Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2681 - 2690

Chapter 2681 Who Do You Choose

"Jessica, what're you doing?" Larry tilted his head up in a flash.

"What do you think I'm doing?"

Jessica strutted towards Larry and glared at him.

She was quite a character, someone who'd go all out for her friends and family if the situation called for it. Her boldness and audacity persisted even after her parents passed on.

"What happened between Della and me were purely misunderstandings." Larry was quick to explain.

Jessica had always greeted Larry chirpily every time she saw him. But today at the office, her tone was cold and sharp. She was on the verge of going berserk.

"So tell me, Larry. Are you planning to give way to your lecherous greed?"

Her resentment drew her fist tighter and tighter.

"Nonsense!" Larry growled in discontent.

"No, it's not! Say it, who do you choose?"

Jessica looked him in the eye.

What kind of question is this? Larry looked at her quizzically.

"What? You know perfectly well who I'm talking about. Joan or Della?" The interrogation continued.

Duh, of course Joan!

"Enough. You have other things to do!" Larry gestured for Jessica to leave.

"Answer my question!"

Jessica was persistent.

Unfortunately, Larry couldn't give her one at this point of time.

The one he loved was undoubtedly Joan. He honestly wasn't sure if he'd slept with Della, but rumors had it that there was something saucy going on between them.

"Stop this lunacy, Jessica!" Larry swiveled back to his laptop as he growled.

"Larry Norton, who would've expected that you're a scoundrel who played with people's feelings!" Jessica pointed her fingers at Larry as in anger.

Sigh. Do as she pleases! Before figuring out what the raw truth is, he'd keep his lips sealed.

"Jessica, enough. You've crossed the line!"

Caspian rushed in and tugged the corner of her blouse.

"Who's the one crossing the line here, eh? All men are as*holes!" She directed her rage at Caspian this time.

She's gone mad! How could she say something so offensive?

"Go home. Now!" Caspian had enough.

"What's the matter? Did I tick you off? But that's the truth, isn't it? You men only want to dip your wick."

Those words were meant for Larry, but they didn't fail to trample Caspian's feelings either.

"Enough, Jessica!" Caspian went bananas and lugged her out of the office.

"Let me go, Caspian! You bast*rd..."

She turned her head towards Larry as she tried to struggle free.

"Do you hear me? Stop it!" Caspian hissed in the corridor.

"Never!"

"Jessica, I say stop. It's either that or we break up!"

Caspian's austere manner threw Jessica off.

He's breaking up with me for something so trivial?

"Aren't you the man, Caspian!" Jessica flung his hand off and left Norton Corporation.

Glumness took over Caspian as Jessica stamped further and further.

When can she stop acting like a child? He shook his head and left.

"Good day, ladies and gentlemen. Coming up next, Mr. Larry Norton, the CEO of Norton Corporation, and Ms. Della Duff were being found having an affair at..."

On the screen, The TV host reported the news with great enthusiasm.

Larry's clenched fist became watertight.

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2683

Chapter 2683 The Plan

She was right, and her guards were up. He didn't come just to say hi.

"And what's your plan?"

"Stop your dealings with Norton Corporation." Jake was blatant with his request.

What? That's never gonna happen. Not in a million years!

"Jake, what are you up to exactly?" She was skeptical about him.

"Can't you see that I'm helping you to get hold of Larry?"

He must be kidding!

Even the dumbest of the dumbest knows the consequences of severing ties with Norton Corporation. Larry would definitely hold a grudge till the end of time.

"You may leave. It's out of the question." Della responded coldly.

She'd moved heaven and earth to build up this partnership with Larry, and nothing could make her give up this connection between them.

"Ms. Duff, trust me. He'll be yours."

"So, what's the deal?" Della pressed her lips flat.

"Larry will only be able to see how important you're to him once you've ended your partnership with Norton Corporation, no?"

Jake's words tugged at her heartstrings, and she bobbed her head to his words.

"So? Do you think it's doable?"

Jake asked impishly.

Della wasn't sure, but eventually said yes.

"Are you sure it's going to work?" Still, she was worried.

"Positive." Jake was calm and firm.

Ring-Ring-Ring...

It was her phone.

Della picked it up straight away when she saw the caller ID.

"Hi, Della. Where are you?" It was her father.

"I'm at home in Chanaea." She regained her gentility.

"My dear, listen to me. Don't make any rash decisions. Sometimes things are just not meant to be." His voice was brimmed with concern.

"Dad? You lost me." Della acted like she had no idea what he was talking about.

"Come back anytime if things get too rough. It's perfectly okay."

"That's not happening. I'm not going back!"

What's next? Is she going to debilitate Larry? The man on the other end of the line couldn't do anything but sigh.

"Don't be a tool."

"Don't worry, Dad. I won't." Her smile shone naive confidence.

Jake, who was seated next to her, remained silent as a scheming grin crossed his face.

Della hung up the phone after a few exchanges with her father and started to talk to Jake about their plan.

Della hadn't grasped the current situation in the country fully, but Jake knew it like the back of his hand.

He believed that he'd carved out a flawless ploy. What he didn't know was Larry was ready to retaliate.

Back at Norton Corporation, Larry was swamped.

Whump!

Caspian hurled the door open and barged in as he tried to catch his breath.

"Larry!"

"Yes?"

"It's about Ms. Duff. She'd stopped her dealings with us!"

Larry jolted up in consternation.

What on earth is she trying to do? Was it Jake that made her do so? He shook his head in dismay and walked towards the window.

"Where is she?" He turned towards Caspian, urging for a reply.

"I don't know. I called her just now but she didn't pick up."

Caspian was engulfed by fear, fearing that the future of Norton Corporation would be affected gravely.

Without any hesitation, Larry drew his phone out and punched in Della's number.

"Hello?"

She sounded cautious.

"Where are you?"

"At home." She gave a simple and chirpy reply as if nothing happened.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2684

Chapter 2684 At The Villa

"Come to Norton Corporation. I've something to tell you."

Larry tried to keep his cool as he wanted to negotiate with Della in peace.

"Actually, I'm a bit under the weather today. Why don't you come to my place?"

Della's reply had Larry on the qui vive.

"Was it about our contract? No discussions will be done if it's not at my place." She hung up right after laying out her conditions.

Caspian was at sixes and sevens.

"Larry, what did Ms. Duff say?"

"I'm gonna head out now. Give me a buzz if anything."

Larry took his jacket and walked out of his office.

That was gruff. Caspian scratched his head in confusion.

In the car, Larry, completely agitated, was taking drags on his cigarette. No matter what the outcome would be, he had to solve this predicament.

Very soon, he was at Della's villa.

It was unaware to him that a few people were lurking in the dark, observing his every move.

Knock, knock.

Della slowly paced towards the door at the sound of the knockings.

She was scantily clad in sexy lingerie that showed off her cleavage.

"Welcome," she foxily greeted and leaned on the wall as she opened the door.

Larry knew clearly that Della was up to something folly this evening from the way she presented herself.

"Go ahead and explain yourself." He took a seat on the couch.

"About what?"

"About why you terminated our liaison."

"Tell me, Larry. Are you using me?"

Without notice, Della pressed herself against him and brushed her skin against his.

"I thought our relationship was symbiotic, is it not?"

Larry pushed her aside and straightened his shirt.

"You know it's not about the money. What I need is a romantic partner who will become my husband in the future." She then drew herself closer in and wrapped her arms around his neck.

Larry became narky and bellowed, "Della, behave!"

"Relax, will you? I just want to get closer to you. That's all."

Della slithered her hands underneath his shirt and made her way up to his chest. Not long after, she pushed him out onto the balcony.

This was all part of the plan.

"Della, I'm here to talk business. If you insist on continuing the evening in this manner, I'm leaving." Larry insouciantly made his stand.

What business? I've only wanted to talk romance with you since day one.

Click! Click! Click!

Meanwhile, somewhere in the villa, a man with raised brows and a wide grin was wildly snapping photos of them.

"Don't you think that's a bit too many?" The girl next to him whispered.

"Not at all. We aren't even there yet." The man holding on to the camera let out a scheming smile, and his eyes were gleaming in greed.

They've caught everything on camera.

"Larry, since both of us are single, why not we go steady?"

Della pinched his chin and drew herself as close as she could to him.

"What's going on, Della?"

What does he mean by what's going on?

"You weren't like this before."

Larry rolled his fingers into his palms out of fury. If Della weren't a woman, he'd have struck her with his fist.

"No!" All of a sudden, Della flipped her hair back and cried.

"I've been like this since forever. I'm just keeping it in. You didn't like my coarse mannerism, so I became more ladylike; You didn't like me drinking, and I quit. I even binned all the snacks I bought because you didn't like me eating them!"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2685

Chapter 2685 Everything Is In Order

Della wailed and then whimpered. Her feelings towards Larry were nothing but genuine. Sadly, there could only be one woman in his heart.

"Why wouldn't you even look at me? Why must you choose Joan! Larry, why can't we, you know, try to be together? You have feelings for me too, don't you? Don't you!" Della plunged her crimson red lips onto Larry's.

"Kiss me..." she murmured.

Larry was taken aback, and his mind went blank for a second. He pushed her away once he got back to his senses.

Click! It was the perfect moment for the camera.

"Excellent!" The man was on cloud nine.

"Are we done yet? Can we go now?" The girl beside him whispered.

"Of course not. The show has just begun." He patted her on the head and let out a sly grin.

"You're out of your mind!" Larry lost it.

"No! I'm not! I just can't wait any longer! I don't want to hold it in anymore," Della sobbed pitifully.

"I'm leaving."

Larry picked up his phone, and just as he was about to turn around and leave, Della lunged towards his back and held him tightly in her arms. Anyone seeing this would assume that something was going on between them.

"Please don't go. I beg you. Don't leave me..."

At that moment, Della was the epitome of vulnerability. Her words would draw sympathy from anyone. Nevertheless, Larry remained stoic.

"Larry, let's get steady, okay?"

"No!"

He mercilessly picked her hands off his waist and walked out.

Her love for him reduced into specks of dust and dispersed into thin air as she saw him leaving. Her passion was stamped out.

Larry has always been so cold, and he always pushes me aside!

Della sunk into the couch and stared blankly at the ceiling with her vacant eyes. She was lost and was thinking of retreating, but that was never an option.

There was no turning back for her this time.

"S-So? D-Did you get it?" She pulled the phone to her ears.

"Everything's in order, Ms. Duff. Don't you worry." It was a light-hearted reply.

Very well, Larry. You'll know what's coming at you tomorrow!

Della flung her phone onto the coffee table and fondled her hair. She let her eyelids drop as she quietly awaited sunrise.

The next day, as Della expected, scandalous news of Larry and her were all over town. Every street and every corner was bubbling with the made-up affair.

"Larry, what's going on!" Delilah bawled and flung the newspaper onto Larry's hands. Larry just got up and had no clue about why Delilah was so waspish. "Ms. Young, what made you lose your rag so early in the morning?"

He slowly turned the newspaper open and read the headline word by word.

"The president of Norton Corporation is with Ms. Duff.

"Ms. Duff's sizzling hot bod and Mr. Norton's chivalry..."

What the hell is this? Larry's frown was as tight as a drum.

A few pictures were tagged to the headline. It was all taken last night at Della's villa.

What the heck? It was Della?

"Explain yourself, Mr. Norton," Delilah urged.

What is there to explain? It's all an act! Nothing happened between Della and me last night!

"Ms. Young, please listen to me. Firstly, this is fake news. Secondly, I went to Della's because—"

"What! You really went to her place last night?"

Delilah fumed and stronger suspicion brewed.

"It was for work!" Larry was slightly worked up.

Ring-Ring-Ring...

Larry answered the call immediately,

"Larry, where are you?"

Caspian was in a state of nerves.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2686

Chapter 2686 Holding His Ground

"I'm at home. What's the matter?"

"Code red. You need to come to the office immediately!"

Caspian was having the shakes.

Larry hung up, and in a flash, he was out the door with his jacket in his hand.

"Larry, think hard about how you are going to tell Joan!"

Delilah was extremely concerned and couldn't figure out how things had gotten into this mayhem.

Larry got into his car, and bam! He rammed his fist onto the steering wheel to let off steam.

At Norton Corporation, flocks of reporters were blocking the entrance. They were all waiting for Larry.

When Larry saw the chaotic scene, he stealthily sneaked into the building via the backdoor.

The office was in an utter mess.

"Hey, what's all this?" Larry turned his head towards Caspian.

"Ms. Duff was here early in the morning. She was drunk and started smashing stuff the moment she arrived," Caspian nonchalantly explained.

He didn't dare to stop Ms. Duff unless it was an instruction from Larry.

Thump!

Larry kicked his office's door open.

All employees outside his office held their breath in curiosity. It was so silent that one could hear a pin drop.

"Della, what are you up to?" Larry hastened his footsteps and glared at her.

"Finally, you're here, Larry. Do you know how scared I was after you left last night?" She threw him a hug.

Feeling out of place, Caspian shuffled quietly out of the room and closed the door.

"What do you want?" asked Larry.

"I want you to marry me, Larry." Della moaned.

"No way!"

"Then you shall lose everything!" Della snapped.

She was never a person who joked about, and meant every word she spoke.

"I don't love you."

"But I do, and I'm content with that."

Della clutched onto Larry with all her might and buried her head into his chest.

"What's going on? What's with Ms. Duff?"

"No idea. She was throwing tantrums a minute ago. How did she suddenly turn so compliant?"

"I guess Mr. Norton's the only person on this planet who could make her submit."

A few staff outside Larry's office were tittle-tattling about what they saw.

"Let me go!"

"No!"

Della's grip got tighter.

"Della, please understand that you have a public image to hold." Larry tried to talk sense into her.

"It's not as important as you."

My goodness. This woman has turned mad! Larry pulled her away and flung her onto the couch.

"Listen. First of all, nothing's gonna happen between us. Secondly, if you want to terminate our contract, go ahead. You may leave now!" Larry's eyes widened, and his lips pressed tightly against each other as he pointed towards the door.

"Larry, what if your company goes bankrupt? You'd lose everything without me. Aren't you scared of that?"

Larry was terrified alright. But what petrified him most was him losing his principles!

"You may leave!"

"What if I don't?" Della was persistent.

Larry picked up his phone and made a call.

"Jasper, come to my office immediately and see Ms. Duff out!"

Jasper appeared in the blink of an eye and gestured courteously for Della to leave. "Ms. Duff, this way, please."

"You'll regret it, Larry!"

Della got up and left Larry's office in her platform heels.

The corner of Larry's mouth twitched.

He'd never once regretted. It was nothing, really. Worse comes to worst, the company would go bankrupt. He truly believed that he could rebuild his legacy from ground zero. He also trusted that Joan would be by his side, supporting him along the way.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2687

Chapter 2687 Press Conference

"Larry!"

Caspian looked anxiously at Larry.

"It's fine, don't worry. We'll get someone to clean it up," Larry said as he indicated the mess on the floor.

"So our partnership with Ms. Duff..." Caspian said with some hesitation, unsure of how to approach the matter delicately.

"Call it off! All of it!" Larry commanded authoritatively.

Caspian gave him a large thumbs up in approval.

At the entrance to Norton Corporation, the reporters did not disperse. All of them were animatedly discussing the events of the previous night.

They kept it up until Della appeared when they rushed forward to crowded around her.

"Ms. Duff, we would like to know when you and Mr. Norton would be getting married?" a reporter asked urgently while pushing a large microphone towards her.

"Yes, Ms. Duff. We heard that you and Mr. Norton were living together..."

Della smiled slightly at the sight of the journalists before her.

Yes, just what I wanted!

Ms. Duff, why are you crying?" a journalist asked concernedly.

Tears flowed down Della's cheek as she ran off.

The journalists were stunned at the sight of her departing figure.

"What's going on? That wasn't in the script!"

"How is this going to play out next?"

"After her!" Della's assistant gestured from the sidelines.

Why are they looking so demotivated?

Soon, suggestive and lewd gossip once again made headlines.

Larry's public image had suffered great damage, while Della emerged as the martyr of the entire drama.

"Are what they're saying on the news true?" asked a young employee of Norton Corporation to her colleague.

"I don't know, but it must have happened for a reason. It's possible that Mr. Norton had unintentionally offended that Della."

The two women exchanged speculations, unaware that Larry stood several paces away behind them.

"Mr. Norton!" gasped one of the gossipers in a shaky voice as she jumped with fright at the sight of him.

"What were you discussing earlier?" Larry asked them coldly.

"We were talking about work, yes. We were discussing a plan..."

"Yes, that's right. A plan..."

The women hurriedly corroborated each other's lies for fear of losing their jobs.

"Do your jobs and keep your noses out of other people's affairs!" Larry snapped as he turned and entered his office.

Caspian gazed at them helplessly as he shook his head with a sigh.

The employees who were able to survive in Norton Corporation were talented professionals. A couple of busybodies and gossipers were bound to exist.

"Larry, why don't we hold a press conference?" Caspian suggested as an attempt to combat this prickly matter.

"No need," Larry replied shortly.

"Our conscious is clear. There's no need to prove anything," Larry said in a quiet voice.

It's been many days. Larry had become more open minded. Society was like a murky seabed; there were all sorts of dubious characters. The extreme limits of one's character were difficult to grasp given the breadth of possibilities. Some people were kind at heart but became wicked halfway through life. There were also some who were sinners in their youth but came to their senses later in their later years and sought to lead a normal life.

In this world, there was no absolute good or absolute bad.

"Larry, I think that you should explain to everyone and at least make it known that you had never offended Ms. Duff and had never promised her anything..." Caspian blurted. His face was red with embarrassment.

Caspian believed that the man before him was not one who would be seduced by Della easily. He firmly believed that Larry's love for Joan was pure and loyal.

Thump!

The door was kicked open.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2688

Chapter 2688 She Found Out

Jessica stood at the entrance with her hands on her hips, a strict look on her face.

"What is it?" Larry looked up uncomprehendingly.

"You tell me!"

Jessica came in slowly with anger all over her face.

"What's the meaning of this?" Caspian faced Jessica, somewhat speechless.

"Jessica, what're you doing?"

Caspian pushed Jessica's elbow gently. His face displayed his displeasure.

Jessica doesn't have any tricks up her sleeve, does she?

"Larry, explain yourself!" Jessica took out a newspaper from her purse and flung it down to Larry.

Caspian was stunned. Jessica is here to cause trouble again!

"There's nothing to explain. For those who believe in me, no explanation is necessary." Larry eyed Jessica with disdain.

He's still smug, is he? Things have developed to such an uncontrollable degree. Isn't Larry ashamed? Doesn't he feel even a little embarrassed? Jessica walked right up to him and stared at him with wide eyes as she hoped to draw his attention.

"Step aside, I'm in the middle of something," Larry exclaimed loudly without raising his head.

"Larry, aren't you worried that Joan would be angry if she finds out?" Jessica reminded him.

Larry knew that Joan would be jealous of course, but that may not be a bad thing.

"This is none of your business," Larry said as he typed and stared at his document to appear busy.

"Don't say I didn't warn you!" Jessica turned away.

I am kind enough to come over and help Larry resolve his problem but he did not even appreciate it. I don't know what Larry is thinking to work together with Della, and the both of them even...

If they're going to a hotel the last time was an accident, then what about this time? Even worse, Larry had been to Della's house...

Jessica folded her arms in front of her and stroked her chin, deep in thought about the most recent events. Suddenly, she turned back to face Larry. "Larry, Joan will be back soon."

That was the only thing Jessica said that had caught Larry's interest.

"Have you been in contact with her?" Larry asked urgently.

"Yes, we've been in touch," Jessica said coldly with a shrug.

"How is she now? Is she well? Where the hell is she, anyway? Is she living in a decent place?" Larry straightened out his shirt as he fired questions at Jessica.

"That's enough, stop worrying over nothing. You should probably start worrying about yourself," said Jessica with a fierce glare at Larry as she pointed to the newspaper on the table.

"If Joan sees that, she'll be very sad." Jessica turned and saw Caspian with a glint of excitement in his eyes.

"Caspian is still the best. He's honest and loyal."

Jessica patted Caspian on the back with a smile.

Larry knew that she said that for him. He did not retort to give her the satisfaction. He knew perfectly well that Jessica was sometimes an impulsive person. She could be yelling her head off but the next second she would change abruptly and become demure.

"That's enough, Jessica."

Caspian kissed her forehead in order to dissuade her from speaking further.

The weather at the beach was sunny, the salty breeze rejuvenating. Joan stood on the balcony and gazed out into the ocean, feeling very at peace.

"The president of Norton Corporation is a good match for Ms. Della Duff..."

A sultry female voice came from the TV.

Joan was stunned.

Larry and Della being a good match? What is this? Joan ran to the living room with her eyes fixed on the television before her.

As she watched, tears formed at the corners of her eyes.

Larry cheated on me!

She had thought that he was the only person in the world who would never betray her, and now he's been caught with another woman.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2689

Chapter 2689 Tough It Out

What a joke!

All that talk about remarrying and about loving me. Turns out it was nothing but a lie.

Men think with the part that's below their belts.

Smack!

In her daze, Joan accidentally knocked a drinking glass off the table. She felt the living room spin before her eyes.

She steadied herself and seized her phone to search for Larry's number. She wanted to call him so badly but she did not have the courage to do so.

She was afraid that Larry would tell her that he had moved on.

Ring!

Before she could dial his number, her phone rang instead.

At the sight of the caller, Joan picked up immediately.

"Joan."

Jessica's voice sounded uneasy on the other end.

"Jessica, is everything alright?" Joan asked at once.

"I'm sure you've seen the news, haven't you? Don't worry, I'm sure Larry has a reasonable explanation for that, don't overthink..."

Jessica made everything sound so simple but Joan could not believe a word of it.

If it were Casper on TV with Della, I'm sure Jessica wouldn't sound so calm!

"I know." Joan was about to hang up.

"Wait!" Jessica suddenly shouted in a panic.

Joan jumped and held the phone an arm's length away from her ear.

"Don't come back yet. Larry is attending to this matter and he is worried about it affecting you..." Jessica explained.

It was true. When Joan first saw the news, her first impulse was to return to the country and confront Larry about it.

"Jessica, talk to me. What is actually going on?" Joan asked with concern.

"It's... it's not a big deal, just a normal accident..." Jessica stammered in response.

Is she insane? She said that it was an accident, so how could it be normal? Something unusual or awkward must have happened back home. Joan's eyes flashed with coldness. Anger rose to her face.

"I'm coming back to the country tomorrow!" Joan was about to hang up again.

"You can't!"

Jessica's cold voice alerted Joan's suspicions at once.

She must have something to hide for being so set on preventing me from going back!

"Alright, I'll tell you! Norton Corporation is now facing a crisis, and now Della is withdrawing her support..."

Jessica told Joan everything in an attempt to stop her from returning to the country.

It was simple. Larry had to devote all of his energy to keep his company alive. If Joan chose to return to the country at that moment, groups with specific interests would target her, thus necessitating Larry to divert his attention to protect Joan.

"Joan, please don't come back right now. Things aren't too good. Think of it as helping Larry by remaining out of the country and tough it out," Jessica explained helplessly.

It was at this moment when Jessica decided to side with Larry.

Though Jessica used to tease Larry to the point of angering him on purpose, Larry could always count on Jessica's support when it was needed.

The women chatted a little longer before hanging up respectively.

To avoid creating more problems for Larry, Joan had decided to stay where she was.

At that very moment, Dustin and Abelyn were on the couch with their eyes glued to the television screen.

"What's the situation? What's up with Larry?" Abelyn yelled as she munched on some chips.

To her left, Dustin watched the news with a stiff expression on.

He did not expect that Larry would cheat on Joan.

"Is that Larry trustworthy?" Abelyn wondered out loud as she cast a curious eye at Dustin.

"He is," Dustin answered calmly, as Abelyn looked at him scathingly.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2690

Chapter 2690 Men Are Pigs

"Let's go pay Joan a visit," said Abelyn, with concern in her eyes.

Ever since her last drunken episode, Abelyn's attitude towards Joan had changed completely.

Abelyn used to look at Joan with disappointment, but now she felt herself sympathizing with Joan.

"What are you planning to do?" Dustin turned and gazed suspiciously at Abelyn.

He was afraid that Abelyn would take advantage of Joan's misfortune. Worse, Abelyn might insult Joan.

"What are you thinking about? What can I do? I'm just going to comfort her!" Abelyn said as she flung a pillow at Dustin in disdain.

"You make it sound like I want to cause her harm."

Wasn't it so? Wasn't the pain she had caused in the past enough? Dustin glared at Abelyn but said nothing.

The couple got dressed and headed for Joan's rented house.

"What are you two doing here?" Joan asked in surprise when she opened the door.

"We came to raid your fridge," Abelyn said and strode in.

After a glance around, Abelyn deemed the place decent. It was clean and had tasteful decor.

"What are we having tonight?" Abelyn asked as she sprawled on the couch, as though she was in her own home.

"What would you like to eat?" Joan played along as she walked toward her. She had not managed to greet Dustin who was behind her.

"Shall we have pizza?" Abelyn asked tentatively from the couch.

"Perfect!" Joan entered the kitchen.

Dustin was in the middle of brooding over the mystery of their sudden friendship when Abelyn gave him a kick to send him into the kitchen.

"Help her!" Abelyn yelled as she munched on an apple.

What is the meaning of this? Dustin gazed at Joan in the kitchen and then at Abelyn in the living room suspiciously.

"I'll come over as soon as I'm done with my apple!"

It was at this point when a large pizza for three was being prepared.

"Joan, it was my fault back then for being hostile towards you. I would like to apologize to you now. Let's have a toast! For health!" Abelyn raised a glass and downed it.

The other two were taken aback. Not keen to show weakness, they too promptly raised their glasses in response and drank.

Abelyn was feeling pity for Joan.

She had been lied to by men in her past and understood the feeling of betrayal perfectly.

This was one of those bonds that women shared.

"You two should take it easy with the beer," Dustin remarked worriedly.

If they were going to get drunk, he would be the one to suffer the most.

"Shut up!"

"Shut up!"

The two women reprimanded Dustin in unison, further solidifying their friendship.

"Joan, don't pick up her bad habits," Dustin said with a jab of his finger towards Abelyn as he helped himself to a slice.

"Dustin, what do you mean? I'm not afraid of anything. What's wrong with being with me? I am bold, but not unreasonable, you know?" Abelyn shouted furiously.

"Are you sure you aren't afraid of anything? Didn't you used to be afraid of your ex-boyfriend?" Dustin blurted out.

A second later, he clapped a hand to his mouth in horror at the realization that he had overstepped his bounds. As if by instinct, he gave himself a slap across his cheek.

"I didn't mean that, Abelyn. Please do not overthink," Dustin explained guiltily.

What is there to explain? He spoke the truth! Abelyn shook her head with a sigh. Pain and bitterness were written all over her face.

If the feelings from the past did not ever exist, perhaps she would be living very happily now.

Suddenly, Abelyn's phone rang.

Joan handed Abelyn's phone to her and returned to the kitchen.

Abelyn glanced at the screen and declined the call.

However, the phone calls were incessant, as though the caller was determined to reach her. Dustin had enough and turned her phone completely off and flung it down onto the couch.