

Departure with a Belly Chapter 81

Departure with a Belly Chapter 81

Chapter 81

However, in the end, Victoria nodded in agreement.

1/10

She found Alaric sitting on the couch when she returned to the bedroom, and she inadvertently sized his clothes up upon recalling Griselda's words.

Sure enough, he was only wearing a black shirt, and his gloomy aura almost blended with the dark couch.

Victoria didn't expect them to end up like this.

Actually, even if they didn't become husband and wife, they had been good friends since childhood, just minus the intimacy of a married couple, and even that aside, he had helped her a lot.

Victoria knew she should yield first, but for some reason, she couldn't say anything even after gawking at Alaric for a long time. In the end, she silently went to the washroom to wash up.

12:11 Mon, 19 Jun

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

By the time she came back out, Alaric was no longer in the bedroom.

However, she did receive several messages.

She checked them to find they were from an unknown number.

‘This is my phone number, Vixie. Remember to save it.’

外肉71%圖

Though the sender didn’t introduce themselves, Victoria knew whom it was at once, for only one person ever called her ‘Vixie’ her whole life.

After saving the number under ‘Bane Morison’, she replied to the text. ‘I’m already an adult. Can you please not call me that anymore?’

Bane’s phone was probably nearby, or he happened to be fiddling with his phone. Either way, his reply came in two shakes. ‘What should I call you, then?’

‘My name.’

2/10

3

x

外肉71%

Chapter 81 Don’t Worry About Me

3/10

Given her relationship with Bane, addressing each other’s first names was the best way to go.

‘Your name?’ Bane seemed to be contemplating, for he only sent another

text moments later. ‘Very well. I’ll call you Snowball, then.’

Snowball...

The nickname made Victoria frown slightly, for only Alaric ever called her that, and even when he did, he was usually mad at her.

Just when she was about to reply to him, Bane sent a third text. ‘Alright, Snowball, it is. I still have work to do. Rest early. I’ll see you tomorrow.’

After reading Bane’s texts, Victoria decided against telling him not to address her by her nickname. At that, she checked the time to find it was already near 10.00PM.

“To think he still has work to do late at night.”

4/10

Chapter 81 Don’t Worry About Me

With that, Alaric, who was no longer in the bedroom, came to her mind, and she wondered where he had gone. She put her phone away and lay in bed, drifting to sleep in two shakes.

:

The following morning, Victoria woke up to find Alaric’s side of the bed empty. It seemed that the man didn’t return at all last night.

She sat there for a while, lost in thought, before getting up and heading downstairs after getting dressed.

As Victoria passed by the study, she happened to run into Alaric as he opened the *door* and walked out. Their eyes met, and they both froze, clearly not expecting to see each other.

Moments later, Alaric looked at her expressionlessly, his handsome face cold and indifferent, and asked, “Bane has gathered everyone for dinner tonight. Do you want to go?”

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

Victoria had assumed he would give her the silent treatment, given what had happened the night before, and she even thought about what she should say if Griselda were to ask her again at the dining table. Who'd have thought Alaric would take the initiative to break the ice, though?!

5/10

Just as Victoria was lost in thought, she recalled how her fights with Alaric would get very ugly, and being young, she was pretty careless with her words.

It wasn't until after their argument was over that Victoria wanted to take her words back. Then again, she couldn't bring herself to talk to him, so she always secretly decided to ignore him forever, but he would end up being the first to break the tension between them.

Growing up, he would always be the one to break the ice. Of course, he

remained grim even when he took the first step, and if she continued to ignore him, he would explode and talk to her with gnashed teeth.

12:11 **Mon, 19 Jun**

Chapter 81 **Don't** Worry About Me

After coming to herself, Victoria nodded faintly and said, "Sure."

Finally, Alaric's countenance brightened a little.

871%

After breakfast, the two headed out the door together. she was going to drive herself, but she had just bypassed Alaric's car when the man rolled his window down and gazed icily at her, ordering her to get into his car.

At the thought that they would have to attend the gathering together,

Victoria obliged, and they drove in silence before heading to their

respective offices after arriving at the company.

,

6/10

**

As Victoria sat down, she received a text from Summer. 'How are you doing lately? With Old Mrs. Cadogan's surgery postponed, will your thing with Alaric be postponed too?!

'Yeah.

(‘What?! Do you know how far into the future you are looking at?’

12:11 Mon, 19 Jun

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

‘It’s still up in the air. Grandma’s still resting. We can only wait and see.’

271%

7/10

Summer couldn’t form a proper sentence in her reply, and Victoria

understood at once. ‘Don’t worry about me. I’ll sort it out just fine.’

Summer didn’t reply to her after that, and it didn’t bother Victoria either, as

she believed her best friend had returned to her work.

Just then, Yasmin came in with a stack of documents.

“Miss Victoria.” She gazed warily at her boss and asked with caution, “Was

everything between you and Mr. Cadogan okay last night?”

“We’re fine.”

“That’s good.” Yasmin let out a sigh of relief after placing the documents

on Victoria’s table.

She had asked the cab to wait outside when Victoria and Alaric went out

12:11 Mon, **19** Jun

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

the night before. However, they didn’t leave right away but were talking

near the car.

8/10

After a while, they seemed to have broken into a fight, but Yasmin was too far away to hear anything.

She felt a little guilty, for she had exaggerated when she spoke ill of Caleb to Alaric the night before.

It was mainly because she found Caleb rude, and more importantly, she wanted Victoria to stay, so she deliberately said some things that would make Alaric sympathize with Victoria.

Meanwhile, Victoria sensed Yasmine staring at her as she flipped through the documents, so she looked up and asked, "Do you have something to tell me?"

"No." The assistant hurriedly waved her hands in denial, then scratched her (head awkwardly before announcing her departure.

12:12 Mon, 19 Jun

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

"Alright. Please close the door behind you."

"Will do, Miss Victoria."

9/10

At that, Yasmin left Victoria's office in defeat. She had wanted to apologize

to Victoria for the night before. However...

She closed the door behind her.

di

She didn't apologize because Victoria didn't look so good. Hence, she worried she would piss Victoria off if she did say it. But Miss Victoria wouldn't end up in that situation if it weren't for me.

At that, the young woman leaned against the door and poked her fingers sulkily.

Just then, Peter approached her direction with things in his hands. At the sight of that young woman at the door, Peter smiled at her. But a voice came from inside the office just when he was about to open the door.

1212 **Mon, 19 Jun**

Chapter 81 Don't Worry About Me

"Would I be worried about you if you weren't pregnant?! You'll sort it out

10/10

just fine? What is even your plan?! Do you think your belly will remain flat if you keep this up?!"

Chapter 82

It was already too late when Victoria wanted to turn it off when the voice played from her phone out of the blue, and by the time she got to it, the voice message had already finished playing on its own.

Victoria was speechless. What the heck, Jones?! She thought Summer had returned from her work to rant about her *sshole of a boss, but who'd have thought she would talk about Victoria?!

A thought then came to Victoria, and she opened the door in a panic.

Seeing that there wasn't a soul in sight, she breathed a sigh of relief.

I had Yasmin close the *door* behind her. So, by right, she wouldn't linger around. She likely didn't hear the voice message,

That said, Victoria still felt uneasy. As such, she took a few steps forward and searched the area before finally returning to her office when she was

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

certain there really wasn't anyone around.

At that, she deleted Summer's voice message and reprimanded the girl, who apologized at breakneck speed, saying sorry, she was just too emotional and that it wouldn't happen again repeatedly.

At the same time, at the stairwell not far away, a man and a woman stood face to face, one panting heavier than the other while their faces were enveloped in various emotions.

The smile on Peter's face seemed to be frozen, half-smiling and stiff, and standing right in front of him with an even wilder expression was Yasmin, whose eyes were wide open and her mouth agape.

The two of them stood staring at each other just like that, reeling in shock.

Finally, about a minute later, Peter, who believed he had better mental resilience, calmed down and asked, "Have we been here all this while?"

12:12 Mon, 19 Jun

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

“Sorry?” His question stumped Yasmin.

“I mean, did I go to Miss Selwyn’s office just now?”

However, the assistant remained stupefied.

补气71%會

Judging from her expression, Peter knew what had just happened was real, and he finally came around. He and this secretary assistant had overheard a jaw-dropping secret.

A beat, he asked, “Do you suppose Miss Selwyn is pregnant with Mr. Cadogan’s child?”

“Of course, she is!” Yasmin, still reeling in shock, blurted subconsciously.

“Why are you so sure?” Peter was stumped. “It doesn’t seem like she wants anyone to know about it. I mean... Mr. Cadogan might even be unaware of it.”/

3/9

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

But it doesn’t make sense, does it? If I’m not mistaken, what was said

4/9

meant that Miss Selwyn is scared of people knowing about her pregnancy.

That’s why she’s worried about not being able to cover up her growing belly in the future.

Yasmin had finally come to herself at this point, and she argued, “Isn’t it normal that Mr. Cadogan is unaware?”

Peter was rendered speechless, his worldview shattered.

He couldn't believe the young woman thought it was normal for a wife to hide her pregnancy from her husband! He instantly thought the young woman's mindset was problematic.

But just as he was about to correct her worldview, Yasmin reasoned solemnly to him. "Do you know there's been word going around in the company that Mr. Cadogan and Miss Selwyn will be divorcing because Claudia is Mr. Cadogan's true love? Not only does she frequent Mr. Cadogan's office and sits in his front passenger seat, but she even brings him food all the time. I wouldn't want Mr. Cadogan to know either if I were Miss Selwyn."

Her words gave Peter a moment of epiphany. She's right! Johnson frequented the office for a time. Though I had a problem with her and even tried to deal with her myself, nothing changed because Boss is the root of it all!

He was too shocked earlier to piece the puzzles together.

"Don't you think I'm right?" Yasmin asked, seeing that he remained silent.

"Don't you think this is betrayal?"

Peter had nothing to say. In fact, he could understand and even felt angry for Victoria when he put himself in her shoes.

"I'll take it as you agree with me if you don't say anything. In that case..."

Yasmin whispered. "We'll keep this between us for now."

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

Peter nodded in agreement. "I know. This isn't what we should be revealing

in the first place.”

“Good. We’ll pretend we know nothing. Miss Selwyn is already in a difficult situation. We can’t add to her troubles.”

6/9

“But...” Peter frowned. “I still don’t get it. Why wouldn’t Miss Selwyn reveal her pregnancy to Mr. Cadogan? If she does, Mr. Cadogan might even cut off his ties with Claudia Johnson.”

“Huh!” Yasmin sneered. “What age do you think we live in? Don’t tell me you actually think using a child to hold a man down will work!”

Her reprimand embarrassed Peter.

“Either way, no one else can know about this. Whoever talks about it will be cursed to remain single for the rest of their lives.” Yasmin threatened, rendering Peter speechless.

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

7/9

Peter wiped the cold sweat off his forehead, taken aback by the severity of the consequence. “Can we change it to something else?”

“No!” Yasmin growled. “It’ll have to be this since you mind it so much. That way, you’ll think twice when you want to reveal it.”

“Fair enough.” At that, Peter vowed, “I will be cursed to remain single for the rest of my life if I reveal it to anyone else.”

Finally, Yasmin nodded with satisfaction.

Soon after that, the two left with different thoughts in their minds.

Yasmin couldn’t help looking into Victoria’s office after returning to her

seat.

She still couldn't believe she would overhear such a massive secret, and she cupped her cheeks and sighed helplessly, having a feeling that she would behave guiltily in front of Victoria from now on.

Chapter **82** Overheard the Secret

Suddenly, her heart ached for Victoria. She must actually be in a lot of pain

8/9

despite her nonchalant appearance when everyone pointed fingers at her at the cafeteria the other day.

On the other hand, Peter returned to his desk with multitudes of emotions.

"Mr. Levane, aren't the files for Miss Selwyn? Why did you bring them back?"

someone asked when they saw the files in Peter's arms.

It was only then Peter realized he had forgotten to deliver the files. He sighed and slapped his thigh in despair.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Levane. Mr. Cadogan asked to see you in his office."

Mr. Cadogan?

"Got it."

Mon, 19

3

9/9

Chapter 82 Overheard the Secret

With that, Peter asked someone else to deliver the files to Victoria while he headed off to the CEO's office, where he found Alaric working away at his desk.

The man had a handsome face, but his eyes were cold, and his pressed lips made him unapproachable. And having been in a position of power for many years, he exuded great intimidation.

Normally, Alaric was handsome and powerful in Peter's eyes. Sometimes, the assistant even wondered how it was possible for a man as perfect as Alaric to exist in this world. But now, he thought his boss was nothing but an *sshole, mediocre and stupid, or how could he abandon a woman as wonderful as Victoria and hook up with Claudia instead?!

Alaric was focused on his work when he sensed a gaze of anger on him, and he looked toward Peter with a frown. "What is it?"

Chapter 83

"*sshole!"

"What did you say?" Alaric squinted menacingly, displeased.

His icy tone snapped Peter back to reality at once, and the latter though he was doomed. Wasn't I only ranting in my mind? How did I end up blurting it out?!

That said, as exasperated as he was about himself, he countered it in two shakes, given that he was already a seasoned veteran. "I'm sorry, Mr. Cadogan. I wasn't referring to you. It's just that I watched a cheesy soap opera with my mother last night, and the male lead was a total, *sshole!" Yes, that's right. Explain it like this!

Cheesy soap opera? Alaric frowned and stared at Peter with displeasure. "You're telling me this is what you have in your head during work hours."

Exness Markets

INSTALL

FREE

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

Huh, says the man who hooks up with other women during work hours. So what if that's what I have inside my head?!

Of course, Peter wouldn't dare think out loud anymore.

2/9

"No, sir. It just popped into my head on my way here. I swear, the drama is

www
super cheesy, and the male lead is seriously revolting. He keeps going back and forth between the two women. Tell me that's not a typical *sshole, Mr. Cadogan."

"I don't have time for your nonsense. Get this acquisition proposal sorted out," Alaric ordered while handing Peter a folder, unaware of his

connection to the *sshole' and two women Peter referred to.

Despite cussing Alaric, Peter knew work was still work, and it had to be done. So, he picked the folder up and huffed, "Got it."

That tone... Alaric couldn't help but look up at Peter only to find the latter glaring daggers at him.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

They had worked together for so many years, but when had Peter ever looked at him with such eyes?

At that, Alaric squinted his eyes and asked, "Peter, don't you think you're directing your animosity toward the *sshole on TV onto me?"

"Oh, I am." Peter quirked his lips. "You won't believe it, Mr. Cadogan. That *sshole looked very much like you. That's why I'll think of the *sshole whenever I see you."

Alaric was rendered speechless. What could he say about being associated with a soap opera? That he had a superb assistant?

"So, you can't blame me, Mr. Cadogan. Blame the actor who looks nearly identical to you. No, so be it that you two look identical, but he also does sh*tty things! Don't you think it's absolutely absurd that he goes back and forth between two women?!"

As dim as Alaric could get, he gradually came around after observing

Exness Markets

INSTALL

3/9

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

Peter's behavior, and he narrowed his eyes dangerously at the assistant at once.

"Are you saying I'm an *sshole?"

"What?!" Peter denied dramatically at once. "When have I ever said anything about you? I'm talking about the *sshole on TV!"

Alaric stayed silent, and Peter acted as though it just hit him. "I see, Mr. Cadogan. You don't think I'm actually implying you're the *sshole, are you? How dare I?! Miss Johnson might frequent your office and hang out with you, but I believe nothing is going on between you two, and you wouldn't do anything to betray Miss Selwyn like that *sshole from the TV. Am I right, or am I right?"

The veins on Alaric's forehead throbbed as he listened to Peter's insinuation, and he interjected when he had enough. "Looks like you have quite a lot of time on your hands."

Exners Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

Five minutes later, Peter left Alaric's office with a stack of files and dejection.

He glanced at the work he would have to complete for the next three days because of his insinuation and sighed. Should've just kept my mouth shut.

But whenever Peter thought about Miss Selwyn's pregnancy and how she couldn't tell Mr. Cadogan about it because of his unclear relationship with Claudia, he felt a raging anger burn inside him.

Just imagine the pain Miss Selwyn is going through...

As such, Peter decided to continue calling Alaric an *sshole even if the latter would oppress him like this.

Victoria, who was oblivious to all of this, was still working on her tasks.

However, she grew listless soon after, repeatedly yawning in front of the Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

computer screen.

79%

Yasmin happened to catch her yawning when she brought Victoria her beverage, and she quickly offered, "Are you tired, Miss Victoria. Why don't I take over for you?"

Her eagerness surprised Victoria, and she couldn't help asking. "Can you do it?"

"I've learned a lot from you lately, Miss Victoria. I'm confident I can handle it."

Seeing that Victoria remained hesitant, Yasmin simply helped her up and said, "Go ahead and get some rest, Miss Victoria. I got this."

Victoria had wanted to turn her down. After all, it wasn't appropriate for her to nap during work hours. However, she was pooped. So, she nodded in agreement in the end. "Alright, I'll rest for ten minutes."

ex

Exness Markets

FREE

INSTALL

Wed,

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

"Alrighty!"

With that, Victoria went into her private lounge.

@x3.7

In actuality, given her current status, no one would dare do anything to her face but only talk behind her back even if she slept for a whole day, not to mention she was only taking a ten-minute break.

After entering her lounge, Victoria caressed her belly and whispered, "You're not only a glutton but also a sloth, huh, little one?"

With that, she grabbed the throw on the couch and drifted to sleep.

Meanwhile, Yasmine worked away at Victoria's desk.

From now on, I will protect Miss Victoria at all costs! she vowed.

Victoria had planned to only take a ten-minute nap, but it was an hour later when she stirred. Who'd have thought she would oversleep?!

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 ■ TIME

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

At that, she went out to find Yasmin still at her desk.

At the same time, the young assistant turned around and beamed at Victoria when she heard noises behind her.

“Good morning, Miss Victoria. How was your sleep? It’s only been an hour. You should sleep a little longer.” The young woman pulled a chair from the side and helped Victoria sit down as she spoke, baffling the latter.

“I got you some dessert, Miss Victoria. You must be hungry. Here, have a little something before lunch.”

Dessert... Victoria glanced at the strawberry shortcake Yasmin got her. It looked delicious. However, she couldn’t help thinking Yasmin’s actions were suspicious.

“What would you like for lunch, Miss Victoria? I’ll get it for you.”

“Are you guilty of something?” Victoria asked, gazing at the young woman.

0 x

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41

TREE

Chapter 83 Are You Guilty of Something?

Or why would she suddenly behave so attentively? Victoria probed as such because she was worried Yasmin had overheard Summer’s voice message.

Sure enough, Yasmin’s countenance turned unnatural at once, and her gaze averted as well. “N-No. Why would you say that?”

Exness Markets

Chapter 84

Shoot, have I overdone it? I knew I should’ve played it safe!

However, Yasmin’s heart ached for Victoria after knowing Alaric was hooking up with other women while Victoria was pregnant. All she wanted to do was help Victoria, so she didn’t care about everything else.

“Hmm?” Victoria’s heart skipped a beat when she saw Yasmin averting her gaze. She didn’t really hear it, did she?!

Yasmin might normally be a chicken, but she was quick-witted as well. So, she reacted immediately when she sensed Victoria’s suspicion.

“Alright, it’s about last night.” Yasmin rubbed the back of her head awkwardly. “I want to make it up to you. Mr. Burke wouldn’t say all that to you if it weren’t for me.”

Miss Victoria wouldn’t suspect a thing anymore when I put it like this, right?

Chapter 84 Heartless

Sure enough, Victoria brightened up a little after hearing Yasmin’s explanation.

It’s about last night, huh? That explains why she’s behaving like this. At that, Victoria chuckled and said, “What happened last night was an

accident and also a lesson. Never forget that.”

“I won’t! Don’t worry, Miss Victoria, I will never make that mistake again!”

Yasmin vowed, then changed the subject. “So.... what would you like to have for lunch? I’ll grab it for you.”

79%

“Don’t worry about it,” Victoria said as she grabbed the strawberry shortcake. “If it’s for last night, you’ve already compensated for it with this cake.”

She was getting hungry, and this cake was just perfect.

Yasmin was quite happy when Victoria ate the cake she got, for she didn’t know what to get for her boss. So, she got this when she saw it was

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FREE

2/

Chapter 84 Heartless

delicately made, and it turned out to be Victoria’s taste.

If she couldn’t get Victoria lunch, she would prepare some snacks for her, then. Her mother had said an expecting mother tended to crave something.

Thank goodness I reacted quickly and apologized for last night, or I’d be caught!

When night fell, everyone came together for Bane’s dinner party and chatted.

“Say, how come I didn’t receive any news about Bane’s return before this? When did he come back?”

“I’m not sure either. Bane used to be super busy, and he never kept in touch either after going abroad. So, it’s normal that none of us are aware

Exness Markets

INSTALL

3/

Chapter 84 Heartless

of his sudden return.”

While the group chatted away, the stars of the night were still yet to arrive

“Do you guys think Alaric will bring Claudia over tonight?”

“Probably not... Isn’t Alaric with Victoria now? It’ll surely be awkward if Claudia shows up.”

“But didn’t Alaric used to have a thing for Claudia? How did he end up with Victoria?”

“I heard it’s because the Selwyns were bankrupt, and Alaric wanted to help Victoria, so the two got married temporarily.”

“You heard? Did Alaric and Victoria tell you that?”

“They didn’t. That’s what everyone is saying, and they didn’t deny it either.”

ex

Exness Markets

FREE

INSTALL

5/9

Chapter 84 Heartless

Everyone discussed the topic heatedly until they heard a series of footsteps approaching the private room door, and they all finally gazed at each other before lowering their voices.

Very quickly, the door opened to reveal a tall, slender figure.

44

Bane showed up in a white suit and gold-rimmed glasses, looking absolutely gentlemanly. Compared to five years ago, when Bane still had some youthfulness to him, he was now mature and refined, and it was nearly impossible to look away from him.

“Bane.” Everyone stood up and greeted him, and he nodded and smiled at everyone in response. After sweeping his gaze across the room, his gaze dimmed a little when he didn’t see who he was looking for.

This girl wouldn’t be absent tonight, would she? No, Alaric hasn’t shown up yet. Given her current situation, she’s likely to come with him.

Just as he was deep in thought, a gentle voice rang from behind him.

Exness Markets

のろ

INSTALL

16-33 Wed, 21

Chapter 84 Heartless

“Sorry...”

“Claudia!” Someone shouted, and Claudia knew right away she was exactly where she should be.

Bane looked over his shoulder and nodded in acknowledgment after glancing at the sexily-dressed young woman.

On the other hand, a hint of surprise flashed across Claudia’s eyes as she quickly made out the familiar face. “Bane?!”

The man nodded with a smile and pushed his glasses a little. “Hi.”

The other ladies who came with Claudia were also amazed by Bane’s gentlemanly appearance. Man, he’s hot!

Claudia also took some time to come to herself before extending her hand for a handshake. “Long time no see. You’ve changed a lot; I almost didn’t recognize you.”

xe

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 FREE

79%

6/9

@K完.79%會

Chapter 84 Heartless

“Have I?” Bane mumbled, stunned, as a hint of surprise flashed across his eyes.

He didn’t care what other people thought or felt, but their expressions changed drastically almost immediately after they saw him, including this

woman who claimed to be Alaric's beau.

It was evident that he did change significantly. So how come a certain girl didn't react at all when she saw him?

Bane still remembered how calmly Victoria looked when he appeared before her.

It might be that she didn't notice my change, or... she didn't care.

At the thought of the latter possibility, Bane's eyes turned grim, and he pressed his lips into a fine line.

"It has been a while." He finally returned the handshake. However, he

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 TREE

7/9

Chapter

or 84 Heartless

withdrew his hand almost immediately.

Claudia was stunned as she gazed at the quickly retreated hand.

8.79%

Is it me, or Bane seems to be disdainful of me? Also, he doesn't look too happy even when I say he changed a lot. Why is that?

Just then, Claudia's friend suggested that they head into the room first, and Claudia finally came around and nodded in agreement.

0/9

With that, everyone took a seat, and Claudia happened to sit right across from Bane.

The man might appear amiable, but no one dared sit next to him, so he was the only one at that table.

In response to everyone's inquiries, he spoke confidently and conducted himself with courtesy and elegance, like a modest gentleman, and it made Claudia lost in thought quite a few times.

www

Exness Markets

INSTALL

TREE

Chapter 84 Heartless

Time ticked away, and nearly everyone had arrived. Only Alaric and Victoria were yet to show up.

Bane chatted with everyone patiently at first, but as it got later into the night, he couldn't help checking his phone every now and then.

He had texted Victoria in the afternoon, but the young woman never replied to him. Tsk, heartless girl.

Chapter 85

Just then, someone asked, "Do you suppose Alaric will come to Bane's welcome home party?"

"I don't think he'll miss it. They were pretty close back then."

“But why hasn’t he shown up, then?”

Yeah, why hasn’t he shown up?

Claudia instinctively glanced at her phone. She had sent Alaric a text message before setting off, asking for his whereabouts. However, he didn’t reply to her. Hence, she assumed he was driving.

But it had already been a while since she arrived, yet he still hadn’t shown up nor replied to her text. She couldn’t help getting a little worried.

A scheme flashed across Claudia’s friend when she saw the young
e

Exness Markets

TREE

INSTALL

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

woman checking her phone. At that, she suggested in front of everyone, “Claudia, why don’t you give Alaric a call? Ask him where he’s at. I’m sure he answers all your calls.”

At that, Claudia glanced at her friend, who winked at her, suggesting that she make the call.

Claudia knew exactly what she was trying. Her friends just wanted to help her confirm her relationship with Alaric in front of everyone. However...

Alaric still hasn’t replied to the text she sent before setting off. Will he answer if I call at this time?

It wasn’t a safe bet, and she would certainly embarrass herself in front of everyone if Alaric didn’t answer.

“Nah, forget it.” Claudia shrugged it off. “It’s already so late. He’s likely in the elevator or on his way here. He probably wouldn’t answer it even if I called him.”

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FREE

2/9

16:33 Wed, 21

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

To her dismay, the crowd’s interest was already piqued.

“But you won’t know until you try. C’mon, call him.”

“Yeah, Claudia. We all know how much you mean to Alaric. He will definitely answer your call even if he’s driving.”

At that, everyone urged her to make the call. Feeling that she had been put in a tight spot, Claudia subconsciously turned to Bane when a thought hit her.

Lo and behold, the man merely lowered his head and stared at his phone, seemingly unaware of the commotion.

“C’mon, Claudia. Call him. It’s been ages since we heard Alaric’s voice.”

“Yeah, Claudia. Just do it to satisfy our curiosity.”

Satisfy your curiosity? Huh! Claudia sneered. Who do you people think you
ke

ZX

Exness Markets

INSTALL

3/9

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

are? Satisfy your curiosity. I wouldn't even come if not for Alaric's sake!

At that, the young woman pulled a smile. Just as she was about to speak up, the door opened, grabbing everyone's attention.

1

Alaric, in a black coat, showed up, with Victoria following closely behind in a similarly designed beige trench coat. Her long hair had also been tied up behind her head, and her fair face looked clean and makeup-free.

Even so, it didn't affect her beauty one bit. Her facial features were sharp, to begin with, and her skin was also fair and smooth. Applying makeup would roughen up her face instead.

The number of guests in the private room stupefied Victoria for a second, whereas Alaric was unfazed the entire time. Seeing that the man had no intention of explaining their tardiness, Victoria spoke up, apologizing, "Sorry. The traffic was a little heavy."

Her voice was clear and melodious, like flowing water, and she looked.

ke

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41. TRIE

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

slender and dainty standing next to Alaric. Plus, they were wearing similarly designed coats, so it gave people the illusion that they agreed on their outfits beforehand.

5/9

Back when everyone was still teenagers, Victoria and Alaric, who grew up together, were practically inseparable, and everyone was used to seeing.

www

the two appearing anywhere together. But it was precisely because of that that no one thought they would end up more than friends. Childhood friends saw too much of each other's most genuine side, so it was impossible for them to end up together.

More importantly, the two would've long gotten together if they really had feelings for each other. Hence, the crowd felt somewhat melancholy when they saw them appear in similar clothing, and they couldn't help turning their gazes to Claudia too.

Naturally, the young woman wasn't feeling her best, for the couple's stunt was like a slap in the face.

www

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 ■ THEE

Chapter 25 Growing Anxiety

Her anxiety grew at that. Things were getting more and more out of hand, but what could she do? The least she could do was to not embarrass herself in front of so many people, right?

At that, she walked toward Victoria and wrapped her arms around Victoria's arm affectionately. "Don't worry about it. What matters most is that you guys arrived safely. Come and sit with me."

Having witnessed Claudia's true colors in the past, Victoria knew the woman had a thing for acting in front of a crowd. Hence, she drooped her eyelids slightly when Claudia wrapped her arms around hers. She didn't turn the young woman down but instead followed her to their seats.

Everyone was surprised, and they gazed at the two with mixed emotions. Alaric, on the other hand, sat down next to Bane, who, despite greeting Alaric with a 'hey', was actually staring at Victoria.

"Hey." Alaric took a gander at Bane after sitting down. When he saw the ex

Exness Markets

41 TREE

INSTALL

6/9

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

latter staring in one direction, a thought hit him, and he followed his line of sight to find who else but Victoria!

Instantly, he turned slightly grim while his gaze deepened, exuding animosity.

Sensing an icy gaze on her, Victoria turned around only to meet Alaric's frosty gaze.

It took her aback, and she quickly frowned. Is he looking at me like that because I'm sitting next to his precious beloved? Huh, I knew I should've rejected her in front of everyone. But he'd probably only be even more pissed off, right?

Claudia was also looking at Alaric, and her anxiety grew further as he had been looking only at Victoria since he arrived.

At that, she drooped her eyelids and bit her lower lip lightly while her fingers bunched up together.

@XX

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

FALE

7/9

16:33 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

The four of them had seemingly plunged into an eerie atmosphere, and it was quite a while before someone finally asked for the menu and asked everyone if they wanted booze.

Bane turned it down with a smile. "I drove here. So, I'll have to say no. Feel free to drink if you guys want to, though."

Alaric, on the other hand, remained silent, and as usual, no one dared ask him when they sensed his frosty aura.

In the beginning, everyone was just chatting about their recent years, but after a few glasses of a certain beverage, everyone grew bolder.

A guy in glasses, who was a lightweight, was already tipsy, and he sized Claudia's face up for a long while before finally holding his glass and saying, Princess Claudia, it's not every day all of us get to meet up. Are you and Alaric really not going to drink with us?"

Silence filled the private room momentarily before bursting into a tumult

Exness Markets
INSTALL

FREL

8/9

16:33 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 85 Growing Anxiety

again.

"Yeah, join us! It's quite a feat that you guys can be together for so many years."

"Yeah! When are you guys finally going to invite us to your wedding?!" exclaimed the man in glasses.

Claudia reflexively glanced at Alaric and found him sitting silently with his eyelids drooped, looking like he couldn't hear a word anyone said.

At that, Claudia could only chuckle awkwardly and say, "Cut it out, guys. Al isn't someone you guys can simply make fun of anymore."

Exness Markets

Chapter 86

0

Claudia was making a bet when she said that because Alaric had been acting strangely as of late. If she hadn't restricted Victoria with the reason of the latter owing her a favor, she would've assumed that Victoria had told the man about the pregnancy.

Ironically, even though Victoria was a love rival, Claudia trusted her to keep her word. That was the reason she tried very hard to make Victoria owe her a favor back then.

As expected, after she finished speaking, everyone was hyped up.

"What do you mean?"

Someone asked with a smile, "Claudia, are you talking about Al being a husband now?"

"Gosh, the marriage is a sham! Everyone knows that you're the only one in

Exness Markets
INSTALL

FREE

1/9

16:33 Wed, 21 Jun •

Chapter 86 Provocation

Al's heart."

“That’s right. Moreover, Alaric and Victoria have been good friends since childhood. There’s no love between them.”

Alaric frowned while listening to their conversation. He subconsciously took a look at Victoria to find her calmly sipping on juice.

Her eyes brightened as though she realized the juice tasted wonderful. Following another sip, she started chugging it down.

Alaric was speechless at that.

Victoria didn’t expect that her taste for food and beverages would change so much after she became pregnant. This kind of juice was her least favorite back then, but she loved it now. She finished the juice in barely a minute.

Claudia noticed what Victoria had been doing as well. She frowned for a moment before becoming at ease. She must be embarrassed right now.

That’s how she’s trying to cover it up. Pfft.

3/9

There were mostly alcoholic drinks on the table. Several people didn’t like to drink wine, so they ordered juice, including Victoria. Claudia had ordered a glass of milk, but Victoria didn’t like the taste.

There was a glass of juice in front of Bane as well. Since he didn’t like to drink wine, he asked for a glass of juice.

After finishing her juice, Victoria seemed to be craving more. Despite feeling bashful, she had the urge to ask for another glass of juice from the waiter. After all, she couldn’t ask Bane to pass her his juice.

While she was deep in thought, everyone in the private room started urging Alaric and Claudia to drink.

“Let’s drink!”

“Drink up!”

Even Claudia’s friends joined in the fun.

“Alaric, why don’t you drink with Claudia?”

79%

4/9

“That’s right. Are you worried Miss Selwyn will be mad? We’re aware of your relationship with her, and she knows that you’re fond of Claudia. I’m sure Miss Selwyn won’t mind, right?”

Hearing that, Victoria sneered in secret.

Not only are they trying to make Alaric and Claudia look like a couple, but they’re also trying to keep my mouth shut. Do they think they can

Chapter 86 Provocation

Chapter FS Provocation

Chapter 86 Provocation

embarrass me by doing so?

At the thought of this, Victoria lifted her head and looked straight at that person before curling her lips. "Why did you even ask me when you've put words in my mouth?"

0:

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 # FREE

8.79%

Chapter 86 Provocation

At this point, Victoria finally realized that the person was one of the women who had warned her outside the clubhouse.

5/9

Her voice is also the same as the one who warned me over the phone.

She's indeed a good lackey of Claudia.

The woman was startled, as she didn't expect Victoria to counter. When she came to her senses a moment later, she lifted her chin and said, "I had to ask, of course. I don't think you're so petty, but what if you're that kind of person?"

"Elaine..." Claudia took her arm with a dark expression. "Stop it."

"Why are you stopping me, Claudia? I'm just trying to have a friendly conversation with Miss Selwyn. I'm sure she's not so narrow-minded."

As the woman spoke, Victoria picked up a glass of wine in front of her. She swayed the wine as the red liquid radiated a charming glow under the lights.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FREE

16:33 Wed, 21

Chapter 86 Provocation

Elaine's expression changed when she saw that. "What are you trying to do?"

Hearing that, Victoria was startled as she turned to look at the woman in shock. When she realized what was on the woman's mind a moment later, she broke into laughter. "What's wrong? Do you think I'm going to splash it on you? Don't worry. I'm not narrow-minded, so I won't let the wine come into close contact with your face."

Although she did nothing, her tone was weird.

Elaine's expression darkened at that. Just as she was ready to flare up, Claudia placed her hand on the woman's shoulder and sent her a signal. Only then did Elaine calm down, but she pursed her lips with displeasure as a hint of gloominess flashed across her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Victoria. I'll apologize on her behalf. She didn't mean it. Will you forgive her?"

B

Exness Markets

INSTALL

6/9

Chapter 86 Provocation

Hearing that, Victoria smiled. "Sure. I'm magnanimous, after all."

7/9

Claudia was rendered speechless while balling up her fists. She's such a b*tch!

All of them were ready to watch a good show the moment the blonde woman beside Claudia started mocking Victoria. They were not disappointed, as they had indeed witnessed a good show. The only problem was that the show lacked the long-anticipated intensity. Victoria, who was Alaric's wife, was too calm. They felt like even though Elaine was haughty, Victoria could easily destroy her and render her unable to keep making a scene. They secretly chastised Elaine's foolishness. If she had been more adept at arguing, the show would've been more interesting.

Just as they assumed the show had come to an end, Elaine appeared agitated as she said through clenched teeth, "Claudia has apologized to ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

AT THE

16:33 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 86 Provocation

you, Victoria. Why are you still putting on an act?"

Hearing that, Victoria shot her a glance. "She told me to forgive you, and I did. How am I putting on an act? Weren't you the one who said I wasn't narrow-minded?"

"You!" Elaine was at a loss for words for a moment before sneering. "So what if I've said it? You've been occupying Alaric for many years. Claudia is magnanimous enough not to settle the score with you, but it doesn't mean we have to put up with it as well."

"Oh?" Victoria arched her brow and put on a smile. "Are you saying Claudia has been putting up with it? Is that what she told you?"

"Of course not!

putting words into my mouth!"

"In that case, why are you trying to imply that she has been putting up with my relationship with Alaric? Are you slandering your friend?"

Exness Markets

4.1

FREE

INSTALL

8/9

Chapter 86 Provocation

Victoria remained calm and collected. She had been in the business world for years, so her logic was impeccable when she argued with Elaine. She could also make the woman embarrass herself.

9/9

On the other hand, Elaine had made a fool out of herself because of her stupidity. Her fury got the better of her as she yelled and tried to grab Victoria. Since she couldn't win the argument, she decided to lay a hand on Victoria.

At that moment, she had forgotten that she was Claudia's friend. She just wanted to teach Victoria a lesson.

"You b-

With a gloomy expression, Alaric slammed his glass on the table with a bang.

Exness Markets

1 Chapter 87

The private room fell into dead silence. Those who were jeering and watching a good show earlier kept their mouths shut. A sense of coldness seemed to permeate the air.

Alaric sat there and glared at Elaine with a gloomy and ruthless gaze. The woman no longer dared to be haughty as she hunched her back. When she was met with Alaric's gaze earlier, she felt like the man was ready to kill her. She could only hide behind Claudia in fear.

Claudia could barely keep the smile on her face as she took a look at the woman behind her. Left with no choice, she pleaded with Alaric. "Please don't be mad at her, Al. Elaine is straightforward, but she means no harm. Elaine, apologize to Victoria now."

Elaine was displeased. She would rather go to hell than apologize to Victoria. However, when she recalled Alaric's terrifying gaze, she turned to look at Victoria and said through clenched teeth, "I'm sorry."

Exness Markets

INSTALL

1/10

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

"Elaine didn't mean to offend you, Victoria. Will you please forgive her?"

Victoria sat there calmly without responding to her.

On the other hand, a relentless Alaric curled his lips and sneered. "Do you think an apology is enough? What were you trying to do?"

Hearing that, Elaine was astounded. "N-Nothing."

"You were trying to lay a hand on her, weren't you?"

"No, I just "

"Al," Claudia called out anxiously. "I've pleaded with Al, but why isn't he willing to forgive Elaine?"

Hearing that, Alaric turned to look at Claudia as his emotions were slightly stirred.

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1

FREE

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

3/

The woman's eyes were red. It was as though she was about to break into tears.

She had sacrificed herself to save his life before. After the incident, he swore that he would protect her for the rest of her life. Since she had pleaded with him, he was supposed to forgive her friend.

However, all he thought about was a certain someone at that moment. He saw nothing else, but Victoria's determined and distant gaze.

Despite being humiliated in front of so many people, she didn't seem to have been affected one bit. It was as though all of this had nothing to do with her.

Nevertheless, Alaric remembered that wherever the woman felt wronged in the past, she would clench his shirt and look pitifully at him while sobbing, hoping for him to stand up for her.

All of a sudden, he recalled what Victoria said to him that night. She asked

www

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

4/10

him what everyone would think of her if they found out their marriage was a sham.

Apart from her colleagues, even these friends started despising Victoria upon finding out the truth. Claudia's friend even wanted to lay a hand on her.

If today's incident never happened, Alaric would never have understood how Victoria felt when she said those words that day.

Initially, he thought that Victoria wasn't happy about always being regarded as just his wife despite working hard to prove her worth.

It wasn't until that moment that he realized what was on her mind when she said those words that night.

Now, she was just like an outsider who looked at her own life without any emotions. If she were still not happy about her life, she wouldn't have

attended the gathering. Since she was there, it showed that she was no

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

longer bothered by what was going on around her.

Upon that realization, Alaric felt his emotions undulating in his heart.

He pressed his lips into a thin line and rejected Claudia's plea for the very first time. "I don't mind forgiving her, but she can never appear in front of me again."

Upon hearing that, everyone understood that the man was ordering Elaine to get out of the private room.

Elaine clenched Claudia's clothes and widened her eyes in disbelief.

"Claudia..."

She had been haughty because she believed that Claudia was important

in Alaric's heart. As long as Claudia pleaded with Alaric, the man wouldn't settle the score with Elaine. Much to her surprise, her assumption was wrong.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

TREE

5/10

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

"Help me, Claudia," Elaine pleaded in a small voice while tightening her grip on the woman's clothes.

Claudia fell into a dilemma. She wanted to help Elaine because she was eager to prove to everyone that she was important to Alaric. However, the man was determined and didn't even spare her a glance.

Norwood, who had remained silent all along, couldn't take it anymore.

"Stop trying to beg for his mercy, Claudia. Don't you see he's furious?"

Hearing that, Claudia came to her senses and glanced at Alaric. The man had hung his head low as his long eyelashes concealed most of the emotions behind his gaze. Despite that, he was still evidently vexed.

He's mad. Claudia understood that if she still tried to ask Alaric to forgive Elaine, he would see her in a bad light. No one can stop me from winning Alaric's heart. Not even Elaine.

At the thought of this, Claudia pushed Elaine's hand away and said gently,

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

"I'm sorry. Why don't you go home first?"

Elaine stared at her in disbelief.

Claudia bit her lip and sent the woman a signal.

5.79%

It never crossed Elaine's mind that Claudia would readily give up on her. She wanted to growl and curse, but she couldn't afford to offend anyone at the scene except for Victoria.

Victoria! She glared at the woman resentfully before leaving the place in embarrassment.

After she was gone, the private room fell silent. All of them looked embarrassed. Those who urged Alaric and Claudia to drink together earlier sobered up in an instant and wouldn't dare to drink again.

They were dumbfounded. It was said that Alaric and Victoria's marriage was a sham and that Claudia was indispensable to Alaric.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

7/1

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

That was the reason they had been recklessly mocking Victoria. They assumed that Alaric wouldn't flare up since Claudia was around.

79

Much to their surprise, it seemed that Claudia had lost her special place in

the man's heart. They couldn't help but think many things could change as time passed.

After Elaine was gone, Claudia sported a dark expression. She could no longer keep the smile on her face. A moment later, she rose from the couch and said, "Sorry, I need to use the restroom."

She then left the private room. Seeing that, her friends followed her in silence.

In an instant, the atmosphere in the room turned awkward.

Some of them were unaffected, including Bane. After Claudia was gone, he suddenly stood up with his glass of juice and sat down beside Victoria. "Here you go."

www.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

16.34 Wed,

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

Victoria looked at the juice in surprise.

"You seem to like this juice very much. It so happens that I don't have a sweet tooth. We'd better not waste this glass of juice."

Victoria was startled for a moment. She subconsciously wanted to look in Alaric's direction, but she stopped herself from doing that.

Since everyone knew their marriage was a sham, she didn't have to worry about his feelings.

She calmly took the glass and flashed a smile at Bane. "Thanks for giving me your juice."

She had intended to order another glass of juice. If not for the farce earlier, she would've been drinking it by now.

The moment she took the glass, she felt a certain someone's glare

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FREE

9/10

Chapter 87 Trying to Lay a Hand on Her

slashing across her like a knife.

Exness Markets Chapter 88

It was apparent to Victoria, who was glowering at her. Unbothered, she lifted the glass and took a sip. The juice tasted just like the one she had finished.

Given their proximity, Bane could see her red lips coming into contact with the glass. The color of her lips was in stark contrast to the transparent glass. He gulped at the sight of it. He adjusted his glasses and forced himself to look away before asking gently, "Don't you mind?"

Hearing that, Victoria was startled.

With a smile, Bane explained in a small voice, "I mean, don't you mind what they say about you?"

Both of his questions were not so different. Since Victoria was no longer concerned, she didn't mind what others thought of her. At the thought of

this, she curled her lips. "It's the truth anyway."

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 FREE

1/9

16:34 Wed,

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

Their marriage was a sham, so it was pointless for her to mind others talking about it.

Bane's gaze behind his glasses darkened when he heard that. Instead of feeling pleased, he wasn't sure what to say when he was faced with the woman's attitude. A moment later, he sighed and ruffled Victoria's hair.

"You're so mature now."

Victoria stiffened and subconsciously looked at him. What's wrong with him? Many years have passed, but he still loves ruffling my hair. It was fine since I was a young kid back then, but I'm an adult now.

While she was deep in thought, Alaric rose from the couch and glared at Bane. He demanded, "Come with me."

Bane put on a smile. "Go on and finish your drink. Perhaps Al has something to tell me."

"Alright." Victoria nodded.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FRE

2/9

16:34 Wed, 21

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

After they were gone, the people in the private room exchanged glances. In the end, they couldn't contain their urge to glean information from Victoria.

"Victoria, many years have passed, but Bane still treats you very well."

Is that so? Victoria remembered that Bane always loved driving her crazy in the past. She almost broke into tears on several occasions. Therefore, she only pursed her lips in response.

Finally, someone asked, "Is your marriage with Alaric a sham?"

They were deathly curious. After all, they were shocked when they learned about the marriage back then. Since Victoria and Alaric had been friends since they were kids, it was inconceivable that they eventually got married.

Then, they heard a rumor that their marriage was a sham. Griselda was critically ill at that time, and she was fond of Victoria. To help make

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 A THEE

3/9

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

Griselda's last wish come true, Alaric got into a sham marriage with

Victoria.

Only then did they realize what had happened. They were aware that Alaric had been in love with Claudia for a long time, so it was unlikely that he would marry Victoria. Turned out it was only a sham marriage.

However, after today's incident, they felt that the rumor might not be true, after all. They wouldn't dare to ask Alaric about it, so they could only go to Victoria.

Before Victoria could respond, Norwood sneered. "Where did you guys hear the rumor from? Why are you spreading the rumor when you haven't even verified it? You even have the nerve to ask Victoria about it. Have you ever considered her feelings?"

Hearing that, Victoria looked at Norwood in shock. She didn't expect him to stand up for her. He was also the one who helped her clear up the

misunderstanding in front of Alaric that night.

ZX

Exness Markets

INSTALL

TREE

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

Isn't he Alaric's friend? He should supposedly side with the woman Alaric loves. Why would he stand up for me?

After hearing Norwood's words, they felt embarrassed and stopped) asking.

Norwood lifted his glass with a smile and sat down beside Victoria before clinking glasses with her. "I wonder who started the rumor. I'm sure Al will look into the matter."

He was trying to tell the woman that Alaric wasn't the one who exposed the nature of their relationship.

Victoria clinked glasses with him and nodded politely. "Thanks for getting me out of trouble."

Norwood smiled. "You don't have to thank me. Alaric and I are best friends, and you're his wife. I'm supposed to help you."

xxe

1 Z

Exness Markets

INSTALL

TREE

SA

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

Hearing that, Victoria fell into her thoughts. Perhaps his intention is not to stand up for me. He just isn't aware that our marriage is a sham.

Just then, Norwood continued, "Perhaps you should give him more time."

A surprised Victoria turned to look at him.

Norwood said in a hushed voice, "Claudia saved his life before he even knew what was love. Therefore, he might have mixed up gratitude with love."

At that instant, Victoria finally realized what he was trying to say. "Is that SO?"

She responded with a smile and didn't seem bothered.

Seeing her expression, Norwood pressed his lips into a line for a moment before letting out a sigh. "You grew up with Alaric, so you're aware that he almost drowned in the past. The incident was traumatizing for him.

xe

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 83 Feel It With Your Heart

Therefore, he's grateful that Claudia saved his life."

"I know." Victoria dipped her head.

多79%!

She understood that the incident had a profound impact on Alaric, which was why she regretted not being there to save him at that time. She couldn't remember where she was that day or why she wasn't at the scene. She even fell into the water and came down with a fever. All the same, she couldn't recall what happened that day. If she had been the one who saved Alaric, everything would've been different.

Sometimes, she thought that if love could be easily mixed up with other feelings, could it still be considered love at all?

"That's why I said you should give him more time."

"What for?" Victoria was puzzled.

"So that he'll realize whom he loves," Norwood explained.

Exness Markets

1

INSTALL

FREE

TA

16-34 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your Heart

Victoria couldn't help but gape at him. "Why are you saying this? Have you ever thought that he might already know who he loves? He might've mixed up his feelings after Claudia saved his life back then. Many years have passed. Do you think he still doesn't know who he loves? Or are you the one who doesn't understand him at all?"

Victoria became increasingly agitated. When she finished speaking, she finally came to her senses. Then, she tucked her hair behind her ears and said, "I'm sorry. Please don't take it personally. It's just my two cents."

Norwood was a mild-tempered person, so he only responded with a smile. "It's fine. I don't mind it. I'd be glad if I could help you guys."

Victoria pursed her lips. "I don't think you can help us in any way. Although I might've said too much, it's the truth."

Hearing that, Norwood let out a long sigh. "It's fine even if I can't help you, but I'll still give it a shot. Perhaps you haven't even seen through your own heart."

www

xe

Exness Markets

INSTALL

#FAILE

8/9

ke

Chapter 88 Feel It With Your He

Your Heart

“Me?” A perplexed Victoria had no idea what he was trying to say.

“Yes.” Norwood nodded. His voice was as warm as spring water. “Perhaps you should feel it with your heart calmly and seriously.”

Exness Markets

Chapter 89

Victoria splashed her face with some water to calm herself down.

Pressing her hands against the sink’s edges, she looked at herself in the mirror and recalled Norwood’s words.

What did he mean when he said I should feel it with my heart? What am I supposed to feel?

Victoria didn’t understand Norwood since he didn’t elaborate on that.

Moreover, many people were in the private room, so she didn’t ask further.

She just found it ridiculous that Norwood’s stance was different from Alaric’s. If she wasn’t mistaken, Norwood was trying to get Alaric and her together.

Why, though? He’s supposed to help Alaric and Claudia get together.

Forget it. I’ll stop thinking about it.

xe

Exness Markets

INSTALL

4.1 FREE

Chapter 69 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

She dried her hands and walked out of the restroom.

0.79

“Stop being sad, Claudia. It’s all my fault for what happened. If I hadn’t said nonsense, Alaric wouldn’t have treated you harshly.”

Upon hearing the familiar voice, Victoria stopped in her tracks and looked speechlessly at the people outside the restroom.

They were Claudia and her friends. The woman who wanted to lay a hand on her was also there.

Surrounded by her friends, Claudia sobbed. “It has nothing to do with you. I know you’re straightforward and you meant no harm. Al understands that as well. It’s just that his heart is no longer with me.”

A hint of ruthlessness flashed across Elaine’s eyes when she heard that.

“It’s all Victoria’s fault. She must’ve seduced Alaric since she’s his wife on paper. Otherwise, Alaric wouldn’t have treated you distantly. Don’t worry,

Exness Markets

4.1

TREE

INSTALL

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

Claudia. I'll teach her a lesson for you."

3/9

"Forget it." Claudia took her hands while her tears slid down her cheeks. "I don't want to drag you into this. You've suffered a lot for standing up for me. Don't worry, though. I'll plead with Al again on your behalf when he's no longer furious."

"Claudia, we're best friends, so you're not dragging me into any mess. I'm supposed to help you out."

Victoria sneered in secret upon hearing that. She finally understood she shouldn't deal with fools who couldn't distinguish right from wrong. They felt that they were righteous, but most of the time, they were used like pawns. It had to be said that Claudia had been making use of these people cleverly.

While she was deep in thought, someone noticed her presence.

"Victoria?!"

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41 FREE

BKS79%

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

It was a sensitive name for all of them, so they immediately shifted their attention to her.

Elaine appeared resentful as she gritted her teeth and glowered at the woman.

"It's you, Victoria! Why are you eavesdropping on us?"

"Huh?" Victoria let out a sigh. "I was just using the restroom. When I came out, I heard your loud ensemble performance. Could it even be considered eavesdropping when we're in a public space?"

Elaine looked at how calm Victoria appeared and shifted her attention to the sobbing Claudia.

Claudia is crying, but Victoria doesn't seem to feel guilty at all. Doesn't she realize she has done something wrong? She's such a b*tch!

A furious Elaine charged forward with a dark gaze.

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

On the other hand, Victoria was well-prepared. When she saw Elaine dashing toward her resentfully, she vigilantly took a step back.

However, Elaine was a crazy person who did things recklessly. She grabbed Victoria's hair the next moment and yelled, "B*tch, how do you have the nerve to be smug after seducing another woman's man?"

Claudia and her friends were stunned, not expecting Elaine to make a

move when they were only talking behind Victoria's back.

Only wealthy young ladies could become Claudia's friends. Although their families weren't comparable to the Johnsons, they were famous people. As such, they wouldn't dare to embarrass their families by doing anything irrational.

They would never curse at others or even get into a fight in public. Much to their surprise, Elaine had acted on a whim.

Claudia was astounded when she saw that. Since she hated Victoria, she

www
Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

certainly wanted to teach her a lesson. However, hurting the woman directly would only worsen her relationship with Alaric. Therefore, such an idea never crossed her mind.

When she saw what was going on, she subconsciously wanted to step forward and stop them. However, she soon stopped in her tracks.

Wait a minute. Why would I stop them? Perhaps an accident will happen to her child amidst the chaos. Since no one else is aware that she's pregnant, I can nip the problem in the bud by making use of another person to get rid of the child. If I allow Victoria to give birth to her child, it'll prove to be a threat in the future. Even if Alaric finds out about it, it has nothing to do with me anyway.

At the thought of this, Claudia remained in the same spot, pretending she was too stunned to move. On the other hand, her friends were all astonished, not knowing how to deal with the situation.

Although Victoria had acted quickly, the woman still managed to grab her

Exness Markets

INSTALL

FREE

6/9

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

hair.

At that moment, she felt a sharp pain as the woman pulled her hair. She was enraged at that while glowering at Elaine. Does she think I'll let her bully me and won't counterattack?

She sneered and forcefully stepped on Elaine's foot while bearing the pain. Although she wasn't wearing stilettos, she made sure her heel came into contact with Elaine's toes, sending a sharp pain through her leg.

As expected, Elaine groaned in pain as her expression turned hideous. She was in so much pain that she was no longer able to hold onto Victoria's hair.

She glared at Victoria and tried to grab her hair with the other hand. "You b
With an emotionless face, Victoria grasped her hand. "Both of us are

Exness Markets

INSTALL

JA

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

women. Do you think I have less strength than you?"

At the same time, she exerted more force on her leg, causing Elaine to shriek. Elaine had lost all her strength while Victoria had gained the upper hand.

None of them had expected the turn of events because Victoria looked like a beautiful and frail woman from a broke family. It surprised them to learn she was so ferocious.

They finally came to their senses and rushed over to separate them.

Victoria's expression changed as she instantly released the woman and moved away.

On the other hand, the noise caught the attention of the people in the private room. The moment Victoria stepped backward, Claudia caught sight of the others coming over. Flustered, she quickly approached Victoria to pull her.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

B/S

Chapter 89 Nipping the Problem in the Bud

Victoria didn't know it was Claudia coming to her. After all, they were a group of people, and she only saw someone charging toward her.

Therefore, she subconsciously tried to push the person away. However, before she even made a move, the person shrieked and fell over.

Following the scream, Claudia, who was wearing stilettos, fell toward the steps.

D

Exness Markets

Chapter 90

It was only when Claudia's forehead almost came into contact with the steps that she realized things had gotten out of hand. She only wanted to fall over, not injure her face.

At the most critical moment, she subconsciously covered her face with her hands, but she still injured herself terribly. Everyone could hear her crashing into the steps with a thud.

"Claudia!"

Her friends came to their senses and rushed over to help. The people from the private room also arrived at this point.

Victoria was rooted to the spot, remaining in the same posture. She looked at her hand and squinted her eyes. I didn't touch her at all. How did she even fall over? Did she twist her ankle or something?

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

Just then, an icy voice was heard asking, "What happened?"

Hearing the voice, Victoria seemed to realize something.

出

Alaric and Bane arrived at the same time. When Alaric saw that Victoria's hair was a mess, his expression changed as he spun the woman around to face him. "Did she hurt you?"

At that moment, a startled Victoria looked at the man in disbelief. Was I the first one he noticed when he arrived? I've always thought he's concerned about Claudia only. Is that what Norwood meant when he told me to feel it with my heart?

Before she could ponder, someone called out, "Claudia is bleeding, Alaric!" Hearing that, Victoria subconsciously lifted her gaze, only to be met with Alaric's dark gaze. He was also staring at her, but his gaze was conflicted. She pressed her lips together and remained silent. Let's see what he'll do.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

THEE

16:35 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

I'll find out if I'm significant in his heart this time.

While she was deep in thought, she felt the man loosening his grip on her shoulders. Her pupils dilated as her heart sank. She took a look at the man's hands.

Alaric noticed her glance and pressed his lips into a line. As though having made up his mind, he whispered, "She's injured. I have to take a look."

There you go. I'm not so important to him, after all. Victoria put on an almost imperceptible sneer, which served as a response to the man's words.

Alaric frowned at her reaction, so he clenched her shoulders and said through gritted teeth, "Wait for me."

The next moment, he released Victoria as she watched the man shuffling toward Claudia. Her shoulders slumped as though she didn't have any energy left to support her weight.

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

Just then, a pair of hands came into contact with her shoulders. A startled Victoria turned her head.

Bane sensitively caught sight of the sorrow behind her gaze. He calmly adjusted his glasses and flashed a smile at her. "Are you alright?"

Victoria only pursed her lips in response. The next instant, a muffled cry caught her attention.

Presently, Claudia covered her forehead with her hands as blood streamed through the gap between her fingers. The blood was in stark contrast to her fair skin.

Victoria furrowed her brows when she saw so much blood, not expecting the woman to be badly injured.

"It was Victoria who pushed Claudia!" someone shouted all of a sudden.

In an instant, everyone shifted their attention to Victoria.

e:

Exness Markets

INSTALL

41

FREE

16.35 Wed,

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

While staying by Claudia's side, Elaine glared resentfully at Victoria. "Yes, it was her. Claudia went to talk to her, but she pushed Claudia away. That's how Claudia crashed into the steps!"

Hearing that, those who came from the private room recalled seeing Victoria extending her hand. Did she push Claudia away? She's pretty ruthless if she really did that.

All of them looked cautiously at Victoria, who remained unfazed. Alaric carried Claudia from the floor and said grimly, "We'll look into the matter later. Let's send her to the hospital first."

Then, he brushed past Victoria with Claudia in his arms while Claudia's friends followed them. When walking past Victoria, Elaine said smugly, "Let's see how you're going to explain it."

She tottered away after mocking the woman. Those who came from the private room exchanged glances in embarrassment.

ax

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

It was a welcome-back party for Bane, but everything ended up in a mess. As such, they apologized to Bane, who gently told them it was fine. He asked them to go home first and come out for a gathering next time. Following the incident, they were no longer in any mood to party, so they went home respectively.

After they were gone, Victoria turned around to leave. Bane extended his hand to stop her and said, "I'll send you home."

Victoria pushed his hand away. "Thanks, but there's no need for that."

With that, she ignored Bane's reaction and moved forward. When she rounded a corner, she saw Norwood standing there on his own.

As their eyes met, Norwood appeared hesitant to speak. Victoria flashed a smile at him and whispered, "I'll take my leave now. We'll meet again if there's a chance."

@ x

ex

Exness Markets

4.1

TREE

INSTALL

6A

16:35 Wed, 21 Jun

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

Norwood swallowed his words and nodded with difficulty. "Sure. Stay safe."

7A

“Thanks.”

Norwood watched the slender figure leave. It wasn't until the woman was out of sight that he pocketed his gaze and shook his head helplessly. Are the two of them not meant to be together?

The chilly wind at night made Victoria feel uncomfortable.

Presently, she was seated on a long bench just outside the hotel on her own with a pair of wireless earbuds in her ears while she listened to Summer's intense cursing.

“Da mn it! Those women are shameless! How did they have the nerve to do that? Also, Claudia was so bold. She was even willing to risk deforming her face to frame you. That's pretty awesome, eh? I finally understand why Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain It?

you're not a match for her. She can do everything just to achieve her goals!”

Claudia had helped Victoria before. Even though Victoria regarded her as a love rival and couldn't be her friend, she still had a good impression of Claudia. She believed the woman wouldn't do any despicable things.

However, she was certain that she didn't touch Claudia at all, so how did the woman fall over earlier? Was she trying to frame me? Or was it merely an accident? A doubt remained in her heart.

“She's been sent to the hospital. Let's see what she'll say.”

Hearing that, Summer sneered. “Not like it's hard to guess. She's trying to frame you and sow discord between you and Alaric. When they ask her about it, she'll anxiously say that she fell over accidentally. She'll also tell Alaric not to blame you because it was her fault for losing her balance.

Let's make a bet.”

ex

Exness Markets

INSTALL

Chapter 90 How Are You Going to Explain it?

Victoria pressed her lips together and remained silent.

“I've seen many b*tches like her. She'll pretend to put in a good word for you, but everything she says will imply that you're the culprit. Don't you see her motive? If she didn't want to frame you, why did she even approach you suddenly?”

8

Exness Markets

AHHE

IN