

# Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-7 minutes

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## When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 81

Chapter 81 Pack Rumors AMY Finished Rumors started harmless at first, then it became harsh enough to hurt. By the end of the week, they were everywhere. People whispered when I entered the room. The students at school. The pack guards. Even some of the house staff. They didn't say my name outright, but I heard enough "the Alpha's wife" 2 2 0 2 2 2 2 2 58 "Moonstone blood" "prophecy reborn." I tried to ignore it, but it followed me everywhere. Brian called me in the afternoon. His tone was serious. council's getting restless. They're not just curious "Scared of what?" You need to keep your head down," he said. "The anymore they're scared." "You," he said flatly. "They think your presence is triggering something. Don't ask me what, but it's spreading fast." I rubbed my forehead, pacing the room. "Let them think whatever they want." "Don't underestimate them," he warned. "You're not dealing with gossip anymore, Amy. They're calling for an inquiry." [www.novels.com](http://www.novels.com) That word inquiry sent a strange chill through me. It wasn't just a meeting. In pack law, it meant interrogation. After the call, I couldn't sit still. My mind kept circling back to Mrs. Carter. She had been quiet lately, too quiet. Every time our paths crossed, she looked like she was calculating something. That evening, I went straight to her home office. I didn't knock, I just walked in. She was by the window with her reading glasses low on her nose, flipping through papers. When she saw me, she set them down carefully. "Amy," she said, her voice calm. "You should have called first." "I didn't come for small talk," I said. "The council's calling an inquiry. About me." Her eyes flickered, but she didn't look surprised. "I know." "Then why didn't you tell me?" "Because I hoped it wouldn't reach you so soon," she said. I folded my arms. "They think I'm hiding something. Are they right?" She didn't answer right away. Her silence said enough. "I deserve the truth," I pressed. "You said the council could teach me to use my powers but you never said 1/3 17:14 Fri, Dec 26 JOM Chapter 81 Pack Rumors why I have them in the first place." Finished She turned fully to me, the softness gone from her eyes. "Because you were never supposed to exist," she said quietly. I froze. "What?" "You weren't born by chance," she continued. "You were chosen, summoned by forces older than any of us. Your mother was part of a sealed bloodline that was meant to end generations ago." "That doesn't make sense," I said. "My parents were ordinary. They weren't-" "They weren't supposed to have you," she interrupted, her tone sharp now. "When

your mother conceived, the prophecy should have stayed buried. But something interfered. [www.novelworld.com](http://www.novelworld.com) You were born under a rare celestial alignment, the kind that only appears once every thousand years.”

I felt my stomach twist. “What prophecy?” She hesitated, then exhaled. “The Moonstone Prophecy.” The words made my skin prickle. I’d read them somewhere before, in Daniel’s old book, in the hidden letter. Guardians of the Moon. Sacred vows. Betrayal. I whispered, “You mean the one that says a child of the Moon will rise and change the balance and shadow?” Her eyes flicked up to mine. “Yes. That child is you.” I stared at her, searching her face for some hint of humor, but she wasn’t joking. “You’re telling me I’m supposed to... what? Bring chaos?” between light “Not chaos,” she said softly. “But your bloodline carries power the council has feared for centuries. That’s why we hid you. Your mother’s lineage was sealed to keep the prophecy from awakening. And yet, somehow, it has.” My pulse quickened. “So my wolf, my strength, even the council’s interest is all because of some ancient story?” [www.novelworld.com](http://www.novelworld.com) “It’s not a story,” she said firmly. “The Moonstone wolves were once guardians and keepers of divine energy. But when one of them broke the sacred vow, the balance shifted. It was said that the next to bear the Moonstone mark would decide whether to restore the light or destroy it.” I sank into the chair across from her. “You’re saying I could destroy everything?” [www.novelworld.com](http://www.novelworld.com) Mrs. Carter looked at me sadly. “I’m saying you could change everything. And not everyone wants that change.” I let out a shaky laugh, but it didn’t sound like me. “This is insane.” “I wish it were,” she said. “But the inquiry isn’t just about your power, Amy. It’s about control. The council wants to know which side of the prophecy you’ll stand on. And if they can’t be sure, they’ll remove the risk.” 2/3 1714 Hi Dec 26 Chapter 81 Pack Rumors “By remove, you mean Finished She didn’t answer. For a moment, the only sound was the faint ticking of the clock behind her. My head felt heavy. “So what do I do?” I asked finally. “You’ll attend the inquiry,” she said. “You’ll tell them nothing. You’ll act as though the Moonstone name means nothing to you. If you give them reason to believe you understand what you are, they’ll come for you.” I looked up at her, confused. “But you said they could help me.” Her expression softened. “That was before I realized how fast things were moving. You’re not ready for their kind of help.” The air between us felt suffocating. My mind was spinning and not just from what she said, but what it meant. My entire life, every secret, and every strange coincidence all pointed to this. 22 2 22 P# 2 3 2 My blood wasn’t cursed. It was chosen. And now, everyone wants a piece of it. When I left her office and as I walked down, the corridors felt narrower. My footsteps echoed. I could almost feel the energy humming beneath my skin. The moon hung high and full tonight, glowing like it was listening. I whispered under my breath, “If I was never supposed to be born, then why am I still here?” No answer came, only the wind. But somewhere deep in me, something

stirred. It wasn't fear. It wasn't anger. It was an awakening. And this time, I wasn't sure I wanted to stop it. But I don't understand it either.

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

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### When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 82

Www.novellworld.com

Chapter 82 We Don't Know Who We Are DANIEL Finished It's been annoyingly long weeks and recovery was slower than I liked, but I kept pushing through it. Every stretch, every session, every stumble, I told myself it mattered. I wasn't just fighting for strength, I was fighting for Amy to see me as more than the man she was forced to marry. Amy came by my room most mornings. beside me while I ate breakfast. She'd bring my medication, sometimes a book, sometimes just sit She didn't hover or ask if I needed help. Instead, she let me do things myself, even when I failed halfway. There was a kind of respect in that silence, but there was also distance. I noticed the way she always left something unsaid. Every word she chose seemed stressed, like she was careful not to step too close. By mid morning, I decided to do something different. I'd arranged for flowers to be sent to her room. They were simple white lilies. They arrived before breakfast, and when she came down, she looked at me, confused. "Are these from you?" she asked. (W)w(W).novellworld.com I nodded. "They're your favorite, right?" WWW.NOVELLWORLD.COM She stared at them for a moment, then said quietly, "They used to be my mother's favorite." "I know," I said. "My mum mentioned." Her eyes softened for a second, "Thank you," she said. I wanted her to smile, but instead, she just sat down and poured coffee. After breakfast, I followed her outside while she took a call. The sun was warm, the air smelled like old memories I couldn't reach. "You're always busy lately. School, the council meetings, helping around the estate." She gave a short laugh. "It keeps me sane." "I'd like to help," I said. "With what?" "With you. With whatever you're doing." She turned to look at me, serious now. "Daniel, you don't have to do that. You're still recovering." "I want to," I said. "We're still married, right? I should at least know what's happening in your world." She hesitated. "That's the thing," she said. "You keep saying 'we. But you don't even know what we are." 1/31 Chapter 82 We Don't Know Who We Are (W)w(W).novellworld.com I looked away. "Then tell me. Help me understand what it is beyond being your husband" She

sighed. "It's not that simple. Finished But it was. I just didn't know how to make her see that I wanted to start again, even if we were just mated together. Later that day, I asked the staff to bring breakfast to her study. It was nothing fancy, just pancakes, fruit, and tea. I wanted her to see that I was trying. I stayed in her study until she came in. When she walked in and saw the setup, she stopped. "You did this?" she asked. "Yeah." I said, trying to sound casual. "You've been working hard. I thought you might need a break." She stared for a moment before sitting down. "You didn't have to." "I wanted to," I said again. We ate mostly in silence, but it was a comfortable kind this time. For a moment, it almost felt normal.

When she stood up to leave, I asked, "Do you ever think we could start over?" She paused. "Start over?" "Yeah," I said. "From here. Forget the past, just... try again." She looked at me for a long time. "Daniel," she said softly, "you don't even remember who you were. You're trying to fix something you don't understand." "I can learn," I said. "About you. About us." Her eyes met mine. "And if who you were before doesn't match the man you think you are now?" I didn't know how to answer that. Before I could respond, Brian walked in, a folder in hand. "Sorry to interrupt," he said. "Council papers for Amy." He glanced between us, probably reading the silence. He gave Amy a small nod, then turned to me. "You're making progress, Daniel. Physically, at least." I ignored the tone. "Trying my best." He nodded again but didn't leave immediately. Instead, he looked at Amy. "You should go over the proposal before tomorrow's meeting. I'll wait outside." She gave him a quick thanks and followed him out. Through the small peek in the door, I could see them talking quietly. Brian had this way of standing too close when he spoke to her, but she didn't seem bothered. It wasn't romantic, not exactly. It was more like he understood her in ways I didn't. 2/3 17.14 Fri, Dec 26 M Chapter 82 We Don't Know Who We Are When she came back. I said, "You trust him." "Brian?" she asked, "He's been consistent. That's rare around here." "I could be consistent too," I said. She smiled faintly. "You're trying, Daniel. That's enough." But it wasn't enough for me. Finished That night, I stayed up longer than usual, going through my old journals and records, trying to piece together who I used to be. Most of what I found wasn't helpful. Business notes, council discussions, a few mentions of the pack. Nothing about her. Nothing personal. I sat there, staring at the empty space where her name should have been. If I had truly cared about her before, I would have written something And if I hadn't, then maybe I was the reason she built those walls. The next day, during therapy, my trainer commented on how distracted I seemed. I shrugged it off, pushing through the exercises until my muscles ached. Pain was easier than I thought. When I got back to my home and in my room, Amy was already there, waiting with a book. "I thought you might need something to help you sleep," she said. "What is it?" "A history on the old packs," she said. "Your musaid you used to like reading about bloodlines and origins." I smiled slightly. "Trying to remind me who I was?" "Maybe," she said. "Or maybe I'm trying to see who you've become." That stayed

with me for the rest of the night but she left before dinner, saying she had work to finish, and I didn't stop her. I wanted to tell her that I wasn't trying to trap her in a past she never asked for. I just wanted her to see that maybe the present didn't have to be so cold. When the door closed behind her, I looked at the untouched flowers on the table. They were already starting to wilt.

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### When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 83

Bound To The Broken Alpha Chapter 83 Scandal Headline AMY [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com) B. Finished My first day back at the office started quietly enough. The drive was smooth, the morning air cool, and for once, I didn't feel rushed. I had missed the rhythm of work. the meetings, the constant back and forth, even the hum of computers filling the air. But sadly, peace doesn't last long in my life. By midmorning, whispers started moving through the office like wildfire. People were glancing at their phones, looking at me, and then pretending to look away. It didn't take long before Sandra, my assistant, walked in looking pale. "You might want to see this," she said, sliding her phone toward me. The headline glared back: "Carter Heir Awake." And below that, was my picture, I stared at it for a long moment before saying anything, "So it's out." Sandra hesitated. "It's everywhere. They are saying the marriage was arranged for money." I let out a tired breath. "Of course they are, it's not the first time. Do they not get tired? [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com) Within hours, blogs, online tabloids, and gossip channels were running wild with their own versions of my story. Some said I trapped him. Some said I married a man I didn't know for fame. Others called me a gold-digger who played nurse until her husband woke up. The irony was almost funny if it didn't annoy me so much. Around noon, I decided to step out for a coffee. Cole offered to come with me, but I told him to stay because I needed a few minutes alone. The moment I stepped outside, I saw a group of people had gathered near the entrance. Reporters, maybe some randoms who just wanted a spectacle. I kept walking, head high, pretending not to hear the whispers. Then something small and hard hit my arm. I stopped. It was a crumpled paper cup. Then came another and another. "Shameless!" someone shouted. "You married a man in a coma!" I turned slightly. A woman at the front of the crowd was holding up her phone, recording me. "You think you can buy love?" she yelled. [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com) Something else flew toward me but this time, a small plastic bottle. It hit the ground beside me and rolled away.

My pulse started to beat, but I forced myself not to lose it. Cole must've been alerted because, a minute later, he was there, cutting through the crowd. "Back off!" he snapped at them. "You don't get to talk to her like that." 1/3 Chapter 83 Scandal Headline He grabbed my arm gently, "Let's go." The drive back was silent. My hands wouldn't stop shaking, but I didn't let him see it. Finished When we got back to the office, I told Sandra to clear my schedule for the rest of the day. I couldn't sit through meetings pretending everything was fine. By evening, I was on my way to the Carter estate. I needed to see Daniel, not because I thought he could fix it, but because I needed him to understand what his silence meant for me. When I entered his room, he was sitting up, reading something. He looked up immediately. "Amy," he said, surprised. "You're home early." I shut the door behind me. "Do you know what's going on?" He frowned. "I saw something online." "They're tearing me apart." He put the paper aside. "Sit down."

"I don't want to sit down," I snapped. "People are calling me names in the street, Daniel. They're saying I used you for money. Do you have any idea what that feels like?" He looked genuinely pained. "I didn't expect this to spread so fast. I'll handle it." "How?" I demanded. "By pretending I don't exist? You've been silent while the whole world's dragging me." His voice softened. "I didn't want to make things worse. The family thought-" I cut him off. "Your family doesn't get to decide how much humiliation I should take." He looked at me and something shifted in his eyes. "You're right," he said finally. "You shouldn't have to deal with this alone." "I'm not asking for pity," I said, quieter now. "I just want my name cleared. I've been through enough lies. What's it with your family? It's been from one problem to the other." Daniel stood up, "Then I'll make a statement." I blinked. "What?" "I'll tell the press myself," he said. "I'll tell them you're my wife, that the marriage wasn't about money or obligation. That it's none of their business." My anger started to ease, replaced by surprise. "You'd do that?" He nodded. "You've stood by me when I couldn't move or speak. I owe you at least that." I looked at him carefully, trying to read the sincerity in his face. "Fine," I said finally. "But I want to be there when you do." 2/3 17:14 Fri, Dec 26 JOM Chapter 83 Scandal Headline He hesitated. "Are you sure?" "I'm sure," I said. "If they're going to talk about me, I want them to see me." Finished For a while, we just stood there. The room felt really tense, like something was finally shifting in the right direction. When I turned to leave. Daniel called after me. "Amy?" "Yes?" "I'm sorry," he said. "For not protecting you sooner." I didn't answer. I just gave a small nod and walked out. On my way back to my room, I stopped near the hallway mirror. The reflection staring back looked tired and angry but not broken. They could call me whatever they wanted. They could twist stories and throw stones. But I knew who I was. And soon, so would everyone else. I took out my phone and sent a short message to Sandra: "Schedule a press meeting for tomorrow afternoon. Mr. Carter and I will speak together." The reply came almost instantly: "Understood." I put the phone away and sat on the edge of the bed. For the first time in a long while, I didn't feel like hiding. I didn't bother

going to Daniel's mum. I'm pretty sure he'd tell her his intention himself. Tomorrow, I'd walk into that room beside Daniel, not the scandal headline.

Amy was quiet through it all. Her posture never slipped. She smiled once, faintly, when someone asked about her work. It was enough to send the internet into a frenzy. By the end of the event, the music in the air had changed. Headlines online changed. "Alpha Daniel Carter defends his wife- loyalty redefined." Others said: "From mystery to admiration: Amy Carter wins hearts with grace." People who called her a gold digger yesterday were now praising her strength. Screens across the lobby replayed the clips of me speaking firmly, Amy standing tall beside me. Together, we looked like a united front. If only they knew the truth. I didn't do it out of love. I did it because the disrespect had gone too far. Because no matter how little I remembered, something about watching her being insulted made me angry in a way I couldn't ignore. When the press conference ended and I told her I'd join her at the office, she didn't argue. It was my first time there since waking up. My mother insisted on showing me around herself. The place hadn't changed much, but I could tell how much Amy had done to keep it standing. My mother smiled as she opened the door to my old office. "Feels familiar?" she asked. "Almost," I said. She sighed softly. "You've come a long way, Daniel. I pray to the Moon Goddess that you get your memory back. The pack still needs its Alpha." "I hope so too," I said quietly. For a moment, she rested her hand on my arm. "Amy did well, but the council and I want you to take your place again soon. This family needs you to lead it." "I'll do my best." She nodded and left. I walked around the office for a while, tracing my fingers along the desk, the framed photographs, the window that overlooked the city. Everything looked the same, but it didn't feel the same. I wasn't sure if I wanted it to. After a few minutes, I decided to find Amy before heading home. Her office was on the other side of the hall. The glass door made it easy to see inside. She was standing near her desk, her head thrown back slightly as she laughed at something. 2/3 www.No(v)elWorm.c(m)Chapter 84 She Doesn't Smile Brian was there leaning against the table, grinning. Whatever he said, it made her laugh again. I stopped where was. The sound didn't reach me through the glass, but the sight alone hit harder than I wanted to admit. It wasn't jealousy, not exactly. It was more like an irritation that burned through my chest without warning. I told myself it didn't matter. She was free to talk to whoever she wanted. But seeing her like that looking all relaxed, open, smiling and it twisted something in me. I realized I hadn't seen her smile like that with me. Not even once since I woke up. 17 70 3/3

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## When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 85

Chapter 85 I Know Better DANIEL Finisher For a moment, just stood there watching. Brian said something else, and she playfully shoved his arm. He laughed, and the two of them

looked... close. Too close and it really got to me. My jaw tightened. I turned away and walked down the hall before either of them noticed me.. By the time I got to the elevator, my patience was gone. I hit the button harder than I should have. I didn't understand why I was this upset. It wasn't like I loved her. I didn't even know if I could love her, at least not yet. But something about seeing another man make her smile that way made my skin crawl. When the doors closed, I caught one last glimpse of her through the glass wall. Still smiling. Still talking to him. The elevator began to move, and I told myself it was fine that I was just tired and I needed rest. [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) But deep down, I knew better. It wasn't just tiredness. It was frustrating and confusing. Maybe even guilt. I didn't love Amy. But I didn't want anyone else getting close to her either. And that realization stayed with me long after I left the building. When I got home, I went straight to my room, I didn't turn on the lights. I sat in silence, trying to make sense of the feeling clawing at me. For the first time since waking up, I wasn't thinking about recovery, or memory, or leadership. I was thinking about Amy and the way she laughed with someone who wasn't me. Days passed and every conversation between us sounded polite but it was as if she was counting her words and only talked to me out of necessity. She didn't snap or argue. She just spoke in her usual calm tone. At breakfast, she sat across me, reading messages on her phone. The sound of her spoon tapping the bowl was the only thing breaking the stillness. "Long day ahead?" I asked. She looked up briefly. "Probably. We have a council briefing this afternoon, and I need to review a few reports before then." I nodded, waiting for her to say more. She didn't. "I could join you," I said. "Might as well start showing my face at those meetings again." Her expression didn't change. "That won't be necessary. They're mostly about logistics and medical supplies." "Still," I pressed lightly, "you could use the company." "I have Brian for that," she said simply, taking another spoonful. I froze for a second. She didn't even realize how that sounded. Or maybe she did. "Brian?" I asked. [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) 1/3 17-14 Fri, Dec 26 JOM Chapter 85 Khov Better Finished She nodded, "He's been helping with the council's new community projects. He's useful when it comes to negotiations. Especially because I'm still learning the ropes and you're not strong enough yet." Useful. That word irritated me more than it should have. I forced a small smile. "Seems like you two work well together." [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com) "We do," she said, still focused on her food. The conversation ended there. She stood up, and left the table with a quiet, "See you later, Daniel" The door clicked softly behind her, leaving me sitting there with nothing but my thoughts. [www.novellworm.com](http://www.novellworm.com)

But I couldn't shake the feeling that there was something between her and Brian – not romantic, not openly, but something. An understanding I wasn't part of and I may never understand. I saw it when they spoke. The way she relaxed when he entered the room. How she trusted his judgment without question. How he never overstepped but always seemed to be exactly where she needed him. He didn't challenge me directly. He was respectful, quiet,

even distant around me. But I noticed the difference in how she looked at him. The kind of trust I wanted from her but couldn't seem to earn. Later that evening, I found them outside in the courtyard. She was sitting on the stone bench, reviewing a set of documents, while Brian stood near the fountain, explaining something about security reports. "I thought the pack was stable now," she said, sounding tired. "It is," he replied, "but a few rogues were spotted near the southern ridge last week. Nothing serious. Cole handled it." I walked toward them, and Brian stopped talking immediately. "Alpha," he greeted, nodding slightly. Amy looked up. "Daniel. You're home early." "I finished the paperwork faster than expected," I said. My tone was casual, but I caught the quick glance they exchanged. I did not tell her I would go to the office but I knew she would know either way. I just wanted to try my best so that everyone in the house would begin to see that I am capable of helping myself. "I was just going over the new field reports," she said, holding up the folder. "Brian brought them over." I looked at him. "That part of your job now?" He gave a short nod. "Only when needed. The council trusts me to handle certain updates directly." "It saves time." Amy added. I forced a polite smile. "Of course. Always good to save time." The air felt kind of tense. Brian shifted slightly, as if sensing it. "I'll leave you two to talk," he said and excused himself without another word. When he was gone, turned back to her. "You've grown close to him. Her brows drew together. "He's a friend. Daniel. Nothing more." "I didn't say it was more." "You implied it," she said evenly. \* Finished 1 let out a deep breath. "I just... I see how you are with him. You talk to him more than you talk to me." "Maybe because he listens without trying to fix everything," she replied. "Sometimes that's all I need." "I'm trying. Amy." "I know," she said quietly. "And I appreciate it. But you can't force things to just flow as if we are in love or ever were. I'm trying too." "You don't think I know?" I repeated. "We were never anything before, Amy. I woke up to find myself married to a stranger." Her voice softened. "Then maybe we should stop pretending to be anything else."

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## When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 86

Chapter 86 Jealousy And Insecurity DANIEL WWW.novellworm.com She gathered her papers and stood up to leave. "I'm not pretending," I said, my tone lower now. "I just want to understand you." 84 04D +5 Pearls "You want to understand who you think I should be," she said, not looking back. "Not who I am." — After that, she walked away and I just stood there

trying to understand her instead of getting upset. That night, I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking about the way she said Brian's name SO casually, without hesitation. The way she trusted him, confided in him. It wasn't jealousy, it was insecurity. A fear that no matter how hard I tried, she would never look at me the way she looked at him when he walked into a room. The next morning, she greeted me with a polite nod before heading out. No warmth, no anger. Just a very polite distance. After she left, I stood at the window watching her car pull away, and I realized something I didn't want to admit. She didn't have to raise her voice or push me away to make me feel insignificant and it got me wondering if she had already made peace with a life that didn't include me in it. \*\*\* After a few weeks, my life had started to take shape again. I was back on my feet, fully recovered, and running things both at the company and within the pack. Everyone said I'd adjusted well, though I still couldn't remember the night of the attack. The details of it were just all black, and I had given up trying to chase what my mind refused to give me. Instead, I decided to move forward and be the kind of leader everyone expected me to be. I spent most days buried in meetings. The company and the pack are calm. Outwardly, things looked good. But something still felt incomplete, like a page missing from the middle of a story. I tried not to think about it too much. Suddenly, the idea of hosting a business dinner came up, and I agreed right away. It would give me the chance to reconnect with people I hadn't seen in years. The board had insisted it be held at the main banquet hall. Formal setting, high-profile guests, the usual. I didn't care much for the spotlight, but it felt necessary. When all plans were in place and the dinner was certain, I made sure an invitation went out to Amy personally. I also arranged for the in-house stylists to visit her. It wasn't just about 1/3 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 86 Jealousy And Insecurity : wWw.nOveLworm.com84 +5 Pearls appearances, I wanted her to know that she was important to me and I also wanted the public to see her beside me, not behind me. By evening, everything was ready. The hall glowed with warm lighting, filled with laughter and the low hum of conversation. Waiters moved between tables carrying trays of champagne. I greeted a few investors and council members before checking my watch. I looked around but she wasn't here yet and just in that moment, the doors opened. I turned, and everything around me just stopped. Amy walked in wearing a deep emerald gown that fit her perfectly. Her hair was pulled back neatly, with a few strands dropping her face. She looked beautiful, elegant, confident and stunning. When she reached me, I stood up and pulled out a chair for her. "You look beautiful," I said quietly. She smiled politely. "Thank you. I wasn't sure what kind of event this was, so I kept it simple." "You made the right choice."

Before I could stop myself, I leaned in and kissed her lightly on the lips. It wasn't planned, it was just the spur of the moment. What surprised me more was that she didn't pull away. She kissed me back before sitting down like nothing happened. wWw.nOveLworm.comThe dinner moved along as expected – speeches, laughter, wine glasses clinking. I tried to focus

on the guests, but my mind kept wandering back to Amy. Every time someone addressed her, I noticed how she handled herself – composed, professional, warm when needed. People who had once questioned her presence now looked at her with admiration. “Mrs. Amy Carter,” one man called from across the table, “I must say, you’ve done an incredible job with the company in your husband’s absence. You kept it afloat when most wouldn’t have managed half as well.” She smiled. “I had a good team. And Mrs. Carter was very supportive.” Her humility made it hard not to admire her. As the evening went on, more people joined the conversation. It felt almost normal. Then, just when things seemed to settle, one of the guests leaned too close toward Amy. He was from one of the northern packs, a businessman I barely tolerated. “You must tell me your secret,” he said, smiling in that way that wasn’t respectful. “How does someone like you handle all that pressure and still look so flawless?” Amy’s smile thinned, but she stayed polite. “Discipline,” she replied. “And a good night’s sleep.” The man chuckled. “I doubt that’s all it takes.” 2/3 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 86 Jealousy And Insecurity 84 +5 Pearls I saw his hand brush her arm lightly, and before I could stop myself, I was already standing up and losing my cool. “That’s enough,” I said, my voice louder than I intended. The man blinked, pretending not to understand. “I was only-” “You’ve had too much to drink,” I cut in. “Security.” Two guards stepped forward immediately. The man tried to protest, but I didn’t give him the chance. “Escort him out.” Amy’s eyes widened slightly. “Daniel—” “Out,” I repeated. The hall fell quiet. The guards did as I ordered, and the man was gone within seconds. I could feel everyone’s eyes on me, but I didn’t care. Amy leaned closer, her tone low but firm. “You didn’t have to do that in front of everyone.” “Yes, I did,” I said quietly. “He disrespected you.” “Then you could’ve handled it differently,” she said, keeping her voice calm. “You made it a scene.” I looked at her, still feeling the anger in my chest. “You didn’t seem bothered.” 70 [www.novell.com](http://www.novell.com) 3/3 Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

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6-8 minutes

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**When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 87**

Chapter 87 Stop Fighting My Battles DANIEL (w)w.NoV@lW@Rm.c@msuit. “I was,” she said. “But I don’t need you fighting my battles for me, Daniel.” ๕๕๕ +5 Pearls That shut me up. I could feel the tension between us. I tried to stay seated, but I couldn’t. The jealousy, the anger was too much. I pushed my chair back abruptly and stood. “I need some air.” I muttered. “Daniel-” she started, but I didn’t stop. I walked out of the hall, ignoring the stares. The second I got outside, I called for the driver. “Take me home,” I said. He hesitated. “But sir, the guests-” “Now.” He opened the car door without another word. The drive was quiet. I stared out the window, trying to calm down, but my thoughts wouldn’t let me. I didn’t even know why I was this angry. It wasn’t just about the guest. It was something else like the way Amy stayed calm while I lost control. The way she didn’t need me to defend her. When we got home, I went straight to my room and loosened my tie. The house was dark and quiet. I poured myself a drink and sat on the couch. The image of her laughing earlier flashed in my mind, the way she smiled at the people around her, how composed she looked even when I snapped. She didn’t flinch. I took a sip and stared at the wall. Maybe I was jealous. Maybe I was just tired. Or maybe it was both. All I knew was that something about her got under my skin in ways I didn’t understand. I had thought bringing her tonight would fix things, maybe remind us both that we could still play the part of husband and wife. But instead, I’d only made things worse. She was strong, independent, untouchable. And me? I was still trying to figure out where I fit in a life that had moved on without me. Tomorrow, people would most likely talk about how their Alpha lost his temper at a dinner he hosted. They’d say he was jealous or insecure or both. By the time Amy got home from the dinner, I was in the sitting room downstairs, still in my 1/3 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 87 Stop Fighting My Battles +5 Pearls W (w)w.NoV@lW@Rm.c@msuit. I hadn’t bothered changing or eating. The staff moved quietly around the estate, pretending not to notice how tense the air felt. The house was huge but at that moment, it felt really small. She walked in calmly, her heels clicking against the floor. Her face was unreadable, the same composed expression she wore whenever she wanted to keep things polite. “You left early,” she started, stopping a few feet from me. “I wasn’t in the mood to entertain people anymore,” I replied, keeping my tone even. She nodded slightly, glancing toward one of the maids who appeared in the doorway. “Could you please bring some tea to my room?” she asked. The maid nodded and left. Amy waited until the footsteps faded before turning back to me. “You didn’t have to humiliate that man,” she said. “He was out of line, but you made it worse.” “He touched you,” I said. “I wasn’t going to sit there and watch that happen.” Her tone remained calm. “You could have handled it privately, Daniel. Not everything needs to be a show of power.” I ran a hand through my hair, feeling frustration rise again. “Maybe I overreacted, but I won’t apologize for defending you.”

She looked straight at me then. “Defending me is one thing. Acting like you own me is another.” “I don’t think I own you.” Her voice softened, “You act like it sometimes. And maybe

it's not your fault. This marriage wasn't something either of us chose willingly. You were in a coma, and I was chosen for you. We both just... went along with it afterward." She paused, folding her arms. "But you need to understand something, Daniel. I don't belong to you emotionally. Only by law." The room went quiet. I could hear faint laughter from the kitchen where the staff were finishing up for the night, the distant sound of the fountain outside. I stared at her, trying to find something to say that wouldn't sound defensive. "You make it sound like I'm forcing something that isn't there." She didn't answer right away. "Aren't you?" I looked away. Maybe I was. All the dinners, the gestures, the attempts to act like we were a couple. I told myself it was about rebuilding what we lost. But in truth, we never had anything to rebuild. There had never been a love story between us, just a responsibility I kept mistaking for affection. "You've been kind," she said quietly. "And I respect you for that. But respect isn't love, Daniel. And it's not fair for either of us to pretend it could be." I swallowed hard and nodded once. "You're right." She looked surprised, maybe expecting me to argue. I didn't have the energy for that. "I just thought," I continued, "that maybe if we tried, things would feel... normal." "Normal for who?" she asked softly. "You, or me?" I didn't answer and she sighed. "I know you're trying. But maybe trying to make something out of nothing will only hurt us both." Before I could respond, one of the staff returned with her tea on a tray. Amy thanked her, picked up the cup, and turned back toward me. "Goodnight, Daniel." "Goodnight," I replied, though it sounded flat. She walked upstairs quietly, her footsteps fading until the house went still again. I sat there for a long time, staring at the floor. The staff had cleared most of the dining area, and one of the guards closed the front doors quietly behind him. I realized she wasn't angry at me, she was simply done pretending. I had been trying to build something on respect alone, mistaking her politeness for interest. She was loyal, decent, and honest, but that didn't mean she felt anything for me beyond duty. — Maybe I didn't either. Maybe what I wanted wasn't love but the idea of it the comfort of knowing someone was there. Mid thoughts, I heard her door close softly and the sound echoed in my head. In this big, perfect looking house, surrounded by people and wealth, I had never felt more alone.

14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 88 Feelings For Her He let out a small laugh, though there was no humor in it. "You're sorry for liking her?" "I'm sorry for what it means. For how it complicates things." Daniel crossed his arms. "You've always

been straightforward. That's one thing I've admired about you." "I'd rather face the truth than pretend it isn't there." "Yeah," he said quietly. "I guess I can respect that." We both stood there, not quite looking at each other, both aware that nothing would ever be exactly the same. But at the same time. Maybe it wasn't friendship as it used to be, but it was something that came from understanding where the other stood. After a while, Daniel said, "You know, she talks about you sometimes." "I figured," I said. "She's kind to everyone." "She trusts you," he said, his tone neutral. "I'd never do anything to break that." "I know you wouldn't." He paused, then added, "I guess that's what makes this harder." I looked at him, trying to read what he meant. He didn't explain, but I understood enough. They were put into an arranged marriage and he couldn't force her to love him. "I'll stay out of the way when I can," I said. "Give you both space." "You don't have to disappear," he said quickly. "That would only make things awkward." "I don't mind awkwardness," I said. "I mind tension." He almost smiled. "We'll figure it out." I nodded. "Yeah." He walked back to the table and picked up the papers again, though I knew he wasn't reading them. "You know," he said, his voice quieter now, "it means something, what you just told me. Not everyone would do that." "I wasn't looking for praise," I said. "I know. But I'm giving it anyway." He glanced up. "You've got my respect, Brian. For whatever 3/4 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 88 Feelings For Her that's worth." "It's worth a lot," I said. He nodded. "Then we're good?" "As good as we can be," I said. : [www.veelworld.com](http://www.veelworld.com) M 84 +5 Pearls There was nothing else to say after that. We stood there for a moment longer before I turned to leave. When I reached the door, he called my name. "Brian." I looked back. "Thank you," he said. I nodded and stepped outside. 70 B Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

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### When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 88

Chapter 88 Feelings For Her Brian POV :. 200 5 Pearls I had been putting it off for days. Every time I saw Daniel, I told myself it wasn't the right moment. But the truth was, there would never be a right moment for what I had to say. The air between us had changed since

I and Amy got close. That evening, we were alone in the small room behind the main house. The light from the window was dim, and the sound of the wind outside filled the silence. Daniel was sitting by the table, going through some papers. I stood by the door, unsure of how to begin. He looked up when I didn't speak. "You've been quiet," he said. "Something on your mind?" I nodded. "Yeah. There's something I need to tell you." He leaned back in his chair, eyes narrowing slightly. "Go ahead." I moved closer, resting my hands on the back of the chair opposite him. My voice came out lower than I expected. "It's about Amy." He stilled. "What about her?" I took a slow breath. "I care about her. More than I should." Daniel's expression didn't change at first. He just stared at me, as if waiting for me to say I was joking. When I didn't, he set the papers aside and sat straighter. "You're saying you have feelings for her?" [www.NoVelworm.com](http://www.NoVelworm.com) "Yes," I said. "But I'm not going to act on them." He let out a slow exhale, his eyes dropping to the table. "You're serious." "I am." The silence that followed felt tense, but I forced myself to keep talking. "I've tried to ignore it. I thought it would fade, but it hasn't. I don't want this to come between us, or between you and her. That's why I'm telling you now." Daniel rubbed a hand over his jaw, thinking. "You didn't have to tell me," he said after a moment. "You could've just... kept it to yourself." "I tried," I said. "But it didn't feel right. You deserve to know." He looked up at me again, his eyes sharper now. "And what do you expect me to do with that?" 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 88 Feelings For Her (84) +5 Pearls "Nothing." I said quickly. "I'm not asking for anything. I just needed to be honest. I'll keep my distance. She won't know. And I won't cross any lines." Daniel's lips pressed into a thin line. "You're sure about that?" "Yes." He leaned forward, elbows on the table. "Why tell me then? To ease your conscience?" I shook my head. "Because you're my alpha. Because I respect you." He didn't answer right away. The only sound was the ticking of the old clock on the wall. I could see the conflict in his face. I couldn't tell if it was gratitude, suspicion, maybe a bit of anger. I didn't blame him. If our positions were reversed, I'd probably feel the same. Finally, he started talking, "You said you care about her. How much?" "Enough to wish I didn't," I said quietly. His gaze softened just slightly. "You know she's been through a lot. I don't want her caught in the middle of anything." "She won't be," I said. "That's my promise." Daniel nodded slowly. "I believe you." That simple statement meant more than I expected. Still, the air between us had changed. He stood up and walked to the window, looking out. "You've got restraint, Brian. I'll give you that." "It's not easy," I said. "I imagine not." He turned around, leaning against the windowsill. "You could have kept quiet. You didn't have to put this on me." "I thought about that too," I said. "But I didn't want lies between us. Not about something like this." He gave a short nod, eyes on the floor. "I appreciate your honesty. Really. It's just... hard to hear." "I know," I said. "And I'm sorry." [www.NoVelworm.com](http://www.NoVelworm.com)

14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 88 Feelings For Her He let out a small laugh, though there was no humor in it. “You’re sorry for liking her?” “I’m sorry for what it means. For how it complicates things.” (\*, W@Ŵ.nóVēŁwDr(m).©(O)M+5 Pearls Daniel crossed his arms. “You’ve always been straightforward. That’s one thing I’ve admired about you.” “I’d rather face the truth than pretend it isn’t there.” “Yeah,” he said quietly. “I guess I can respect that.” We both stood there, not quite looking at each other, both aware that nothing would ever be exactly the same. But at the same time. Maybe it wasn’t friendship as it used to be, but it was something that came from understanding where the other stood. After a while, Daniel said, “You know, she talks about you sometimes.” “I figured,” I said. “She’s kind to everyone.” “She trusts you,” he said, his tone neutral. “I’d never do anything to break that.” “I know you wouldn’t.” He paused, then added, “I guess that’s what makes this harder.” I looked at him, trying to read what he meant. He didn’t explain, but I understood enough. They were put into an arranged marriage and he couldn’t force her to love him. “I’ll stay out of the way when I can,” I said. “Give you both space.” “You don’t have to disappear,” he said quickly. “That would only make things awkward.” “I don’t mind awkwardness,” I said. “I mind tension.” He almost smiled. “We’ll figure it out.” I nodded. “Yeah.” He walked back to the table and picked up the papers again, though I knew he wasn’t reading them. “You know,” he said, his voice quieter now, “it means something, what you just told me. Not everyone would do that.” “I wasn’t looking for praise,” I said. “I know. But I’m giving it anyway.” He glanced up. “You’ve got my respect, Brian. For whatever 3/4 14:25 Sat, Dec 27 Chapter 88 Feelings For Her that’s worth.” “It’s worth a lot,” I said. He nodded. “Then we’re good?” “As good as we can be,” I said. : www.ŋ(O)VēŁwDr(m).c(O)mM 84 +5 Pearls There was nothing else to say after that. We stood there for a moment longer before I turned to leave. When I reached the door, he called my name. “Brian.” I looked back. “Thank you,” he said. I nodded and stepped outside. 70 B Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

8-10 minutes

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## When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 89

Chapter 89 An Opening AMY POV A few weeks had passed since Mrs Carter went on a trip she would not tell anyone the details. The days had grown longer and heavier, though I didn't notice it much anymore. There was too much to do, too much to hold together. The pack was stretched thin, trust was harder to find, and every whisper seemed to hide a threat. I didn't have the time or space to think about anything else. Especially not about Brian, or what he m have said to anyone. Whatever his feelings were, I didn't know them, and I didn't look for signs. He has been giving me mixed signals lately and I'm not sure if it's just friendship anymore. Each morning began the same way. Work, [www.novelform.com](http://www.novelform.com) reports from the border, lists of supplies, new projects to approve. At least I wasn't being slandered online a By noon, we had uncovered another attempt to sabore the watch schedule. It was subtle, but clear enough once I compared the records. Two names stood out. I told my assistant to tell Daniel to come to my office. I needed to talk to him. When he entered, he closed the door behind him and leaned against the wall, his eyes searching mine. "You found something?" "Yes," I said, handing him the papers. "Rowan and Keaton. They've been moving guards off the east perimeter without clearance." He scanned the page, his jaw tightening. "You're sure?" "I double-checked every shift rotation myself," I said. "They've been making the changes through the night roster. It looks like they're trying to open a gap." "An opening for what?" "An attack," I said. "Or an escape. Either way, it looks like a betrayal." He nodded slowly, setting the papers down. "You'll handle it?" "I already have," I said. "They're being watched. We'll bring them in tonight, quietly." He gave a faint smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. "You always seem to be two steps ahead." "I don't have the luxury of being behind," I said. His gaze lingered for a moment before he looked away. You shouldn't have to do this alone." "I'm not alone," I said. "You're here." That made him pause. Since the dinner issue we had, Daniel had looked at me with caution, me to make a mistake. , as if waiting for 1/4 Chapter 89 An Opening A Finished But lately, that has changed. We still disagreed, still argued, but the distance between us wasn't built on just marital duties any more. Later that night, after we dealt with Rowan and Keaton, the house was silent. I sat by the window with a cup of tea, trying to clear my thoughts when Daniel came in without knocking. He had stopped asking for permission weeks ago. "They confessed," he said. "They were paid to alter the watch schedules. Someone outside promised them a way out if they created enough chaos." "Who paid them?" I asked. "They wouldn't say," he said. "But we'll find out." I nodded. "We always do." He sat down across from me, watching me for a long moment. "You're tired." "I'm fine," I replied immediately. "You always say that." "Because it's true." He shook his head slightly. "You've been holding this pack together while the rest of us scramble to keep up. You shouldn't have to prove yourself every day." "I'm not trying to prove anything," I said quietly. "I'm just doing what has to be done." He leaned forward, elbows on his knees. "You think love works that way too?" I looked at him, unsure what he meant. "What?" "Doing what has to be done," he said. "Even when it doesn't come naturally." I didn't answer. His

tone wasn't accusing, but there was something in his eyes I hadn't seen before. After a long pause, I said, "You can't force people to always care. Not the way you want them to." He gave a faint nod. "I'm starting to understand that." The words hung between us, heavier than they should have been. I didn't know if he was talking about me, or himself, or both. But I didn't ask. We sat in silence for a while. The sound of the wind outside filled the room. Finally, he said, "You've done more for this pack than anyone gives you credit for." "I don't do it for credit," I said. "I know. That's what makes it matter." Something in his voice softened, and for a moment, the tension that usually filled the air wasn't there. He looked at me, not as a wife or mate or an ally, but as someone he trusted. 2/4

Chapter 89 An Opening: Finished Thank you," he said quietly. I nodded. "You don't have to thank me." "I do," he said. "Because I haven't made it easy for easy for you." "You've made it fair," I said. "That's enough." He smiled faintly. "Fair. That's a new word for us." "Maybe it's about time," I said. He laughed softly, the sound low and real. It faded quickly, but it stayed with me. [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com)The nights that followed were calmer, though the threats around us didn't stop. Every few days, another lead surfaced—another name, another plan. We stopped an assassination attempt on the council head the next week, and then uncovered a chain of messages between outside packs that hinted at a coordinated strike. Each time, Daniel and I worked side by side, sometimes without words. I began to notice the small things—how he didn't second-guess me anymore, how he listened before responding, how he lingered after meetings when everyone else had left. There were moments when his eyes met mine and neither of us looked away. It wasn't trust at first. It was something quieter—mutual need, perhaps. But over time, it became something else. Something I didn't name. One night, after a long day of tracking messages and intercepting threats, I found h office. ng outside my "Everything settled?" he asked. [www.novelworm.com](http://www.novelworm.com)"For now," I said. "The messages stopped. They know we're watching." He nodded, then hesitated. "You should get some rest." "I will." "Do you ever mean that when you say it?" "Sometimes," I said. He smiled, just barely. "Then tonight should be one of those times." I didn't argue. We walked together down the quiet hall, the sound of our steps filling the space. When we reached my door, I turned to him. "Daniel," I said. "Yeah?" 3/ Bound To The Broken Alpha Chapter 90 Calm Down Amy Amy "I know it hasn't been easy. For either of us." He looked at me, his expression serious. "No, it hasn't." "But I'm glad you're still here." Something in his eyes shifted. "So am I." Neither of us moved for a moment. The air between us felt diff not charged, just calm, like something understood without needing to be said. Then he stepped back, giving a small nod. "Goodnight, Amy." "Goodnight," I said. When I closed the door behind him, I stood there for a while, listening to the silence. Moving on, I went to bed but then, there was something I was still trying to figure out. The attack on Daniel that landed him in a coma, why Elias was suddenly not around and the reason Mrs Carter travelled out

of the blues. I had asked the same question for weeks about what really happened the night Daniel was attacked and every answer I got had been half-truths, small pieces meant to silence me. Luck finally shone on me. While I was going through really old books in the library, I found the council records hidden in the lower archive, the truth was laid out clearly. Daniel's coma hadn't been an accident. The ambush that nearly killed him had been planned. And the one who ordered it wasn't an outsider. It was a council elder and one of their own who was terrified of how powerful Daniel had become. I sat at the desk, reading the confession written in the elder's own hand. He had feared that Daniel's influence would break the balance of power within the packs. So he arranged for a group of rogues to intercept Daniel during his patrol. They were told to make it look like a random attack. When Daniel survived, the elder panicked and tried to cover it up. The rest of the council stayed silent. I didn't realize how long I'd been sitting there until I heard a step behind me. "Amy?" It was Brian. His voice was low. I turned to him, holding the paper in my hand. "You knew about this?" "Not all of it. We had suspicions." "You should have told me." "We didn't have proof," he said. "Not until now."

## Bound To The Broken Alpha

4-5 minutes

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## When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 90

Chapter 90 Calm Down Amy Finished I stood up. "They tried to kill him. Their own leader. And we've been sitting in meetings with them like nothing happened." "I know," he said. "But if we move too fast, we lose control. You know how they work." "I don't care how they work," I said. "They almost killed him. And now they'll answer for it." Brian didn't argue, but I saw the worry in his face. "What are you going to do?" "Tell him." I said. "He deserves to know." When I found Daniel later that evening, he was outside near the training grounds, speaking with two of the sentries. I waited until he was alone before I handed him the paper. "What's this?" he asked, unfolding it. "Read it." He did, his eyes moving slowly over the page. When he finished, he didn't speak. His hand tightened slightly, and the paper crumpled between his fingers. "An elder," he said finally. "Of course." "He was afraid of you," I said. "Afraid of what you'd become." Daniel gave a short, humorless sound. "And I thought they'd forgiven me for pushing back against them." "They never forgive," I said quietly. He looked at me, something hard behind his eyes. "Thank you for finding this." "I'm sorry," I said. "You deserved to know sooner." He shook his head. "You've done more than

anyone else would have. Leave the rest to me.” I was laying down in my room and at around midnight, I felt a sudden pull, it was sharp and weird. It wasn’t physical. [www.NoVeLwORM.com](http://www.NoVeLwORM.com) followed the pull and got to the grand hall where I saw Clara. She stood at the center of the room, a circle of runes glowing faintly around her. In her hands, she held a bowl of blood. My blood. “You shouldn’t be here,” she said when she saw me. “That’s my blood,” I said. “How did you get it?”

She smiled slightly. “It’s not that hard to get your blood.. A little drop is all it takes.” “What are you doing, Clara?” [www.NoVeLwORM.com](http://www.NoVeLwORM.com) She lifted the bowl higher. “You don’t understand what’s at stake. The Luna bond isn’t just a tradition, it’s power. Daniel was never meant to have that strength. I’m fixing what should never have been broken.” “You’re replacing me,” I said. 2/3 Chapter 90 Calm Down Amy Finishes. “I’m restoring balance,” she replied. “Your blood carries the Guardian line. With it, the bond can be rewritten. You’ll still live, but the connection will belong to me.” I stepped forward, the runes glowing brighter as I crossed them. “You won’t touch that bond.” “You can’t stop it,” she said. “The ritual has already begun.” The air shifted, growing dense. The runes pulsed beneath our feet, and the bowl began to shimmer. I could feel the pull of it, a tug deep inside me, like something trying to strip away a part of who I was. I pushed back, not with strength, but with focus. The Guardian blood that Clara thought she could use against me stirred. I had never tried to use it before. I’d been told it was dangerous, that the power demanded control no one truly possessed. But there was no other choice. I raised my hand, feeling the pulse of energy move through me. The room grew brighter. Clara stepped back, startled. “What are you doing?” she shouted. “Taking back what’s mine,” I said. The energy surged outward, wild and sharp. The runes flared and cracked, light spilling across the floor. Clara screamed as the circle broke, the bowl shattering in her hands. The blood turned to ash before it hit the ground. I didn’t stop. The force kept building inside me, heavier by the second. It felt like fire under my skin, but colder. My vision blurred, and I could barely stand. “Stop!” Clara cried, stumbling backward. I tried, but I couldn’t. The power had no direction now, it moved through me, feeding on itself. I could feel it tearing at the edges of who I was. “Amy!” Daniel called out, I didn’t hear him come in. His hands were on my shoulders, calming me. “You have to stop,” he said. “I can’t,” I managed to say. “Yes, you can. Look at me.”