

## Becomes 40

Chapter 0040

Serena's POV

I've been scrubbing down the last of the shelves in my shop, muscles. aching and hands worn.

It's taken me nearly half a month to finish the renovation of my shop. I'm exhausted, sure, but with the baby on the way, I'm not pushing. myself too hard.

I glance around my shop, taking in the sight of it all finally coming. together. Shiny displays hold pieces of jewelry that catch the light, sparkling brightly. Each shelf and table is arranged neatly, showing off the unique designs I've worked so hard on. The walls, freshly painted, give off a cozy vibe that makes the space welcoming.

I can't help but smile as I look around. All the effort, the long days, and the late nights – it all feels worth it now. [www.noveLwOrM.com](#)

Lately, I've been staying in the studio behind the mall as I work on the shop renovations. Now, with my baby bump starting to show, I find myself wearing for looser clothes, anything that feels comfortable and gives me room to breathe.

I've been really into my work, and it feels good to be so busy. It's a nice change, especially since Bill hasn't been bothering me.

Before, it felt like I saw him everywhere, and I even wondered if he was following me. But ever since he got really mad and said he'd break into my apartment, he hasn't come around.

This break from him has let me relax more than I thought I could and focus on getting my shop ready.

After finishing up in the shop, I head back to the studio to change. I pick out a soft, flowy dress that gently drapes over my growing bump,

comfortable yet flattering, paired with a light cardigan. [www.noveLwOrM.com](#)

Slipping into the soft, flowy dress, I pause, smoothing the fabric over my bump. It's weird, getting butterflies just because I'm going to see Calvin for lunch. I tell myself it's just a normal day, but it doesn't feel that way.

As I button up my cardigan, I think, "Why am I so nervous?" It's not our first lunch together but never anywhere fancy. Just regular spots, sometimes even fast-food joints.

He's been giving me some business advice, which I find really valuable as the opening day gets closer. That's it, nothing more. Still, my heart. skips a beat thinking about meeting him.

I meet Calvin in front of a burger restaurant in the mall. Despite his always-packed schedule, he stands there looking relaxed, with a casual elegance about him. He's wearing a crisp, well-fitted shirt and dark jeans.

As he notices me, his smile broadens, and he waves. "Serena, great to see you," he greets warmly.

"Hey Calvin, good to see you too," I reply.

We step into the fast-food restaurant together. As we wait for our orders, the butterflies in my stomach flutter uncontrollably. I silently remind myself, "This isn't a date."

"Have you decided on the name yet?" Calvin asks, pulling me back from my thoughts.

"Sorry?" I respond, a bit startled. Is he asking about the baby's name? Because I still have no idea what to call it. Heck, I don't even know the

baby's gender yet.

"I mean, have you decided what to name your shop?" he clarifies, with at curious tilt of his head.

Chapter 0040 [www.noveLwOrM.com](#)

+25 BONUS

I nod, realizing the mix-up. "Oh, it's uh.. S. R. Nixon & Co."

"I see," Calvin says, his eyes lighting up. "I like it. It has a premium. sound to it."

"Well, Stevie thought of it," I explain. "I suggested we put our surnames together, but she declined, saying that I'm the one designing the jewelry.

"Serena R. Nixon," Calvin muses. "Tell me, what does the 'R' stand for?" [www.noveLwOrM.com](#)

"Rose," I reply. "My middle name is based on my mom's favorite flower."

Calvin's smile widens. "Well, what do you know?" he says. "I learn something new every day."

Calvin picks up our tray, which holds two burgers wrapped in paper, their contents just barely contained inside. Beside them, there are two large fries, golden and crisp. For drinks, there's a pair of sodas, condensation beading on the outside of the cups.

I hadn't realized how hungry I was until I saw the food laid out in front of us. Calvin must have caught the eager look I gave the food because he says, "Let's eat."

"Yeah," I admit, feeling my stomach rumble a bit. "I've been working all morning. Didn't have the chance to grab breakfast."

Calvin frowns, concern evident in his expression. "You shouldn't do that. You have a baby in you. Take care of yourself better."

I'm not sure if I'll ever get used to Calvin's kindness. Unlike with Bill, who never seems to pick up on my hints that I need care, Calvin's gestures are genuine and constant. It makes me realize what I've been missing all along.

"You're right," I reply, nodding slowly. "I'll make sure to take better care of myself. Thank you."

+25 BONUS

I allow my gaze to linger in his eyes, hoping that he'll pick up on the silent cues I'm sending his way.

Calvin looks away, leaving me unsure whether it's because he's not interested in me or if he's just shy around women.

Not wanting to create any awkwardness, I decide to break the silence." So, the opening day is on Sunday. Got any advice?" I ask.

"I think you got this, Serena," he says reassuringly. "I have a feeling your hard work will soon pay off."

Today is the opening day, and I can feel the nervousness gnawing at me. Stevie, bless her heart, has taken time off her photography gigs to help me set up.

As I step outside the shop, my eyes land on the grand opening sign and the shop name illuminated in bright lights. It's bold and colorful, with balloons adorning the storefront.

Yet, despite the cheerful look of the shop, there aren't many people

around.

Feeling disappointed by the lack of visitors, doubt starts to creep in. I wonder if I have what it takes to succeed after all.

I start to wonder if launching a new business right after my divorce was

a mistake.