

Becomes 38

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Bill's POV

Serena tears the \$10 million check I handed her into shreds, flinging them at my face as if they were mere scraps. The audacity!

Before I can muster a single word in response, she whirls around, dashes into her apartment, and slams the door with a resounding thud.

Damn it! She has a knack for pushing my buttons. If this was my house, I'd have kicked the door open and walked straight in.

Trying to shake off my frustration, I end up knocking frantically on her door. "You're impossible, Serena!" I yell. "Open up, or I swear I'll break this door down. Don't push me!"

"Go to hell, Bill!" Serena fires back with fury. "Leave now or I'm calling the cops and screaming for help."

Am I being too aggressive? She sounds scared of me. I take a deep breath and decide to leave. I'll talk to her later when my thoughts are clearer.

"Fine, I'm going. Just don't cause a scene," I say. I head down the stairs and walk straight to my car.

I really want to fix things with Serena, especially since I found out Doris might be after her. The check was meant as a peace offering. What else does Serena need from me? I've saved her life. Shouldn't that be enough to make things right?

As I drive back home, I'm constantly thinking about how to keep Serena safe from Doris. But Serena won't even speak to me. I can't warn her about the danger she's in with only a bit of proof. She just wouldn't take my word for it.

She's been with Calvin a lot, and I literally just saw him drop her off at

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her apartment. Were they planning to sleep together until they noticed me? Imagining my ex-wife wrapping her legs around my uncle's waist

makes me lose it.

I'm the one protecting her, not Calvin Serena needs to realize that soon enough.

I call Sarah immediately when I arrive home. "Sarah, do you have any updates on the case?"

Sarah replies, "No new updates, unfortunately. The police haven't found anything that links the accident to Doris yet."

I grit my teeth in frustration. "Then they're not looking hard enough.

Fuck."

"Hey, boss. Just chill. We just need to wait for the court hearing in two weeks," Sarah tries to reassure me.

"I can't wait that long, Sarah. Serena might be in danger," I respond, my worry evident in my voice.

"Well, there's not much we can really do about it," Sarah says, her tone exasperated.

I can't just sit here and do nothing. I need to find out for myself if Doris is really behind the accident.

"You know what, Sarah? Find a good private detective," I say.

"Okay, that sounds easy enough," Sarah replies.

But then I reconsider. Maybe just "good" isn't enough.

"No, scratch that. Find me a great private detective, the best in doing their damn job," I clarify with emphasis.

"Got it," Sarah says. "But what's your plan if it turns out you're right about Doris?"

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I pause, feeling the heaviness of Sarah's question. What am I actually going to do if I find out Doris is behind this?

Finally, I just say, "Let's not worry about that now," and hang up.

I've been turning Sarah's question over in my mind for days. Could Doris really be capable of such a thing?

Pulled back from my daydream, I focus on what's happening around me. I look at the table, full of our brunch favorites. There's a bunch of tasty things spread out: scrambled eggs with herbs, crispy bacon with a bit of maple syrup, warm croissants that smell amazing, and a colorful fruit salad with berries and mango.

Mom and Aunt Claire are talking and laughing, their plates full of food, while I haven't even started eating yet, lost in my own thoughts.

"Bill, are you okay?" Mom asks, her voice pulling me back to reality. "You seem like you're not with us right now?"

"Yeah, I'm okay, Mom," I reply, trying to sound reassuring. "Just thinking about some work stuff, that's all."

Mom gives me a puzzled look. "Well, sure hope Doris is helping you with that."

"She is, Mom. The company's doing fine," I say, managing a forced smile in hopes of easing her concerns.

"Speaking of Doris," Mom starts, and can already tell where this is going she's about to meddle in my personal life again. "Why don't I see her around anymore? Are you still in good terms with her?"

Doris must have told Mom that I've been keeping my distance. I let out

a sigh. "Okay, fine. I saw her a few nights ago in the office, scolding one of the janitors. She even tried to fire him."

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But that's not the real reason I'm avoiding Doris. I can't let Mom know about my suspicions. She's not one to keep secrets.

Mom shakes her head in disbelief. "I don't think she meant that!" she exclaims. "She probably was just having a bad day."

I shrug. "I don't know. Maybe that's the kind of woman she really is," I suggest.

Mom gasps, her disapproval clear. "William Alexander Richardson Jr!" she exclaims, visibly upset. She only uses my full name when she's gearing up to scold me. "Don't say that! Doris is an educated woman... Unlike your ex-wife who's... well, crass..."

I immediately jump to Serena's defense. "Well, Serena's smart and educated too," I point out firmly. "In fact, she studied abroad just like Doris."

Mom furrows her brows, clearly not expecting my defense. Aunt Claire raises an eyebrow. "I don't get why you always defend that woman. She caused nothing but trouble."

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"That woman' has a name, Mom. It's Serena," I say, my annoyance

creeping into my voice. "Now, I would appreciate it if you'd call her by her name."

I don't have the energy to argue with Mom right now. So, I excuse myself from the table, my food untouched. *Wɔːw.nɔvɛL@erM.Co*

I need to figure out what to do about this situation with Doris. I still can't believe my childhood friend turns out to be like this.