Love from My Dominant Boss Chapter 136 - 140

My heart skipped a beat when I saw my mother weeping. It was safe to assume that Steven must have been gravely injured.

As I dragged my way over to the ward, I saw Steven lying on the bed. He was completely drenched in blood with a plaster cast applied to both his legs.

There was no way I could stand seeing him in such a state no matter how much I was irked by his actions. After all, at the end of the day, he was my only sibling.

I strode toward his bedside, staring at him, and noticing that he was bruised all over, especially his face. Although my parents hadn't sustained any serious injury, they weren't exactly fine.

What the heck is wrong with that brutal bunch? They didn't pull their punches at all! How dare they beat Steven up to a pulp? Aren't they afraid of being arrested?

"M-Mom..."

Overwhelmed by emotions, I was unable to finish my sentence.

Torrents of grief streamed down my cheeks. I approached my mother and looked at her with my face scrunched up in guilt.

Although it was Steven's fault for getting himself involved, I felt bad as I wasn't of much help. If only I was capable enough to turn the tables around, Steven wouldn't have ended up heavily injured.

When she heard me, she stopped weeping and glared at me in the eyes. A few seconds later, she stood up and marched over in my direction.

"Mom, I'm so sorry-"

I wanted to express my utmost apology, yet I wasn't even given a chance to finish my sentence. She slapped me in the face without holding back the moment she reached my side.

"Get the hell out of my sight at once!"

She yelled at me with a pair of teary eyes and bellowed at me to leave the ward immediately.

Seconds after I returned to my senses, I looked at her with my eyes widened in disbelief. I had a hard time fathoming the rationale behind the brutal slap.

Staring at my mother's scrunched-up face, my eyes started brimming with tears. The emotions I had been holding back almost came flooding out, but I knew I couldn't afford to be vulnerable.

Irked, Natalie had to resist the urge to confront my mom. She tried her best to maintain her composure and asked, "Hey, how could you slap Anna?"

Sniffling, I expressed my apology once again, "Mom, I'm so sorry—"

"Get out of my sight immediately! You're not my daughter!"

She couldn't be bothered by my apology at all. Instead, she dragged me out of the ward with all her might, indicating she deemed me liable for Steven's injuries.

"Mom, how can you say that? I'll always be your daughter! How can you chase me away when you need someone by your side?"

Although I wasn't of much help, I wasn't the one at fault! I can't believe she's chasing me away! Has she never thought of my feelings?

"Where are you when we need you the most? Since you can't be of much help, stop considering yourself a member of the family! I'll just consider it a waste of my time and effort raising you over the past two decades!"

It was evident that she held a grudge against me for not being able to resolve the issue on the family's behalf. In another word, she held me accountable for everything that had occurred.

Is she implying that I'm the one at fault for the family's current situation? Does she think I'm having a great time when they're having it tough?

In an attempt to defend myself, I looked at her in the eyes and repeated, "Mom, haven't I made it clear? I don't have the required sum! Over the years, I have given you everything! I don't even have a single cent left!"

It wasn't fair to hold me accountable for the things that had occurred.

"Don't try to deceive me! You have been working for years! I'm sure you're able to make more than a few hundred thousand within a year! You're just selfish and unwilling to help your brother!"

There was nothing I could say that would convince her otherwise since she had already decided that I was the one responsible for the misery that had befallen Steven.

My heart went cold when I caught her staring at me with contempt. I wondered if she would react the same if I was the one heavily injured instead of Steven.

All these years, I was the breadwinner of the family, yet an accident was all it took to nullify my contribution over the years.

That's so unfair! Steven is their child! But so am I! Are they taking things out on me just because I'm a female?

Natalie couldn't stand my mother's arrogant behavior anymore. She tried her best to suppress her wrath and enunciated her reply, "Are you telling me you're not aware that Anna has transferred more than half of her monthly wages home? What do you expect

from her when she's just an executive-level employee? She has been trying her best to cover Steven's debt over the past two years! What makes you think she must bear the consequences of his actions?"

Natalie's statements took my mother by surprise as she interrupted our conversation. However, seconds after my mother returned to her senses, she began taking her frustration out on Natalie.

"Who the heck are you? What makes you think you're in a position to interfere when I'm trying to teach my daughter a lesson? Why are you even here in the first place?"

In spite of being relatively straightforward, Natalie had never once mispresented the facts. Nonetheless, that wouldn't work with someone like my mother.

"I'm just telling the truth! To be honest, I can't stand it anymore! I'm supposed to show you some respect since you're Anna's mom, but I don't think you deserve it at all! Don't you know she's going to feel bad as well? How can you blame her when she's not the one at fault?"

Natalie went on and on without paying heed to my mother's fury.

"Natalie, that's enough! I'm sure Mom is just frustrated because of the things that have occurred over the past few days!"

My mother had always been an unreasonable person. As such, I was afraid that Natalie would get herself involved in another fight, so I tried to stop her.

"Anna, they're holding you accountable because you have always tolerated their nonsensical demand! I'm well aware of the things you have gone through over the past two years! It's fine even if they don't appreciate your effort, but I can't believe they're blaming you when you're not even involved in this! They don't deserve to call themselves your parents!"

Natalie was never afraid of blurting out the things she had in mind. Therefore, she didn't bother to rephrase her sentence even when she was conversing with an elder like my mother.

Never would I bring up something of that sort in front of my mother, however, for I knew she would reprimand me for being unfilial and ungrateful if I did.

"Anna, is this your friend? Has she no manner at all?"

Unable to defend herself, my mother glared at me in the eyes and started picking on me instead of Natalie.

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"Mom, I'm sorry! I'm well aware that you're upset, but Natalie isn't trying to offend you either!"

Although I was still upset she had slapped me in the face, I knew she didn't mean it. She was just worried about Steven and needed to take her frustration out on someone.

"Get the hell out of my sight at once! Don't show up in front of me anymore in the future!"

Although she was relatively calm as compared to the moment I showed up in the ward, she insisted on chasing me out of the room.

"But Steven needs someone to look after him since he's heavily injured. Mom, just let me stay behind to keep an eye on him."

It felt awful to be chased away over and over again. I would be lying if I said I wasn't bothered by her harsh remarks.

"No! I want you to scram, now! Also, you'll be the one to settle the medical bills of your brother!"

No matter what I told her to defend myself, she refused to listen to me. She simply pushed me out of the ward with all her might before slamming the door shut in my face.

Staring at the tightly shut door, I felt a prickling sensation behind my eyes. Although I was aware that she was irked, the fact that she actually chased me out of the ward took me by surprise.

Natalie, who had been suppressing her wrath, approached me and grasped my hand before announcing in a gentle tone, "Anna, let's just go home."

However, I would never leave my family in times of emergencies. Hence, I asked Natalie, "Natalie, I wish to stay here to keep an eye on my brother, but Mom doesn't want me anywhere near them! What should I do?"

"Your mom's never going to let you back in. You need to stop wasting your time here. You're only causing yourself more grief if you stay. Why don't you listen to me and return home for the time being? Let your mom cool off for a bit and maybe she'll reach out to you in a few days."

Natalie glanced in the direction of the ward and let out a long sigh. Helplessness was written all over her face.

Since Natalie's advice made sense, I stopped insisting and paid the attending physician a visit to find out Steven's actual condition instead.

He told me that Steven's condition was bad and he would require an immediate operation. However, the cost of the operation and the rehabilitation process that comes soon after would cost a fortune.

As I was as poor as a church rat, my heart sank to the bottom when I heard that. I couldn't think of any way to gather the required sum within such a short span of time.

Nonetheless, I had to come up with something because I couldn't afford to waste any time as Steven's condition was at stake.

My mind was all over the place after we returned to Natalie's place. I couldn't think of anyone who would offer their help. Truth be told, they had all turned me down when I brought up the request before. Therefore, it was obvious it would end up the same.

In an attempt to figure out my next best course of action, I started pacing back and forth in the living room.

It was then I received a call from Yuval. I took a deep breath to calm myself before picking up the call.

Confused by the reason he had called, I asked, "Yuval, why are calling me in the middle of the night?"

"Anna, Natalie has told me everything you're currently going through."

Yuval cut the small talk and got straight to the point the moment the call got through.

Hearing him mentioning my family, I frowned and wondered if I should acquire Yuval's help.

A few seconds later, I shrugged that thought off my mind because we had just gotten into a relationship. It wouldn't be wise to get him involved, let alone get him to lend me a few hundred thousand.

"What should I do? Steven is currently unconscious after having both his legs broken! He needs a few hundred thousand for the upcoming series of operations."

I almost burst into tears when I shared my concerns with him. It was rare for me to have an emotional breakdown in front of others, but I had run out of options.

"The culprits are the ones liable for the damages they have willfully caused your brother. It's better for you to file a lawsuit against them and get them to compensate you for your loss."

Yuval answered my queries in a serious tone. Perhaps it had something to do with his profession, he started analyzing the situation and told me the available alternatives.

"But that's going to take a long time! Steven can't wait that long! His attending physician told me the operation has to be conducted tonight, and a hundred thousand is required!"

When I reached the hospital, they were in the middle of preparation for the operation. As of now, Steven is still unconscious. I'm pretty sure Dad and Mom don't have the required sum after spending most of the fortune Michael has bestowed them...

After a few seconds of silence, Yuval added in a callous tone, "It is quite a challenge."

Although I had no intention to ask for his help, I couldn't help being hopeful. To my surprise, he had just implied he wouldn't offer his help.

"Thanks for calling in to check on me. If there's nothing else, I'm hanging up now."

As soon as I figured out Yuval had no intention to help me, I didn't want to waste my time engaging in a pointless conversation anymore. The only thing I had in my mind was to gather the required sum as soon as possible.

Yuval wrapped up the conversation as though he couldn't be bothered at all. "Alright, you need to calm down first and call it a day since it's getting late."

As I couldn't think of anyone who could be of aid, I got increasingly anxious after hanging up the call with Yuval.

I couldn't figure out if Yuval had no intention to offer his help or if he had merely forgotten about it. However, it was evident he valued money over everything else.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, my mind was in a mess. As such, I went to the hospital again in the middle of the night.

My father was no longer in his prime, and I was afraid that my mother would have to take care of both my father and Steven. As such, I couldn't bear to leave them alone.

When I reached the hospital, I found out she was in the attending physician's office again. She was begging the doctor to carry on with the operation and promised him she would gather the required sum as soon as possible.

Nonetheless, the doctor couldn't be bothered at all. I barged into the doctor's office and helped my mother up immediately.

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"Mom, what are you doing?"

"Anna, since you're here, have you gathered the required sum for the operation? We can't afford to drag this on any longer! Otherwise, your brother's going to be wheelchair-bound for the rest of his life!"

When she saw me, she behaved as though her only hope had shown up. She gazed at me with a panicked look in her eyes.

"Mom, I'm still trying to get the required sum. I can't gather that much of a fortune overnight."

Afraid of looking at her in the eyes, I lowered my head in guilt.

She had been holding a grudge against me ever since I refused to settle the debt on Steven's behalf. Now that there was a possibility of Steven spending his life in a wheelchair, I was overwhelmed by guilt.

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"If you haven't gathered the required sum, why the heck are you here?"

The moment my mother found out I still hadn't gathered the required sum, she pushed me away with all her might and glared at me in the eyes.

I was upset by her response. Staring at her in the eyes with sorrow written all over my face, I answered, "I'm only here because I'm worried about you and Dad. I thought I can help keep an eye on Steven in the ward."

"If you still care about us, why don't you get us the money we need for the operation? He needs it urgently or he'll end up crippled! Are you really going to forsake your brother?"

Up until that very moment, she still thought I had been keeping a fortune from her for myself.

Sighing, I looked her in the eyes and announced, "Mom, can you stop being so unreasonable? If I had the money, I would have given you already."

Glaring daggers at me, she repeated herself, "If you still consider yourself a member of the family, gather the required sum at all costs! If anything happens to Steven, I won't forgive you!"

Once again, I had no choice but to bear the burden of the family.

"M-Mom-"

I had no intention to blame her for forcing me to gather the required sum, but I couldn't stand her threatening me over and over again. Is she actually saying that she would hold me accountable if Steven really ends up crippled?

I'm equally upset by Steven's condition! But how can she make it sound as if I was the one who brought upon his misery? What else am I supposed to do?

"Well? Get going already!"

She pushed me out of the doctor's office without expressing any concerns over my feelings.

Perhaps he couldn't stand my mother's unreasonable behavior anymore, the doctor stepped in just then and stopped my mother from pushing me. he offered, "Alright, that's enough. I'll carry on with the operation, but you need to settle the medical bills first thing in the morning. Otherwise, I'll get in trouble as well."

"Thank you so much!"

I heaved a sigh of relief when the doctor agreed to carry on with the operation.

He nodded and repeated himself prior to departing from his office. "I'll head over and check on the patient's condition. Meanwhile, please gather the required sum as soon as possible."

With that, my mother and I were the only ones left behind after he marched out of his office.

Seeing that I was still standing at the entrance, she pushed at me and yelled, "Well? What are you waiting for? Hurry up and get going already!"

A few seconds later, she went after the doctor and marched in the direction of Steven's ward.

I thought of waiting for Steven outside of the operating theater, but my mother got worked up the moment she saw me. In the end, I had to leave the hospital because she wouldn't stop chasing me away.

It started raining cats and dogs the moment I stepped out of the hospital. It felt awful, but the fact that I was completely drenched had nothing to do with my foul mood. Instead, it was because my own mother had always deemed me replaceable.

Wandering on the streets in the middle of the night, I couldn't think of anything that could allow me to gather the required sum overnight.

Out of nowhere, Michael's image crossed my mind. He was the only one amongst my acquaintances who could whip out over a hundred thousand within a night.

That being said, he's someone who would never involve himself in a losing trade! If I'm acquiring his help, I'm pretty sure there's a hefty price to pay... And the only thing he wants from me is...

Ugh! As much as I want to stay away from him, he's the only one I can turn to! I don't have any alternatives anymore!

I ended up walking my way to Birchwood as I couldn't hail a cab in the middle of the night. To make things worse, there was a heavy downpour. I was just glad that Birchwood was merely a few streets away.

As I wandered in the deserted street with the rain splattering down me, the helplessness I felt intensified.

After a long while, I finally made it to Birchwood. As I had moved out of Michael's place, I couldn't make my way in since the key was no longer with me.

I started shivering in the cold and reached for my phone to call Michael.

To be honest, I was afraid he would miss the call since it was the middle of the night, and he might have already fallen asleep. Besides, there was also the possibility where he might not want to make his way here even if he managed to figure out the things going on.

After ringing for quite some time, and just when I was about to give up, he finally picked up and asked, "Yes?"

Judging by his hoarse voice, it was evident that he had been roused from his sleep.

I was at a loss for words when I heard his voice. Coupled that with the awful feeling in my heart, I started weeping over the phone.

I knew that if I told him the truth, I would have to sacrifice myself again. Therefore, I was unsure of how to start the conversation. I just couldn't bring myself to ask for money from him.

Seeing how I was silent, he raised his voice and asked, "Where are you?"

I couldn't help but wonder if he was worried about me.

Sniffling, I forced myself to form a complete sentence and muttered, "I-I'm at Birchwood."

"Wait for me."

He hung up the call as soon as he assured me he would reach me soon.

As the beeping tone sounded, I lowered my phone, and I could no longer suppress the pent-up emotions and grievances that I felt.

Ironically, Michael was the only one I could rely on when we had merely spent a few nights in bed before.

I ended up shivering as I sat leaning against the entrance in anticipation of Michael's arrival. No longer could I pull myself together after spending such a long time walking over to his place in the rain.

As the pent-up fatigue caught up to me, I started dozing off, my eyelids getting heavier.

"Anna!"

Just when I was about to fall asleep, I heard Michael's voice. I forced myself to open my eyes and noticed that he was now standing in front of me.

I beamed at his presence and brought myself up immediately. Nonetheless, I could barely stand on my own feet. It felt as though I would pass out at any time.

"Hey. You're finally here."

The very moment I brought myself up, I staggered and ended up in between Michael's arms. His familiar scent allowed me to feel a sense of serenity. I felt a strong urge to stay in between his arms without doing anything else.

Michael gaped at my actions with a perplexed look.

After a short while, he broke the silence and asked, "Why are you completely soaked in the middle of the night? Are you getting yourself wet on purpose?"

As a result of water dripping off my completely soaked shirt, Michael's shirt was partially drenched as well.

"Michael, can we go in first? I'm so tired..."

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I was on the verge of collapsing, but I had to pull myself together to gather the required sum for the operation.

Michael pushed me aside and accessed the keypad. I was shocked to see that he had changed the lock of the place to a keypad lock.

He marched his way to the couch in the living room and took a seat after showing me the way into the foyer.

Staring at me with his legs crossed, he queried, "So, why were you looking for me in the middle of the night?"

I was pretty sure he could easily figure out that the only reason I was looking for him was that I had something to ask of him. After all, I had suddenly shown up after having been avoiding him for the past few weeks.

When I caught him sizing me up, I pursed my lips in an attempt to make up my mind.

Although it wasn't the first time we had some raunchy fun, the upcoming one was one with a purpose. I thought I wouldn't get myself involved with him again after the last session we had. Unfortunately, just a few months later, I had to return to him because I was in desperate need of cash.

As I remained silent at the foyer, he asked with his brows arched, indicating he was about to lose his patience, "What? Cat got your tongue?"

He has always been an impatient man. I'm pretty sure I'm about to get on his nerves for real if I don't talk to him soon.

Staring at him in the eyes, I started undressing in silence. I deemed it unnecessary to bring up the request prior to the session.

Seeing that, he narrowed his eyes to a slit with a curious look.

After removing every garment I had on, I stood bare in front of Michael. His lust was written all over his face.

"Did you get me here in the middle of the night just to seduce me?"

Once he finished his question, he got up from the couch and stalked toward me, the desire in his eyes intensifying.

Coming to a stop in front of me, he looked down upon me with a smirk.

My heart skipped a beat when I caught a whiff of his unique scent. I stared at him with my eyes brimming with tears.

"If that's what you want, I'll give it to you, then."

Smirking, he lifted me in between his arms and brought me to the bedroom.

After throwing me on the spacious bed, he started undressing. Meanwhile, I started feeling lightheaded and wondered if it had something to do with him throwing me around as if it wasn't a big deal.

Once he removed his top and exposed his sturdy pecs, he got on top of me and started the session with an amorous kiss.

Soon, he ran his tongue all over my body as though he couldn't wait to devour me.

I had no choice but to brace myself through the session. In spite of my heart racing, I couldn't resist the urge to fall asleep as the pent-up fatigue caught up to me once again.

Since the only thing I had in mind was to sleep, I allowed Michael to play with me however he wanted. I tried my best to pull myself together until the session was over, but I couldn't resist it anymore.

Noticing that I wasn't reacting, Michael moved his lips away from me. He placed his hands next to me and looked me in the eyes with a hint of wrath in his ebony eyes.

"Anna, have you shown up in the middle of the night and seduced me just to fall asleep halfway through the session?"

My heart skipped a beat when I heard his hoarse voice. However, I simply couldn't bring myself to open my eyes anymore.

He arched his brows and placed his hand on my forehead. A few seconds later, he frowned and asked, "Are you having a fever?"

For a moment, I thought I could hear a hint of worry in his tone.

"M-Michael, I'm tired. I want to sleep..."

I fell into a deep slumber once I finished my sentence. I could feel Michael leaning over, but he seemed to be up to something else.

I couldn't seem to shrug the dizziness off me until I felt something cold on my forehead.

When I woke up again, a brand-new day had begun. I tried to open my eyes, but I couldn't due to the strong shaft of light in the room.

I still felt sick, but it wasn't as awful as it felt last night. Michael, who was next to me, was still sleeping soundly.

I sat upright and reached for my phone immediately. It was then I found out it was already eleven o'clock in the morning.

When I recalled the promise I had with the doctor, I sprang out of the bed to get myself dressed. I couldn't help but wonder if things were fine on Steven's end.

Michael was roused from his sleep by my frantic movements. He opened his eyes and looked at me with a frown. Judging by his look, it was safe to assume he was exhausted.

"You're finally awake."

He struck up a conversation in a hoarse voice, indicating he had a long night.

I stiffened when I recalled the reason I had paid him a visit last night. Initially, I was about to offer myself to him, but I fell into a deep slumber halfway through the session.

Curious if he had finished the things we had started, I asked, "Did we... do it last night?"

If others weren't aware of my concerns, they would deem me a lustful woman who couldn't contain her desires to herself in the morning.

When he heard my question, he looked at me with a scowl and started making fun of me.

"You don't actually think I would do it with someone that's sleeping, do you? Did you show up just to spend a night in bed with me?"

As I could vividly recall myself dozing off before the best part of the session, I flushed when I heard his sarcastic remark.

Michael has always placed great emphasis on satisfaction when it comes to sex. I'm pretty sure he's having it tough since the session has been brought to an abrupt halt.

I was about to say something to express my apology, but I became tongue-tied.

On top of that, since nothing had occurred between us, I couldn't possibly bring up the request to get another loan from him. I was certain he wouldn't give in to my request until he was able to get his hands on the things he sought.

Once that particular thought crossed my mind, I stopped dressing up and pounced on him instead. I started kissing him on the lips.

That was the first time in forever I had taken the initiative. Michael's eyes widened in disbelief, but a few seconds later, he wrapped his arms around my waist.

He returned my kiss with a frown. Meanwhile, as it was the first time I had initiated a kiss, my heart wouldn't stop pounding.

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Michael had always been a man with strong desires. Coupled with me riding on top of him completely bare, he was quickly aroused.

I let loose of myself as well since my goal was to seduce him into having sex with me. In order to please him, I stopped playing hard to get.

Pleased by my actions, he stopped kissing me and started running his lips across my neck instead. In the end, he moved away from me and peered into my eyes.

"Go on."

Noticing that I had paused, he glanced at me in displeasure before placing my hands on his manhood, indicating that he wanted me to please him with everything I had.

He continued running his hands all over my body and added, "Anna, since you're the one who seduce me first, you need to finish what you started."

Michael had always been a beast in bed. Therefore, it took a long time until he had his needs satisfied.

By the time we were done, I was completely exhausted. I felt a strong urge to take a nap once I was able to take a breather after the wild session we had.

Michael, who was laying next to me on the bed, looked at me with a bright grin and asserted, "You did great today. Let's try some new positions next time."

Hearing that, I rolled my eyes at him. If it weren't for the fact that I needed money, I wouldn't have seduced him in the first place and if possible, I wouldn't want to have a next time with him.

I turned around and looked him in the eyes when I recalled the reason I was here in the first place. However, as I gazed into his ebony eyes, I was tongue-tied once again.

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"Actually, I..."

He interrupted me and asserted when I couldn't even finish my sentence, "You don't have to worry because I have instructed someone to bring the required sum to your family members."

It took me a few seconds to figure out the things he had brought up since he made it sound as though it wasn't a big deal.

Once I snapped out of bewilderment, I asked, "You knew?"

Steven was rushed to the hospital yesterday! How the heck did he manage to find out about that so fast? He's way too capable!

"Isn't it obvious when you have repeated the same trick again? I mean, you're not going to get in touch with me and seduce me unless you need me to do you a favor. With that being said, you need to bear in mind it's not going to work for the third time."

Michael got out of bed and started tidying himself up with a straight face. Thus, I couldn't tell if he was pleased or not.

I looked elsewhere to avoid his gaze when I found out he had long since guessed the reason for my visit.

"If you knew, why did you still..."

I couldn't suppress the urge to figure out the reason he had agreed to bed me in spite of being aware of the things I had in mind. Although I hadn't finished my sentence, I was certain he had guessed what I had in mind.

He brought himself to a halt and stared at me in the eyes. A few seconds later, he asked, "Anna, I'm sure you're aware now that only by being my woman, your life will be better."

Although he hadn't made himself clear, I understood that he wished to maintain the sort of relationship we had.

"Michael, I..."

As much as I was against the idea, as the subservient one in the relationship, I knew I was in no position to make a decision.

"You're well aware of the things awaiting you because of your brother's condition, aren't you? It's going to involve a huge amount of money until the day he's able to stand on his own feet again. Are you sure you're able to withstand the burden?"

Michael was spot on. I couldn't even turn him down because I had no choice but to rely on him until Steven was completely recovered.

He's right... The doctor told me Steven needs to spend a few months in bed until he's able to walk again because his nerves have been severely damaged.

The fees for the operation weren't my sole concern as there would be a lot more additional cost after that. There was no way I could afford those with my monthly income.

Michael leaned over and repeated his offer in a seductive tone. "If you're willing to maintain our relationship, I'll get the best doctor to tend to your brother. I'll ensure that he's taken care of with the best available resources at no additional cost."

I was tempted by his offer as I wouldn't have to go through any of the tormenting experiences anymore as soon as we came to terms with one another.

But what sort of relationship is he referring to? Does he want me to keep having this sort of secretive relationship with him?