

Becomes 110

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Serena's POV

We lock up the shop and head to a nearby café that Taylor suggests. When we arrive, I'm struck by how elegant the place is. The exterior is sleek and modern, with large windows showing off the chic interior. Inside, it's both simple and luxurious – plush chairs, marble tables, and soft lighting. The walls are decorated with tasteful art, and a gentle hum of conversation fills the air.

A hostess greets us and, recognizing Taylor, quickly leads us to a prime table by the window. The menu lists a variety of gourmet options.

"I'll have a flat white with almond milk, please," she says. "And could we also get a selection of your finest pastries?"

Stevie and I follow suit. "I'll have a cappuccino," I say while marveling at the ambiance. Stevie opts for a chai latte

Taylor's grace and poise are undeniable. She moves with an effortless elegance, her every action measured and deliberate. I can't help but admire her.

"This place is amazing," Stevie says, looking around. "I can see why you suggested it."

Taylor smiles warmly. "It's one of my favorite spots. I come here often to unwind and catch up with friends."

The waiter brings our drinks and a platter of beautifully arranged pastries. Taylor takes a sip of her flat white, then turns her attention to me.

"Serena, I have to say, your jewelry at the fashion show was absolutely stunning. The piece inspired by the Birth of Venus... Ah! It was breathtaking"

I blush at her comment. "Thanks so much, Taylor. That really means a lot."

Stevie chimes in. "I remember when Serena first sketched that piece. We knew it was something special from the start."

Taylor's eyes gleam. "Oh, it showed. Your eye for detail is incredible."

She pauses to take another sip of her coffee, then continues. "I was thinking, Serena... How would you feel about collaborating with me? I'd love to interview you for my YouTube channel. We could discuss your inspirations, your process, and what drives your creativity."

"Wow, that sounds incredible," I say, trying to process the offer.

"And in return," Taylor adds, leaning in slightly, "I could model your pieces, maybe even become an ambassador for your next collection, free of charge."

My eyes widen in surprise. "You'd do that? For free?"

Taylor laughs softly, a genuine sound that puts me at ease. "Yes, absolutely. I don't do this for the money. I do it for the love of fashion."

Stevie practically bounces in her seat. "This is amazing, Serena! Think of the exposure!"

1/2

Chapter 0110

"I don't know what to say, Taylor. I'd be happy to collaborate with you," I say with a smile.

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Taylor reaches across the table to squeeze my hand. "I'm excited to work with you as well, Serena."

+25 BONUS

When I get home, I kick off my shoes and sink into the couch. My phone buzzes with notifications, but I ignore them for a moment, allowing myself a few minutes of peace.

After all, today has been a rollercoaster. I had to deal with Eden and his rude friends at the shop, and then I got an unexpected offer from Taylor.

Eventually, curiosity gets the better of me, and I open TikTok to catch up on the day's buzz. As I scroll through my feed, I stop at a video Eden Jonas just posted. My heart sank as I saw the caption: "I paid \$ 2,350 for THIS?!"

I tap on the video, my stomach tightening with dread. Eden appears on the screen, holding up one of my necklaces.

"So, I went to this little jewelry shop today," he begins, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "And I have to say, I was less than impressed."

He holds the necklace closer to the camera, his fingers pinching the delicate chain. "Look at this, guys. The craftsmanship is terrible. See how the pieces are falling off?"

He tugs at the necklace, and a small pendant comes loose, dropping into his hand. "This is what you get for jewelry that's supposed to be high-quality. I mean, come on. I expected better."

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He continues showing more pieces, pointing out what he claims are flaws. "And to think, this jeweler accuses my friend of sabotaging her before the fashion show and having her ex-husband go after my friend."

Eden smirks. "Oh, and one last thing. The Rebirth of Venus piece everyone's talking about? It was done last minute. Maybe you should do all your pieces at the last minute so they wouldn't be as shitty as these."

My heart sinks further with each passing second. His followers are eating it up, the comments section filling with harsh critiques and laughing emojis. www.novelworm.com

I stare at the screen, my hands trembling with anger and disbelief. This is ridiculous. My jewelry isn't overpriced; I pride myself on fair pricing and quality. It's infuriating to see someone tear down my work, especially after how disruptive his group was in the shop.

I slam my phone down on the coffee table. How dare he? I take a few deep breaths, but the frustration is too much. I pace the room, my thoughts racing. There's no way my jewelry would fall apart like that. Eden must have tampered with them – loosened the clasps or something. It has to be that.

Just when I'm at my breaking point, my phone buzzes with a text from Bill. "Hey. Are you okay?"

I pick up my phone and start typing. Maybe I don't have to handle this alone.