

## Becomes 97

Chapter 0097

Serena's POV wWw.moVèLW(©)R©.Com

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I blink more than I intend to, trying to stay calm as I keep eating. The meal, which should have been enjoyable, now feels like a chore. I look at Bill's direction and say. "I honestly don't know where to begin. Why don't you start by telling me what you remember?"

Bill pauses, his fork halfway to his plate as he thinks. "Honestly, it's all a bit blurry," he starts slowly. I remember we talked, and things got a little intense, but the details were

fuzzy. I know we ended up closer than we've been in a long time."

"Closer?" I repeat, trying to sound casual as I fiddle with my napkin to avoid his gaze. He's probably talking about the kiss. He looks at me, trying to read my reaction. But I keep my eyes down, hoping he doesn't notice how fast my heart is racing.

Bill nods, picking up on my hesitation. "Yeah, closer. We were face to face, just talking, really opening up. It's been a while since we've done that, gotten real with each other," he explains.

"Okay... Anything else?" I ask, trying to sound casual. I'm curious to see if he remembers the kiss, but I don't want to bring it up directly. I watch him closely, waiting for his answer.

Bill takes a bite of his toast, then pauses. "Oh, and I remember the door closing on my hand." He glances down at his hand, noticing the bruising has gone down." Thanks for taking care of it, by the way. It feels a lot better now," he says.

"You're welcome, I'm just glad it's not as bad today," I respond. "And after that?" I ask.

Bill's eyes widen as he shakes his head. "It's totally blank after that. Why? Did I do something stupid?" WwW.No©©LWòRm.cOm

I shake my head, relieved he doesn't remember the kiss. "Oh no, you didn't do anything stupid. I just helped you get to the couch, that's all," I say.

Bill nods, looking somewhat relieved. "I really appreciate it. I guess I owe you one," he says. "I don't know what I was thinking, getting that drunk. That was a bad idea."

"It's alright. The important thing is you're safe," I say, giving him a half-smile.

finish my meal and feel a craving for some fresh orange juice. I stand up, head to the fridge, and grab a couple of oranges, ready to squeeze them into a refreshing

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drink.

+25 BONUS

"By the way, thanks for finding out Max was behind the sabotage," I say as I return to my seat, setting the oranges down to peel them. "But you shouldn't have punched him. Let me fight my own battles, Bill."

Bill gestures toward the oranges with a gentle, "May I?" I nod, handing them over to him. As he begins to peel, he responds to my earlier comment, "I know I shouldn't have lost my temper. I just saw red when I found out what he did."

I watch the way he carefully removes the skin in neat strips. "I'm just worried about your reputation," I say, watching his hands work. "What if your colleagues find out? What then?"

Bill gives a nod as he finishes with the oranges, then moves toward the juicer. "I handle it," he assures me.

Bill slices the peeled oranges and places them on the juicer. As he presses down, the machine hums and vibrant orange juice begins to collect in the pitcher. The fresh, tangy aroma fills the kitchen. Once finished, he stirs the juice and pours it into two glasses. ©WwW.NoVèL(w)OrM.com

Bill hands me a glass of the freshly squeezed orange juice. "You should just focus on what you need to do for today," he says. "What's your plan?"

I take the glass from Bill, enjoying the cool feel of it. "Thanks," I say taking a sip of the juice. "It's too late to go into work now, so I'm just going to head to my OB appointment instead."

Bill looks at me as he takes a sip of his juice. "Is Stevie going with you, or anyone else?" he asks.

I shake my head, "Stevie's at the shop. I'll go alone, as usual."

Bill sets his glass down, pausing for a moment as he considers his next words. "Do you mind if I come with you?" he asks gently, looking earnestly into my eyes.

Tknow it's usually something you do on your own, but I'd like to be there for you."

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