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As I stared at Justin, who was standing a near distance away, I could distinctly see the rage in his eyes. But due to Michael's presence, he didn't dare say anything.

Only then did I realize that he was actually a spineless coward.

Subsequently, Michael's gaze shifted to Justin. Wrapping an arm around me, he ambled over to him and regarded him impassionately.

"What a coincidence, Mr. Xenakis. Seems like every time we meet, I would always catch you pestering my woman."

Michael's voice was cold as he spoke to Justin, his handsome countenance devoid of expression. For some reason, I felt that such a side of him gave off a sense of oppression.

Ever since Justin caught sight of Michael, he appeared a tad nervous. And in the face of the latter's question now, he seemed all the more flustered.

His imposing aura when he spoke to me earlier was all but gone, and he looked meek instead. Inwardly, I couldn't help disdaining him. Hah! He was all high and mighty earlier, but he doesn't even have the guts to say a single word in front of Michael now. I never knew that he's actually such a coward!

"This is all a misunderstanding, Mr. Shaw. There are some misunderstandings to be resolved between Anna and me, so I sought her out today to talk."

Justin looked at Michael apprehensively, his words repulsing me. Good Lord! He was clearly pestering me just now, claiming that I'm the one he loves. Now that Michael is here, he doesn't dare admit it. Where's that overbearing attitude of his when he was hounding me earlier?

"Justin Xenakis, there's nothing to be said between us. Please don't pester me anymore. Now that you know I'm Michael's woman, don't tell me you're hoping that I'll go back to you?"

Stepping out of Michael's arms, I stalked up to Justin and glowered at him, my words bereft of emotion.

As soon as my words fell, Justin nervously cast a glance at Michael. Then, he turned his gaze back on me, his voice sounding rather frantic.

"Anna, I think you might have misunderstood my meaning. That's not what I meant. I merely want to resolve the conflict between us. I don't want you to hate me."

He denied everything he said earlier, but I expected nothing less from him. As I took in his nervous expression, I couldn't help sneering inwardly. Well, well... He's truly abhorrent! It's only been a few minutes since he said that, yet he's denying it now! Sure enough, he goes back on his word in the blink of an eye!

"Oh, really? Then why did you hug me despite my protests just now? And what did you mean by saying that I'm the person you love? You're such a coward, Justin! You don't dare admit what you said earlier, huh? Do you know that you're really repugnant right now?"

With a sneer on my face, I regarded him contemptuously. He's nothing but a sissy! I really don't know why I'd been so blinded in the past seven years that I actually fell in love with such a man!

Upon hearing that, Justin's expression turned grim. His eyes shone with faint anger as he stared at me, but he didn't dare say anything since Michael was there. After having said all that, I felt much better at once, my pent-up fury dissipating.

Now that Michael was here, he wouldn't dare do anything to me no matter what I said. That was why I had the guts to give voice to the resentment buried within me all this while.

I might still be worried that he would pester me if Michael weren't here, but at the sight of his cowardice, I decided to vent it all out because I knew he wouldn't dare counter me.

"Anna, you've really misunderstood my meaning. I really didn't mean all those things you said..."

After Justin stole a peek at Michael, whose expression was gradually darkening, his gaze turned increasingly frantic.

"That's enough. Justin Xenakis, please don't appear before me anymore, okay? We no longer have anything to do with each other. I'm with Michael now, and he's a thousand times better than you in all aspects. If you have a semblance of self-awareness, never appear in front of me again!" I declared coldly.

With that, I turned around and went back to Michael's arms. At that moment, I didn't want to see him for even a second longer.

Justin initially wanted to say something about my frosty attitude, but he didn't dare to when he glimpsed Michael's grim face.

"Let's go, Darling."

Taking Michael's arm, I deliberately addressed him intimately. I wanted to aggravate Justin and let him know in no uncertain terms that Michael was far better than him.

"Alright, we're going to my house tonight," Michael murmured suggestively while leaning close to my ear.

He hugged me tightly, playing along perfectly. While his voice was low, I knew that Justin would definitely be able to hear it as well.

Throwing an indifferent glance at Justin, I allowed Michael to lead me forward with an arm around me. When we walked past Justin, Michael abruptly halted and looked at him coldly.

"Not anyone can pester my woman, so watch yourself, Mr. Xenakis."

After leaving him that threat, Michael strode toward the car with an arm around my shoulder without sparing him another glance.

When I brushed past Justin, I could clearly see the panic that flashed across his eyes. Haha, he's scared now.

Only when I got into Michael's car did I finally breathe a sigh of relief. I was now all the more irritable after having been hounded by Justin when I was already frustrated from having to work overtime. My brows knitted together deeply as I gazed out the car.

"Is Justin Xenakis pestering you?"

Michael and I didn't speak ever since getting into the car, and a long while passed before he finally broke the silence.

"Yeah," I replied mildly without much emotion.

"Do you love him?"

"No. I only feel repulsion toward him now," I replied without a hint of hesitation while gazing at Michael's profile.

I had now seen Justin's true colors and understood the kind of man he was, so I felt really lucky that I didn't end up marrying him.

Michael didn't comment on my answer, but I could distinctly perceive a faint smile tugging at his lips.

He drove very fast, so the car cruised into his mansion in a little over ten minutes. It was my first time at such a place. Although I had never been there, I knew that it was a renowned wealthy residential area.

As I gazed at the huge mansion after alighting from the car, I inwardly exclaimed at Michael's affluence.

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Before I was done admiring the view, Michael dragged me into his mansion.

The moment I stepped foot into the house, the resplendent decor floored me. I gaped at the huge crystal chandelier in the living room. I had once seen in a magazine that a chandelier cost hundreds of thousands at the very least, which was equivalent to an average person's lifetime savings.

Sure enough, there's a world of difference between people from different walks of life. Michael Shaw is truly a man to be envied!

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There wasn't a single soul in the living room, the entire place was as silent as the grave. I looked at Michael apprehensively.

"I can't believe you actually brought me to your house... What if your parents see me?" I reminded in a whisper after walking over to him.

Dear heavens! My relationship with Michael is of a scandalous nature, so I'd be utterly mortified if his parents were to know about us!

"Don't worry. They don't stay here."

After saying that, Michael pinned me down on the couch in the living room.

He appeared to be a calm and composed person on the surface, but when it came to matters of the bedroom, he always turned into an impatient and frenzied beast.

Upon hearing that, great relief suffused me. As I gazed into his fervent eyes, my heart fluttered.

"Thank you, Michael..."

Recalling the fact that he had come to my rescue the night before, I thanked him as I stared at his handsome countenance.

His expression stilled for a moment when he heard that. Immediately after, he looked right into my eyes, his voice low and mesmerizing.

"You're my woman, and I, Michael Shaw, never shares my woman with anyone else! Remember this, Anna Garcia—before I break off our relationship, you're not allowed to be with any other man! Do you understand me?"

His voice was domineering and possessive when he said that. In fact, he had always been such ever since I got acquainted with him.

For some inexplicable reason, a wave of bitterness swept over me. Gazing into his eyes, I was silent for a long time before I finally answered, "I got it."

In truth, I had no delusions about our relationship, but anguish inevitably crept in when he ordered me in such a manner. Gah! Why am I suddenly assailed by such a feeling? Well, perhaps too many things have happened recently that I'm now becoming sentimental! I comforted myself inwardly.

At the same time, Michael had already captured my lips. And very quickly, I was lost in his tenderness.

He "tormented" me for the better half of the night like a tireless beast.

Lying beside him, I tossed and turned as sleep eluded me. Part of the reason was that we had never slept in the same bed. During the previous few times, we went our separate ways after doing the deed. This time, however, he had fallen asleep next to me, and we were at his house to boot.

With a practical stranger sleeping beside me, coupled with the fact that my privates were feeling rather sore, I only dozed off when it was almost dawn.

Perhaps I couldn't sleep well since I was in an unfamiliar place, but I woke up very early in the morning. When I opened my eyes, I was immediately greeted by the sight of Michael staring at me.

Flustered, I hastily averted my gaze. Why is he staring at me early in the morning instead of sleeping? I wonder how long he has been at it.

"Uh... It's getting late, so I should get going."

At the realization that I was now in his house and his bed, panic swamped me. Having blurted that anxiously, I swiftly darted my gaze around in search of my clothes.

However, I didn't see a single garment of mine even after sweeping my gaze all over the room. At that, I frowned in mystification as I tried recalling everything that had happened last night.

I remember that I first started stripping in the living room...

Finally, I remembered that my clothes were in the living room. Alas, I was currently in my birthday suit. While Michael had seen every part of me, I simply couldn't bring myself to sashay right past him to the living room without a single stitch on.

"Um... My clothes are in the living room. Can you please get them for me?" I inquired softly as I turned to look at him in embarrassment.

However, Michael didn't answer me. Instead, his gaze was fixated on my chest.

Following his gaze, I looked down at myself. All at once, my face flamed.

I swiftly snagged the blanket and wrapped it around myself tightly. At that very moment, my mortification was so great that I was gripped by the urge to crawl into a hole.

"Why are you shy? There isn't a part of you that I have not touched or seen."

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As though chagrined that I had covered myself up, Michael chided me placidly with a quirked brow.

"Um... It's late, so I should head to work now. Otherwise, I'll be late," I blurted in a panic, simply making up an excuse.

I didn't dare look into his eyes anymore, for they seemed capable of perceiving everything. Every time I locked gazes with him, I couldn't help feeling flustered.

"You're working at Joyful Success?"

I thought that he would say something risqué again, but he unexpectedly changed the subject without warning.

I was taken aback for a moment. When I snapped back to my senses, I truthfully answered, "Yeah."

When his brows furrowed slightly, panic engulfed me. "I don't have any ulterior motive working at Joyful Success. I only want a better platform to further my career. Don't worry, I won't cling to you because of such a thing," I hurriedly explained.

Men from the elite classes like him were most averse to women using various methods to get close to them. I was worried that he would think the same of me, thus I promptly clarified things.

I really need this job now, so I can't lose it because of our relationship! Even though Dad has had a heart stent surgery, his health is no longer what it used to be. Just for that reason alone, I've got to support this family!

"Why are you so panicked? Did I say anything?"

Clocking my frantic expression, Michael cocked an eyebrow and regarded me with mirth.

I breathed much easier upon seeing that he wasn't angry.

Nonetheless, I still looked at him apprehensively and asked, "You're not going to ask me to leave Joyful Success, are you? I really need this job."

"Do you think I'm such a narrow-minded person? You're my woman now, so there's nothing wrong with you working at my company. However, don't forget your promise to me back then. You're not allowed to tell anyone about our relationship."

Michael's assurance had my heart settling back into my chest. But his final reminder caused a sense of melancholy to envelop me.

Honestly speaking, I never planned on telling anyone that I was acquainted with him. Even so, I was perturbed when he said that.

"I know. I won't tell anyone about our relationship, so don't worry," I replied placidly as I lowered my eyes.

At the sight of my sudden disappointment, Michael frowned slightly and seemingly grew a touch irritated as well.

Subsequently, silence reigned, making the atmosphere grow awkward.

"Can you please retrieve my clothes for me?" I asked once more, turning to look at him. "I need to go to work now."

Then, I shifted slightly. Despite having rested for a night, my nether region still ached slightly.

My brows creased slightly. In the next moment, my face inexorably flushed bright red again when our frantic lovemaking last night flashed across my mind.

"Are you sore?"

Seemingly having noticed my fidgeting, Michael frowned, and he even sounded as though he was concerned about me.

"Yeah, perhaps we did it overly long last night, so I'm feeling a bit sore down there," I murmured, blushing hotly.

Actually, I didn't really want to discuss such an intimate subject with him, but the words inadvertently tumbled out of my mouth.

"Can I take it that you're complimenting me on my stamina?"

Although I was speaking of my soreness, its meaning got twisted when it fell into Michael's ears.

Stumped, I looked at him speechlessly.

Well, well... Only now did I realize that not only is he domineering, but he's also narcissistic. I've never heard of anyone patting himself on the back for having strong stamina! Ah well, since he's speaking the truth, I'll just let it go.

I turned my head a fraction to the side, not wanting to talk to him further.

"There's a soothing salve in the first-aid kit. I'll go get it for you."

To my surprise, he wasn't offended when I remained mum. After saying that mildly, he flipped the covers and got out of bed, walking over to the cabinet by the window to retrieve the first-aid kit.

He was entirely naked, and I couldn't help but admit that his figure was indeed superb. He was neither plump nor skinny, his eight-pack abs and Apollo's belt a feast to the eyes.

As my gaze traveled down, I glimpsed the magnificent manhood between his legs. It was now standing at attention, its size far more impressive beyond my imagination.

Reluctantly, I averted my gaze. My soreness down there is all thanks to his manhood. It's no wonder that I'm hurting since he tortured me for the better half of the night!

A blush stained my cheeks, and I didn't dare look at him anymore. After all, it was very embarrassing to stare intently at a man's groin.

"Feel free to continue looking if you want to do so. I don't mind."

Just when my heart was racing and my gaze darting around, Michael's voice drifted into my ears.

All at once, I averted my gaze in a panic. Oh God, he actually noticed me watching him earlier! I wonder what he's thinking about me!

"Why would I want to look at you? It's your fault for getting out of bed without a stitch. I mean, it's only natural for me to glance at it since that part of you is so conspicuous."

While my face had long since gone as red as a tomato, I still feigned a nonchalant expression since I hated being teased about such a thing.

"I'll take that as you saying that I'm big enough, then. So, how do I compare to Justin Xenakis? Is my stamina superior to him?"

A smug smile bloomed on Michael's face when he heard my remark. He then strutted toward me. The words out of his mouth, however, had my expression turning cold at once.

"What did you mean by that, Michael? I've already made it clear to you the previous time that I've never been intimate with Justin. Do you still not believe me?"

I glowered at him. He has already questioned me about this back then, and I've already explained it to him. So why is he mentioning Justin again out of the blue? Does he still not believe me?

At the direction of my thoughts, the anger within me surged. While I didn't mind how he perceived me, I loathed the feeling of being wrongly accused.

Likely realizing that I was truly peeved, Michael didn't continue speaking of that. His tone softened as he coaxed, "I was just joking. Do you need to get up in arms? Anna, if my memory serves, you don't care what others think of you."

He had already returned to the bed when he said that. Instead of looking into my eyes, he was rummaging the first-aid kit for the salve.

"I don't care what you think of me, but I don't want others to misunderstand me."

I regarded him indifferently, my voice tinged with a layer of frost.

However, my words garnered no reaction from him. In fact, he acted as though he didn't even hear me. For some reason, an inexplicable spark of anger ignited at the sight of his apathetic expression. What exactly is his stance here? Does he believe me or not?

"Spread your legs."

Michael turned and looked at me with an imperturbable expression.

"What?"

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I was startled for a moment. When I registered his meaning, my eyes went wide in shock.

At the sight of my astonished expression, Michael frowned in consternation.

"I said to spread your legs. Did you not understand me?" he ordered once more.

Keeping my legs tightly pressed together, I eyed him warily. No way! I'm not wearing anything down there, not even panties! He'll be able to see everything if I were to spread my legs!

At that thought, the anxiety within me multiplied. Although I had always been a brazen woman in his eyes, I really couldn't bring myself to show the most private part of me to a man, especially when I wasn't all that familiar with the said man and had only been intimate with him a few times.

"W-Why do you want me to do so?"

I regarded him warily, my expression turning awkward as I spoke.

"So that I can apply the salve, of course. Where did your mind go? Anna, don't tell me you were hoping that I'd take you again?"

Michael stared at me with a raised brow, his words layered with an underlying meaning.

Naturally, I understood the implication of his words. The moment I realized that he only intended to apply the salve on me, my face instantly flushed bright red. Oh... I thought he wanted to do it again...

"My mind wasn't in the gutter. I'm innocent, okay?" I countered guiltily, turning my reddened face to the side.

In actual fact, my mind indeed went there earlier. However, no woman would actually admit it before a man.

"Do you really think you're innocent? Your expression just now betrayed your thoughts. I never knew that you're so deprayed, Anna."

Michael curled his lips, not believing my explanation the slightest bit. He was dead certain that my mind was in the gutter earlier.

"Forget it since you don't believe me. It's late, so I've got to go to work."

Not wanting to discuss that topic with him anymore, I made to get up and retrieve my clothes after saying that.

Alas, it seemed that Michael had no plans of allowing me to leave. Flipping over, he pinned me beneath him and easily parted my legs with his massive hand.

In the blink of an eye, I felt a breeze brushing against my ladyparts. At that, I frantically yanked the covers over myself.

My gosh, isn't he the slightest bit embarrassed to look at my body so boldly? How could he?

"Hold still. If you continue wriggling, I don't mind taking you again."

Michael's brows creased in displeasure upon seeing me squirm, and his voice carried a hint of threat.

Hearing that, I immediately held still and no longer dared to twitch even a muscle. After all, he wasn't a person who made empty threats. He had "tortured" me more than enough last night, so I would definitely feel worse if he were to take me again.

I stopped struggling for my own sake and allowed him to apply the salve on me. As I lay in bed, the thought of him having seen all of me struck, and I was seized by the urge to jump off the nearest building.

Ugh! What the hell kind of melodramatic plot is this that it'd actually happen to me? I'm not filming a television series here! My life has been a shitshow ever since Justin cheated on me, and things that happened recently are truly incredulous, especially my relationship with Michael. Never in my wildest dreams had I ever imagined that I'd be involved with a big shot like him.

While my thoughts were wandering, Michael had already applied the salve on me. The cool sensation soothed that part of me significantly, and it didn't sting anymore. But at the thought that Michael had now seen all of me, I still couldn't help flushing.

I didn't even dare make the slightest sound, much less move. After a very long time, Michael was finally done applying the salve. I breathed a long sigh of relief, but I no longer dared to look at him.

"It's nothing serious, just slightly swollen. It'll be fine after applying some salve," Michael murmured placidly as he placed the salve back into the first-aid kit.

"Okay, I got it," I replied in a whisper.

I turned my face to the side, embarrassed to look at him further.

Wrapping the blanket around myself, I then headed to the living room to retrieve my clothes. Alas, my clothes were gone from the couch, and two housekeepers were cleaning in the living room right then.

When the housekeepers spotted me, they were both visibly surprised. Meanwhile, I was gripped by the urge to crawl into a hole at the speculation in their gazes. What the hell? Michael didn't tell me he has housekeepers!

"G-Good morning... May I know if you've seen my clothes?"

Despite my stark embarrassment, I still bit the bullet and greeted the two housekeepers.

"I think I put them in with the laundry, but they're still drying now."

That reply from one of the housekeepers had me on the verge of tears. Good heavens! What am I going to wear if my clothes are now hanging to dry? I've got to get to work now, or I'm going to be late!

While I was panicking, Michael was already done with his shower and had come downstairs. At that moment, he was wearing a robe with the sash casually knotted at the waist. It hung on him loosely, revealing a huge part of his chest.

"Michael, my clothes have been laundered! What should I wear now?"

My gaze flew to him anxiously. Glancing at the time, I grew all the more frantic. Ugh! All my colleagues in the company are now gossiping about me, so who knows what kind of rumors are going to surface if I were late to work?

"In that case, just go without clothes."

Michael merely shrugged at my question, not at all bothered.

He sauntered to the couch in the living room and sat down. At once, a housekeeper brought a cup of coffee over and carefully placed it on the coffee table in front of him.

"I'm going to be late for work, and it'll result in my pay being docked!"

I glared at Michael in vexation. Damn it! He doesn't need to worry about whether he's late for work since he's the boss, but I'm only an ordinary employee. As such, I still need to consider my pay. Besides, everyone in my department is now trying their best to pick fault with me, so I've got to be very careful. After all, I might be dismissed for the slightest infraction!

"I'll compensate the difference in pay. Can you please stop being so cheap, Anna?"

Michael eyed me contemptuously, his gaze brimming with annoyance. He probably thought that I was a stingy woman right then.

"That's different, okay? The money you give me and the money I earn myself are two different things entirely. Furthermore, I can't make the slightest mistake now. Otherwise, I'll most likely be dismissed."

Recalling what my department head, Conrad, had done to me, disgust inexorably welled up within me once more.

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"How is it possible that you'll get dismissed just for being late?" Michael furrowed his brows and looked at me quizzically.

I lowered my head and mumbled, "Well, I might turn out to be the first one to get sack because of that since I offended my supervisor previously. Ever since then, he has been holding a grudge against me. Not to mention, everyone in my department is also against me at the moment. So who knows, I might actually get dismissed at any time due to the slightest mistake made."

I did not feel like going to the office lately as I could sense that all my colleagues were ostracizing me. Moreover, Conrad was even unleashing his wrath on me by torturing me at work after I rejected him previously. He pressurized me by assigning me endless tasks not only from my department but also from the other department.

"But why?" Michael's frown deepened into a scowl as he stared at me curiously.

Initially, I never thought of pouring out to him how Conrad tried to hit on me previously. However, the inexplicable grievance in my heart was suffocating me. Almost everyone misunderstood me for seducing Conrad in order to enhance my career advancement. In their eyes, I was nothing but a shameless and scheming woman who intended to go from rags to riches. In the end, I blurted out the disgruntling incident to him.

The moment I finished my story, Michael's face fell. My heart skipped a beat at the sight of the abrupt change in his expression. I glanced at him apprehensively. D*mn... Would he see me as someone who had taken advantage of the fact that we have slept together just so I could snitch to him about my superiors? What if he really thinks that way of me?

"So he groped your breast?" he asked coldly when I was cracking my head on how I should explain it to him. I could not tell what he was thinking about as he gazed at me with his obsidian eyes.

"Yeah..." I murmured in bewilderment, intimidated by his grim look.

"I'll handle this matter. Listen to me, Anna. I need you to get one thing straight. As long as we have this relationship going on between us, I will not tolerate another man laying their hands on any parts of your body. Do you get me?" His tone was laced with a hint of warning.

I gazed at him, feeling helpless. What does he want me to do then? I'm the one that's being harassed by Conrad here. I, too, was repulsed by how the unsightly pervert touched me! Yet, he is hinting that I was the one who let others lay their hands on me!

"I understand. I'll be more alert next time." Suppressing the irritation in my heart, I nodded obediently so as not to infuriate him.

Upon hearing my reply, he threw an indifferent glance at me without uttering any words before taking a sip from his cup of coffee elegantly. As silence ensued in the living room, it was as if he had forgotten about my existence. Anxiety welled up from within me gradually as I glanced at my watch. Even if I rush out now, I might still be late the moment I reach the office!

After a while, Michael put down his cup of coffee and switched his attention to the newspaper he was holding, flipping through them. Mustering my courage, I asked tactfully, "Michael, do you have any women's clothing here that you can lend to me?"

He raised his brows and turned to look at me. "Do I look like a man who will easily bring any woman home?" His voice had gone up an octave and his tone had turned cold.

Well, I'm not wrong, am I? After all, you brought me home last night, didn't you? I was mocking him inwardly, yet on the surface, my expression was impassive as ever.

Even though I had only known the man for a short span of time, I could somehow sense that his temper was unpredictable. If I dared to go against his will, I would surely enrage him.

"Can't you just tell me do you or do you not have it? You can't expect me to stay naked, right?" I could not hold back any longer and ask again.

I lowered my head and looked at my embarrassing state. Wrapped with a blanket, I was completely naked beneath. Feeling awkward at how the maids were staring at me, I could not help but bury my face in my hands.

"No issue on that. In fact, it'll be more convenient if you remain naked. Since I have an appointment in the afternoon, I'm not going to the office this morning. We can grab time for another round of intimate sessions!" he teased me.

I was rendered speechless and even felt that my temples started to throb. Is he going against me deliberately? He's the boss! Nobody would dare to question him if he does not turn up at the office. On the other hand, I'm just a low-ranking employee. What if I am fired for being late?

"Michael, can you please be more considerate and put yourself in my shoes? Even though we're in a mutually beneficial relationship, it doesn't mean that I have to listen to your every request! What if I lose my job because of this?" I tried to hold back my temper and talk him into changing his mind.

"Don't worry. You won't get fired. After all, I'm the owner of the company. So far, we have never sacked anyone just because they were late for work. We would only dock the employee's salary as a warning at most. Anyway, you don't have to be worried even if your salary is docked. I will compensate you ten times more than the docked amount." He convinced me.

What? Ten times! What a sum! Even though I disliked people who were insolent by thinking that money was everything, his offer was simply irresistible for me. Dad's treatment still requires a large sum of money, and I can't really afford it with just my current salary. This is a golden opportunity for me to gain and save more money for Dad!

"I hope you keep your promise and compensate me accordingly then. I'd better make a call to apply for leave today before it's too late. Otherwise, I won't know what to do if I'm really really fired for being late."

I took my handbag from the desk and whipped out my phone to call Conrad. Even though I was reluctant to have a conversation with the disgusting man, he was still my superior. I was worried that he would take this matter and use it to threaten me.

Michael leaned against the couch with his legs crossed as he took a sip of his coffee casually.

When the call got through, Conrad's bellow of rage sounded before I could even utter any words. "Anna Garcia, what's the matter with you? Why the hell are you not in the office yet at this hour? Do you want me to dismiss you?"

I knew very well that ever since I offended Conrad previously, he never stopped finding fault in everything I did. I had been extra careful not to make any mistakes and work diligently, so he would not have any excuses to punish me. Since I was late for work this round, I was certain that he would grab at the chance to give me a hellish time.

"Mr. Skeete, I'm sorry, but I need to apply for leave today to settle something..." Tamping down the rage that I was feeling, I tried to explain to him patiently.

"Do you have any respect for the company? How can you apply for leave as you like? Do you really think you can apply for leave with just a phone call?" he fumed. He was obviously trying to pick fault with me, yet I could only stifle my frustration.

"I really have something on today. Can you please approve my leave application?" I gritted and forced myself to softened my tone. Deep down, however, I felt like venting my anger by bombarding him with a slew of curse words.

"Well, if you really wish that I can approve your leave application, you need to show that you're sincere with your request..." He suddenly softened and lowered his voice.

My face lit up and I thanked him at once, "Thank you so much, Mr. Skeete..."

"Don't thank me first. I haven't finished my words yet," he cut me off.