

# Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 111

Chapter 111 Failed Elimination AMY He exhaled slowly. “If it’s linked to Clara’s time with the rogues, we’ll need to find out what she was involved in” Mrs. Carter nodded from behind him. “And fast. If she’s been using their methods, there’s no telling what she’s brought into our world.” As she left the room, Daniel stayed behind, still staring at the mark like he could will it to disappear. “I’ll fix this,” he said finally. “I know,” I said. “But for now, just stay with me. That’s enough.” I did not realize when I slept off until the ray of sun shone directly on my face causing me to squint. I opened my eyes slowly, feeling the ache of my wound. By the time I came downstairs, Daniel was already dressed for the day, pacing near the window phone in hand. His tone was low. In public, “What do you mean she’s been released?” he said sharply into the phone. “She attacked my wife there were witnesses-” He paused, “Don’t tell me it’s out of your control. Someone had to authorize that.” I stood quietly by the doorway, watching him. When he finally ended the call, he turned to me, his expression unreadable. “They let Clara out,” he said. “What?” “What?” “Last night. No record of who signed the order, but it went through the higher council channels. I called the precinct myself. They said someone with authority overrode her detainment.” My stomach turned. “That doesn’t make sense. After everything she did—” “It makes perfect sense if Elias was involved,” he interrupted. “He’s on the internal board that handles council-related cases. If he wanted her released quietly, it wouldn’t take much.” Mrs. Carter entered, holding her tablet and wearing the expression that usually meant bad news. “I heard,” she said, setting the tablet down on the table. “Daniel, you need to tread carefully. If Elias has started pulling strings like this, he’s confident we don’t have enough to expose him yet.” Daniel rubbed the bridge of his nose. “He’s stalling us – buying time.” “Or cleaning up,” I said quietly. They both looked at me. “Cleaning up how?” Mrs. Carter asked. I hesitated. “I tried accessing the financial archive again. The folder with Elias’s approval files that we flagged for review are gone.” 1/3 09:58 Thu, Jan 1 Chapter 111 Failed Elimination Daniel froze. “Gone?” “Deleted. Or moved. I checked through the audit logs. It wasn’t an outside hack, someone with administrative clearance did it.” “That means it’s internal.” Finished I nodded. “And not just the files. The hard copies from the secure cabinet are missing too. Whoever did it knew exactly where to look.” Daniel turned toward his mother. “Who else has

clearance to the estate and the company's confidential section?" She thought for a moment. "Only senior staff, two council assistants, and us."

"Which means Elias has someone feeding him information," I said. Daniel's tone hardened. "Then we find out who." By noon, Daniel was at the council office, demanding a review of Clara's release. I stayed behind with Mrs. Carter, going over security access records from both the estate and the company. It was tedious work of lines of digital entries, time stamps, codes. Nothing stood out at first, name that shouldn't have been there. "Mrs. Carter," I said, turning the screen toward her. "Look at this." She leaned closer. "Samuel Grant." "He's one of the estate's internal clerks," I said. "He doesn't have clearance for the finance wing." [www.Velworm.com](http://www.Velworm.com) She frowned. "He's been with us for years. His wife used to handle staff training." noticed a "Well, his access card was used three nights ago which was the same day the archive files disappeared." Mrs. Carter frowned. "That's not a coincidence." Before we could discuss further, the front doors opened. Daniel walked in, "They stonewalled me," he said flatly. "Every request I made was redirected. No record of who processed Clara's release, no logs, nothing. It's like the whole thing was scrubbed overnight." Mrs. Carter exchanged a look with me. "Then Amy's right. Someone's cleaning the house for him." Daniel's eyes flicked to the laptop screen in front of me. "What did you find?" I explained quickly about the access logs and the name that appeared. He took a step closer, jaw tightening as he read. "Samuel," he muttered. "He's been with us since before my father died. Loyal, quiet. Never a problem." "Until now," I said. He nodded slowly. "If Elias got to him, he wouldn't use direct money. He'd use pressure like family, debt, or something personal." 2/3 nu Jang Chapter 111 Failed Elimination Finished Mrs. Carter folded her arms. "Either way, he's compromised." Daniel turned to me. "How much did he take?" "I don't know yet," I said. "But the missing files include the ledger trail linking Elias to the rogue payments. If those are gone, we've lost the easiest proof we had." His expression darkened. "Then we start over. This time, we make sure no one gets close enough to erase it again." The rest of the afternoon blurred as Daniel set up internal restrictions at the company, locking access to sensitive data. Mrs. Carter called in her personal assistant and discreetly reassigned certain staff to other wings of the estate. — I focused on rebuilding what I could from old backups spreadsheets, council memos, anything that might help us trace Elias's hidden accounts. By evening, Daniel returned from the company again, looking worn out. "The finance division were tampered with," he said. "Our IT confirmed it. The backup drives from that week are "So it's not just the estate," I said. "He's reaching into both sides." Mrs. Carter exhaled sharply. "He's tightening the net." Daniel sat down across me. His hands were clasped, his voice calm but low. "This isn't just about revenge anymore. If he's already controlling parts of the council, he's building something bigger. Might be a takeover, or wo "What if the attack years ago was

just one piece of it?" I asked quietly. "He failed to eliminate you then. Maybe this is his second attempt through influence, not violence." 80

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

7-8 minutes

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 112

Chapter 112 The Cut Is Gone AMY My question silenced the room. E wW.N©  
vê/Worm.CM Finally, Mrs. Carter spoke. "Then we need to turn this around. If Elias wants control, we'll show the council that he's been using them. But we'll need proof of something that can't be deleted." Daniel nodded slowly. "And a way to expose it publicly before he silences us." The plan was simple in theory which was to rebuild the trail from independent sources. It meant talking to people who once worked under Elias, tracking rogue payments through third-party trade routes, and securing witnesses. But it also meant we'd have to trust fewer people than ever. As I gathered the files, the faint sting on my cheek pulsed again. I pressed a finger to it instinctively. Daniel noticed. "Still hurting?" "A little," I said. "It's manageable." He observed me for a second, his tone softening. "You shouldn't have to manage pain because of someone else's hatred." I smiled a little. "We've both done worse for this family." He didn't argue. Instead, he stood up and said, "We'll deal with Elias. And when this is over, I'll make sure no one ever comes near you again." Mrs. Carter's eyes lingered on us, a faint trace of approval in her expression. "He means that, Amy." I nodded, though inside I couldn't shake the feeling that Elias was already several steps ahead watching, waiting and pretending to not know that we're on to him. Somewhere in the walls of this estate or the halls of our company, he still had someone feeding him our every move and we need to figure out who. And the worst part was that I wasn't sure who it was anymore. \*\*\* I woke up the next morning feeling strangely light. For a second, I didn't even remember falling asleep. The last thing I recalled was Daniel helping me clean the wound on my face. The cut had stung deep into my skin, a thin but sharp line that burned long after we bandaged it. I got up from the bed to check my face in the mirror, I was surprised to see that there was nothing. I sat up quickly, touching my cheek. It felt smooth like there was nothing there before. No tenderness, no mark at all. It was as if it had never happened. The blanket slid off as I swung my legs to the floor. My body felt normal, but my mind didn't. I walked to the mirror, turned my face toward the light, and looked again. The skin was clear and there wasn't even a W(w)w.n©velwŔm.(c)(o)mfaint scar. 1/3 09:58 Thu, Jan 1 GG Chapter 112 The Cut is Gone www.©OveIwoŔm.com That was strange because it was poisoned and

refusing to heal. All of a sudden it was gone. Finished Daniel walked in a few minutes later, still in his shirt from last night, the first two buttons undone. He stopped at the door when he saw me. "You're awake," he said, his voice calm. "How are you feeling?" I turned to him slowly. "That's the thing. I feel fine. Too fine." His eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?" I pointed to my check. "It's gone." He stepped closer, his expression shifting from confusion to disbelief. His fingers brushed my face gently his thumb tracing where the wound had been. "Amy, there's nothing here." "I know," I said. "It healed overnight. Completely." He frowned. "That shouldn't happen. That's so strange with that kind of poison." We called for the medic immediately. The doctor arrived and examined it. The doctor was as astonished as we were. "I don't understand," she said finally, pulling her glasses down. "The wound was bad enough to take at least a week to heal. But there's not even a trace of regeneration marks. No inflammation, no tissue shift. It's like the injury never happened."

Daniel crossed his arms. "So what does that mean?" The doctor shook her head. "If I didn't treat it myself, I'd say it never existed." Her words didn't help. She packed up her things and left, promising to "run a few comparisons," though I could tell she didn't have a clue what to compare. After she was gone, Daniel stayed by the bed, looking thoughtful. "We keep this between us," he said quietly. "Why?" I asked. "Because unexplained things like this don't happen without a reason. And if it's tied to Clara or the rituals she was part of, we don't know who might be watching." He wasn't wrong. Still, I hated the secrecy. I nodded anyway. "Fine. Just... don't look at me like I've grown a second head." *www.NoVelwóRm.com* His lips lifted slightly. "I'd notice that." He tried to lighten the mood, but the concern in his eyes didn't fade. Later at work, I sat at my desk, reviewing some documentation. The office buzzed quietly – phones ringing, keyboards clacking, people moving in and out. Nothing unusual. 2/3 09:58 Thu, Jan 1 GG: Chapter 112 The Cut is Gone Finished Yet everything felt... heightened. My senses felt overly heightened and it felt like I was sharing an office with a thousand people.. I could hear conversations from the other end of the floor. They were faint but clear. Someone laughing near the break room, another person complaining about a report delay. I rubbed my temple, telling myself I was imagining it. When Daniel walked past my office later that morning, I knew before I saw him. I could sense his presence, even the intensity of his focus. That wasn't normal either. At lunch, I forced myself to act normal, joining my team briefly before escaping to the rooftop for some peace and quiet. I needed the distance to think. Mrs. Carter found me there that evening. I didn't hear her footsteps, but I smelled the faint trace of her perfume of lilies and cedar, the scent that always seemed to follow her. "I heard the medic came by the house," she said, her tone casual but direct. I turned toward her. "Daniel told you?" She nodded. "Of course he did. He tells me everything that concerns you." I didn't know how to respond to that. She stepped closer, her eyes scanning my face. "So it's true," she said softly. "The cut is gone." "It is." I said. "I don't

understand how.” She looked thoughtful. “Healing that fast of poison isn’t natural – not even for us. Not without something else involved.” “You think it’s connected to Clara?” I asked. Mrs. Carter exhaled slowly. “Possibly. Or to something possibly different. Remember, the rituals she dabbled in weren’t simple. The energy she played with was dark, unpredictable. If she scratched you while carrying any trace of it...” She didn’t finish the sentence. She didn’t need to. “I don’t feel sick,” I said. “Just... different.” Her eyes softened. “That’s what worries me.” “I’ll be careful,” I promised. “Good,” she said. “And if anything changes anything at all—you tell me before you tell Daniel.” — I nodded, even though I wasn’t sure I agreed. 80

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 113

Chapter 113 Elias Carter DANIEL 94 Finished It was a quiet afternoon at the estate. I had just finished a call with the board when one of the guards appeared at my office door, looking uneasy. “Sir,” he said, “Elias Carter is here.” I froze for a second, making sure I’d heard him right. “Here?” “Yes, Alpha. He’s at the main gate. Says he doesn’t need an escort.” I stood up immediately, Elias had not come back to the estate since his strange trip. And now he was here refusing the usual security escort. “Let him in,” I said after a pause. When I stepped into the main hall, he was already there. Elias looked exactly the same physically but I could not unsee him the way I saw him like a criminal now. He had that smile that had fooled me for years. He greeted the guards like old friends and turned toward me as if walking into my home was the most natural thing in the world. “Daniel,” he said with that smooth tone I’d once respected. “It’s been too long.” “Too long,” I replied evenly. *www.novëLwo(r)mm.c(0)m* He looked around, taking in the polished floors, the quiet hum of the estate. “Feels good to be home again. I’ve been handling council matters abroad – things that needed my full attention. But that’s done now. I’m back for good.” Before I could respond, I saw my mother appear from the stairs. Her face was calm, her movements graceful as always, but I caught the flicker in her eyes. It was the same warning she used to give when something was wrong. “Elias,” she said smoothly. “What a surprise.” He smiled. “It’s good to see you. You haven’t aged a day.” “That’s generous of you,” she replied. “You must be tired from your trip. You’ll stay for dinner, of course.” I wanted to object, to tell her he wasn’t welcome here, but her slight nod stopped me. The message was clear: Not now. Don’t show your hand. 1/4 D: 94 Chapter 113 Elias Carter So I said nothing. Finished When Amy came downstairs later, dressed neatly after work, she froze for half a second at the sight of him. I saw the same tension in her

shoulders that I felt in my chest. Still, she managed a polite nod. "Elias." He smiled. "Amy... Always so composed. Daniel's lucky." Her eyes didn't show any warmth. "Thank you." Dinner that evening was weird. Elias sat across from me at the long dining table, speaking in that tone anyone would use if they did not want to sound guilty. He complimented the food, praised Amy's efficiency at the company, and asked me about future expansion plans. "So," he said casually, "I heard Carter Enterprise Holdings is considering another overseas branch. Impressive growth, Daniel." I cut a piece of steak and answered without looking up. "We're reviewing potential sites. Nothing final." Amy sat beside me, her fork was barely moving. I could tell she wanted to leave. "That's good," Elias continued. "Your leadership's been commendable, especially after such a long recovery. The pack and the company are fortunate to have you back." His words were meant as praise, but I heard the undertone. The same arrogance he always masked behind diplomacy. My mother responded before I could. "We appreciate your interest, Elias. But business can wait until tomorrow. Tonight, let's just enjoy the meal." He smiled faintly. "Of course, I wouldn't dream of spoiling family time." The word family made my stomach turn. After dinner, Amy excused herself quickly, muttering something about reviewing documents. I didn't stop her. I wanted her as far from him as possible. When the table was cleared and the staff dismissed, my mother poured herself a small glass of wine and motioned for me to follow her into the study. The moment the door shut, her calm expression slipped.

"He's making a move," she said quietly. "The problem is, we don't know what kind." I leaned against the desk, folding my arms. "He's too comfortable. He wants us to know he's watching." 2/4 94) Chapter 113 Elias Carter H Finished *www.novE1(W)orm.com* "Exactly," she said. "And the timing isn't random. The wound on Amy's face healed overnight, the council's been restless, and now he reappears as if summoned. It's deliberate." "Do you think he knows we found the files?" I asked. "It's possible. Or he suspects," she said. "Either way, we need to stop talking about him in this house. I don't trust the walls anymore." Her tone was low but firm. "You think he planted someone here?" I asked. "I think he's been planning this longer than we realized," she replied. "He knows how we the estate, the company, even the council ties. If he's back for good, it's not to — operate reconcile." I stayed quiet for a moment, letting that sink in. "What do you want to do?" "For now, nothing that looks defensive," she said. "We'll treat him as a returning family member. If he senses we're on edge, he'll start digging. Let him think he's winning." I nodded slowly. It made sense, but every part of me hated it. She walked closer, her voice softer. "I know what this means for you. I also know it takes everything in you not to confront him." "I want to," I admitted. "But not without proof. Not yet." She gave a faint smile. "Then you're learning." Before I left the room, she added, "We'll meet tomorrow morning. Quietly. Not here. There's a place near the old Carter vineyard — no staff, no

surveillance. We'll talk freely there." [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com) I agreed, though part of me was already thinking ahead. When I passed through the hallway later that night, I saw Amy standing near the staircase. She looked lost in thought, her hand resting lightly on the railing. "He's staying in one of the guest rooms," I told her. "I figured," she said quietly. "You shouldn't go near him," I warned. "I wasn't planning to," she replied, her eyes meeting mine. "But Daniel... he looked at me tonight like he already knew we're onto him." 3/4 9:15 Fri, Jan 2 [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com) Chapter 113 Elias Carter 943 Finished I didn't answer. She was right. Elias had looked too calm for someone returning from exile. As I walked her back toward her room, I could feel the tension crawling under my skin. "My mother's right," I said finally. "We stop talking about him here. No mentions, no theories, nothing." Amy nodded. "So we act normal?" "For now," I said. "Until we can prove what he's really after." We reached her door. She hesitated, then said softly, "Be careful, Daniel." I tried to smile, but it didn't reach my eyes. "Always." 90

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 114

Chapter 114 Who Is She? AMY Finished After Elias's return, the entire house felt different. The rule was clear inside the estate. Not by name, not by hint. Even casual talk felt dangerous, like the walls could – no one mentioned him hear. Mrs. Carter had made it official two nights ago during a short meeting in her study. "From now on, all discussions concerning Elias stay outside this house," she'd instructed. "He's listening somehow. I can feel it." ([www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com)) No one argued. So now, we acted like everything was fine. Daniel went to work every morning like clockwork, calm and smiley as always. I kept to my department, handling trade documents and compliance reviews. Mrs. Carter buried herself with social events, charity meetings, and the quiet performance of being the perfect matriarch. It was all an act. A careful one. Still, it was impossible to ignore the shift. The air in the estate was heavy, like everyone was pretending not to feel watched. Even the staff who had no idea what was going on seemed more cautious, softer footsteps, fewer conversations in the hallways. For me, it wasn't just a feeling anymore. I knew I was being watched. T was always a familiar feeling with Elias around. At first, I thought it was paranoia, but it kept happening. The faint sound of a door closing when I turned around. Footsteps stopping just as I looked up. A reflection in the glass that didn't belong to anyone nearby. Elias had been living in the guest wing for almost a week now. He was polite when we crossed paths, smiling like nothing was wrong.

But there was something off about him, something cold in his eyes that didn't match his words. At work, I tried to focus. I had my responsibilities and the company couldn't afford distractions. Daniel and I hardly spoke about Elias anymore, at least not where others could hear. Still, even with the silence, there was an understanding between us. [www.lovefrom.com](http://www.lovefrom.com)

One afternoon, I brought him coffee during a meeting with two senior managers. He looked up when I entered, eyes softening for a brief moment before he turned back to the papers in front of him. "Thank you," he said quietly as I set the cup beside him. "You're welcome," I replied. 1/3 7.10 Fri, Jan 2 6943 Chapter 114 Who Is She? 雞 Finished That was all. But it was enough. A few simple words in a room full of people, a small reminder that we were still on the same side. By the time I got home that evening, the house was quiet again. The guards nodded as I walked past, and I noticed one of them glance toward Elias's wing. Later that night, I overheard two of the maids whispering near the kitchen entrance. "...he's in there for hours," one said. "Never comes out, not even for dinner." "Do you think he's sick?" the other asked. "I don't know. I heard voices in there last night. He might be making calls. Important ones." I didn't interrupt. I waited until they left, then slipped into the back corridor that led toward the guest rooms. The lights were dim, and the only sound came from the faint ticking of the wall clock. When I reached his door, I stopped. There was no sound, just complete stillness. I turned away after a few seconds and went back to my room. That night, I started journaling. I wrote down everything I noticed like the odd noises, the late calls, the changes in staff rotation. If we couldn't talk about Elias aloud, I could at least record what I saw. By the third page, my hand was shaking slightly. I wasn't afraid, exactly, just uncomfortable. I had a feeling we were getting close to something we couldn't undo. It was around noon the next day an unexpected visitor arrived.

One of the guards came to find me at the office, saying someone was waiting at the gate asking for me an older woman who claimed to be family. — When I stepped outside, my heart stopped. It was Mrs. Smith. My foster mother. She looked nothing like I remembered. Her face was pale, her frame thinner, her movements slow. Even her voice trembled when she spoke. "Amy," she said softly. "You still look like your [www.lovefrom.com](http://www.lovefrom.com) mother." I didn't know what to say. "Mrs. Smith... what are you doing here?" "I needed to see you," she said. "Please. It's important." The guards glanced at me, waiting for direction. I nodded. "Let her in." We walked through the main hall, and I could feel the stares from the staff. When we reached [www.lovefrom.com](http://www.lovefrom.com) 2/3 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 114 Who Is She? the sitting room, Mrs. Carter was already there, her expression calm but watchful. "She said she has something to tell you," Mrs. Carter said, looking at me. Mrs. Carter nodded, gesturing for her to sit. "Then she's welcome here" & 6923 Finished Mrs. Smith sat down slowly, her hands trembling against her lap. "I came because I can't carry the secret anymore," she said. "It's about your mother." My chest tightened. "My mother?" "She's alive," Mrs. Smith whispered.

“All these years, I-” Her words cut off abruptly. She pressed a hand to her chest, gasping. “Mrs. Smith?” I moved toward her, panic rising. I didn’t know what to say when Mrs. Smith told me my mother was alive. The words didn’t fit anywhere in my head. They hung in the air between us, heavy and unbelievable. “What do you mean?” I asked quietly, my voice sounding strange to my own ears. She looked at me with tired eyes. “Everything you were told about your parents’ deaths... it wasn’t the truth. Your real mother is still alive.” My heart started to pound. “That’s not possible. I saw the records. The reports. There was an accident-” She shook her head weakly. “Those records were made up. I helped them cover it. I shouldn’t have, but I didn’t have a choice.” I stared at her, the room starting to feel smaller. “Then where is she? Where is my mother now?” Mrs. Smith opened her mouth to answer, but her voice came out broken. “She’s-” 90

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 115

Chapter 115 Everything It Takes AMY 943 Finished She stopped suddenly. Her hand went to her chest again, her face twisting in pain. *www.novE(w)(o)r(m).c(o)m* “Mrs. Smith?” I moved toward her, but she started trembling violently. “Daniel!” I called out. My voice came out louder than I meant. He was downstairs. Within seconds, he ran into the sitting room, confusion on his face. “What happened?” “She’s collapsing!” I said, holding onto her shoulders. Mrs. Carter came rushing in right after him, “Call the doctor now!” Daniel was already on his phone, his tone sharp and steady. “We need a car out front – now.” Mrs. Smith’s breathing was shallow. I could feel it fading under my hands. “Stay with me,” I said, my voice shaking. “Please, don’t close your eyes.” Her lips moved like she was trying to speak again, but no sound came out. By the time the guards arrived, she was limp. We got her into the car. Daniel didn’t waste a second, he drove like every minute counted. I sat in the back seat with Mrs. Smith’s head resting against my lap, whispering words that made no sense just to keep her with me. The drive felt endless. When we reached the hospital, the nurses rushed her away. I tried to follow, but a doctor stopped me at the door. “Please wait outside,” he said. Daniel took my hand and guided me to a seat in the corridor. I didn’t argue. I couldn’t think. Everything in me felt suspended. Mrs. Carter stood a few feet away, speaking quietly with the doctor. Her voice was calm again, too calm the kind of calm that comes when you already know what the answer will be. — Minutes passed. Or maybe it was longer. I wasn’t sure. When the doctor came out, his expression said everything. Mrs. Carter placed a hand

on my shoulder. "Amy..." 1/4 Chapter 115 Everything It Takes I shook my head. "She didn't finish. She didn't tell me the rest." "I'm sorry," he said softly. "She was already gone before you arrived." I didn't react at first. The words didn't land. [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com) Daniel was the one who spoke. "What caused it?" Finished The doctor shook his head. "We'll have to run a test, but it looked like a heart attack. It was sudden and severe." Mrs. Carter thanked him quietly, but I could see the uncase in her eyes. There was no satisfaction, no closure. Just worry. I sat there staring at the hospital floor. I couldn't cry. I couldn't even think properly. Mrs. Smith was gone. The woman who raised me, who told me bedtime stories and scolded me for skipping chores, had died right after telling me the biggest secret of my life. And she hadn't even finished the sentence. Daniel sat beside me and gently took my hand. "Amy," he said quietly. "Look at me." I turned to him. His expression was calm but full of concern. "You're not alone," he said. "We'll figure this out, I promise." I nodded, though I wasn't sure what that meant anymore. After a while, a nurse approached us with a clipboard. "You were listed as her emergency contact," she said, looking at me. "There's something we found in her hand when she came in. I thought you should have it." She handed me a small folded piece of paper, slightly crumpled. "Thank you," I said softly.

When she walked away, I stared at it for a moment before unfolding it. It was only a few words, written in shaky handwriting. She's closer than you think. That was it. No names, no details. Just that. Mrs. Carter leaned forward to read it too. "What does it mean?" I shook my head. "I don't know." [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com) 2/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 115 Everything It Takes Daniel frowned. "Could she have meant your mother?" Finished "I think so," I said. "But how would she know where she is? She was supposed to be dead. All of them were." Mrs. Carter looked thoughtful, her eyes narrowing slightly. "If she wrote that knowing she didn't have much time, it wasn't a random message. Whoever your mother is... she's nearby. Maybe even someone within reach." Her words made my stomach twist. The idea that my real mother – someone I'd grieved for most of my life could be alive and close felt impossible. – Daniel placed a hand on my shoulder. "We'll find out what she meant," he said firmly. "But for now, let's get you home." The ride back to the estate was quiet. No one spoke. When we arrived, Mrs. Carter went straight to her study to make calls. Daniel stayed behind with me in the main hall. "Do you want to sit down?" he asked. I shook my head. "I just need a minute." He didn't press. He just stayed near me – not saying anything, not asking questions. When I finally sat down, I unfolded the paper again. The words stared back at me. It could've meant anything and now it would be like I was searching aimlessly. I had no idea who my mother was because there was no picture. It felt like no one wanted me to ever know her. Even the forces of nature were against me on this. But somehow, I knew Mrs. Smith hadn't been speaking in riddles. She had known something and something big enough to scare her. Daniel leaned closer. "Whatever this is, Amy, we'll handle it together. You don't

have to face it alone.” I looked at him, his calm expression grounding me for the first time all day. “Thank you,” I said quietly. He nodded once. “We’ll start by finding out what she meant. And who might’ve wanted to stop her from saying it.” I folded the paper again and held it tightly in my hand. 3/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 115 Everything It Takes 94 Finished Mrs. Smith had carried this secret for years. And even though she was gone, I could feel that whatever truth she’d tried to tell me wasn’t buried with her. “I think we should go home so that you can get some rest. It’s been a stressful day for you Amy. Daniel urged with worry in his eyes. I felt too numb to respond, so I just kept staring at him.

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 116

Chapter 116 An Empty Feeling AMY : 6943 Finished The office felt unusually quiet the next morning. I’d been staring at the same document for almost an hour, pretending to read while my mind replayed the last thing Mrs. Smith ever said to me. Those words looped in my head like a broken record. I didn’t know what they meant, or who she was supposed to be, but every time I tried to move on, my thoughts dragged me right back to that hospital room with the lifeless stillness, the unanswered questions, the paper clenched in her hand. A soft knock on my office door pulled me out of the deep thoughts I was in. Daniel stepped in, a file tucked under his arm. “You haven’t looked away from that page in a while,” he said quietly. I straightened, forcing a small smile. “Just... catching up on reports.” I rolled my eyes around He didn’t believe me and I could tell from the way he left his eyes fixed on my face. “You haven’t been yourself since the funeral. Take the day off, Amy. Go home and rest.” [www.NovelWorld.com](http://www.NovelWorld.com) shook my head. “If I stop now, I’ll start thinking too much.” He sighed and sat across from me. “You’re allowed to think.” “Not today.” My voice came out lower than I intended. “Today, I need to feel useful.” He didn’t argue. He just nodded slowly, as if he understood that keeping busy was my way staying sane. After a moment, he placed the file on my desk. “Board summary for next week. Don’t push yourself too hard, okay?” “I won’t,” I said, even though we both knew that wasn’t true. of When he left, the silence returned. The clicking of keyboards down the hall sounded distant, almost muffled. I rubbed my temples and forced myself to refocus but then my phone buzzed with a message from Mrs. Carter’s assistant: “Mrs. Carter would like to see you in her office.” I hesitated before standing. My nerves weren’t ready for another round of questions, but avoiding her would only make it worse. When I entered her office, she was seated behind her desk, reading

something on her tablet. She looked up and gestured for me to sit. 1/4 1943 Chapter 116 An Empty Feeling “I spoke to someone this morning,” she began, setting the tablet aside. “A woman named Margaret. She used to work with Mrs. Smith at the foster network.” I straightened. “You found her?” “She reached out after seeing the obituary. Said she wanted to clear her conscience.” Mrs. Carter’s voice was steady, but her eyes held concern. “Apparently, Mrs. Smith had been frightened before she died. She told Margaret she’d ‘seen someone she shouldn’t have.’” I frowned. “Someone? As in... from her past?” Finished [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) “That’s unclear,” she said. “But Margaret mentioned that Mrs. Smith had started keeping an old photograph close to her, one she said belonged to you.” [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) My pulse quickened. “A photograph?” Mrs. Carter nodded. “She said Mrs. Smith claimed it was of someone important. Maybe the person you’ve been asking about.” I didn’t realize I was gripping my knees until I felt the tension in my fingers. “Did she that person was?” “No. Only that Mrs. Smith was terrified and believed she was being watched.” The room seemed to shrink around me. “Watched by who?” say who

Mrs. Carter leaned back. “We don’t know yet. But if she was right... it means her death might not have been just bad timing.” The thought settled like ice in my stomach. I’d told myself Mrs. Smith’s collapse was a tragedy and sudden, cruel, but natural. Now, I wasn’t sure. Mrs. Carter’s tone softened. “Amy, I know you want answers, but don’t go chasing shadows alone. Let Daniel handle the investigation.” I nodded slowly. “I understand.” But I didn’t. Because deep down, I knew this wasn’t something Daniel could fix for me. This was mine to face. By the time I got home that night, the weight of everything felt heavier than it had all week. I changed out of my work clothes and sat at my desk, staring at my phone. I didn’t hear Daniel come in until he spoke. “You’re still up.” I turned, startled. “I didn’t hear you.” 2/4 :. 943 Chapter 116 An Empty Feeling [www.movielworm.com](http://www.movielworm.com) He leaned against the doorframe, his shirt sleeves rolled up, his expression calm but concerned. “You’ve been quiet all evening.” Finished “I was just... looking at something.” I turned the phone toward him. “Mrs. Smith sent me this a while I didn’t think much of it then.” ago. He stepped closer and studied the picture. “That’s near the eastern lake. The border side of the territory.” My chest tightened. “You’re sure?” He nodded. “I used to patrol there years ago. That tree line in the back, it’s unmistakable.” I stared at the image again. The figure looked like a ghost frozen in time. “Do you think it’s her? My mother?” Daniel’s expression softened. “It could be. But if it is, then someone’s been keeping her close all along.” The thought made my throat dry. “Mrs. Smith said she’d seen someone she shouldn’t have seen. What if it was her?” “Then whoever she saw didn’t want her to talk,” Daniel said quietly. That silence between us lingered. The possibilities twisted through my head, my mother alive, hidden somewhere nearby, someone silencing the only person who knew. Finally, Daniel sat beside me. “If you want, I’ll have someone trace where that photo was taken. Discreetly.” I looked up at him. “You’d do

that?" "Of course." His tone was steady, certain. "You deserve the truth." For a moment, I didn't know what to say. I just nodded, clutching the phone a little tighter. "Thank you." He stood up and brushed his hand lightly over my shoulder. "Get some rest. We'll start tomorrow." After he left, I turned back to the photo again. The woman by the lake seemed to be looking right at me now, even though I knew that wasn't possible. "If my mother is alive..." I whispered to the empty room, "...I need to find out why she never came for me 3/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Bound To The Broken Alpha

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-7 minutes

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 117

Chapter 117 The Regal Hotel: CLARA : 4204 H Finished I'd been dizzy since morning, the kind of dizziness that made the walls move when I blinked. My hands trembled as I tried to drink water, but it slipped from my grip and spilled. The air in the hotel room suddenly felt thick and it made it difficult to breathe. I grabbed my phone with unsteady fingers and scrolled to Mark's number. I hadn't called him in months, not since everything fell apart, not since he looked at me like he didn't recognize who I'd become and dropped me at a mental institution which I clawed my way out of. But I didn't have anyone else. When he picked up, his voice was wary. "Clara?" [www.move1.com](http://www.move1.com) "Mark..." My throat burned. "Please come. I need you." "Where are you?" "The Regal Hotel, room 409." The words barely left my mouth before a sharp pain cut through my chest. I wanted to say more, to tell him I was scared, but the phone slipped from my hand. The world tilted, then everything went black. \*\*\* When I opened my eyes, the light was soft and dim. Curtains drawn. A faint hum of an air conditioner. I turned my head slowly and saw Mark sleeping in a chair beside the bed. His face looked tired, his hand still clutching mine even in sleep. For a second, I thought I was dreaming. Then the pain in my chest reminded me I wasn't. I tried to sit up, but my body didn't respond the way it used to. My arms felt heavy. My legs trembled when I moved them. The skin along my shoulders was pale, almost gray. [www.move1.com](http://www.move1.com) The ritual hadn't left me. It was still eating at me slowly, just like the witch had warned before it all went wrong. I closed my eyes, fighting the wave of nausea that hit me. The last thing I needed was for Mark to wake up and see me like this. He already thought I was unstable before, now, he'd think I was dying. A low groan escaped me, and his eyes opened instantly. "Clara?" He leaned forward, voice low and careful. "You're awake. Thank God." I forced a small smile. "Hey." 1/4 Chapter 117 The Regal Hotel: : 94 943 Finished "You passed out in your hotel room. I thought-" He stopped himself

and shook his head. "You scared me." "I'm fine," I lied. My voice was barely a whisper. *www.Noëlworm.com* "You're not fine," he said, standing to help me sit up. "You look... pale. Weak. You need a hospital." "No hospitals," I said quickly. "It's just stress. I've been working too much, not eating right. That's all." He frowned. "Clara-" "I said I'm fine." The silence stretched between us. He didn't believe me, but he didn't argue either. Instead, he brushed a strand of hair from my face and said quietly, "You scared me more than I want to admit." When he finally left the room to grab food, I sank back against the pillow, closing my eyes for a moment. The lie sat heavy in my mind. I wasn't fine. I hadn't been fine since that night. When the ritual failed, it didn't just fail, it broke something inside me. I could still feel it sometimes, that sharp, cold echo in my chest, like my body never fully came back. I dragged myself to the mirror across the room and stared at my reflection. The woman looking back at me wasn't the same one Mark fell in love with. My eyes were sunken. My skin had lost its color. There was a faint mark on my collarbone which was the same one that burned the night I tried to steal what wasn't mine. "It's her fault," I whispered, my voice trembling. "It's always her." Amy. She had everything – Daniel, the respect, the life I should've had. She didn't even want it at first. She got it handed to her. And I... I tried to take it. I remembered the night clearly, the candles, the old book, the chants. The way the air shifted when I said her name. I remembered how strong the pull was, like something ancient had

heard me. But then it went wrong. The light died and the air froze. And how Amy over powered me that 2/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 117 The Regal Hotel: *www.Noëlworm.com* night. Finished 容 After that, I started to feel sick. The energy that used to make me feel powerful turned into poison. Now, every time I closed my eyes, I saw it all over again. "Stop it," I muttered to myself, gripping the edge of the dresser. But the whispers started anyway. Low and faint, like someone standing just behind me. "You tried to take what wasn't yours." "You failed." "She will always win." I turned sharply, but there was no one there. Just shadows. My chest tightened. "No," I whispered. "I won't let her win." But the whispers didn't stop. They grew louder, echoing in the corners of my mind. The room felt colder. My reflection seemed to move even when I didn't. I stumbled backward, shaking my head. "I didn't mean to-" The lights flickered. My vision blurred. For a second, I saw Amy again but she was not real, not here, but clear as day – standing in the doorway, calm and untouchable. I screamed and reached out to shove the image away. My hand hit the nightstand, knocking the lamp over. The glass shattered across the floor. And then everything went dark again. When I opened my eyes, I wasn't standing anymore. The floor was cold against my skin. My fingers tingled. I heard footsteps rushing toward me, a voice shouting my name. "Clara!" It was Mark. He dropped to his knees beside me, his hands shaking as he touched my face. "Clara, can you hear me?" 2/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 117 The Regal Hotel: I wanted to answer. I really did. But my tongue felt heavy. My eyes wouldn't stay

open. “Someone help me!” Mark’s voice broke. “Please! Call an ambulance!” – Everything around me faded the shouting, the panic, even the fear. All that was left was the truth that this was what I’d earned. Because no matter how I tried to blame Amy, the truth stayed the same, I’d done this to myself. 90 A 94 Finished many times 4/4 Bound To The Broken Alpha

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

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### When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 118

Chapter 118 Coincidence DANIEL 6940 Finished I had made arrangements to meet with a private investigator to help in the search of the woman in the picture Amy had shown to me a few days ago. I decided to meet the investigator at a quiet café on the far side of town, the kind of place where no one asked questions, and the staff didn’t care who you were as long as you paid in cash. The man was punctual, sharp-eyed, and carried a thin black folder under his arm. *www.no(v)eLWôrm.com* He sat down across from me, “Mr. Carter,” he said. “I have what you asked for.” I nodded once. “Let’s see it.” – He slid the folder across the table and opened it to a single printed photo had shown me, the silhouette of a woman by a lake. But now, there were coordinates written the same one Amy beneath it. “I was able to recover metadata from the original file,” he said. “It’s been through multiple compressions, but the GPS tag remained intact. The image was taken about three months ago near the northern border of your pack’s old territory.” My fingers tightened around the edge of the paper. “That’s too close.” He nodded. “Exactly. Whoever took it wasn’t just nearby. They were on your land and inside your protected perimeter.” I stared at the image again. The faint outline of the woman’s hair, the water, the shadows... it wasn’t just some random landscape. It was deliberate. Someone wanted Amy to see this. “Can you tell who sent it?” I asked. He shook his head. “The message came from a scrambled ID. Whoever did it knew how to cover their trail.” That didn’t surprise me. People who had something to hide always did. I closed the folder. “You’ve done enough. Send your report to my private line and delete everything else.” He gave a short nod. “Understood.” When he left, I stayed there for a few minutes, watching the steam curl from my untouched coffee. My thoughts were already miles away back at the estate, where Amy had spent the morning trying to stay busy even though I knew her mind was still on that note from Mrs. — 1/4 Chapter 118 Coincidence Smith. I hated how those words had started to make sense now. A *www.n(v)eLWôrm.com* 94) Finished When I got back to the office, Amy was in her workspace, flipping through a few reports. She looked tired but determined, like she’d decided that keeping busy was the

only way to stay sane. I closed the door behind me. "I have something." She looked up immediately. "About the photo?" I nodded and handed her the folder. "The coordinates show it was taken just outside the northern ridge about two hours from here." She stared at the printout, eyes narrowing slightly. "That's still our territory." "Yes," I said quietly. "Which means whoever took it wasn't a stranger. They knew where to go." She traced a finger along the edge of the image, thinking. "Then it wasn't random." "No," I said. "It wasn't." When she looked up again, she had the same look she had when she found the council records months ago. "I want to see it," she said. "Amy-" "I need to," she interrupted softly. "If my mother really was there... or still is..." She hesitated. "You don't have to come if it's too risky." [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) I shook my head. "You know I'm coming." A faint smile tugged at her lips. "I figured you'd say that." Before I could respond, a knock sounded at the door. My mother stepped in, elegant as always, holding a folder of her own. She looked between us – at the open file on the desk, the tense air and sighed quietly. "I had a feeling you two were working on something," she said. "I suppose it's about the photo." [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) Amy nodded. "We found where it was taken."

Mum's gaze flicked to me. "You're not thinking of going there." "I am," I said simply. She shook her head. "Daniel, think. If that image was sent from within our borders, it means 2/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 118 Coincidence : 20 Finished someone breached our surveillance. And if Elias had anything to do with it, walking straight into that area could be exactly what he wants." Amy's shoulders stiffened. "You think Elias sent it?" "I think he knows more than he lets on," Mum replied. "And until we know how far his influence reaches, we move quietly. No sudden moves, no public trips." I could tell Amy didn't like it. Her jaw tightened slightly, but she said nothing. I understood why. She'd waited too long for answers to stand still now. "We'll be careful," I said, trying to settle the tension. "Be smart," Mum corrected. "Careful isn't always enough." She left soon after, and the silence between Amy and me stretched. "I know she's right," Amy said after a moment. "But I can't just do nothing." I leaned against the desk, watching her. "We'll go soon. Just not without a plan." She nodded, though her eyes stayed on the picture in front of her. "If my mother was there, then she's been close all along." The thought didn't seem to comfort her. Later that evening, I received a message from one of our outside sources – an informant who'd helped us gather records during the investigation against Elias. His message was short but clear: "Mark is back in town. He's with Clara." I stared at the screen for a long time before responding. Clara. After everything she'd done, after the chaos she left behind, the idea of her being anywhere near this territory again made my stomach tighten. But there was another detail that bothered me more. The informant added, "She's in bad shape. Some kind of illness. They're keeping it quiet." Illness? I didn't believe in coincidence anymore. Still, I didn't tell Amy. Not yet. She'd had enough to deal with. That night, I stayed late at the office, reviewing security footage from the northern ridge.

The feeds were old and grainy, but something didn't sit right. A section of the recordings – the same area where the photo had 3/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 118 Coincidence been taken had gaps. Hours of footage missing. Someone had erased them. I didn't need to guess who. Before I could dig further, my phone buzzed again. A new message. Unknown number. > "You're digging too deep. Some things were buried for a reason." I stared at the words for a long time. No name. No trace. Just a warning. 90 949 Finished 4/4 9:16 Fri, Jan 2

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-7 minutes

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 119

Chapter 119 Under Our Nose AMY H Finished The road to the northern ridge was long and quiet, Daniel drove while I stared out the window, the trees passing like slow-moving shadows. We didn't talk much, there wasn't anything left to say until we saw it for ourselves. The GPS led us off the main road and onto a dirt path that twisted through the woods. It felt oddly familiar, though I couldn't remember ever being there before. Maybe it was because this was the same area I'd been told my mother had died or maybe something inside me already knew it wasn't true. When we finally stopped, the lake stretched out in front of us – wide, calm, and silent. The water caught the light in soft ripples. For a moment, I just stood there, my hand on the car door, trying to breathe through the feeling that something was waiting. Daniel came around to my side. "You okay?" I nodded, though my voice felt stuck somewhere in my chest. "It looks the same as the photo." He looked around, scanning the tree line. "There's a cottage not far from here," he said, pointing toward a narrow trail. "Let's check it out." We followed the path quietly, the crunch of leaves underfoot the only sound. As we got closer, the smell of smoke and damp wood hit the air. It was faint, but recent. Whoever had been there hadn't left long ago. The cottage was small, built from dark stone with ivy crawling up the sides. The windows were dusty but not broken, and there were footprints near the door. One looked small and the other one larger. I crouched down, tracing the outline with my fingers. "Someone's been here within a day or two." Daniel looked uneasy. "Let's go in. Stay behind me." [www.novelsor.com](http://www.novelsor.com) He pushed the door open carefully. It creaked, but the hinges still held strong. Inside, the air was heavy with the scent of old books and herbs. A thin layer of dust covered most surfaces, except for one table, it was clean, recently wiped. On it sat a lamp, a folded blanket, and an old photo frame facedown. I reached for it slowly and turned it over. The moment I saw the face in the photograph, the room

seemed to tilt. 1/3 6943 Chapter 119 Under Our Nose Finished 白 It was a woman with calm eyes, her posture was straight. Older, maybe in her forties. But her face... her face really looked like mine. I stared for a long moment, not even realizing Daniel had come to stand beside me. "That's her," I said quietly. My voice sounded smaller than I intended. "That's the same woman I think is my mother." He took the frame from my hands and studied it closely. "There's no date," he murmured. "But this looks recent. The paper hasn't even turn yellow." I looked around again – at the half-burnt candles, the folded blanket, the faint scent of tea in the air. She had been here. Not long ago. Daniel crouched near the fireplace, touching the ash. "It's still warm." "She was here today," I said, barely above a whisper. "Maybe even this morning." Before either of us could say anything else, a faint sound echoed from outside, footsteps crunching over dry leaves. Daniel's head snapped toward the window. "Someone's coming." He pulled me behind the large wooden cabinet near the door. We crouched down, keeping low as the front door creaked open.

— A man stepped in, tall, dressed in dark clothing. He moved with silence the kind of stillness that came from years of hiding. He scanned the room briefly, then spoke into a small radio clipped to his belt. "The place is clear," he said into the comm. "She's not here today." My pulse kicked hard against my ribs. "She's not here today." That meant she came often. He moved toward the table, glancing at the photo I had just set back down. He hesitated, frowning, then adjusted its position slightly, like he'd done it before. Then he turned and walked back out, closing the door behind him. Daniel waited a few seconds before standing. His expression was dark. "That was one of Elias's men," he said quietly. "I've seen him before, he used to handle security for the council." I stood slowly, trying to steady myself. "Then Elias knows. He's known she's alive all this time." [www.No\(v\)el\(wo\)rm.com](http://www.No(v)el(wo)rm.com) He nodded grimly. "And he's keeping her hidden. The question is, why?" I looked around again at the signs of life scattered around the cottage. The blanket folded with care. The teacup washed and left to dry. The photograph that someone had clearly touched [www.No\(v\)el\(wo\)rm.com](http://www.No(v)el(wo)rm.com) ביולי 9:17 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 119 Under Our Nose many times. "She's been living here," I said softly. "Right under our noses. All this time." 44 94 Finished: Daniel turned toward the door. "We should leave before they circle back. We'll come again, but not alone." I didn't move. My eyes stayed on the photograph still sitting on the table. For years, I had believed my mother was gone, that she had died and left me alone in that foster home. Every choice I'd made since then had been shaped by that lie. And now, this changed everything. When we finally stepped back outside, the air felt heavier than before. The sky had dimmed to a dull gray, the kind that promised rain. Daniel glanced at me. "Amy, we'll find her. Whatever this is, we'll get to the bottom of it." I wanted to believe him, but the words caught in my throat. "She's closer than we thought," I said instead. "And someone's making sure I don't find her." [www.No\(v\)el\(wo\)rm.com](http://www.No(v)el(wo)rm.com) He didn't argue. He just reached for my hand. Not out of habit

or comfort, but as a quiet promise. We walked back toward the car without speaking. The wind picked up behind us, scattering leaves across the path, and as I turned for one last look at the lake, I couldn't shake the feeling that someone was still watching. Somewhere in those trees, maybe even within reach, the mother I'd mourned for years was alive. And whoever was keeping her hidden... wasn't finished yet. 90 3/3 Bound To The Broken Alpha

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

7-8 minutes

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When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 120

Chapter 120 You Need A Break AMY'S POV B Finished The morning started like any other morning with files, phone calls, the steady rhythm of responsibility but something in the air felt different. *wW.móveℓW⊙rⓂ.c(0)M* Maybe it was me. Maybe it was the way Daniel had been watching me lately, as if he could see the exhaustion I kept pretending wasn't there. By noon, my head was pounding. I was halfway through another report when his voice cut through the silence. "Enough," he said simply. I looked up from my desk. "Excuse me?" He leaned against the doorway, sleeves rolled, that quiet authority in his tone that left no room for argument. "You're done for the day, Amy. Pack a bag." "For what?" "A break," he said. "With me." I frowned. "You have meetings, a call scheduled for -" he didn't allow me to complete my statement before he interrupted me with a hand raised. "I cancelled them." He stepped closer, his expression softening. "You haven't taken a real breath in weeks. So we're leaving and it's just for one night." I opened my mouth to protest but stopped when I saw the faint tiredness around his eyes. He looked as worn out as I felt. Maybe we really do need this after all. "Where are we going?" I let the tiredness I've been holding at bay in my voice. He smiled just slightly. "You'll see." *wŴw.NOvé(1)wOrM.cóM* The drive out of the city was quiet at first, it was a little bit awkward as it was just the hum of the engine, the whisper of wind through the trees we drove by and the distant sound of rain threatening the horizon. I watched the skyline fade behind us and tried to shake off the tightness in my chest. But it wasn't that easy. He didn't take any of the familiar roads. No Carter-owned property, no guarded gates. It was just us and the winding country paths lined with pine and stone. 1/4 9:17 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 120 You Need A Break Finished: For once, it felt like he'd left his Alpha title behind. Like we left the heavy weight of responsibility behind to be our true self. *(w)Ww.(n)⊙vℓIW⊙(r)m.cóM* After a while, he reached for the console and turned on the radio. A slow instrumental played, it was soothing and something old, probably from his father's collection. "You hate silence that much?" I teased. He glanced at me, the corner of his mouth lifting. "Only when

it's heavy." I looked back out the window. "Sometimes silence is the only thing that makes sense." He didn't answer. But when he reached across the seat to take my hand, I didn't pull away and for the rest of the ride the air between us was warm and comfortable. The resort sat by a lake tucked between tall evergreens. It wasn't grand or flashy, it's more of a handful of wooden cabins, the air rich with the scent of wet earth and cedar. Daniel parked near the water and cut the engine. "Owned by a friend," he said. "No one knows we're here." It was as if he knew the question at the top of my tongue. I smiled softly before I stepped out of the car, letting the cool breeze brush against my skin. The lake shimmered softly, reflecting clouds that looked close enough to touch. For the first time in weeks, I felt something unclench inside me. I felt human and less of the robotic version of me that's asked up each day. We spent the afternoon walking along the shoreline, our hands brushing occasionally but never quite holding. When the sun began to dip, Daniel led me to a small wooden deck set for two. Dinner was a simple grilled fish – that Daniel had caught earlier while I was appreciating our new environment — vintage wine, and silence that didn't need to be filled. Halfway through, he said, almost to himself, "I booked this place months ago." I looked up. "Before... all this?" My face wore the confusion reeling through me.

He nodded. "I didn't know what for at the time. Maybe I just wanted a place that didn't remind me of what I'd lost." His gaze flicked to me, steady and unguarded. "Now I know it was meant for this." "For what?" [www.novelform.com](http://www.novelform.com) "For us," he said quietly. "Not the arrangement and this is not about our family's legacy or our position in the pack. But just for us." His eyes met mine and in his eyes I saw more than any words of his could comprehend. The sound of water lapping against the deck filled the silence that followed. I didn't know what to say. Part of me wanted to run because that kind of honesty felt dangerous. But another part of me wanted to stay forever.... I chose the later. "You don't have to say anything," he added softly. "I just needed you to know." He poured me another glass of wine and lifted his own. "To second chances." I met his gaze and raised mine too. "To finally taking a breath." The glasses clinked and right in that moment everything was warm, simple and real. Later that night, the air turned colder, and we moved inside the cabin. A fire burned low in the hearth. I sat on the edge of the bed, running my fingers through my hair, trying not to think too hard about what that dinner and profound statement had meant. When he came up behind me, I smelled his delicious fragrance before I saw his reflection filling the mirror, the tired eyes and the careful hands of a man who is trying his best to be the better version of himself. "You're always thinking," he murmured. "Even now." "Occupational habit." He smiled faintly. "Then let me help you stop." His hand brushed mine, and the moment stretched into something sensual, pant melting and alive. When his lips finally met mine, it wasn't the kind of kiss that asked for permission; it was one that asked for trust. And I gave it. Clothes slipped away between

laughter and quiet gasps. The world outside blurred until there was only us and when his wolf brushed mine, Eve stirred inside me in her low hum of recognition and surrender for our partner. For the first time, it didn't feel like I was giving something away. It felt like I was returning home. Morning came faster with pale sunlight spilling through the curtains. The air smelled of pine and smoke. Daniel was still asleep beside me, his arm heavy across my waist. For a while, I just watched the rise and fall of his chest, the faint scar near his temple, the peacefulness I hadn't seen in years. I realized I wasn't afraid of him or what comes next. When he finally stirred, I whispered, "You were right." His eyes opened slowly. "About what?" 3/4 9:17 Fri, Jan 2 Chapter 120 You Need A Break "About needing a breath." He smiled against my shoulder. "Then I'll keep reminding you." I turned to face him, tracing a finger along his jaw. "You'll get tired of me." "Never." 13 90 943 Finished