence.

When I didn't hear anything for a long time, I began to worry that she couldn't take the shock.

“Hello, are you still there?”

## **Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 524**

My mother's silence had me even more worried. While nervously asking if she was still on the line, I was genuinely concerned about her health becoming compromised as a result of her inability to handle this news.

"I'm still here. Oh, Janette... my poor child. How could such a thing have happened to her?"

She started to choke up as she spoke. It was understandably upsetting for her as a mother to learn of the tragic fate that befell her own daughter.

"What's happened has happened, so you should restrain your grief. Having just been discharged and have yet to fully recover, you need to be more mindful of your own health.

Feeling no less disturbed by it as well, I was able to empathize with what she was going through. However, my concerns, at present, rested more on her physical well-being.

"Where is Janette? How is she now? With everything that has transpired, why is it that she had told me nothing about it? This girl is really getting me worried sick."

Her voice quivered while she rattled off a string of questions pertaining to her daughter.

"Emotionally, Janette isn't very stable right now. I was the one who decided to withhold it from you as you were still in the hospital when this all went down. I chose not to tell you as I was worried that you might not be able to cope."

That was all that I could have said about Janette's situation.

"Where is she now? I want to see her. She needs someone to keep her company."

"Okay. I'll drive you over to see her in a bit."

Even though we were both her daughters, I could sense that the extent of her affinity for Janette was much greater in comparison. Her sentiments toward me had been mostly rooted in guilt, whereas what she felt toward Janette was borne of genuine affection.

This sentiment was hard for me to contend with, but now was not the time to wrangle over such things; Janette was in a position of vulnerability, and in much need of care.

After we drove over to the house in Birchwood, I did not see Janette after we entered. That left me quite confounded.

Whenever I came by these past two days, I could always find Janette seated on the couch in the living room, unspeaking and doing nothing else in particular. Her absence at the moment got me somewhat fretful.

“Where’s Janette? Didn’t you say that she’s here?”

Turning around to regard me, Alicia sounded even more anxious when she was unable to catch a glimpse of Janette either.

“Stay calm. I’m going to check in the bedroom. Maybe she had been tired out over these past couple of days, and went in to take a rest.”

With burgeoning disquietude, I picked up my pace and made my way to the bedroom. The sheets on the bed remained pristine and tidy. It was evident that no one had slept in it. Frantically, I looked everywhere, even in the washroom. Finally, I spotted a figure standing on the balcony.

My heart sank when I ascertained that it was Janette. Ill at ease, I hastened toward her.

“What are you doing, Janette? Don’t you know that that’s dangerous?”

Janette stood over at the balcony with her eyes cast out into the distance, and I was seriously afraid that she might decide to jump down from there outright. As we were on the tenth floor, there was going to be little to no chance that she would survive the plunge if she really went for it.

As though oblivious to my voice, she continued to stare vacuously into the horizon. Drawn to the commotion, Alicia had also hurried over by this time. She got herself quite a fright when she saw Janette in such a precarious position.

“What are you standing there for, Janette? Please come back in. It’s dangerous out there!”

She regarded Janette with a bundle of nerves as she spoke, and I saw that her body was trembling ever so subtly in the throes of fear.

It was only upon hearing her voice that Janette turned this way, and the moment she saw her mother, she burst into tears.

“I feel horrible. Mom... every minute that I draw breath feels excruciating. Do you think I’d be able to find relief by jumping down from here?”

Bereft of expressiveness, Janette looked at Alicia as she said these with impassivity. Therein, I was able to hear the despair in her voice.

“What are you talking about, Janette? Being as young as you are, you would be able to get through this, no matter what. Plus, you still have me. What am I to do if you were to jump down from here? Do you mean for me to join you?”

Alicia's tears fell like beads untethered from their string. The pain was palpable upon her face while she regarded Janette with tremendous sadness.

"Did you know what I went through that night, Mom? How could I bear this stain for the rest of my life? How could I face other people from here on out? What would they think of me..."

"Listen to me, Janette. You will get through this, so don't do anything silly! If anything were to happen to you, I wouldn't want to carry on living either!"

Alicia approached Janette with tears welling in her eyes.

"How could I get past this? How could I face anyone in the future? What man would ever want me? I feel so dirty, and I don't know what to do with myself. Whenever I close my eyes, all I see are the images of those men tearing at my clothes. It hurts. It hurts so much..." Janette shuffled backward while she cried in anguish.

My chest tightened as I witnessed this. Janette was just a few steps away from the edge and if she really wanted to jump, there was nothing we could do to stop her.

That was when I heard the sound of the door outside opening. Shortly after, Michael's silhouette came into view.

"Aren't you supposed to be in the office? What are you doing here?"

Surprised at his unexpected presence, I could not help but ask.

"With everything that is going down, would you have been able to handle it by yourself without me?"

Michael kept his eyes focused on Janette while he spoke, and with his pretty lips tightly pursed, it was not hard to tell that he was similarly a little nervous, just as we were.

"What should we do now? Janette's in a bad place, and she isn't budging no matter what we tell her. I'm really afraid that things could spiral out of control should this persist."

Janette's present state of mind got all of us jittery.

When Michael heard what I said, he furrowed his brows slightly and began to walk toward Janette.

"Aren't you standing there because you want to jump? If so, stop wasting time here. Just go ahead and do it." Michael regarded Janette coldly. If he was tensed up, it did not show.

All of us present were shocked at his words. Even I was a little confused, unable to figure out what he was thinking. With the situation being as dire as it was, how could he go on agitating Janette like this? What if she really decided to go for it?

Alicia looked upon him, noticeably upset. However, considering the circumstances at present, she held her tongue. I could nonetheless see the displeasure in her eyes.

## Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 525

### Chapter 525 The Goad

“What are you saying, Michael?”

I walked to his side and looked at him disapprovingly, upset with the things he said. While we were all struggling to find a way to save Janette, he, conversely, was pushing her to jump.

Michael merely continued onward in Janette’s direction. In spite of me expressing in no uncertain terms how I felt about that, he did not even look my way.

“If you really want to jump, then stop wasting everybody’s time. Go on and get it over with. There wouldn’t even be a chance for you to be resuscitated if you jump from here, so I’d have your funeral arrangements seen to. As far as this goes, you’ll have nothing to worry about.”

Michael remained as poker-faced as ever as he spoke, and there was a sliver of impatience in his tone.

As opposed to comforting her, Michael instead urged her to jump down as soon as possible. That really took Janette by surprise. She was quite stunned for a moment before she responded with some anger.

“You! You’re really too much! Are you looking forward to seeing me die so that Anna would become my mother’s only daughter? So that you could both hoard my mother’s assets all for yourselves?” said Janette as she seethed at Michael.

“Clever. Were you to pass on, Anna would become the only heir to your mother’s immense empire. All of it would become hers, while all that you’d be is a pile of ashes.”

Michael’s lips lifted into a sardonic smirk while he moved in on Janette once more.

So consumed by her own rage, Janette failed to realize how close Michael had gotten to her.

“If you don’t have the guts to jump, why don’t I give you a hand?”

When Michael reached Janette, he extended his hands as though he meant to push her off.

That set Janette into a panic. Shrieking and screaming, she leaped the other way and was aptly caught inside Michael's arms.

All of us let out a sigh of relief in reaction to this. I finally realized that Michael was deliberately goading her. Perhaps he reckoned that Janette did not have the courage to jump to her death, to begin with.

Upon seeing Janette safe and sound, a tearful Alicia rushed up and hugged Janette.

"Did you know that you scared me half to death? What am I to do if something were to really happen to you? Don't you ever try anything like that again, you hear?"

Alicia was all choked up as she held Janette.

"I'm in so much pain, Mom. Please tell me what I should do..."

A positively bawling mess, Janette held onto my mother tightly as a hapless child would.

"Don't worry. We'll get through this. With our family's background, you'll surely be able to find a boy that you fancy in time."

Alicia kept patting her on the back and comforting her.

My heart ached upon the sight of this affectionate display of motherly love, so much so that it turned me away from the balcony.

She was as much my mother as she was Janette's. That being said, even though I never had to go through anything as traumatic as this, she had also never shown such concern for me before.

Janette had always been the apple of Alicia's eye ever since she was little. I was akin to an unwanted urchin in relative comparison, regarded with harshness throughout my formative years. Though born from the same mother, the treatment we received could not have been more starkly contrasting.

Michael came out after me and pulled me into his embrace.

"I misunderstood you just now. You only said what you did because you wanted to save Janette," I felt guilty inside as I recalled how I had wronged him on the balcony just now.

"Yeah. Considering the sort of person that she is, I was sure that she wouldn't have what it takes to jump. She was just overwhelmed, and I knew that the fear factor would just kick in when she's pushed to the brink."

With no discernable change in Michael's expression, he remained as staid as ever at my words.

"It was fortunate that you came by. I wouldn't have known what to do if you didn't." I leaned into Michael's chest and spoke with unease.

Even though this crisis had been averted, I was not as happy as I ought to be. Seeing the mother and daughter's relaxed demeanor really stabbed at my heart.

"We should leave them to handle the rest here on their own. Let's go on home."

Perhaps he had also sensed that I was not in a good mood, Michael had an arm over my shoulders while we departed.

While seated in his car, I was feeling a little down.

"Have you discussed Janette's issue with Mrs. Campbell? Does she plan to file a report?"

The car had traveled some ways before Michael broke the silence.

"No. I haven't the time to do that yet. This came to her as a major blow, so I think I may prefer to do that at a later time."

Going to the police would be the most ideal solution, but I could not be sure if they would be amenable to this.

"Yeah," Michael replied casually and left it at that.

In the next few days that followed, Alicia had not called again. I guessed that she must have been busy keeping Janette company. Or perhaps, she had already forgotten about my existence.

Although Janette was in a delicate situation and needed to be taken care of, it did not feel good to be neglected like this. Maybe it was the lack of attention from my foster parents that made me a little sensitive in this regard.

A week later, I finally heard from Alicia.

When the call came through, she told me to head over to her place. I would have said "no" in any other instance, but when I figured that they could use some support in light of what had happened to Janette, I decided against turning her down.

Janette was spotted within minutes of my arrival. In spite of her emaciated disposition, she looked to be in markedly better spirits than she did at the beginning. It would seem that she was slowly stepping out of the shadows of that misadventure.

She regarded me with mild indifference when she saw me approach and made her way upstairs with nary a word.

Since we had never really gotten along that well all this time, to begin with, I chose not to take this affront from her personally.

“You’re here, Anna.”

Alicia regarded me with welcoming eyes and approached me immediately as soon as she caught sight of me.

Having not seen her in a week, I found a smidgen of pallor and weariness upon her countenance when I gazed upon it.

I supposed that Janette’s predicament must have weighed heavily on her mind. With everything that had transpired, she must not have felt any better about it than Janette herself.

“Yeah. Do you have something to ask of me when you called today to have me over?” I replied blandly before asking.

“It’s nothing in particular. After not seeing you these past few days, I just missed you, so I thought about having you over so that we can have dinner together,” said Alicia warmly while she came up beside me.

“I see,” I grunted as I did not know what else to say, for right now, I was finding those formalities that were expected from me a little hard to parse.