

Becomes 30

Chapter 0030

Serena's POV

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This is it! The day I've been eagerly waiting for. www.Nô(v)εℓw(o)r.M.cô®

I called Calvin, asking if he could come with me to scout the best shop for my first business on Melrose Avenue. Surprisingly, he agreed, even though I'm aware of his hectic work schedule. I also reached out to Stevie, hoping she could join us and maybe capture the day with her camera, but she's booked with photography gigs.

As we walk by the luxury boutiques, I start feeling unsure about everything. The store windows are filled with stunning jewelry, each piece sparkling under the lights. There are delicate necklaces that look like they're made of liquid gold, rings studded with diamonds so clear they seem to hold entire galaxies, and bracelets with gems that catch every color of the rainbow.

I can't help but stop and admire them. Seeing the intricate designs and the way they shine so beautifully makes me pause. It's all so

impressive, and it makes me question if my startup can really make its mark among these established brands.

Calvin catches the worry on my face. "Hey," he calls out. "You look troubled. What's up?"

I hesitate to let Calvin see my doubts, especially since he's already shared his concerns about the fierce competition in the jewelry industry. I don't want him to think I'm giving up on my business idea before I've even started.

I quickly mask my apprehension with a smile. "Oh, nothing's wrong," I assure him, gesturing towards the glittering displays. "I'm just amazed by all these beautiful pieces of jewelry. Let's keep looking around."

We make our way to a corner of Melrose that feels different from where

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we've been Around us are smaller boutiques, each with a unique charm. It's clear they're run by aspiring entrepreneurs like me. I'm in awe of the products on display. The designs are striking, and it's evident that many of them are handcrafted.

There's a personal touch in each piece that you just don't see in the larger, more commercial stores. Seeing the passion and creativity here inspires me. I decide this is where I want to rent a shop.

My eyes catch a "SPACE FOR RENT" sign hanging in the window of an empty shop. "I think I want to ask how much to rent this," I told Calvin, pointing toward the shop.

Calvin looks at me and gives a reassuring smile. "Well, go for it. I'll wait here," he says.

I turn and take a few steps towards the shop, but my nerves suddenly kick in. I mean, can I really make this business successful?

Feeling overwhelmed, I turn back to Calvin and say, "I don't think I can *www.no-re@W(e)r.m.Com* do this."

Calvin's eyebrows knit together. "What do you mean? Why not?" *WWW.N(ø)veℓWorM.c©m*

"It's just hitting me now, how big of a deal this is," I say, trying to keep my voice steady. "Thinking about the competition, the money it'll take, and what if it all goes wrong? I'm really scared of messing this up."

Calvin turns to face me and gently places his hands on my shoulders. The moment his hands touch me, I feel a jolt, like electricity running through me. 1

"Look, Serena," Calvin begins. "I know it's scary to start a new business. I've been there too. But I know you've got this. Just believe in yourself."

"I don't know, Calvin," I sigh, the weight of my doubts pressing down. "I haven't built a business before. What if this is a mistake?"

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"What if you're actually on the right track? You won't know unless you give it a shot," Calvin says. "Backing out now, when you're this close, that's the real mistake."

I pause. "Maybe you're right," I find myself saying, feeling a spark of something like courage. "I've come this far, haven't I? It would be silly to back out now, without even seeing what I can do."

I head to the shop's door and turn back to look at Calvin. I give him a thankful smile, grateful for his encouragement.

I take in the sight of the shop's interior. Boxes are scattered everywhere, a clear sign that the previous renters are in the process of moving out. The space feels a bit chaotic with all the packing materials and half-empty shelves, but beneath the clutter, I can see the potential. "Excuse me," I call out to the woman inside, noticing she's around her 50s. "I saw the sign outside that this place is for rent. Could you please tell me how much the rent is per month?"