



YourEssence

Chapter 12 - Persevere. Right?

"Shit, you're right. I guess we will have to keep going as each other until Olivia leaves," Diana said remorsefully. Her face looked like someone had died, and she was grieving the loss. David looked the same, which relieved Diana because she was not being truthful with her expression. She wanted to stay in David's body for as long as possible, and this was as good an excuse to continue doing so as any. The risk of more mental changes was worth it to her. Diana had experienced the thrill of being a respected businessman and was finally getting the recognition she so clearly deserved. She had the most unique and impactful insights into the problems David's work presented. Her natural leadership abilities helped her make quick work of all the obstacles that David's work could throw at her.

David's bosses had taken note, too. Pavan, David's boss's skip-level boss, had come down personally to thank Diana for her work on this project and commended her for her inventive solutions and creative communication approach. Pavan was a man's man and an old-school businessman by reputation. So, for him to compliment Diana was a tremendous achievement. David's boss had been personally selected by Pavan when he got his promotion, and Diana thought this was the first sign that she might be in store for the same treatment. So, when David had filled her in on the situation with Olivia, she knew she needed to tread carefully so she didn't show her true feelings.

"Damn, I think you're right 'David.' Hopefully, it's just a few more days, and we can change back. I felt more 'discrepancies' with my memories today," David said before continuing at a whisper's volume, "I'm starting to remember growing up as you. Out of nowhere, I suddenly knew that you consider your parents the ideal example of a married couple. It's not a huge revelation, but I already feel other things. It's like... I feel the 'edge' of a memory or feeling. All it will take is some stimulation, and then it won't be abstract anymore; it will be a real memory, and I'm having trouble distinguishing my memories from yours," David said with a deeper look of concern than Diana had ever seen. It worried Diana, too. She hadn't noticed symptoms similar to David's in her days, but she wondered if she had just blown past those feelings because she was experiencing so much euphoria living

as David.

Diana and David spent the rest of the evening socializing with Olivia except for a brief window where Olivia prepared dinner at her insistence. Diana was thrilled to get a home-cooked meal from her mother, but David was the one who would enjoy it the most. These new feelings he was manifesting seemed particularly strong around things Diana felt nostalgic for. So, having Olivia prepare a mole was a guaranteed path to David adopting more of Diana's memories. Just as Diana had expected, David raved about the food and had the most prominent look of contentment and joy as he eagerly ate the meal. Diana knew that feeling and was envious of how deeply David enjoyed it.

Olivia insisted again that she sleep on the couple's couch. She said she wasn't there to disrupt their routines, and after several rounds of back and forth between David and Olivia, they finally mutually agreed to Olivia's terms. After getting Olivia settled on the couch for the night, David and Diana found themselves standing in their en-suite together to finish prepping for bed. David was wearing a blue silk nightie and holding 'his' bottle of YourEssence. Diana looked at him with apprehension; why was he holding 'David's' pills?

"Everything all right, babe?"

"Even that now... I don't even cringe when I hear you say that."

"David, are you ok? You're scaring me..."

"No, 'David's' not all right. I don't even know how ***I*** am feeling. It's getting harder to think of myself as 'David.' Dinner did a fucking number on me."

"All right, why don't you tell me about it? We can get through this. I know we can!"

"God, I hope you're right..." David held his hand to his face and placed his palm on his cheek. He looked at his reflection in the mirror and seemed deeply in a trance. Diana just stood there staring and waiting for David to respond. An uncomfortable moment of silence passed, and Diana could feel the dread that David was experiencing. Just before Diana was going to try to comfort David, he started in. "Dinner made me remember the first time your mother made you a mole. She called you her big little chiquita and laughed. You both laughed. She had always called you chiquita, but you ate the mole with the adults, and she was so proud of what a big girl you were becoming. Hell, ***you*** were proud, but now all I can think is how proud ***I*** was. That memory feels like it's mine. It feels like me, but it's not, and that is seriously messing with me."

"Yeah, I remember that day too. You got it all right. She said all those things, and I

was very proud. Clearly, YourEssence has some abilities that aren't advertised. God, David, I'm so sorry. It shouldn't be too many more days until we can change back. Just keep your mind on that. I'm sure we will get through this," Diana's reply was genuine. Despite her secret joy in extending their time in each other's bodies, she knew she had to help get her mother back home as soon as possible. The only question was how to do that without making David out to be the worst son-in-law ever.

David started crying as he dropped the bottle of 'his' YourEssence onto the bathroom vanity. Diana embraced David to soothe him as best as she could. "Could you...," David started before stopping.

Diana pulled David back and looked him in the eyes. David had a curious look in his eyes. He looked incredibly vulnerable. "What do you need, babe?" Diana asked instinctively. She wanted to help David, and if there were something he wanted from her, she would go out of her way to make it happen.

"Could you... hold me, like I used to hold you, for tonight? I think it would make me feel better," David said as he resigned himself and downed the correct YourEssence pill to stay in Diana's body for another 24 hours.

"Yes, of course. Anything for you, babe," Diana said as she took her pill from the bottle David had discarded, sealing their mutual fate for at least the next day.

"Let's go to bed...," David said as he stuck his hand out to lead Diana. Rather than go to his usual side of the bed, David went to the left-hand side and lay down. Diana noticed this but wasn't going to correct him. She took her place on David's usual side of the bed and then wrapped her hand over David's body. Diana had been tentative in this action, not wanting to agitate David's fragile feelings, but David was swift in nestling himself against Diana's body. The warmth of their bodies next to each other was calming, and within a few moments, David was gently sleeping in Diana's arms. Diana felt a deep sense of protection and care for David as he slept in her arms. She was committed to doing the right thing for David. She would do anything for the 'woman' she loved.