

Broken 121

Chapter 121 A Simple Event DANIEL

Morning came softly, filtering through the curtains in long, golden streaks. For a few seconds, I didn't move. I just lay there, watching Amy sleep beside me from the faint rise and fall of her chest to the strands of hair spilling across her face. She looked peaceful. I hadn't realized how much I needed to see her like this. Without her not guarded or burdened with the pressure of life, she look still like she's at peace. For years, I'd merely been existing. Waking, working and surviving in the same boring cycle. But her warmth and the quiet rhythm of her breath felt like the first real moment of living I'd had in a long damn time. I brushed a thumb over her shoulder, tracing the faint mark where my wolf had connected with hers. Eve and my wolf had found each other without hesitation. That bond was more than instinct. It was choice, our choice. Then she stirred before her once peaceful eyes opened and blinked up at me, her voice was soft. "You're staring." I smiled a little. "Trying to memorize this." She groaned and buried her face against the pillow. "You're impossible." "I've been told worse," I said, leaning in to kiss her temple. We stayed like that for a while, all tangled up in sheets and our love for each other, the world outside forgotten. It was strange how easily silence fit between us now, like we'd been doing this forever. Eventually, her stomach growled loud enough to make us both laugh. "Guess that's breakfast calling," she said, sitting up and tugging one of my shirts over her shoulders. "I'll make something." She arched a brow. "Are you sure you can cook?" "I try not to burn things. Yesterday was a demonstration of my skill."

A Simple Event She chuckled and followed me into the small kitchen. We made pancakes, badly shaped ones, at that and sat by the window while the lake shimmered outside. The conversation around breakfast was easy and filled with teasing and easy laughter. She dripped syrup on her wrist; I wiped it off without thinking. When she caught me looking at her again, she said, "What?" "Nothing," I replied, smiling. "You're different when you're not trying to hold everything together." She tilted her head, studying me. "And you're different when you're not trying to control everything."

Fair point. I shrugged all smiles. After breakfast, we packed up, but neither of us seemed ready to leave. I suggested a short walk before heading back. She agreed, and we took the narrow trail that wound into the forest behind the cabins. The air smelled of pine and wet soil. Birds darted between branches. Halfway through the hike, we stopped near a ridge that overlooked the lake. It was a mirror of light framed by trees. Amy leaned against the railing, her hair swaying gently in the wind. "You look like you're thinking too hard," she said. "Maybe I am." "About what?"

"About everything," I admitted. "About how close I came to losing all of this" I gestured at the view "before I even knew what it was." She didn't speak right away, she was patiently looking at me, the way she always did when she knew I was digging for words. "When I woke up from the coma," I continued, "I didn't remember much. No faces, not even names.. it.. it all blurred. But the first thing I truly recognized was you. And it's not because I remembered your name, but something in me knew you were... safe." Her eyes softened. "Daniel..." "I used to think strength meant control," I said, watching the water. "Now I'm starting to see it's the opposite. It's letting yourself feel something without being afraid of what it'll make you."

She stepped closer until her fingers brushed mine. "You're not the only one learning that. I've spent most of my life trying to be what people expected, being the perfect daughter, the proper wife, the

quiet Alpha's mate who never asks for too much." Her voice dipped, almost shy. "I didn't know how to be loved for real. Not until you." I turned toward her, and for a second, the air between us was still and full of words we didn't have to say. I reached up, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "Then we'll learn it together." She nodded and smiled while we held onto each other. We stood there a while longer, watching the wind dance across the lake. When we finally headed back to the car, her hand found mine, again and I held it without hesitation. The drive home was quiet but easy. She hummed along to a song on the radio, her bare feet placed on the dashboard and sunlight playing across her face. I wanted to freeze that image forever and wake up to it. The real Amy Carter with no titles restricting her, with all of her barriers lowered. By the time we reached the estate, the sky had turned the soft color of dusk. My mother was waiting by the steps, arms folded but eyes warm. "You both look... different," she said, a knowing smile touching her lips. "Peaceful." Amy flushed, and I tried not to smirk. If only she knew how peaceful. Her gaze softened as she looked between us. "It's nice to see happiness in this house again. The goddess must be listening." For once, I didn't deflect. "Maybe she is." We had dinner later with her, conversations flowed freely around the table, and laughter that didn't feel forced. Afterward, Amy excused herself to review a few files in her room, and I walked her there. At her door, she turned to face me. "Thank you," she said. "For what?" "For taking me away. For... reminding me that I'm allowed to feel something other than fear." I brushed a hand against her cheek. "Get used to it," I murmured. Her smile faltered just a little, her voice barely above a whisper. "You make it too easy to forget

A Simple Event everything else." "Then maybe forgetting isn't so bad." & 873 I leaned in and kissed her like I did the nights before. It wasn't about need this time; it was about promise. When we finally pulled apart, she rested her forehead against mine. "Goodnight, Daniel." "Goodnight, Amy." As I walked back down the hall, I realized something simple but irreversible. somewhere between fear and healing, between lies and the truth, we'd stopped pretending. And whatever came next, we'd face it as more than partners bound by duty.

We'd face it as two people who finally remembered how to live and peace with each other.