

Becomes 89

Chapter 0089

Serena's POV

"You were behind this, Elena? You tried to ruin my career and you have the nerve to call me a snake?" I ask. I try to keep my face calm, but I can feel my hands shaking.

Elena shoots me a sharp look, trying to intimidate me. I stare back just as hard. I just want to get to the bottom of this.

Elena shifts her gaze from me to Bill. "I have no idea what you're talking about. You're letting that woman cloud your judgment," she insists, her eyes flicking nervously between us.

Bill shakes his head, his disbelief clear. "We both know that's not true, Mom. We have the video of you and Max talking, and you handing him cash. What was that for, if not sabotage?"

Elena straightens, her voice firm. "Bill, Max and I were just talking about a project. And where's your proof that Max was the one who destroyed the jewelry?" [www.f\(o\)V@LwO\(r\)m.c@M](#)

"The video shows you giving him money, Mom. Six hours before the show. It's hard to see that as a coincidence," Bill points out.

I can barely catch my breath, each inhale sharper than the last. I pace, unable to stand still. I always knew Elena hate me. But sabotaging my work, my passion, was a level of cruelty I never expected from her.

Tears well up in my eyes. "How could you do this, Elena?" I ask.

"Because you don't belong in this industry. You're out of your depth. This world is for real talents, not opportunists who think they can waltz in and claim a spot," Elena

snaps.

"This isn't about you, Mom," he interjects sharply. "Serena has worked hard for her place. People need to see Serena's work. She's talented, and her jewelry looks stunning."

Heat creeps up my cheeks as Bill stands up for me. I'm not used to him being this vocal, especially in front of his mom. It leaves me feeling unexpectedly warm inside hearing him praise my work.

"What's got into you, Bill?" she asks. "She's nothing special. I don't know why you and

Calvin are crazy about this woman."

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+25 BONUS

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Bill shakes his head, his resolve clear in his firm voice. "I won't let you get away with this, Mom. Everyone will know you set Serena up to fail."

Elena's face registers shock, her voice rising with disbelief. "You're choosing this woman over your own family, Bill? You really must be out of your mind!"

Bill sighs, tired and frustrated. "I've told you before, call her Serena," he says firmly. "She's the love of my life. If you can't accept that, then you might as well forget you have a son."

Elena's face falls, her eyes widening slightly as the sting of Bill's words hits her. Without a word, she turns sharply and leaves the room.

As Bill and I stand in the midst of the crowd, neither of us makes a move to speak. There's a lot on my mind, but I can't seem to put my feelings into words.

I mean I'm grateful he stood up for me against his mom's hurtful remarks, something he's never done before. But it's a lot to absorb. This is the first time he's defended me

like this, and I'm still trying to wrap my head around what it means for us.

Instead of speaking, Bill simply nods and flashes a pained smile. It's the same smile I saw when I was on the runway today.

I watch Bill as he heads for the exit, his eyes catching Max Laurent's as they both

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move in the same direction.

"You scumbag!" Bill's voice rings out angrily as he throws a punch straight at Max's chin. The hit is hard, and Max stumbles back, looking dazed.

The crowd gasps collectively, their eyes widening in shock as Bill's fist connects with Max's chin. Some people step back while others murmur to each other, exchanging uncertain glances. A tense silence falls over the room, broken only by the sound of Bill's heavy breathing and Max's groan of pain.

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Marjorie pushes her way through the crowd. She checks on Max who's still in the ground. "I will not condone violence in my presence," she asserts. "Bill Richardson, leave now."

Bill winces visibly, his hand cradling the aftermath of his punch. He walks away and doesn't look back. The tension eases a bit as he leaves, but there's still a feeling of unease among the onlookers.

"What just happened here?" Calvin's worried voice cuts through the tension as he appears beside me. "Serena, are you okay?"

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I nod, my own worry reflected in his eyes. "Just get me out of here," I reply.