

Broken 126

Chapter 126 Fighting For Her AMY

I'd been looking at the same photograph that Mrs. Smith gave me before she died for hours – the one Mrs. Smith sent before she died. The woman whose face was half-turned, looked too much like me for it to be coincidence. Every time I zoomed in, something in my chest twisted tighter. I'd been running searches through the old pack registry all week, trying to trace her location, but it kept leading to dead ends. Finally, I had reached out to one of the archivists from the regional pack records, a quiet man named Lewis who owed Mrs. Carter a favor. He called that morning. "I think I found what you're looking for," he said. The file he sent was old, scanned from yellowed paper. The name on it struck a nerve, Elara. It matched the name Mrs. Smith had whispered, the same name she said was connected to my mother. I sat back in my chair, staring at it. Elara. Female, mid-twenties, last recorded location: near Silverridge Lake the exact spot from the photo. — Listed as missing seventeen years ago. No death record. No burial record. Nothing. She was just gone and vanished into thin air. Mrs. Carter found me in the study later that evening, still reading through the file. "You haven't moved all day," she said gently. "I found her," I said with a voice low. "At least, I think I did." She came closer, scanning the screen. When her eyes landed on the name, her whole expression changed. For a moment, she didn't breathe. "Elara?" she repeated slowly. "Are you sure?" I nodded. "You know her?" Her silence was all the answer I needed. Finally, she said, "She was... connected to the council. A woman who disappeared years ago after a scandal." I frowned. "What kind of scandal?" Mrs. Carter hesitated, her gaze fixed on the file. "She was Elias's mate."

The words didn't make sense at first. I blinked at her, waiting for her to correct herself. "What?"

"Elara was Elias's mate," she said again, her tone heavy. "They were bonded until she vanished without a trace. He claimed she ran away." The room seemed to tilt slightly and my mouth went dry. "You're saying..." I swallowed hard. "You're saying the woman in this photo who is most likely my mother was Elias's mate?" – Mrs. Carter's eyes softened, full of concern she didn't know how to express. "If that's true, Amy, then your mother was part of his life long before you came into ours." I stared at the document again. It was old, faded, but the name wouldn't disappear. Elara. The same face. The same lake. My chest tightened. "Then that means... I'm..."

I couldn't finish the sentence. At that exact moment, Daniel walked in. He must've sensed something was off because his voice was immediately calm but alert. "What's going on?" Mrs. Carter looked at me, then him. "Amy found something you both need to see." I turned the laptop around. He came closer, eyes scanning the text. I could see the realization forming behind his calm expression. "Elara," he murmured. "That's—" "Elias's mate," I finished for him. My voice cracked as I spoke. "She's my mother, Daniel. She has to be. Mrs. Smith said her name before she died." Daniel looked at me for a long moment. He was not shocked, not doubtful, just so calm. "You're sure about this?" I nodded. "If this is true, then I'm part of the same bloodline that tried to destroy you." He moved closer, kneeling in front of me so I couldn't look away. "Then that bloodline ends with you," he said quietly. "Not him." I shook my head. "You don't understand. If I'm her daughter, that means Elias knew. He knew who I was this whole time." "He did," Daniel said, his voice low and sure. "And he didn't want you to find out."

Mrs. Carter folded her arms, her tone sounded thoughtful but grim. "It explains why Elias always kept you close, Amy. Why he never pushed too hard. He's been watching not because of Daniel, but because

of you." I felt cold all over. "You think he knows that I know?" Daniel glanced toward the window, his jaw tight. "Not yet. But when he does, he'll make a move." I nodded slowly, trying to process it all. "So what do we do now?" "We keep this to ourselves," Mrs. Carter said firmly. "No council member, no staff, no one outside this room. The moment he senses that we're aware of his connection to you, he'll turn it against us." I tried to hold myself together, but my hands wouldn't stop shaking. "He's either my uncle or father," I whispered. "He's been sitting across from me at family dinners, pretending all this time. Does that make me and you related?" My thoughts were spiralling already. Daniel placed his hand gently on mine. "Amy," he said, his tone steady, "listen to me. You are not him. You are not what he's done. Whatever blood you share, it doesn't define who you are. I am also damn sure that you and I are not blood related." I stared at him, trying to find something solid to hold onto. "And what if he comes after me again?" "Then he'll have to go through me first," Daniel said. There was no hesitation in his voice. Mrs. Carter sighed softly. "You two need to be careful. If Elias realizes how much you've uncovered, he won't just stop at intimidation. He's too calculating for that." "I know," I said. "But he's not the only one with secrets anymore." For the rest of the night, none of us spoke much. Daniel stayed beside me, silent, his presence calmed me when words wouldn't help. Later on, after he walked me to my room, I sat on the edge of the bed, staring at the open file on my phone screen. Everything I thought I knew about who I was all felt like a lie now. My phone buzzed, pulling me out of my thoughts. It was an unknown number. I hesitated, then opened the message. "He knows." My stomach dropped. I looked toward the window. The night outside was still, but I couldn't shake the feeling that someone was watching.