

Broken 128

Chapter 128 The Famous Amy Carter AMY

The ballroom at the Imperial Hall buzzed with music, light, and the low hum of conversation. It was Carter Enterprise's annual gala and it was the first one Daniel and I had attended together since everything with Elias came to light. Weeks of planning had gone into this night, and the company board expected a flawless appearance from us both. Mrs. Carter made sure to remind me of that. I stood beside Daniel near the entrance, greeting the shareholders and business partners, the usual mix of polite smiles and shallow talk. Everything felt lighter than it had in months and I told myself to enjoy it even if it was just for tonight. The crowd suddenly shifted and a hush spread across the hall, followed by murmurs. I didn't need to look to know something had changed. I saw Daniel's expression first and it had a stillness that showed shock. His hand which was resting against my waist had unconsciously dropped to his sides. I turned toward the entrance and saw Elias had arrived. He looked perfectly composed, smiling as if the world owed him attention. But it wasn't him who made Daniel tense. It was the woman walking beside him and Elias had a snug smile sitting on his lips. She was tall, elegant, and familiar in a way that made my chest tighten before I even knew why. Her hair had the same soft shade of chestnut I'd seen in an old photo, and was swept into a neat twist. When her eyes landed on Daniel, she smiled like someone returning to a place she once called home. Daniel clenched his jaw. Elias's voice echoed through the hall. "Daniel, I was wondering if we'd run into each other tonight. It's been far too long." Daniel forced a polite nod. "Uncle, we live in the same house. Don't be dramatic." His eyes flicked toward the woman beside him. "And this is...?" Elias smiled wider. "Selene. I believe you two have met before." She stepped forward before Daniel could reply. "Danny," she said softly, like she'd been saving the word. "You haven't changed at all." Her hand brushed his arm lightly and Daniel froze for a second, then moved back half an inch. "It's been a long time, Selene," he said evenly. "This is my wife, Amy." She turned to me with a fake smile. "Of course. The famous Amy Carter. I've heard a lot about" I smiled back, matching her tone. "All good things, I hope." Her smile widened, just a bit too much. "Depends who's telling the story." Elias chuckled like the exchange amused him. "Well, I'll leave you all to catch up. I have a few people to greet." He slipped away into the crowd, leaving us standing there in the kind of silence that draws stares. Selene filled it easily. "You always hated these events, Danny. I remember you used to sneak out halfway through." Daniel's expression didn't change. "That was a long time ago." "I suppose it was." She laughed softly, a sound that felt rehearsed. "Still, it's good to see you. Alive and well." "Likewise," he said. The way he looked at her told me enough. He wasn't glad to see her, but he wasn't indifferent either. The past never leaves that easily.

I stayed beside him through the rest of the evening, smiling when I needed to, nodding at conversations that I barely followed. But every time Selene laughed, every time she leaned close enough for her perfume to drift over, I felt something sharp twist in my chest. Not anger. Not exactly jealousy either. Just... unease. Like her being there had shifted something I couldn't see. When we finally left the gala, the air outside felt colder than it should have. Daniel opened the car door for me, but he didn't speak until we were halfway home. "She shouldn't have been there," he said quietly. "You didn't know she was coming?" I asked. He shook his head. "No. The last I heard, she was dead. That was years ago." I watched his face in the dim light. His eyes were fixed on the road, but his hands were tense on the wheel. "Do you still care about her?" I asked. He turned his head just slightly, as if the question surprised him. "No," he said after a pause. "I don't. I was just... surprised. That's all." The Famous Amy Carter
When we got home, he went straight upstairs, loosening his tie. I followed him slowly, trying to her hand

on his shush the thoughts running through my head. I knew what I saw at the gala. arm, the look that flickered across his face when she said his name. It wasn't love, but it wasn't nothing either. "Amy," he said quietly, "I meant what I said. Whatever she was to me, it's over." "I know," I said, but I also knew how ghosts had a way of following people, especially the kind that once mattered. He reached for my hand, and I let him. "We've had enough people try to come between us," he said. "She won't be one of them." I nodded. "I hope not." He kissed my forehead, then laid back, in a few minutes, his breathing evened out. I turned off the light, but I didn't lie down yet. The hallway outside was dim, the kind of silence that makes every sound louder. I stepped out for some air, moving toward the main staircase. That's when I heard soft, low, voices just at the edge of hearing. I followed the voices to the foyer. Elias stood near the doorway, his back half-turned. Selene stood close to him, her head bowed slightly. I couldn't hear every word, but their tone was a bit tense. Elias said something that made her glance toward the stairs. I stepped back before her eyes could meet mine. They left together a moment later, their voices fading into silence. I went back upstairs and lay down beside Daniel. He was asleep, his hand resting loosely near mine. We had started sharing a room to help build our bond.