

Becomes 123

Chapter 0123

Chapter 0123

Serena's POV

"Let me walk you to your work," Bill says.

I glance at him, a little surprised but touched by the offer. "You don't have to, Bill. I can manage."

"I know you can," he replies, grabbing his jacket. "But I want to."

After getting dressed for work, we step outside into the crisp morning air. Bill walks beside me, and I feel a bit awkward.

I fumble with my bag, avoiding his eyes. What happened this morning was a close call. I shouldn't have let him think he could kiss me.

What am I doing? I already divorced him, so we shouldn't have anything to do with each other anymore. But it feels like the complete opposite. I feel closer to him now than when we were married. [www.NoVeLwOrM.com](#)

My head tells me to keep putting up walls, to protect myself. But my heart whispers that it's okay to let

him in. That what we have is still worth a second shot.

"So, how's the new summer collection coming along?" Bill asks.

We pass a small park, the swings swaying gently in the breeze.

I sigh. "You know, it's coming together."

"Sounds like you're not thrilled at all. What's wrong?"

"I already have some rough sketches," I admit. "But the designs are still just an idea. Not a lot of progress." [www.NoVeLwOrM.com](#)

yet." [www.NoVeLwOrM.com](#)

"Maybe you just need some inspiration," Bill suggests, his tone encouraging.

I nod, though I'm not sure where to find it. "Yeah, maybe."

We continue walking in silence for a few moments. Both of us seem to be lost in our thoughts.

Bill stops and faces me. "Serena, do you have to work tomorrow? It's Sunday."

"Oh... It was Stevie's turn to look after the shop, but since I missed a couple of days, I had to cover for her. Why did you ask?"

Bill shifts his weight from one foot to the other, rubbing the back of his neck.

"It's just, uhm..." he hesitates, glancing away before meeting my eyes again. "I'm thinking of taking you somewhere to find inspiration for your jewelry."

"Where exactly?" I ask, curious.

"It's a surprise," he says, grinning. "I'll give you a hint. It's one of my favorite places from when I was young. It always helps me clear my mind."

Bill rarely took me anywhere, except for our few trips abroad, like our honeymoon in Amsterdam. [www.NoVeLwOrM.com](#)

He also didn't share much about his childhood. For some reason, he hated talking about the past. So, I'm

1/2

Chapter 0123

definitely curious about his surprise.

Should I say yes?

Bill looks down when I don't say anything. "It's okay if you're busy. Maybe we can go next time."

"No, it's fine," I say quickly. "I'd love to go with you tomorrow."

"Really?" he says, his face lighting up. "Can you repeat what you said?"

I smile, amused by his reaction. "I'd love to go with you tomorrow."

"Great!" he exclaims, pumping his fist into the air. "I'll pick you up in the morning."

+25 BONUS

We approach a discreet corner, not quite at the mall entrance. I didn't want anyone, especially Stevie, to see me with Bill.

He looks at me curiously. "Why did you ask to stop here?"

I quickly think of an excuse, spotting a nearby Taco Bell. "Oh, I need to fetch Stevie a breakfast taco," I lie, hoping it sounds convincing.

Bill raises an eyebrow but nods. "Okay. Whatever you say."

We pause for a moment, neither of us quite ready to part ways. I can see the questions in his eyes, but he doesn't press further. He just stands there, hands in his pockets.

"Thanks again for walking me," I say.

"Anytime, Serena."

I nod, feeling a lump form in my throat. "See you tomorrow."

"Can't wait for our date," he says with a hopeful smile.

I roll my eyes at him but smile. "Just as friends, Bill," I remind.

Even though I agreed to go somewhere with him, I still need to set boundaries. We've been through so much, and I can't afford to let my guard down completely. He says he just wants to help me with my new collection, and I have to believe that's all it is. 1

He grins, not missing a beat. "I'll take that."

I watch Bill walks away. There's a noticeable spring in his step, a little too excited. He seems almost giddy, as if we're in high school and I just said 'yes' to go to the prom with him.

I feel a flutter of something inside me, unsure if it's a good thing or a bad thing.