

Becomes 20

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Chapter 0020

Serena's POV

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Stevie waits outside the stall as I puke my guts out in the toilet.

I hear a gentle knock on the door. "Do you need any help? I can hold your hair back if you want," Stevie offers.

"No, it's alright," I reply. "I've got this. I've had plenty of practice."

After I'm done, I wipe my mouth and take a deep breath. I was worried that Stevie would be mad at me for not telling her about the baby.

But I was wrong. As soon as I come out of the stall, Stevie hugs me tightly. "Stevie, are you crying?" I ask, noticing tears in her eyes.

As she steps back, she says with a smile, "Of course, I'm crying, silly! I'm going to be an aunt."

"Or you could be the baby's godmother. I know you'll take care of my child if something bad happens to me," I say.

Stevie smiles and replies, "That would be wonderful! I mean, being your baby's godmother, not something bad happening to you." WwW.NovEwOrM.com

"Wait, does Bill know you're carrying his child?" Stevie asks.

I reply, my voice distant, "I didn't tell him. I can raise my baby on my own. I don't need his help."

"Fine by me," Stevie says. "Just remember, if you ever need any help, I'll be there for you and our future godchild." WwW.NoVEwOrM.com

I took the train to Salt Lake to visit my parents and see our old house.

I stand at the gate, looking at our old house in Salt Lake. It looks mostly

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the same, just with a few small changes here and there. The front door's color is a bit different now, and there are new shutters on the windows.

I reach out and press the doorbell, my finger lingering for a moment longer than necessary. What will my parents think when they see me standing here, after all this time?

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As the door creaks open, I see Mom stepping out of the house. She looks just as I remember her hair a bit grayer, perhaps, but her eyes still carry that same warmth, that gentle spark of kindness that's always defined her.

"Serena? You should've called," Mom says. She hurries to the gate, her movements quick with the need to close the distance between us.

I can't hold back the tears anymore as I wrap my arms around her. "I missed you so much, Mom," I manage to say through sobs. She holds me tight, her tears mingling with mine. "Where's Dad?"

"He's inside. You should go say hello," Mom says.

Mom and I walk into the house together. It's been a while since I've talked to either of my parents because of my marriage to Bill. I'm not sure Dad will be as understanding as Mom has been. It wasn't that I wanted to keep them out of my life; sharing my troubles with Bill felt too hard.

Dad is absorbed in the morning paper, a cup of coffee by his side when I step into the dining room. My heart pounds a bit harder as I approach. "Dad, I'm home," I say.

As Dad lays the paper aside and looks up, there's an unexpected gentleness in his gaze that I've rarely seen. He slowly approaches me and hugs me. It's a surprise because Dad doesn't usually hug. That makes me cry even more.

"I thought I'd never see my little girl again," Dad says, his voice thick

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with emotion.

"Sorry, Dad. I should've called," I say as I pull away from the hug.

"That's okay, honey," Dad reassures me with a gentle smile. "The important thing is you're here with us now."

Mom, wiping her tears, smiles at us. "Just like old times," she says. "Why don't you sit down, dear? I'll whip something for you."

"Thanks, Mom," I say, as she heads back to the kitchen.

Time seems to slow as the aroma from the kitchen fills the house. After a while, Mom comes out with the lasagna and garlic bread, setting them on the table with a warm smile. "I made your favorites," she says.

Mom, you always make the best meals," I say with a smile.

Turning to Dad, I can't help but ask, "So, what have you and Mom been up to lately?"