

## Broken 231

### Chapter 231 They Are Planning Something Big

AMY

After Daniel left to get some air, Mrs. Carter closed the study door behind us, checking twice to ensure that no one lingered in the hall. She didn't sit right away. She stood by the window with her arms crossed, the tension clear in her shoulders. "We need to discuss a counter strategy," she said. "Elias didn't pull this off alone. At least three elders flipped." I nodded. "Bribed?" "Most likely. He's too smart to rely on favors alone." I sat at the chair across from her. "Then we track financial movements. Someone must have received unusual transfers. If Elias paid them, there will be a trail." Mrs. Carter finally sat. "I already have someone looking into the council's financial logs, but elders hide their transactions well. We'll need outside help. Someone with access to private ledgers." "I can call in a contact," I offered. "He's discreet. He won't leak anything." She lifted a brow. "Good. We can't afford a single mistake." I opened my tablet, ready to start listing search points, but a sudden tight pull hit my lower stomach. It felt sharp and quick, enough to make me grip the table edge. My breath hitched. Mrs. Carter's eyes widened. "Amy?" "I'm fine," I said, waiting for the pain to ease. "Are you sure?" She moved toward me, already reaching for her phone. I shook my head and straightened slowly. "It stopped. It was quick." I rubbed my stomach once. "The healing... it's affecting the pregnancy. My body reacts differently now." Mrs. Carter didn't look convinced. Her expression softened, but her worry didn't lessen. "We're calling Daniel." "I don't want him distracted." "You're pregnant and in pain," she shot back. "He can be distracted for five minutes." Before I could argue, she already dialed him. Daniel arrived in less than ten minutes. He didn't speak when he entered the study. He walked straight to me and crouched down so we were eye level. "Where does it hurt?" he asked quietly. "It already passed." I put a hand on his cheek. "I'm okay." He placed his palm over my stomach, waiting, like he could sense something beneath the surface. "You should have called me the second it started." "I didn't want to pull you away from your preparations. Elias is gaining too much ground. You need to stay ahead of him." Daniel shook his head. "Nothing is more important than this." I rested my forehead against his. "I'm stable now. I promise. But I need you focused. If he gets any higher, he'll take everything from you." He didn't reply. He just pulled me against him and held me until Mrs. Carter cleared her throat, reminding us we had work to do. Daniel helped me sit back down before he left the room again, but not without giving Mrs. Carter a look that said she better call him instantly if anything changed. Later that night, the study lights were dim, the rest of the house quiet. Brian sat in front of his laptop, typing nonstop, while Cole stood behind him scanning the documents projected on the wall. I pulled up the digital copies of the forged orders. "Look at the signature again," I said, pointing at it. "Something about it bothered me the first time." Brian zoomed in. "I already compared it to Daniel's. It's not a match. It's not even close." "That's not what I mean," I said. "Check our archives. Cross-reference all pack officers from five years ago." Cole gave me a quick look. "Why five years?"

Because that's when the formatting in this template was last used. Whoever forged it used an outdated command form." Brian nodded and started the search. A minute later, the match appeared. The name under the signature belonged to a pack officer who died years ago. Cole exhaled slowly. "There it is. The smoking gun." "It's clear forgery," I said. "But proving it will take time. He hid his tracks well." Brian leaned back. "We'll need to dig deeper. The signature was copied from an old file. Someone with access to dead officers' records helped." "And likely someone inside the Southern administration,"

I added. I stood up to stretch. The moment I took a step, the sharp pull hit me again—worse than before. My hand instantly went to my stomach. The pain made me bend slightly, trying to breathe through it. Daniel appeared in the doorway so fast I didn't know how long he'd been watching. "Amy." His voice was low, serious. He crossed the room, lifted me without asking, and held me close to his chest. My arms went around his shoulders automatically. The pain started fading, but his grip only tightened. "We're done for tonight," he said. Cole and Brian both stepped back, giving him space. No one argued with him. He carried me upstairs and laid me gently on the bed. He didn't leave my side, not even for a second. He sat beside me with one hand on my leg and the other wrapped around my fingers. The room was quiet except for our breathing. The pressure in my stomach faded completely, but the fear didn't. Daniel brushed his thumb along the back of my hand. "Talk to me." I stared at the ceiling. "It's happening too early. My healing is pushing everything forward. My body is changing faster than I expected." I swallowed. "I don't know what that means for the baby." The words came out softer than I meant. Saying them out loud made the fear feel real. Daniel leaned closer. "We'll figure it out. You're not alone in this." I turned my head toward him. "Daniel... I'm scared." He didn't reply right away. He just pulled me closer and kept his hand on my stomach like he could shield both of us from everything outside that room. We lay there a long time. My body finally relaxed, but my mind stayed alert, the worry stretching quiet but heavy inside me. Just when I felt sleep coming, my phone buzzed against the nightstand. Daniel reached over and handed it to me. "Who is it?" The message had no sender name—only a secured ID I recognized. One line appeared on the screen "Clara just arrived at the northern border. She met with Selene earlier. Something big is coming. My stomach tightened again but not from pain this time, but from the trouble of what those words meant. I looked at Daniel. "It's starting."

## Chapter 232 This Can't Wait

### DANIEL

I barely slept through the night. My eyes stayed on Amy the entire night, waiting for any sign that the pain she felt earlier would return. She slept on her side with one hand over her stomach, and every few minutes I reached out to check her breathing even though I knew she was fine. The room felt strangely still. I kept imagining problems I couldn't fix, and every one of them made my chest feel tight. Brian knocked at dawn. The sound was sharp enough that Amy shifted in her sleep. I got up quietly and opened the door before he knocked again. He stepped inside, closing it behind him. "Daniel... Clara just requested a private meeting with the elders. They approved it. She's already on her way to the council building." I stared at him. "They approved it? Under what grounds?" "No one knows," he said. "No announcement. No agenda. Nothing." I looked at Amy again. She was waking up slowly, her eyes soft but alert. "You're not going," she said before I could speak. I walked to the bed. "I have to know what she's doing." "You're suspended," she reminded me. "If you break that rule, Elias will use it to bury you." "I can't just sit here." She pushed herself up carefully. I sat beside her, and she caught my face between her hands. "You're not useless. You're not powerless. But if you act the way Elias expects, you'll make everything worse. He wants you cornered. Don't give him that." I closed my eyes and leaned my forehead against hers. "It feels like everything I built is being taken from me in slow pieces." "I know," she whispered. "But you're still here. And you still have allies." Brian added quietly, "We're not letting Elias or Clara walk all over this." Amy squeezed my hand. "Then start acting like the Alpha you've always been. You plan. You don't flail." Her words settled something inside me. Not comfort, exactly—more like direction. I nodded. By late morning, I convinced Brian to watch the house while I stepped out. Amy wanted to come with me, but I didn't want her walking around when her body was already under stress.

I promised her I'd be back in less than two hours. I drove to a quiet meeting spot where Elder Havik agreed to see me. He waited behind an old administrative building near the ridge. He looked tense, which wasn't his usual state. Havik rarely showed emotion, so the stiffness in his posture worried me. "You shouldn't be here," he said once I reached him. "If someone sees you—" "No one followed me," I said. "What's going on? Why did Clara ask for a private meeting?" He exhaled slowly and handed me a sealed envelope. "This came to the council last night. No sender. No signature. Nothing. But the documents inside... Daniel, they're not about you. They're about Carter Holdings." I opened the envelope. Inside were records of supposed financial transfers—large amounts disguised as maintenance expenses. According to the papers, the money flowed through the South, routed through shell accounts tied to the southern envoy group Clara was connected to. "These are fake," I said immediately. "They don't look fake." Havik replied. "If I didn't know Carter Holdings' accounting protocols, I might believe them myself." I rubbed my jaw. "Clara set this up. She and Elias must have been planning this for months."

Havik lowered his voice. "There's more. Some of the elders think these documents prove you've been working with the South behind their backs. They're discussing appointing an acting Alpha by midnight." O My stomach tightened. "They're going to put Elias in my seat." "It's leaning that way," Havik admitted. "He's been gaining support fast. Too fast, if you ask me." I folded the documents. "Thank you for telling me." He nodded once. "Be careful. The room is shifting, and it's not in your favor." I returned home in a state I could barely name. Anger, frustration, dread—they all blended together. When I walked inside, the house was quiet. Amy stepped out from the hallway and watched me closely. "What happened?" she asked. I held up the envelope. "Clara's trying to destroy the company now. It's bigger than I thought." She walked to me and placed her hands on my chest. "You're breathing too fast." "I'm fine." "You're not." She didn't push or scold. She just waited. I wrapped my arms around her and lowered my chin to her shoulder. She held me until my breathing evened out. When I finally pulled back, her face softened. "You're allowed to feel this," she said. "Just don't let it control you." I kissed her, needing the reminder that I still had something stable in my life. She kissed me back without hesitation, grounding me in a way nothing else could. "Daniel—sorry—this can't wait." Amy pulled the blanket up, annoyed but alert. "What is it?" Cole held a tablet out, his hand shaking. "Clara just sent this statement to the elders. And they're broadcasting it internally through the council system. You need to see this." My pulse spiked. I took the tablet and opened the file. Clara stood in front of the council podium, speaking with that calm expression she always wore when she wanted to pretend she cared about the pack. Her voice played through the speakers: "I have come forward today to present information that the council deserves to know. Daniel Carter has concealed several breaches of protocol, and Carter Holdings has been involved in financial activities that put the North at risk..." Amy grabbed my arm. "Pause it." I did. She looked at me, "Then we start our counter now." The room no longer felt quiet or safe. The trap was bigger than I expected, and Clara had just tightened another piece of it. But as long as Amy stood beside me, I wasn't giving them the victory they wanted. The only thing that mattered now was staying ahead of them, piece by piece, until the truth broke their entire plan apart.

Chapter 233 Temporary Alpha

AMY

The days that followed were quiet as if we were mourning someone. The hum of the television and the occasional click of a keyboard as Cole and Brian monitored the situation were the only sound in the

room. The council chamber broadcast filled the screen, the angle wide enough to see the entire room and the tension in every elder's posture. Clara stood at the front, calm and composed. I had never seen her look so assured, and it made my stomach tighten. She began speaking about "protecting the North from internal corruption." Her tone was measured, deliberate. Every word landed with precision. I could feel Daniel's muscles tense beside me, his hand gripping mine like a lifeline. He didn't move or speak, but I knew his thoughts were racing, trying to find any angle to counter what was happening. Clara lifted a sealed file and presented it to the elders. She explained that she had received it anonymously and that she felt obligated to bring it forward for the good of the pack. I watched her carefully, noting how every motion, every word, was designed to appear innocent and dutiful. The elders accepted the file immediately. No questions. No hesitation. They were convinced by the presentation alone. I could see the subtle nods among them, their decision made before even examining the contents. I leaned closer to Daniel, squeezing his hand to remind him I was there. He didn't look at me, didn't even blink as he stared at the screen. His jaw was tight, and I could feel the tension radiating off him. I knew how badly this was hitting him. The council didn't just control the pack, they had the power to sway public opinion, manipulate the board, and make Carter Holdings appear guilty without a single legitimate investigation. The file Clara presented contained financial documents that made Carter Holdings look guilty of fraud. I knew immediately, as did Daniel, that they were falsified. Still, to the untrained eye, they seemed legitimate. I felt a small wave of anger rise, but I forced it down. Right now, I have to stay sharp. Panic wouldn't help. Reporters were already swarming Carter Holdings headquarters. Alerts began flashing on Cole's tablet, showing the stock plunging and headlines appearing online within seconds. The board was reacting even faster than I expected. Their temporary statement removed Daniel from all decision-making positions until the investigation ended. Mrs. Carter stepped into the room, standing firm behind the monitors. Her voice was calm, precise, and full of authority as she addressed the board. She reminded them they were being manipulated, but I could see the hesitation in some of their eyes. They wanted a public sacrifice, something to appease the market and the pack. Daniel's removal served that purpose perfectly. Daniel's hand tightened around mine. I could feel him trying to calm himself, trying not to lash out or make a scene that could worsen the perception of him in the public eye. I rested my head against his shoulder, keeping close, making sure he knew I was present and focused on him. I didn't speak at first, just let my presence be a small anchor. The elders continued their deliberations, but it was clear they were already leaning toward Elias. The sealed file Clara presented had shifted the balance entirely. I saw Daniel's eyes darken and they were full of anger. He was planning, calculating, even in the midst of public disgrace.

I could feel my own stomach tighten. Every second Clara's plan unfolded, the more vulnerable we became. She had orchestrated this to perfection. Elias would benefit immediately from Daniel's suspension, Clara would maintain her image as a dutiful observer, and the council's influence over the North pack would tighten. I grabbed Daniel's hand again, squeezing it firmly. "We won't let this break us," I whispered, my voice low but resolute. "We'll find a way to turn this around." He finally looked at me, eyes sharp, alert. For a moment, I could see the conflict in him—the desire to act, to defend, to take control but he also knew that rash action would play directly into Clara's hands. I felt the weight of his restraint, the effort it took to remain composed in front of the cameras and his own council. Cole and Brian monitored everything, providing updates as best they could. Each new alert from the news feeds, each fluctuating stock price, added to the pressure, but I stayed focused. I needed to stay calm for Daniel. If I let myself panic, even slightly, it would only make him tense further. The news ticker at the bottom of the screen finally flashed the announcement: "The Elders will vote tonight. Elias has been

nominated as temporary Alpha.” I felt a wave of vertigo hit, but I forced myself to breathe through it. Daniel’s eyes narrowed, his entire body stiffening. I rested my hand on his chest, feeling the rapid beat of his pulse beneath my palm. I didn’t speak immediately. Words weren’t necessary. The reporters outside were already speculating, sending flashes of cameras and live updates flooding the news. Investors were panicking, shareholders calling the office, and I could feel the tension radiating through the building. Every move we made from this point forward would be watched, analyzed, and exploited. Daniel leaned back slightly, exhaling slowly, a quiet growl escaping him. I held his hand tighter. “Clara and Selene have trapped us from both sides,” I thought, letting the words anchor me to the reality of the situation. I looked at Cole and Brian. They were waiting for instructions. We had to respond strategically. Every move, every decision, could either protect Daniel, the pack, and our family, or make us more vulnerable. Daniel finally spoke, but with a low voice. “We need to stay calm. We can’t give them anything more than they already have. We fight smart, not loud.” I nodded, knowing he was right. My hand remained in his, a constant reminder that we weren’t alone in this. I had to keep my wits about me, not just for the pack or Carter Holdings, but for the baby growing inside me. That alone gave me a clarity I hadn’t had in weeks. As the broadcast continued, Clara had manipulated the situation perfectly, and the elders had bought it. I could feel Daniel’s frustration.

#### Chapter 234 Moving Smartly

AMY

We had prepared for a press conference this morning and as I stepped onto the stage, I could feel every pair of eyes in the room settle on me. The press conference was packed—reporters leaning forward with pens poised, cameras whirring, elders sitting stiffly along the front row, and board members shifting uneasily behind them. Clara stood near the side, her expression was calm, almost smug, as if she already knew the outcome. I ignored her for now, focusing on the script in my hands. Daniel watched from the sidelines. I caught his gaze for a second and saw the frustration in his eyes. He wanted to intervene, to argue, to take control, but he held himself back, letting me take the spotlight. That trust fueled me. When I began speaking, I outlined the steps Carter Holdings had taken to protect investors and maintain transparency, emphasizing the board’s swift action in response to the documents presented by Clara. My words were precise. I could feel the tension in the room as I addressed the council’s accusations. Reporters scribbled furiously, the click of cameras punctuating each point. Clara’s smirk didn’t leave her face. She stayed perfectly composed, a contrast to the rising agitation I felt from the elders around her. She wanted the narrative to be hers, but I wasn’t going to let her dominate the story without resistance. Halfway through my statement, a sudden sharp wave of nausea hit me. My knees buckled, my vision blurred. I gripped the podium to steady myself, but it wasn’t enough. The room erupted into murmurs as I collapsed to the floor. Panic spread immediately. Reporters shouted, stepping forward to record the moment. I felt Daniel and Brian moving to my side instantly. His hand found mine, steadying me against the chaos. In that instant, my pregnancy was exposed. The cameras captured it/live, and I realized the implications even before Daniel whispered reassurance in my ear. My stomach had grown enough that it was unmistakable. The room shifted subtly. Reporters glanced from me to the council, whispers circulating that there was more at stake than just a corporate scandal. The public would notice, and emotions would shift. I focused inward, calling on my healing abilities. The nausea and dizziness receded, my strength returning faster than I expected. I surprised myself with the speed of recovery, but I could feel a subtle extension of my power—an almost imperceptible influence spreading around me, calming the panic in my chest. Daniel held me tightly, his whisper low against my ear. “You’re okay. Just

focus on steadying yourself. You're stronger than they think." I leaned against him briefly, letting his presence anchor me, before sitting upright and addressing the room again. My collapse had been unplanned, but it gave me an advantage I hadn't expected. Public perception could be shaped by moments like these, and I intended to use it. Mrs. Carter stood quietly on the sidelines, observing the reactions of the media and investors. Clara's confident expression faltered slightly as she noticed the shift. Reporters began asking questions not about the fraud but about me, my condition, my ability to handle both the pregnancy and the ongoing crisis. I took a deep breath and addressed the council directly. I reminded them of the importance of facts over speculation and reassured the board that Carter Holdings remained committed to transparency. The media's attention was divided now. Some focused on the alleged financial misconduct, but many were drawn to my resilience, my recovery, the unexpected announcement of my pregnancy. Daniel stayed at my side the entire time, his hands lightly on my back and shoulder, guiding me without speaking. Clara adjusted slightly, noticing the cameras capturing me at that moment. She no longer had full control over the narrative. Even her subtle smirk had shifted, replaced with a trace of calculation. I could feel the subtle changes in her posture, the tension in her jaw. She had underestimated the impact of human emotion combined with perception, and now it worked in our favor. Once I had recovered fully, I continued with the statement I had prepared. I stayed focused, answering questions concisely, calmly, and without hesitation. I could see investors nodding in agreement as reporters typed their updates. The tide was slowly beginning to turn, and I could feel the power of this public revelation as a tool. After the press conference concluded, Daniel helped me off the stage. I leaned against him. "They think they've won," I whispered, my voice low and firm, "but we're just getting started." He held me tighter, nodding, his expression determined. "And we'll make sure they know it," he said. O Mrs. Carter met us as we walked off the stage, "You handled that well," she said. "That shift in attention could buy us time. Use it." I nodded, understanding the gravity of her words. The pregnancy, the public sympathy was all part of the larger strategy now. Daniel led me back to the private room. I let myself rest briefly, closing my eyes, feeling the pulse of the day and the subtle strength I had drawn from my healing abilities. Even in chaos, there was control, and even in exposure, there was power. I knew the public revelation of the pregnancy would change everything. Clara and Elias had started a chain of moves to corner us, but now we had a tool they hadn't accounted for—public empathy, perception, and our own growing resilience. I looked up at Daniel once more, and he met my gaze. "They'll learn soon enough," he said. "This isn't over." I nodded, letting my hand rest on my stomach again, feeling both the child and the strength that came with this new reality. The day's events had shaken me, but they had also shown me the leverage we now had. Clara's plans could be countered if we moved smartly. Elias and the elders were still in play. I understood clearly that perception, timing, and precision were now our weapons, and we would use them wisely.

## Chapter 235

I woke before dawn, the house was quiet except for Daniel's soft breathing beside me. Even with Elias officially still named Alpha, I didn't feel calm. I reached for my tablet, reviewing the latest updates from Cole and Brian. Alerts from the council, the board, and our network of informants painted the same picture: Elias had the title, but being in control was far from complete. Several elders had quietly expressed their doubts, leaving him unable to act freely without hesitation. Investors were already asking pointed questions about past decisions at Carter Holdings, forcing him to micromanage in ways that exposed his inexperience. Daniel stirred beside me, his eyes opening to mine. "What's the situation?" he asked quietly. I kept my voice low, as I always did when discussing sensitive topics. "Elias

is in position, but he's already being checked at every step. The elders aren't fully behind him, and the board is asking questions that force him to overreach. He's stretching himself thin." Daniel rubbed his face and sat up. "Then we need to track everything he does. Every move. We can't afford surprises." I nodded. "Exactly. And public perception is starting to work in our favor. Yesterday's press conference made him underestimate the backlash. People are quietly sympathizing with us, with you, and with the baby. Even the investors notice when decisions don't add up." He glanced at me, studying my expression. "So Clara thinks she's winning with these minor gains."

"Yes. She reports small victories, but she misses the bigger picture," I said. "Elias is focused on consolidating, but he's unaware of the cracks appearing. Some of his allies are already second-guessing him. The more he tries to cement control, the more predictable he becomes." Daniel ran a hand over his face. "We'll need to stay sharp. Every time he miscalculates, we can respond, but we have to be careful. One misstep, and he'll find a way to hurt us or the pack." I leaned back, keeping my hand over my stomach. The baby stirred. "We have another advantage now," I said. "People are watching closely. The sympathy from the press conference didn't just sway public opinion -it created a subtle pressure on Elias. Every decision he makes is under scrutiny." He reached for my hand. "And we watch, wait, and respond. That's our strategy." I scrolled through the reports from our informants. Elias had been trying to manipulate key figures in the North, trying to solidify support. But the subtle resistance we'd expected was emerging. A few council members who were initially compliant were now acting cautiously, sending discreet messages confirming suspicions and maintaining contact with Daniel's loyalists. His inner circle was tightening, yes, but even within that smaller group, hesitation was present. "He's losing grip without realizing it," I said, almost to myself. "Every overreach exposes weakness, but he's blind to it. Clara hasn't noticed either. She's celebrating minor wins while we're watching the real movement." Daniel pulled me closer, pressing a kiss to my temple. "And we take advantage without exposing ourselves or the baby. That's what matters most right now." I nodded. "Exactly. Every step, every action, needs to consider that. The baby changes everything. We have to be measured." We spent the morning reviewing financial movements and council updates. Each misstep Elias made- questions from investors, delayed approvals, hesitation from his allies gave us insight into his limitations. He wanted total control, but his overreach created patterns we could predict. "I've been reviewing Clara's reports," I said after a while. "She's celebrating minor gains, but she hasn't adapted to the public perception shift. Yesterday, I noticed some council members quietly messaging Daniel's allies. They're leaning our way, even if they aren't fully committed yet. Every time Elias pushes, it strengthens our position." Daniel squeezed my hand. "We'll stay calm. Let him tire himself out. Let him make the mistakes. That's when we act."

Later, Cole sent a secure note through the encrypted line: "Elias is starting to tighten his inner circle. Be careful, he's losing trust quickly." I showed Daniel the message. "This is what I was talking about. He's focusing on loyalty now, which makes him predictable. Every ally he isolates is an opportunity for us to exploit later." O Daniel's expression hardened. "Then we mark every pattern, every hesitation. By the time he realizes the tide is against him, it'll be too late." I felt the baby move again, a subtle flutter reminding me of the stakes. "Every plan we make has to protect them too. We can't risk any reckless moves. And Daniel, he's never going to expect us to be patient, measured. That's our edge." By afternoon, the stress in the city and among investors had begun to ripple. Minor questions about board decisions had spread, and even some public sentiment hinted at skepticism toward Elias' control. I shared the updates with Daniel, who remained focused, leaning on every piece of intelligence to create

our plan. As evening fell, I felt a message buzz in my secure line: “Your throne is shaky. The Carter family sees everything.” Daniel read it first, his eyes narrowing. “They’re testing him. Someone is already letting him know he’s vulnerable. That’s useful.” I couldn’t help the small smirk that tugged at my lips. “Yes. It confirms what we suspected. Elias isn’t untouchable, and Clara hasn’t noticed the shift. He’s stretching himself too thin, and the public perception we gained gives us leverage we didn’t have before.” Daniel rested his forehead against mine. “Every movement we make has to be deliberate. We stay two steps ahead, and we protect the baby and the pack at the same time. That’s non–negotiable.” I nodded, feeling a quiet surge of resolve. Elias might have the title, but we were smarter. Clara and Elias had underestimated our reach, our allies, and the influence of public perception. Combined with our knowledge of their moves, we had the advantage—but only if we remained measured, calculated, and patient. By the time night fully settled, we had reviewed every report and forecast available. I could feel the calm before the storm—the preparation phase where every detail mattered. Daniel’s hand remained on my stomach as we sat together, silent except for the quiet hum of the city outside.

## Chapter 236 Productive Evening

### MRS. CARTER

I stayed later than everyone else that night at the office. Most offices in the building had already gone quiet, and the cleaning staff moved around carefully, trying not to disturb me. I didn’t blame them. I probably looked like someone who hadn’t slept in days. My desk was buried under files, printouts, and old audit logs I dug out of storage. None of this was work I should have been doing alone, but I didn’t trust half the board anymore, and the other half were too scared to act. I didn’t want to stress Daniel and Amy either. They’ve been through stress. I turned back to my screen and opened another folder of internal emails. At first, nothing caught my attention. Most of it was harmless chatter—meeting reminders, vague questions about the financial freeze, requests for clarification. Then one message jumped out at me. The subject line had an encryption signature that didn’t belong to any of my staff. I recognized the pattern immediately as Clara’s. The email wasn’t addressed to me. It had been forwarded to my inbox by mistake, originally meant for a junior accountant. For a second, I wondered if it was bait. But the accountant was someone I had hired personally, someone too inexperienced to be involved in anything larger. My gut told me the mistake came from Clara, not from anyone else. I clicked the message. At first glance, it seemed boring—just a list of scheduled fund movements for the week. But the timestamps nagged at me. None of them matched the official ledger. I opened the financial system and cross–referenced the numbers. It took less than two minutes for my stomach to tighten. “These accounts aren’t ours,” I whispered. The account numbers belonged to a shell company Daniel shut down years ago. I remembered that time clearly. Daniel brought me a stack of evidence and told me the company had been siphoning money through fake logistics contracts. We closed it quickly. He even filed a report with the council so they wouldn’t accuse Carter Holdings of hiding anything. Why were those accounts active again? I scrolled further down the email chain and saw two more messages. The timestamps were only minutes apart. Clara had sent the first version, then immediately sent a “corrected” version to the same group. The second message had completely different account numbers and timestamps. She tried to cover her tracks, but she accidentally copied the wrong recipient the first time. I hit print before she could recall anything. The documents came out warm, smelling of toner. I gathered them quickly, checked the hallway to make sure no one was around, and slipped everything into a secure folder. My hand shook a little as I locked it in my drawer. I didn’t tell Daniel. I didn’t tell Amy. Not yet. I knew both of them well enough to understand what would happen if I did. Daniel would

storm out of the house the moment I finished explaining. Amy would try to stay calm, but she was already carrying too much, and the last thing she needed was another weight on her shoulders. No. I needed more proof—something airtight. Something the council couldn't twist or ignore. I grabbed my phone and scrolled to a private contact. "Mr. Hale," I said once he answered, "I need you in my office first thing tomorrow. Bring your full team." "That sounds serious," he replied. "It is," I said. "And it needs to be handled quietly." He didn't ask more questions, which was one of the reasons I trusted him. We ended the call, and I finally shut down my computer. The screen went dark, casting the office into dim light.

When I stepped out, the atmosphere in the hallway changed immediately. The building wasn't busy anymore, but some of board members were still gathered in corners whispering. Their tones lowered when they saw me. Some straightened their jackets. Others avoided eye contact. And then there was Clara. She stood in the center of a small group, smiling the way she always did—polite, friendly, and completely aware of the power she believed she held. Her eyes met mine. She didn't flinch or look away. She simply held the smile. I walked past her without slowing down. She didn't deserve acknowledgment. As I approached the elevators, I heard her voice behind me. "Long night?" she asked, casual and sweet. I pressed the elevator button and kept my tone even. "Productive." "It's good to stay busy," she replied. The elevator doors opened, and I stepped inside. Clara didn't follow, but she didn't need to. Her little games were getting sloppier. She didn't realize the room was already shifting away from her. Investors were uneasy. The press had started questioning the timing of recent events. And the pregnancy revelation—Amy fainting on camera and recovering so quickly—had softened public opinion toward us. The elevator reached the ground floor. As soon as the doors opened, I exhaled quietly. My hands were stiff from how tightly I held my bag. I walked outside into the night air. It wasn't cold, but there was a heaviness to it, like the city itself had been waiting for a turning point. I stepped aside from the building entrance, letting people pass. My phone buzzed. A message from Daniel "Heading home soon? Amy's resting" I typed back: >"I'm leaving now. Is everything alright?" Just tired. We'll talk later." I slipped my phone away and tightened my grip on my bag. Inside it was the first real mistake Clara had made in weeks. Something she wouldn't be able to deny or manipulate. Something Elias couldn't twist into another smear campaign. I stood there a moment, letting the weight of it settle. For the first time since this whole ordeal began, I felt the smallest sense of relief—not victory, not confidence, just the simple knowledge that we finally had something solid. "Good," I whispered to myself. "Now I just need proof strong enough to end this." Because my son deserved peace. Amy deserved peace. And I would not let anyone tear apart what we built.

## Chapter 237 Not The Whole Truth

### AMY

I woke up with a calmness I hadn't felt in days. The memory of collapsing on the stage still hung around the edges of everything, but the fear that had chased me afterward wasn't there this morning. My pulse felt normal. My breathing felt normal. Even the faint ache that had lingered in my back since the incident was gone. My phone kept buzzing on the nightstand. The collapse was still trending online, but most of the comments were supportive. A few were dramatic, but nothing that worried me. The public had shifted, and for once, the shift was in our favor. Daniel stood at the foot of the bed with his arms crossed like he'd been stationed there all night. "You're not going anywhere," he said. "You're still recovering." "I'm fine," I said as I sat up. "Really." "You fainted in front of half the region," he argued.

"You need rest." "I need to work," I replied. "Investors asked for a private meeting. If I cancel now, they'll think we're hiding something." He clenched his jaw. I could see he wanted to push back, but he also knew I was right. I reached out and squeezed his hand. "I'll take Cole," I said. "You trust him." Daniel sighed. "I trust him. I don't trust the rest of the world." "Then let me handle it." He finally nodded, though reluctantly. I got dressed in something simple—clean lines, neutral colors. Nothing flashy. I didn't need attention. I needed credibility. Cole arrived at the door ten minutes later. "You look calm," he said as we walked out. "I am." I wasn't sure how true that was, but it felt true enough. The investors had requested a private meeting in a small conference suite downtown. They didn't want press or noise. Just answers. When Cole and I walked in, they were already seated. Both were older, long-time partners of Carter Holdings, the kind who didn't waste time with small talk. One of them stood to shake my hand, though his eyes drifted briefly to my stomach before he caught himself. "Mrs. Carter," he said. "Thank you for coming despite everything." "Thank you for asking for clarity directly," I said, taking my seat. They started with cautious questions—financial stability, pack alignment, projected board decisions. Nothing hostile, just careful. I answered each one plainly. No excuses, no emotional appeals. 72 +5 Pearls When one of them asked whether the leadership shift at the pack house would affect corporate decisions, I sat forward. "Our operations team has remained intact," I said. "Board oversight is stable. Temporary leadership is internal, not structural, and doesn't interfere with long-term planning." The investor who'd looked at my stomach earlier hesitated before speaking. "And your health? There are concerns about stability, given the recent... incident." Cole straightened, ready to argue, but I shook my head lightly. "I'm pregnant," I said. "Not sick. And as for the incident—my doctors cleared me. I'm capable of continuing my work." The investor nodded, visibly relieved. His shoulders loosened. The other investor leaned back, watching me more closely. "You're calm," he said. "Given everything, that's impressive." "It's necessary," I replied. We continued for another twenty minutes. By the end of it, I could tell their stance had softened. They weren't fully reassured, but they weren't uneasy anymore. That was enough. Outside, while waiting for Cole to bring the car around, I leaned against the railing. My heart wasn't racing the way it usually did after tense meetings. My body felt stable in a way that didn't match the stress I should have felt. I kept that detail to myself. On the drive back, Cole glanced at me through the mirror. "You did well in there," he said. "They listened to you." "They needed to see we're still functioning," I said.

"They needed to see you," he replied. "Not Daniel. Not Elias. You." I didn't respond, but he wasn't wrong. The public sympathy from the pregnancy and the press conference had shifted something. People were looking at me differently now—not as a threat, but as someone standing in the middle of chaos trying to hold things still. When we got home, Daniel was pacing the living room. The moment he saw me, he walked straight over and wrapped his arms around me. "You shouldn't have pushed yourself," he muttered against my hair. "I handled it," I said. "They're calmer now." He pulled back, running a hand through his hair. "Elias made more changes today. He's replacing staff at the office and some in the estate without approval. He's taking files from the archives. He's—" "Daniel," I said quietly, placing my hand on his chest. "We can't react to every move he makes. That's what he wants." His breathing eased. I guided him to sit. "We let him keep exposing himself," I said. "The right people are watching now." He exhaled slowly, grounding himself. "I hate feeling like we're just waiting." "We're not waiting," I said. "We're preparing." Later that night, after dinner, I was in the kitchen rinsing a glass when Mrs. Carter arrived. Her expression was calm, but something sat tightly in her eyes. Daniel greeted her first, but she looked past him and met my gaze. "Amy," she said. "May I speak with you privately?" Daniel frowned. "Is something wrong?" She shook her head. "Not wrong. Just women talk." She led me

to the small office room near the hallway. Once the door closed, she faced me with her hands clasped. "I'm not showing you the details yet," she said. "I need to verify a few things before I bring them forward." My stomach tightened. "You found something?" Her voice lowered. "Yes. And it's important. But you must not react. Not yet."

"What kind of something?" I asked. "Financial," she said. "And it links back to someone we already suspected." She didn't say the name, but I didn't need her to. She drew in a slow breath. "I'll confirm everything by tomorrow. When I do, you and Daniel will have the first solid advantage you've had in months." I gripped the back of the chair beside me. "Mrs. Carter," I said quietly, "if this is what I think it is—" "It's a start," she said. "Not the whole truth yet, but a start."

## Chapter 238 Let Elias Burry Himself

### DANIEL

I woke before sunrise with my heart already speeding. Amy was curled into me. I watched her for a moment. She looked better today. Stronger. That part helped. The rest didn't. The title of "temporary Alpha" sitting on Elias' head irritated every part of me. It felt like a stain I had to scrub off. I slipped out of bed quietly and headed straight for my office. The room was cold. Elias had locked access to all Alpha files the second he sat in my chair. I wasn't allowed to touch anything related to pack leadership. So I pulled out what I could: old alliance logs, personal contacts, archived letters from different regional leaders. Things the council couldn't complain about. None of it looked useful, but it was better than sitting downstairs pretending everything was normal. Cole knocked once before entering. "You're up early," he said. "I didn't sleep," I replied. He sat across from me, rubbing the back of his neck. "You need to hear this. Elias replaced three senior guards last night. No process, no notice. Just walked in and sent them out." I looked up sharply. "Did they obey?" "Two did. The third asked for an official order. Said he wanted it in writing, signed by the council." That made me pause. "The pack is resisting him?" Cole nodded. "Not loudly, but it's there." "Anyone complaining?" I asked. "Everyone," he said. "Quietly. No one likes being shuffled around for no reason." Before I could respond, another knock sounded. Brian stepped in, looking like he'd sprinted from the pack house. "We have a problem," he said. "Tell me." "Elias wants to rotate the border units today. Again. People are pissed. They don't trust the replacements he's choosing." I leaned back in my chair and let the information settle. "He's choking the pack with changes." "He thinks it makes him look strong," Cole said. "It makes him look unstable," I countered. The two exchanged a look. Brian finally said, "What do you want us to do? We can't challenge him without Let Elias Burry Himself violating the council orders."

"I know." I pushed the papers aside and stood. "But we don't have to challenge him. We just need to let his behavior speak for itself." Brian raised an eyebrow. "Meaning?" "Meaning you don't interfere with anything he orders... unless it breaks protocol. If it does, you refuse politely and ask for council confirmation." Cole's mouth twitched. "That'll piss him off." "It'll expose him," I said. "And it won't count as rebellion. You'd only be following standard procedure." Brian nodded slowly. "So we push him into corners without actually doing anything." "Exactly." "And the pack?" Cole asked. "Keep them calm," I said. "Tell them to carry on like usual. If they see you two panicking, it'll create chaos." Brian leaned on the desk. "What's the endgame here?" "Elias will overplay his hand," I said. "He always does. The more desperate he gets, the more reckless he becomes."

Cole crossed his arms. "You really think he'll screw himself?" "He already is," I said. "Everyone sees it. The council won't tolerate instability for long." Silence stretched through the room. Then Cole nodded. "We'll handle it." "Good," I said. "Go." They left, and I dropped into the chair again. My hands were restless, flipping through old notes, scanning faces of allies who once stood beside me. Some had drifted away with the noise of politics. Others waited for someone to give them direction again. Around noon, Amy walked in and closed the door behind her and walked straight toward me. "Brian said you haven't eaten," she said. "Not hungry." She didn't argue. Instead, she stepped between my legs and sat on my lap. I wrapped my arms around her waist. The tension in my chest eased for the first time all morning. "What's going on in that head of yours?" she asked. "I'm planning." "Planning what?" I didn't soften anything. "Letting Elias bury himself." She held my gaze. "Explain."

"He's making unstable decisions. People will turn against him without us doing anything. If we push, the council will accuse me of interference. But if we stand still and let him behave like an idiot, they'll step in on their own." She nodded slowly. "You're right. He's unraveling faster than expected." "There's more," she said. "Your mother came to see me last night." I stiffened. "What did she want?" "She didn't say much. Just that she found something. Something important." My entire body went still. "Did she show you?" "No. She wants to verify everything first. But Daniel... her face said enough. Whatever she found is serious." A slow breath slipped out of me. Pieces were finally moving. Real ones. "I knew it," I muttered. "There had to be a mistake somewhere. Elias and Clara aren't as clean as they pretend." Amy tightened her arms around my shoulders. "Your mother's been waiting for the right moment. She wouldn't say that if it wasn't solid." "Then we're close," I said. Closer than Elias realizes." She nodded once. "We just need patience." I kissed her forehead and held her for a long time. The day passed with more reports from Brian and Cole. Staff quietly resisted orders. Border guards requested written confirmation for changes. Even the kitchen staff refused to adjust their schedules without council approval. Elias was shaking the entire structure without realizing how obvious he looked. By evening, the house was quiet. I stayed home as ordered. Every part of me wanted to be at the pack house, ready to step in the second Elias made a dangerous call. But I forced myself to sit still. Instead, I sent messages to old allies. Nothing direct. Nothing that broke any rule. Just short check-ins. Every line was professional and some replied instantly. Others left voice notes saying they were ready whenever I needed them. It warmed something inside me I didn't want to admit was hurting. Hours later, I stood by the window with the lights off. The moonlight made the yard look quieter than usual. I let out a slow breath and said the words out loud, because saying them made them real: "Let Elias think he has won. He's digging his own grave."

## Chapter 239 Perfect Time

### AMY

The boardroom was already filled when Mrs. Carter and I walked up to the doors. Elias was speaking. I could tell by the tone. He was sounding too confident. Mrs. Carter didn't slow down. She pushed the doors open hard enough that they slammed against the wall. Every head turned as we walked into the boardroom. The board members froze. Elias stopped mid-sentence. Clara, who was sitting two seats to his right, went pale the second she saw us. No one said a word as Mrs. Carter marched straight toward the long table and dropped a thick file in front of Elias. I shut the door behind us and stepped closer. Elias stared at his Mrs. Carter first, then at me. "What is this?" he asked. Mrs. Carter didn't sit. "You'll see." He glanced around at the board, searching for support, trying to stay composed. "We're in the middle of a meeting." Mrs. Carter didn't blink. "Then this is the perfect time." She looked at me. "Open

it." I reached over, flipped the file open, and turned the first few pages toward the board. The room went silent again. Screenshots. Emails. Video snippets. Transaction logs with Clara's name, Elias' name, and the funds that had moved through shell accounts just before every hit against Daniel, Brian, and me. Clara's chair scraped back as she tried to stand. "Sit down," Mrs. Carter said sharply. Clara sat without saying anything. Elias cleared his throat. "This looks edited. Anyone can- "The files came from your office computer," Mrs. Carter cut in. "Your personal drive. Pulled by the company's internal security team. No one edited anything." He swallowed hard. I stepped closer to the table and pushed the next set of documents toward him. "These show the money you approved for the private investigators who followed me. Watched me. Reported to Clara." Clara flinched. "I didn't-" I held up a hand. "Don't talk to me." Elias pushed the papers aside, trying to look calm even as his fingers trembled. "This isn't what it looks like." "Yes, it is," Mrs. Carter said. "Every time you sabotaged a project. Every time you leaked details about Daniel. Every time you created doubt in this board—your fingerprints are right here." One of the board members leaned forward. "Elias... is this real?" Elias didn't answer. I slid my phone onto the table and tapped a video. The screen lit up with Elias and Clara in the hallway outside the finance department. His voice was clear: "Make sure it goes through Clara's account first. I don't want anyone linking it back to me." Clara's: "And Amy? What do we do if she gets too close?" Elias: "We'll handle her." The board erupted in whispers. Elias stood up quickly. "This is taken out of context-" "Sit," Mrs. Carter snapped. He froze. His jaw tightened, then he sat. "This wasn't an accident," I said, staring straight at him. "Everything you did was intentional. You kept escalating because you thought no one would check. And because you wanted control." Elias opened his mouth to speak, but I cut him off. "I lost count of how many times you tried to undermine us. How many times you used Clara to do your dirty work. How many times you tried to twist things so I'd look unstable." I stepped closer, my hands pressed against the table. "But this "I pointed at the evidence. "This is the part that matters most." Mrs. Carter reached into her bag and pulled out another envelope. She placed it in front of Elias.

"These are the hospital reports," she said. "And the footage of the tampering with Amy's car." The board went still. Elias' eyes widened for a split second. That alone told me enough. "You tried to scare me," I said quietly. "But you didn't think you'd actually put my baby at risk." The air shifted immediately. Even the board members who had been neutral looked sickened. Clara whispered, "I didn't know—" "Don't lie," I said sharply. My voice cracked at the end, and I hated that he heard it. "You could have killed her." Elias' hands clenched on the table. "I never wanted—" He tried to feign innocence but Mrs. Carter cut him short. "You wanted Daniel out. You wanted power. You hated that Amy supported him. You hated that his father trusted him. So you started playing games you couldn't control." Elias pushed his chair back and stood again. "Let's talk privately—" "No," she said. "This family has hidden too much behind closed doors. They deserve to hear the truth." I stepped around the table, right in front of him. Close enough that he had no choice but to look at me. "I need you to listen to me," I said, my voice low. "If anything happens to my baby because of everything you set in motion... you will pay for it. And I'm not talking about board consequences. I mean legally. Publicly. Personally." His expression twisted—some mix of guilt, fear, and anger. "Amy, I didn't touch your car," he said. "I didn't order that. I swear—" "But you created the chain of events," I shot back. "You kept working with Clara. You kept hiring people who didn't care about limits. You knew exactly what you were doing. You set the tone. You just didn't think it would reach this point." Clara suddenly stood up again. "I didn't mean for anything to get dangerous. I swear I didn't—" Mrs. Carter's voice cut through her panic. "Clara, we have your transfers. Your messages. Your involvement is already clear." Clara's face crumpled. "Elias said—" "I said stop talking," Elias snapped at her. "Don't raise your voice at her," I said. "You used her. Just like you used

everyone else.” He turned back to me. “You don’t understand-” “I understand perfectly,” I replied. The room stayed silent for a long moment. Then one of the board members spoke. “We need to vote on immediate expulsion.” Another cleared his throat. “There’s no need to drag this out. The evidence is overwhelming.” Elias looked around, panicking. “You’re basing this on—on what? Some files? A video clip? Tell them—” Mrs. Carter shook her head slowly. “I can’t protect you from this.” My stomach tightened, and a wave of pain hit again. I held onto the edge of the table until it passed. Elias noticed. “You’re... you’re in pain?” “That’s because of everything you triggered,” I said. Mrs. Carter turned to the board. “You have everything you need. Continue.” The board members nodded and began organizing documents and preparing the formal vote.

## Chapter 240 Already In Motion

### DANIEL

I woke to the quiet hum of the estate, but I couldn’t stay still. Elias’ exposure last night had changed everything, yet the council was in chaos. Their doubts about him spread like wildfire, and the pack was looking for someone to follow. That someone was me. I walked into the study, where Cole and Brian were already reviewing reports from loyalists. “Status?” I asked, leaning against the desk. Cole pointed to a screen. “The council members who backed Elias are panicking. Some are trying to spin it as a misunderstanding. Others are asking to meet privately.” Brian added, “Pack members are waiting for a signal. They want direction.” I ran a hand over my face. “Good. That means they’re ready to listen. Let’s make sure they hear the right message.” I moved to the secure channel and called a few of the most trusted pack leaders. One by one and I addressed them. “Elias tried to manipulate you,” I said, keeping my voice firm. “He relied on forged documents, secret deals, and fear. I’ve shown the evidence. I expect loyalty to the pack, not to a temporary Alpha trying to play politics.” There was silence on the other end for a moment. Then responses came. “Understood, Alpha.” “We follow you.” “No one acts without your order.” I felt my shoulders relax slightly. That was the beginning. The pack remembered me. I turned to Brian. “Set up a meeting with all active members tonight. Everyone who’s loyal should attend. They need to hear directly from me.” Brian nodded. “I’ll notify them. Some of the council will resist, I clenched my jaw. “Then we deal with them. Quietly, efficiently.” By mid-morning, I was at the council chambers. The room was tense. Some elders still dared to glance at me with suspicion. I didn’t waste time. “Council members,” I began, “You were given responsibility to protect the pack, not to follow a rogue temporary Alpha blindly. Some of you betrayed that trust.” I walked slowly, “Those of you who acted against the pack, against me, will be stripped off your wolves and banished. This is not personal. This is necessary.” Gasps echoed. A few elders shifted uncomfortably. One elder, trying to speak, was cut off by my raised hand. “No arguments. The records, the votes, and the evidence are clear. You failed your duties. Your wolves are hereby revoked.” Another elder whispered to someone beside him. I turned my gaze sharply. “Do not question me again. You will leave quietly or be escorted.”

The room went still. Even Elias, who had tried to regain composure, now sat back, realizing he no longer had control. I addressed the remaining council. “Loyalty is earned. Authority is respected because it serves the pack. Remember this. Anyone trying manipulation again will face consequences immediately.” I stepped back and motioned for Cole and Brian to bring in the assembled pack leaders. Dozens of faces filled the room. “Alpha,” one of the leaders said, bowing his head slightly. “We’ve waited for guidance. Tell us what to do.” I nodded. “You will maintain order within your units. Ensure that Elias’ attempts to regain control are blocked. Protect your territories and report any suspicious

activity immediately.” Another leader added, “Some members are confused about loyalty. They followed Elias out of fear.” I held up a hand. “Then remind them. Loyalty is to the pack first. To the rules. Not to personal ambition. We rebuild now, with everyone knowing their place and responsibility. Cole quietly passed me a tablet with incoming reports. Multiple alerts showed that several previously hesitant members were already realigning with me. That was the key. The pack needed confidence, and I had it. I addressed the room again. “We will move quickly. Any council member who resists will be removed. Any pack member who acts without proper authority will be disciplined. We are reclaiming control, not for revenge, but to restore order.” Brian stepped forward. “Alpha, do you want us to make public statements?” I shook my head. “Not yet. Let the council and Elias stew in their exposure. Internally, we consolidate. Once everything is secured, we will show the pack and the North that authority is stable again.” Elias’ eyes darted toward me. His expression tried to mask panic. I knew he wanted to speak. “You’ve been yourself,” I said, locking eyes with him. “Every move you’ve made is documented. Every attempt to manipulate will be reversed. Do not try to hide behind rules that don’t exist anymore.” He rose, but I cut him off. “Sit. You no longer have authority here. Your title was temporary. Your trust is gone. Consider yourself fortunate the banishment is not immediate. Your role in the pack is over.” Clara remained silent, her usual composure cracked. I could see her calculating, but there was no way for her to regain the initiative in this room. I turned to the gathered pack members. “Tonight, you return to your territories. Reinforce the rules, keep the pack calm, and remember who you follow. Authority without respect is meaningless. Loyalty without purpose is dangerous. We will not let personal ambition destroy the pack again.” Already In Motion Heads nodded, murmurs of agreement spreading. I addressed Cole and Brian quietly. “Make sure everyone who switched sides is monitored. Keep lines of communication open. Any suspicious movement—tell me immediately.” Cole nodded. “Already in motion.” I looked around the room one last time. “We’ve taken a major step. But this isn’t over. Elias and Clara will test boundaries. We need vigilance.” Brian added, “Alpha, the pack has already started responding. Some units refused Elias’ new orders today.” I smiled faintly. “Good. Let him believe he has power while we quietly reclaim ours. We’ve cornered him without firing a single shot. That’s the plan.” The day ended with me standing before the pack leaders, reaffirming rules, addressing grievances, and listening to reports. Every detail mattered. Every interaction strengthened my control. By nightfall, I returned to the estate. I stood at the balcony with the city lights below. My wolf stirred inside me. “This is only the beginning,” I whispered. “We rebuild, we reclaim, and we take back everything that belongs to the pack.”