

## Becomes 26

Chapter 0026

"Incredible," he breathes out. "If I hadn't known you made this, I'd think you'd bought it from some high-end shop in Paris."

"Really?" My voice carries a mix of surprise and pride. Knowing Calvin's background in fashion retail makes his praise even more meaningful.

"Serena, you've got a real talent for design and your craftsmanship is excellent," Calvin tells me, making me feel all warm inside. "Here's a thought... How about you join my company, Aurelian Luxe? I bet you'd fit right in and impress everyone quickly in the design department."

Calvin's offer is tempting. Working at his company could give me valuable experience in the jewelry business and help me hone my skills even further. It's enough to make me pause and seriously consider it for [www.nOvElw@Rm.com](http://www.nOvElw@Rm.com)

a moment.

But after thinking it over, I shake my head and reply, "Thanks, Calvin, but I've already made up my mind. I want to experience what it's like to start something on my own, something I'm truly passionate about."

There's more to my hesitation than just wanting to follow my own path. The truth is, I don't want to become office gossip as the boss's nephew's ex-wife.

I was worried my answer might disappoint Calvin, but instead, he just smiles. "You know, you remind me of myself when I was starting my first business," he tells me. "I was as bold and passionate as you are now. I barely accepted any help from my father because I wanted to prove I could be successful on my own."

Wow, this is the first time Calvin really opened up to me. "Well, look at how that turned out," I respond. "You seem to have everything you ever wanted now."

"Not everything yet," Calvin says, his gaze locking onto mine with a

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sincerity that takes me by surprise. For the first time, I notice the beautiful hazel of his eyes, framed by long lashes.

We're so caught up in the moment that we don't even see the waiter bring our desserts until he coughs. That snaps both Calvin and me out of it. Feeling my cheeks heat up, I quickly excuse myself to head to the bathroom, hoping Calvin doesn't notice how much I'm blushing.

In the bathroom, I try to pull myself together, telling myself to focus on anything but the intense moment we just shared. But no matter how hard I try, my mind keeps circling back to Calvin's words, "Not everything yet." Could he be talking about me?

As I slide back into my seat, Calvin looks up and quickly says, "So, sorry for being off track. Anyway, while you were away, I thought of something."

I lean in, curious, "Uh-uh?"

"Well, I can really share my insights as a businessman with you, so you can get started on the right foot."

Puzzled, I tilt my head slightly, "Are you talking about mentoring?"

"Yes," he nods, his eyes earnest, "if you're open to it." [www.NoVelw@Rm.com](http://www.NoVelw@Rm.com)

"I'll think about it, but I won't say no to hearing advice from someone successful," I respond.

"I'll take that," Calvin replies.

It's clear Calvin is willing to go the extra mile to support me. With my knack for jewelry making and his savvy in business, we just might be the perfect team.

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As Calvin and I head back to his car, my eyes catch a glimpse of something unmistakably familiar – a blue and black Lamborghini

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Chapter onse

parked a bit off in the distance. It has to be Bill's car.

And sure enough, my suspicion is confirmed when I see Bill stepping out, phone pressed to his ear. [www.nOvElw@Rm.COM](http://www.nOvElw@Rm.COM)

Quickly, I tug at Calvin's arm, pulling him to a stop. "Calvin, that's Bill over there," I whisper, nodding subtly towards where Bill is.

Calvin follows my gaze. "Oh? He might get the wrong idea if he sees us together," he muses.

"That's what I'm worried about. Maybe it's better if he doesn't see us leave together," I suggest.

"But I want to make sure you get home safely," he insists.

give him a reassuring smile. "I'll be fine, I promise."

Calvin hesitates, starting to protest, "But –"

I meet his gaze, my eyes filled with a silent plea. "Please, Calvin."

Why does Bill always show up when I least expect it? It feels like I can't escape him no matter how hard I try.

I definitely can't let him see me now, not after dinner with his uncle. The last thing I need is for him to cause a scene, throwing around accusations that Calvin is my sugar daddy.

I'm just trying to start fresh, to rebuild my life away from Bill.

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