

Becomes 31

Chapter 0031

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The lady looks up from her packing and greets me with a warm smile, her eyes crinkling at the corners. "Hello there," she says, her voice friendly. "Oh, the rent for this place is \$7,000 per month."

"I see, thanks," I say, keeping my voice even. "I need to talk it over with my business partner first,"

I lie, not ready to commit. The rent is \$7,000 a month, which is a lot. How am I supposed to come up with that kind of money just starting out? That's definitely impossible.

I walk out of the shop, my mind swirling with thoughts about the rent. I start to wonder if there's a more suitable spot out there, one where the rent is within my reach..

As soon as I step outside, the first thing I notice is Bill staring down at Calvin, his fists clenched as if he's seconds away from throwing a punch. What is he even doing here? My heart races as I quickly move to intervene, running as fast as I can to break it up before things escalate.

"Bill! Get away from him," I find myself shouting.

I quickly position myself between Calvin and Bill, forcing a gap between them with my presence.

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Bill's frustration is palpable. "Why are you with my uncle, Serena?" he demands. "You're crossing a line. We just got divorced." [www.novel\(w\)δOm.Com](http://www.novel(w)δOm.Com)

"And why do you even care?" I retort, my words sharp as knives. "It's my life. I can be with whoever I want. You don't have any right to tell me

what to do."

A heavy silence falls between me and Bill. I fix him with a fierce look, my eyes hopefully conveying a message louder than words could ever manage: I don't ever want to see him again.

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"Bill, this is all just a misunderstanding," Calvin finally speaks up, his voice cutting through the tense silence. "I don't like Serena in that way. I'm just looking out for her, the same way I would for you, like an uncle."

Bill's posture relaxes slightly with Calvin's explanation. "Then, why are you two out here like you're on a date?"

"Like I said, I'm just helping her out with something," Calvin clarifies. "Right, Serena?"

The question makes me pause. Did I mistakenly think Calvin had feelings for me beyond friendship? "Yes, he's just helping me with something."

"With what?" Bill asks, looking frustrated as he presses on.

"That's not your business," I reply.

Bill shakes his head and clenches his fist. "I won't ever let THIS happen," he says, pointing at Calvin and me. "Calvin, you better stop this before I forget you're family."

I watch Bill get a call and walk away. I can't help but feel helpless. I can't understand why he keeps appearing in my life now, after our divorce. It's confusing and frustrating, especially considering how absent he was when we were actually together.

After making sure Bill was completely out of sight, I let out a deep sigh of relief. "Clad that's over," I say.

"So, how did it go? Have you decided to rent out the space?" Calvin asks, turning the conversation back to the reason we were here in the first place.

I shake my head. "It's completely out of my budget. Looks like I need to find another place, somewhere other than Melrose."

"Don't worry about it too much," he reassures me. "I'm sure you'll find a

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more affordable place than that."

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"I sure hope so," I reply, trying to sound optimistic. But my mind is elsewhere, still tangled up in what Calvin said earlier how he's only looking out for me like an uncle. The thought nags at me. Am I just a charity case to him?

"How about I drive you home so you can get some rest now? You look a bit stressed out," Calvin suggests. There he goes again, I think, his kindness sending me mixed signals.

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"Well, I think it's best if I go home on my own," I respond, trying to put some space between us.

I don't want to get caught up with Calvin if his feelings for me aren't there. Keeping things just friendly and civil seems like the best way forward. But still, thinking about it leaves my heart feeling empty.