

Becomes 124

Chapter 0124

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Serena's POV

I pause at the shop door, my fingers brushing against the chipped paint.

It has been days since we've had customers. I'm afraid I'll walk into the shop and find it empty, except for Stevie.

My heart beats fast as I push the door open. To my surprise, there are a couple of people browsing the jewelry. It's not plenty, but it's enough to make me smile.

The shop isn't empty anymore. That's what matters.

I walk over to the counter. Stevie looks up and waves at me.

"Hey, girl," she says. "Looks like we're back in business.

I nod, glancing around at the customers. "Yeah, it's a good sign. Maybe things are starting to pick up."

Stevie smiles. "Let's hope so. By the way, have you seen Twitter last night? It was crazy."

Fuck. I haven't seen what people said online about Max's apology. Now, I'm getting nervous.

"No, I didn't get a chance to look at the comments," I say.

Stevie furrows her brows, studying my face. "Why? What did you do?" she asks.

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"I fell asleep. I had a pretty long day yesterday," I say. Which is true, but I leave out the part about Bill and me talking and him spending the night again at my place.

"I see. Anyway, people are canceling Max. It was brutal. I don't know how he's gonna recover from this."

I sigh, running a hand through my hair. "He kind of brought it upon himself, but at least he did the right thing in the end. I feel for him, though."

Stevie leans in. "But some people are still defending Max." She glances around, then lowers her voice to a whisper. "People are saying your ex-husband only paid Max to say those things for damage control."

I pause, thinking it over. Sure, it's possible Bill paid Max to apologize and clear our names. But something tells me Max wouldn't risk his reputation for money. And Bill isn't that kind of a man. He's not perfect but he has integrity. 1

What he did last night was career suicide as a fashion designer. There's more to all this... but Bill isn't telling me everything.

"Well, girl. What do you think?" Stevie asks. "Did Bill pay Max to apologize?"

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"I don't think so. I know Bill, and he wouldn't do that," I reply.

Stevie narrows her eyes, looking like she's about to press further, but a familiar face enters the shop. It's Taylor.

Taylor glides in with ethereal grace, wearing a flowing white dress that sways with every step. Her silver heels click softly on the floor, and a delicate gold necklace glints at her collarbone.

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"Hey, Serena! Stevie!" Taylor calls out as she approaches us.

+25 BONUS

"Taylor, it feels like it's been ages!" I say, smiling as she reaches the counter. We haven't heard from her in a couple of days. She's been so busy.

Stevie brightens up. "Taylor! How have you been?"

Taylor smiles warmly. "I've been good, just busy with work and everything. How about you two?" she asks. "How are you holding up since... Max posted that so-called 'review'?"

"We're managing," I say. "It's been a bit slow, but today seems better."

"Yeah, we don't have any customers for a couple of days," Stevie adds,

Taylor frowns and shakes her head. "That's awful! Why would Max and Eden make it so personal? Do you have any idea why they'd do that to you?" **ww(w).novèlw0rM.c0(m)**

I can't really say my ex-mother-in-law paid Max to destroy my jewelry in the fashion show. It would put Bill in a bad place. "I guess Max just didn't like me," I lie. "When we were preparing for the fashion show, we kept arguing about what jewelry would look good for his designs."

"Oh, I get it! Like your creative ideas just don't match?" Stevie asks. "I hate when that happens." She looks disappointed, as if remembering something similar from her own experience as a photographer.

Taylor's eyes widen, her brows knitting together as her lips press into a thin line. "Still, Max doesn't have the right to ruin your work because of his feelings."

"It's okay, Taylor," I say, trying to sound reassuring. "I'm over it now. I've dealt with worse people." As I say this, I can't help but think of Elena, my ex-mother-in-law from hell, and Doris, Bill's psychotic wannabe wife.

"That's not right, Serena. You can't let other people step all over you," Taylor insists. "Max and Eden must pay for what they did."

I shrug. "Well, I can't do anything about it now."

Taylor steps closer, her expression serious. "There is, Serena. I think it's time for people to hear your side of the story." **wwW.nov@IW0R(m).C0M**

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