



YourEssence - Quarreling Lovers, Volume 2 - Chapter 1

David woke with a shock. Something was wrong. He could tell somehow. He felt a weird confluence of instinctive anxiety and masculine defensiveness. Listening intently but still lying prone in his bed, David could swear he heard something coming from the living room. A second felt like an eternity. David drew in air, filling his lungs and providing him the confidence to take the next step. He had to confront the intruder in his apartment. His feet touched the floor, and he heard it. A fumbled action from the kitchen led to a loud sound. There it was—the proof that he was not alone. He heard a kitchen cupboard shut loudly. “No chance that happens on its own.” David crept over silently to his closet and grabbed a bat he had kept from his youth.

David went slowly toward the common space, delicately hoping to remain hidden. Staying adjacent to the wall, David leaned forward to see if he could spot the intruder. A shadowy figure was ruffling through the kitchen drawers. David steeled himself and counted backward from three.

Three... two... one...

The shadowy figure’s head smashed into the counter a second after David’s bat crashed against the intruder’s back. David turned the lights on and saw the aftermath of his interaction with the figure. The gruesome sight stunned David, but he kept his cool. A second later, David was on the phone calling for emergency services and the police.

“Hello, may I speak with Diana Martin?”

“Yes, speaking. How can I help you?”

“Mrs. Martin, I’m calling David Martin’s emergency contact...”

“Oh my God! Is he hurt?!” Diana interrupted.

"Mrs. Martin, I'm calling from the local police precinct. Your husband is okay, but he is being held for questioning."

Diana paused. She didn't know how to respond. She remembered that 'he' had a tendency to be hot-headed when she was running around in David's body. This call could be because David had done something wrong and was at fault. Diana shook her head. She immediately regretted that she had let herself think so poorly of David. "What happened? When can I see him?"

"We need you to come down to the precinct. We will explain everything when you arrive."

Diana spent the next hour a wreck. Canceling her classes wasn't a huge problem, but she didn't need Robert's extra attention. Still, this was an emergency, so he would just have to deal with the situation. The car ride was the worst. She sat there observing people doing their everyday routines or out for a coffee. They all looked so... free. Diana felt confined and boxed in by this whole situation. She was fuming inside. She was scared for David. She was longing to see him. In total, Diana was a jumbled-up bundle of fractious emotions. As her car pulled up to the curb to drop her before parking itself, she let some of her frustration out. She expressed her emotion by yelling at the car's dashboard and steering wheel. She just yelled for a few seconds, paused, and then repeated the action one more time before getting out of the vehicle.

She straightened her outfit as she stood up from her self-driving car. A moment later, her car slowly departed to its next task. Diana was silently furious; she thought, "David had better not have caused as much trouble as I imagined." Centering herself, Diana looked up and locked eyes with a woman standing by the entrance.

She was dressed neatly, wearing a button-down blouse and sharp-looking pants. She maintained eye contact, unafraid and confident, as she walked toward Diana. Diana did her best not to look away out of fear that it may implicate David somehow. Otherwise, she would have immediately broken eye contact out of social discomfort. Diana's memories told her that was incongruent, but she didn't have time to reflect on that now. The woman introduced herself as Detective Kara Lavigne.

The two women entered the police station, and Diana was left in an interrogation room. Diana was becoming more worried about how the earlier call had gone and this new scenery. They hadn't placed her in handcuffs, but she wondered if that was a possibility in the near term. With each passing moment, she felt her emotions rise. She knew she had to keep her calm, however. It would be hard to do

it, given that she didn't even know what had happened to have David end up in this situation in the first place. An hour passed with only infrequent visits from the detective to ask if Diana needed more water or to be excused to the restroom.

Finally, as the sun was just starting to set over the tops of the skyscrapers, David was brought into the room Diana was waiting in.

"Oh my God! Are you all right? What happened? Why are they keeping you?"

"It's good to see you too, Diana," David said as he sat across the table from her. He seemed shaken but not broken... yet. Diana worried about how her and David's secrets might be handled if they weren't allowed home for the night. Diana launched into a thousand questions with David, and he answered them.

"I heard a noise in the living room. I went out to check what it was and saw a man rifling through our empty cupboards. He didn't see me come up behind him."

"What?! Why did you get anywhere near him?"

"I thought I needed to stop him. He was a home invader! He was in 'our' apartment. That doesn't scare the shit out of you?"

"Of course it does! Still, you should have just called the cops straight away... What happened to the intruder?" Diana asked with a hint that she already knew the answer.

"I hit him with my bat."

"You didn't! Why?! David?!"

"I don't know, I just felt so fired up. I needed to defend myself. My home!"

"You're lucky you're not hurt. That's what you are."

"...Yeah"

"I don't like that response. What aren't you telling me?"

"Umm, well..." David started to answer, but the detective suddenly opened the door.

"All right, we've got everything we need here. Mr. Martin and Mrs. Martin, I'm sorry to have kept you. You're both free to go."

"Just like that? You've held us here all day practically, and you just come in and say, 'We're free to go?'" Diana was incredulous.

"Diana! Don't insult the detective. I'm sorry, Ma'am. We will leave straight away, thank you."

Diana opened her apartment door and let David in. They had agreed on the car ride back to stay at 'her' place tonight.

"So... I guess this is a bit awkward given our arrangement," Diana started.

"Eh, not really for me. I know I've been pushing the whole 'date as our new selves' agenda, but we are still married, as you've so eloquently put it. Our role fulfillment mission can pause while we recover from this."

"Yeah, that works for me."

"Cool, I'm glad."

The tension was evident despite their casual agreement to resume their status as a married couple. Diana felt awkward conceding to David's plan since he had insisted so ardently that she would move out. She didn't want that on any level. David, on the other hand, was feeling shaken. His actions had been so aggressive, and the result so gruesome. He felt ashamed as he was 'rescued' by Diana. Less than 24 hours earlier, he had flirted with another woman and liked doing it. He liked the attention. Now, he just wanted to isolate himself from the world and hide away. The less attention he received, the better.

Diana, similarly exhausted, informed David of her plans to retire to bed.

"Will I see you in there?"

"Uhh... huh, yeah, I guess so."

"Not the resounding confirmation I was anticipating, David. Is something else on your mind?"

"Oh, uhh, no. I just hadn't really processed how we would end up spending the night together."

"You just said we were pausing our dating mission. I just assumed."

"Totally fair. It's the right assumption; it's just that I don't feel like I deserve to be in such intimate company with you right now."

"Because of what happened with the intruder? Trust me, I'd rather you stay in bed with me than end up having to confront someone again."

"No, it's not that. I... Dammit, Diana."

"What? What's going on, David? You're scaring me."

"I... I... need to confess something else."

"After all we've been through today, there's more?"

David sighed heavily. He didn't know how to say what he was about to say. He was scared and confused.

"Just say it, David. I think we're past the point where we have to tip-toe around each other anymore. There's probably no couple on the planet that 'gets' their partner as well as we do."

"That's true... And it's a good segue. 'David,' I don't want to be you anymore."

