

Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-7 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 91

Chapter 91 1 Never Wanted This AMY The light finally dimmed and silence and dust filled the hall. The floor cracked where the runes had seared through. And Clara was gone, melted away in the last glimmer. But Amy was still there. She stood for a moment, then her knees gave out. I caught her before she fell on the ground. She was shaking, her body ice-cold. I held her as tight as I could, holding us together. "It's done." I murmured, though I don't know if either of us really believed it. She murmured, "She tried to steal my blood" Her fingers clutched weakly at my shirt. "It felt like something was tearing inside me. I couldn't stop it." "You did stop it," I told her. "Look at me, Amy." She lifted her head slowly. Her eyes met mine. There was fear in them, but also something else. Something sweet and honest that I hadn't seen in a long time. "I'm fine," she whispered. "You're not," I said. "You need to rest." She tried to push away, but I didn't let go. "Daniel, I can walk." "I didn't ask if you could," I said quietly. "I'm not letting you collapse halfway down the grand hall. The corridors were empty. She didn't argue again. She rested her head against my shoulder as I carried her out. The corridors were empty. Thankfully no one saw what had happened. The guards were stationed outside, unaware of what had just happened within those walls. When we reached my room, I set her down carefully on the edge of the bed. She sat there, breathing slowly, she was focused on twisting her fingers together. "You should've called for help," I said. "You shouldn't have faced her alone." "I didn't plan to," she replied, her tone flat. "It just happened." "Everything just happens with you," I said, trying to sound light but failed at it. Her eyes lifted sharply. "You think I wanted this?" Mark N "No," I answered softly, "I think you keep putting yourself in danger because you can't stand waiting for others to fix things." I sat beside her, my hands resting on my knees. The silence between us felt thicker than ever. Finally, she turned to me, her voice low. "She had my blood, Daniel. That means somebody in this house helped her get it." "I'll find out who," I said. "You have my word" Finished She held my face with unreadable eyes for a moment. Then she nodded. "Thank you." When she tried to stand again, I stopped her with a hand on her arm. "You should stay here tonight," I said, Her eyes flickered with hesitation. "In your room?"

“Yes. I don’t trust anyone else right now.” Her lips parted slightly, like she wanted to argue but couldn’t find a reason to. After a moment, she nodded in defeat. She sat back down, and I reached for the blanket on the chair to cover her shoulders. But as I leaned in, her scent hit me. It was faint but warm, familiar in a way that made my chest tighten. She looked up at me, and our faces were too close. The air between us thickened. “Daniel...” she started, but her voice trailed off. I didn’t know what came over me. Maybe it was the fear of almost losing her, or the anger that someone had tried to break what was ours, or maybe it was just everything we’d both been holding back for too long. My hand moved to her cheek before I could stop myself. “You scared me tonight,” I said. Her breath hitched, and she whispered, “I scared myself.” We stared at each other in silence. Then I leaned forward, closing the small distance started slowly, I honestly wasn’t certain if I should continue but everything in me like both of us were testing the line we’d drawn for so long. In us. The kiss > have her. It was www.NeverWantedThisFinished.com She didn’t pull away. If anything, she leaned closer, her hand resting on my chest. I could feel her heartbeat under my palm, it was fast and uneven. When I deepened the kiss, she let out a soft moan and the tension that we had between us for months finally snapped. I pulled back just enough to see her face. “Tell me to stop,” I said, my voice rough. She shook her head. “Don’t.” The way she said it made nothing else matter. I lifted her gently, and she wrapped her arms around my neck. The kiss grew more intense, no longer slow, no longer about restraint. When I laid her down, the world outside the room disappeared. Without realizing it, we were tongue in deep with our clothes flung all around the room. It felt as if we’ve been waiting for this moment all our lives. By the time I thrust deep into her, she gasped in satisfaction. I kept a familiar rhythm and we both let out a deep moan of satisfaction. In exhaustion, we both fell onto the bed. She laid beside me, her hair messy against the pillow, her skin warm. 2/3 Chapter 91 Never Wanted This Finished Neither of us spoke for a long time. I didn’t know what to say. I’d told myself I wouldn’t cross this line, that whatever existed between us was respect and nothing more. But respect had turned into something else. She turned slightly, facing me. “You shouldn’t have done that,” she said quietly. “I know,” I said. “But I don’t regret it.” Her eyes met mine, calm but unreadable. “You will.” Maybe she was right. Maybe in the morning, everything would fall apart again—the council, the politics, the questions we’d both been avoiding. But right then, with her lying beside me, none of it mattered. For once, I wasn’t the Alpha, and she wasn’t the woman trying to hold everything together. We were just two people who had lost too much and finally stopped pretending we hadn’t. I closed my eyes, and for the first time in years, I felt something close to peace. My wolf curled inside of me and I could tell he felt at peace with what just happened.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 92

Chapter 92 Private Discussion DANIEL 69% +5 Pearls My mum returned from her trip the next morning. The estate had been busier than usual, and everyone seemed more tense knowing she was home. I was in the main office when Amy came to find me. She looked calm, but her eyes told another story. "Can we talk?" "Privately," she added. Something in her tone made me agree without hesitation. We went to the study, and I sent the staff away. A few minutes later, my mother joined us, she was still wearing her travel coat. She looked tired but bothered, the way she always did when something serious was about to be discussed. Amy didn't waste time. She placed a folded piece of paper on the desk between us. "I found this," she said. "It's from the council archives." Mrs. Carter frowned. "What is it?" "An elder's written confession," Amy replied. "It explains what really happened the night you were attacked, Daniel." My heart gave a slow, heavy thud. I kept my expression steady. "Go on." Amy opened the paper and read part of it aloud. The words were simple but brutal. The elder had written about his fear of my influence, how he believed I was becoming too powerful, and how he ordered rogues to ambush me during patrol. The attack that sent me into a coma hadn't been random, it had been planned by one of our own. I think a part of me always knew that the attack on me was planned. It was too perfect to be random and I couldn't prove it because all I had were fragmented memories of that day. It wasn't enough to tell anyone anything. When she finished, the room went quiet. The ticking of the clock was all anyone could hear. Mrs. Carter sat back slowly, her fingers gripping the armrest. "An elder," she whispered. "something... but not this bad." Amy nodded once. "He panicked when Daniel survived and covered it up. The rest of the council stayed silent." I looked at her. "You're sure this is real?" "Yes, the seal matches. I checked three different documents to be certain." Mrs. Carter looked between us. "Who else knows?" "Brian," Amy said quietly. "He found me reading it. He doesn't have the full picture yet." I rubbed my jaw. "So the council sat there all these years pretending to be loyal while one of them tried to have me killed" Amy hesitated, then said, "I don't think this is the whole truth. There's something else. Someone else behind it." 10.17 Tue, Dec 30 A Chapter 92 Private Discussion Mrs. Carter's eyes narrowed. "Why do you say that?" "Because the tone of the confession doesn't match the rest of the elder's writing. He was using the word 'we.' Even when he talked about fear and guilt, it wasn't personal. It was about protecting someone." I leaned back in my chair. "Then whoever that someone is... might still be in the council." 69% +5 Pearls Mrs. Carter didn't answer right away.

She looked out the window, then back at us. "You two will not confront anyone yet," she said firmly. "If the council suspects that we know, they'll move to cover their tracks. We can't afford that." *W.W. novel worm.com* didn't like it, but I understood. "So what do we do?" "Act normal," she said. "At the office, in the estate, and especially around them. We can't draw attention."

Amy nodded. "I agree. I'll keep working through the archives quietly. There might be more hidden records." *W.W. novel worm.com* glanced at her, wondering how long she'd been digging into this without telling me. "You should've told me earlier." "I wanted proof first," she said simply. Mrs. Carter turned to me. "She did the right thing. You would've gone straight to the council, and that's exactly what they'd expect." She wasn't wrong. Patience wasn't one of my strong points. Amy reached for the confession again, folding it neatly. "I'll keep this with me until we know where to store it safely." "Keep it," I said. "If anyone finds it here, we'll have a bigger problem." Mrs. Carter nodded. "We'll move carefully. Daniel, attend your meetings as usual. Let the council think you're focused on business. Amy, handle public matters as normal. If they see routine, they'll assume nothing's changed." The plan made sense, but I could feel anger building under my calm exterior. Years of yalty, and this was what it came to, betrayal from within. Amy looked at me, studying my face. "You're quiet," she said. "I'm thinking about how many of them shook my hand after that attack," I replied. Her voice softened. "I know. But if we want justice, we can't let emotions lead." Mrs. Carter stood up, signaling the end of our small meeting. "You both did well. But remember, the council isn't foolish. The moment they sense somethings off, they'll retaliate. Don't give them that reason." "Amy and I stood up. She turned to Mrs. Carter and said "Thank you for listening. I know this isn't easy." Mrs. Carter gave her a small nod. "It's not easy for any of us, dear. But I appreciate your honesty." When we left the study, I walked Amy to the main hallway. It was getting dark, and the corridor was quiet except for the faint hum of the chandeliers. 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 92 Privat Cussion "You handled that well," I told her. She gave a small shrug. "I just said what needed to be said." 69% +5 Pearls "You're brave to confront her like that. Most people wouldn't." She smiled faintly. "Bravery isn't always loud." We reached the door to her room. She turned to face me, and for a moment, neither of us moved. "You know this puts you in danger too," I said quietly. "I'm aware," she said. "But truth usually does." There was something about the way she said it that made me forget the council, the betrayal, the anger for a second. It was just her standing there looking really beautiful. As she turned to open the door, I reached out without thinking. My fingers brushed hers. She froze, glancing at me briefly. It was a small touch, but it felt heavier than any words. "I'll see you in the office tomorrow," I said. She nodded slowly. "Goodnight, Daniel." "Goodnight, Amy." When she closed the door, I stood there for a while, staring at the polished wood. My hand still

tingled faintly where it had touched hers. Maybe it was nothing. Maybe it was just the tension of the day.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 93

Chapter 93 Strong Emotions ¥69% 豆 45 Pearls www.novEłW©
Řm.COM DANIEL Włw.W.N@Vé/WorM.c©M

The next few days passed quietly, almost too quietly. Amy and I worked side by side like nothing had changed. At least, that was how it looked to everyone else. To the rest of the staff, we were the same two people bound by responsibility, keeping the company and the pack calm while my mother handled the politics around the council. But I could feel it. The change between us. Our conversations were still clipped and professional. Every word, every gesture was weird. But there were pauses and silence that said more than words ever could. When I caught her looking at me across the conference table, it wasn't the same guarded glance I'd gotten used to. It lingered just long enough to make me wonder what she was thinking before she looked away again. It helped that everyone else seemed oblivious, at least it would not be uncomfortable. Maybe when we were sure of what we felt, then I wouldn't care if anyone knew something had changed. My mother, though, wasn't fooled. She'd been watching. She didn't say anything, but I knew she saw the pull between me and Amy. For now, she seemed more worried about keeping up appearances. If anything, I would tag my mother a witch. How she always knew everything was a wonder. At the office, Amy behaved like she normally would. Her tone never changed, her focus never slipped, and I respected that about her. But when she entered the room, I noticed. When she spoke, I listened. I couldn't help it. On Thursday night, we were the last ones left in the building. The others had gone home hours ago, but Amy stayed behind to finish going through reports from the western branch. I told myself I was staying to help, but that wasn't the full truth. She sat across from me, reading through the files with a focused expression. The desk lamp cast a warm light on her face, and for a while, I just watched her, pretending to work while my mind wandered. "You know," I said finally, leaning back in my chair, "you look terrifying when you're sed." Her eyes flicked up from the report. "Terrifying?" wWłw.ñ@ve(l)woRñ.com "Yeah," I said with a small grin. "Like you're about to find a mistake and ruin someone's week." Her lips twitched. "Then maybe you should double-check your own reports, just in case." I laughed—genuinely laughed for the first time in weeks

The sound surprised even me. "Fair point." She gave a faint smile and went back to her papers, but the tension that had been building all week eased just a little. For the next hour, we worked in silence. The sound of pages turning, the soft tapping of her pen against the table was strangely comforting. At some point, I stood and walked over to her side of the desk. "You've been at this for hours," I said. "You should take a break." "I'm almost done," she said without looking up. "You always say that," I replied. "And then two hours later, you're still here." 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 R Chapter 93 Strong Emotions 69% B +5 Pearls This time, she looked up properly. Her tone stayed calm, but there was something don't do it, who will?" "I would," I said before I could stop myself. She raised an eyebrow. "You? You barely trust anyone to read your own notes." I shrugged. "You're not just anyone." her eyes. "If I For a second, neither of us said anything. Her gaze was fixed on me. Then she closed the file slowly and stacked it with the others. "Well, that's all for tonight then."

She stood up, gathering her things. I stepped aside, letting her pass, but something about the unfinished. As she reached the door, I said quietly, "Amy." She turned, her hand on the handle. "Yes?" ment felt I hesitated. "About the other night—what happened in the hall, the ritual—are you feeling alright?" "I'm fine," she said. "You don't have to worry." "I still will," I said honestly. Her expression softened just slightly. "Then do it quietly" I nodded once. "Deal." She smiled faintly, a small thing, but real. "Goodnight, Daniel." "Goodnight." When the door closed behind her, the room felt different, emptier somehow. I stood th before sitting back down. The papers in front of me were still waiting, but I didn't se somewhere else entirely. for a long while ly mind was I didn't know when it happened, but my thoughts had started revolving around her. The sound of her voice, the way she argued when she thought she was right, the way she handled people with calmness. I told myself it was just respect and professional admiration. But it wasn't that simple anymore. I leaned back in the chair and stared at the ceiling. I had spent years building walls between duty and emotion, leadership and vulnerability. Amy was the first person who somehow managed to stand on both sides of those walls without even trying to break them. When I finally left the office, the halls were dark and quiet. The night guards nodded as I passed. Outside, the air was cool, and the estate lights glowed faintly in the distance. I saw Amy's car pulling out of the lot. She didn't see me, but I watched her taillights fade into the night until they disappeared. When I got home, Mum was in the sitting room, reading through some documents. She looked up briefly when I entered. "Late night?" she asked. "Work," I said simply. 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 2 Chapter 93 Strong Emotions She hummed. "You and Amy seem to have a good rhythm at the office." "Something like that," I replied. 69% [www.n0\(v\)ELw0rM.com](http://www.n0(v)ELw0rM.com)+5 Pearls Her eyes lingered on me for a moment, like she wanted to say more, but she only nodded. "Good. Keep it that way. The council is restless again, and we can't afford for anyone to suspect division or anything else." I knew what she meant by "anything else." "I understand," I said. "Good,"

she said, turning back to her papers. "Get some rest. Tomorrow will be another long day." I left her there and headed upstairs. Finally in the comfort of my room, I sat on the edge of the bed, unbuttoning my shirt slowly. My thoughts kept circling back to that small smile Amy gave me before leaving. It wasn't much, but it felt like something rare. I didn't know what it meant or where it would lead, but I knew whatever was happening between us, it wasn't just duty anymore. It wasn't an obligation. It was real.

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6-7 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 94

Chapter 94 I Should Leave DANIEL +5 Pearls [www.NoVèl\(W\)OrM.com](http://www.NoVèl(W)OrM.com) My mother had a formal council dinner arranged to ease the little murmuring spreading. She said it was time to "remind the council that the Carters were united" What she really meant was that she wanted to make sure no one suspected what Amy had uncovered. The dining hall looked like something out of a magazine. long polished table, expensive wine, crystal glasses, the whole show. My mother had a way of making things look perfect. The elders arrived one by one. their smiles practiced and their greetings polished. I'd been to enough of these dinners to know how fake half of it was. Amy came in a few minutes after me, she had a simple dress on but somehow still managed to make everyone look twice. She walked with confidence, nodded politely at my mother, and took her seat beside me. To anyone watching, we looked like a couple deep in love. Every time our hands brushed as we reached for the same dish, I felt the air tighten. Every time she leaned closer to whisper a comment about the conversation, my thoughts slipped somewhere they shouldn't. "Daniel," one of the elders, Roderick, said halfway through the meal, "it's g I can't imagine what it must've been like being attacked like that. Those rogues were vicious." to see you recovering so well. There it was, the same story they'd been pushing for years. I set my glass down and kept my tone neutral. "Yes. A rough night." He gave a sympathetic nod. "Tragic, really. We've been increasing border patrols ever since. Can't let that happen again." Amy's voice came next, "Strange, though," she said, turning her head slightly toward him. "The report from that night never identified where the rogues came from, did it?" Roderick's fork paused midair. "Well, not officially. Rogues don't exactly leave calling cards." "True," Amy replied, her tone calm but her eyes sharp. "Still, I always wondered how the through two security lines without being seen. That's unusual." naged to get The table went quiet for a second. My mother glanced

briefly between them, her expression unreadable. Roderick laughed, a forced, awkward sound. "You've got a sharp memory, Luna. But I'm sure the guards just missed it. Accidents happen." Amy smiled faintly. "Of course." The tension was subtle but the way his eyes flickered. The way his shoulders tightened before he looked away. He was definitely hiding something. The rest of the dinner went by in a blur of small talk and fake laughter. I barely tasted the food. My thoughts were stuck on that brief exchange. on how easily Amy had exposed a crack in Roderick's story without raising suspicion. When it was over, my mother made a show of thanking everyone for their loyalty and presence. One by one, the council members left, their smiles fading the moment they stepped out the door. Amy waited by the car while I wrapped up a few polite goodbyes. When I finally walked over to her, all I could do was smile. 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 94 I Should Leave 林会 69% w@w.noV@l@r@M.com+5 Pearls "They're lying," I finally broke the silence. "I know," she replied. Her voice was calm, but her eyes were serious. "He flinched w... I mentioned the security lines. He knows more than he's saying." I looked past her toward the estate gates. The night air was cool, and the faint hum of crickets filled the silence. "You think he's the one who gave the order?" She shook her head. "No. He's not bold enough. But he was involved somehow, probably the one who handled the cover-up." I nodded slowly. "Then we start with him." Her gaze met mine, "Carefully."

We stood there for a long time, neither of us speaking. The lights from the mansion glowed behind us, throwing long shadows across the driveway. I could feel the pull between us. It wasn't about strategy or politics anymore. "Thank you," I said quietly. "For what?" "For speaking up in there. You didn't have to." w@w.NoV@l@r@M.c@M She looked at me for a moment, then said softly, "Someone had to." Our eyes met again. I wasn't sure how long we stood like that but it was long enough for the noise from inside to fade completely. The space between us narrowed until even silence felt loud. Then my mother's voice broke through the silence. "Daniel. Amy." We turned to see her standing near the door, her expression calm but her tone firm. "It's late. Don't linger outside, people notice things." Amy nodded. "Of course" "Both of you have done well tonight. But be careful from now on, everything you say and every look you give is being watched. The council is more observant than you think." "I understand," I said. She nodded. "Good. Go Amy exhaled quietly, me rest. We'll talk in the morning." Then she disappeared back into the house. "She usually is," I said. "I should go." "She's right." I stepped forward and opened the car door for her. She paused, hand resting on the frame. "Goodnight, Daniel." "Goodnight." 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 RDO Chapter 94 I Should Leave She got in, and for a moment, before the driver started the car, our eyes met aga she was gone. I stood there long after the taillights disappeared down the road before driving home too. 念69% +5 Pearis the glass. Then I didn't go straight to my room. I wandered into my office instead, sat down at the desk, and stared at the dark window. I thought about

the dinner, about the elder's reaction, but mostly about Amy. About how her voice had stayed calm when she spoke up, how her calmness made it easier to keep mine. She had a way of calming me without even trying. For years, I'd trusted only logic and control. But lately, I found myself depending on her presence more than I wanted to admit. When I finally went to bed, I didn't fall asleep right away. My thoughts kept circling back to her. Amy wasn't just a partner in this investigation anymore. She'd become my peace. And even if I tried to fight it, I knew that I felt something for her.

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6-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 95

Chapter 95 Why Do It? DANIEL 4.69% 69% +5 Pearis Our nights at the company started getting longer. What started as a few hours of reviewing council documents had turned into entire nights spent in my office with Amy sitting across from me, surrounded by stacks of files and empty coffee cups. She was focused as always, calm, precise, and impossible to ignore. I told myself it was about the work, about piecing together what really happened the night we were attacked. But every time her hand brushed mine while reaching for a folder, I forgot what we were supposed to be looking for. "Here," she said, sliding a piece of paper across the table. "This record is missing three pages. The seal's been tampered with." I leaned closer, scanning the document. "You're right. Someone removed them deliberately." "Why would they leave the rest?" she asked. "To make it look like an accident," I said. She nodded quietly, her brow furrowed. The light from the desk lamp fell across her face, highlighting the tiredness in her eyes. I wanted to tell her to rest, but I knew she wouldn't. Instead, I stood up and poured her another cup of coffee. "You should take a break." She smiled. "If I stop now, I'll lose my rhythm." "You've been at this for six hours." "So have you." She wasn't wrong. Still, I set the coffee beside her. "At least drink this." Her eyes flicked up to meet mine, and for a second, neither of us looked away. Before my mother walked in. She didn't knock, as usual. "You're both still here?" she asked with a mild tone. "Working," I answered. Her eyes moved from the scattered files to Amy, then back to me. "You've made progress?" "Some," Amy replied. "But the archives aren't complete. Too many missing sections." say anything, Mother nodded. "That's expected. The council guards its secrets well." She turned to me, "Don't lose focus, Daniel. The council preys on weakness. Remember that "I haven't," I said quickly. She held my gaze for a moment, long

enough to make me question if I believed my own words. Then she nodded and left without another word. Amy didn't say anything right away. She just looked down at the file in front of her. "She's not wrong, she 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 R Chapter 95 Why Do It? said quietly. "I know," I admitted. "But I'm not losing focus." Her lips curved slightly. "If you say so." 69% 45 Pearls Days passed, and the tension didn't fade. If anything, it grew stronger. We started noticing things, files that had been moved, drawers left slightly open, and then the notes. The first one showed up in Amy's office. It was a single sheet of paper with one line written in uneven handwriting: Stop digging. The second came two days later. It was slipped under my office door this time. Some truths stay buried for a reason. Amy showed me hers that same night, her voice steady but her hands trembling slightly. "They're watching us." I took the note from her, folded it, and tucked it into my jacket. "Then let them. I'm not stopping." "Daniel-" "No," I said firmly. "They already tried to silence me once. I'm not letting them scare you too."

Her eyes softened. "You can't protect me from everything." "I can try." w(w)w.nOvëlwOrM.com That was the problem. I meant it. Somewhere between all the late nights and silent looks, she'd stopped being just my arranged wife. I found myself checking if she'd eaten, if she got home safe, if her office lights were still on at midnight. And she noticed. That night, we were both tired. The storm outside was loud enough to drown out most of the silence in my office. Amy was sitting at my desk, flipping through another set of reports, while I leaned against the wall, trying to make sense of how much we'd uncovered and how much we still didn't know. She spoke without looking up. "You can't keep doing this, staying late, watching over me like I'm going to fall apart." "I'm not-" "Yes, you are," she said, finally meeting my eyes. "I can handle myself, Daniel. I've been handling things long before you woke up." Her tone wasn't an angry one, but it hit harder than if it had been. I pushed away from the wall. "That's not the point. You shouldn't have to handle everything alone." "I'm not alone." "Then stop acting like it," I said. "You push everyone away when you're scared. You think being strong means never needing anyone." Her expression tightened. "And you think caring means control. You can't protect people from their own choices." 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 95 Why Do It? That stopped me. For a moment, the only sound was the rain against the window. She sighed, quieter now. "I know you mean well, Daniel. But this-" she gestured at what we're doing, it's already dangerous enough. Don't make it harder." "Between us 69% +5 Pearls -this thing "I can't help it," I said simply. "When it comes to you, I can't." Her eyes flickered, something shifting there that I couldn't quite read. She stood then, and for a second, we were too close "Amy-" "I started, but she cut me off. "Don't," she said softly, though she didn't move away. I should have stepped back but I didn't. The distance between us closed up, and before I could think, I kissed her. It was a really deep kiss. It was the kind of kiss that came from everything we hadn't said,

everything we'd been avoiding. She didn't pull away. Her hand came up to my chest, and for a moment, the whole world went quiet, no council, no threats, no past. Just us. When we finally broke apart, she looked at me like she wasn't sure if she should speak. "That shouldn't have happened...?" she said, her voice barely above a whisper. I couldn't tell if that was a question or statement but I knew she wanted every bit of it. "I know." *wW.n(v)EIWOrM.cóM* "Then why do it?" I didn't have an answer. At least not one that made sense. "Because I wanted it to." She looked away, but not before I saw the same truth in her eyes. Neither of us said another word. She gathered her things and left quietly, her footsteps fading down the hall. When the door closed, I sat back down at the desk, staring at the files we'd been reviewing.

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7-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 96

Chapter 96 A Simple Compliment AMY 69% +5 Pearls Breakfast at the Carter estate is usually serene, but on this occasion there was something different about the stillness in the air. The staff moved as quickly and efficiently as always, pouring coffee and laying out the table, while Daniel and I sat across from one another with a silence hanging between us. My mind was already partially in work mode, thinking about the reports I still needed to catch up on, when I heard Mrs. Carter clear her throat. "I've been having thoughts," she said, now opening her napkin and folding it up neatly. "I think it's time for a public renewal of vows between you and Daniel." The fork in my hand paused midway my mouth. "A renewal of vows?" I repeated slowly. "Yes," she said with a calm smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. "It would send the right message to the council, to the board, to the public. After all that's happened, it will reinforce unity and silence unnecessary talk. I need the both of you to act like you love each other." I glanced at Daniel. He didn't look surprised. Instead, he looked more resigned than anything. His mother's tone made it clear it wasn't a suggestion but a strategic move. He didn't refuse because he understood his obligation as a son. "Of course, it's not mandatory," she added, though we all knew that wasn't true. "But these things matter in politics and business alike." I nodded slowly, trying to seem agreeable. "If it helps stabilize things, then... fine." Mrs. Carter smiled, in satisfaction. "Good. I'll have the staff start arrangements. We'll keep it tasteful, nothing extravagant. Just enough to show the world that everything is in order. The media will be present too, so that they can make a story out of it." I

managed a polite smile, but the idea really annoyed me. Keeping up a show for the public. After breakfast, I excused myself quickly, saying I had early work at the company. When I arrived, the office was busy, the usual hum of printers and keyboards filling the conference room, sorting through some documents. He looked up when I walked in. "You look tense," he said. "I was in the 'Do I?'" I replied, forcing a small laugh as I dropped my bag on the chair. "It's been a long morning." www.novelworks.com He leaned back, studying me. "Something happened at the estate?" I hesitated before answering. "Mrs. Carter thinks Daniel and I should do a public renewal of vows. For business optics." Brian raised a brow. "And what do you think?" "I think it's unnecessary," I said. "But saying no feels... complicated." "Because of her?" I nodded. "She means well. It's just... I don't like pretending for people who already think they know our story." 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 96 A Simple Compliment Brian let out a small smile. "Then don't pretend. You've spent enough of your life if others comfortable. Maybe it's time to make choices that make sense to you." I met his eyes, surprised by how easily he said it. "That's easier said than done." "Most good things are," he replied quietly. "But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try." 林念69% 69% +5 Pearls I tried to make I looked down at the files, trying to hide the small smile tugging at my lips. "You're starting to sound like someone who gives good advice." "Don't get used to it," he said, grinning. "I charge extra for that." That simple exchange made the thought I'd been carrying ease a little. For all the chaos surrounding us, I was grateful to have someone I could speak to honestly. Work helped me focus. I spent most of the day reviewing financial reports and cross-checking council fund allocations. By the time I left the office, the sun was already setting, the sky washed in muted orange and grey. Back at the estate, I found Daniel in the living room, going through some files of his own. He looked up as I walked in.

"You're late," he said mildly. "I stayed back to finish the quarterly reviews," I replied. "Your mother wants updates by tomorrow." He nodded. "She mentioned it." He hesitated, then added, "She also talked about the vow renewal, again." I stopped, half-turning toward him. "She did?" He set the papers aside and leaned back slightly. "Yeah. She thinks it's good for image—our image, the company's reputation, the council's unity, the whole package." There was a short silence before he asked, "Do you actually want to do it?" The question caught me off guard. I looked at him properly this time. "I don't know if word," I said carefully. "I just thought it might help... appearances." Daniel studied me for a long moment. "That's not a reason," he said. "It's reason enough if it keeps things calm." www.novelworks.com He shook his head slightly. "You shouldn't agree to something that makes you uncomfortable just because my mother suggested it." That surprised me. "You're disagreeing with her?" He gave a faint smile. "It's rare, I know. But I mean it. If this feels wrong to you, then it's wrong. You don't have to do it for show." His tone was gentle but certain, and that made it harder to keep my guard up. "It's not that I don't care about the family's image," I said

quietly. "I just don't like being treated like a symbol." "I get that," he said. "Believe it or not, I'm tired of symbols too." 10:17 Tue, Dec 30 R Chapter 96 A Simple Compliment There was something honest and almost vulnerable in his eyes. The man who h now the only person in that house who seemed to understand how heavy prete I sank into the chair opposite him. "So what do we do?" 69% +5 Pearls (w)Ww.n(v)e(1)woR.M.c(0)m When a stranger was ld be. He leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees. "We tell her we'll think about it. Let her believe we're considering it, but don't commit until you're sure." I exhaled slowly. "That might not go well." He smiled faintly. "Let me handle her. You've handled enough for all of us." We talked a bit longer about work, about the reports, the council's new projects, and then silence filled the room again. Not awkward, just quiet. www.NoVEL(w)(O)rM.c(0)m When I stoodup to leave, Daniel looked up from the papers again. "Amy," he said softly. I paused. "Yes?" "Thank you for not just agreeing to things for the sake of peace. It's... refreshing." I smiled a little. "I'll take that as a compliment." "It is," he said. As I walked out of the room, I realized the tension between us wasn't uncomfortable anymore. It was different like we were learning to understand each other beyond obligation. That night, when I finally got to my room, I thought about what Brian said about making decisions for myself.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

7-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 97

Chapter 97 Love Triangle AMY 69% www.movel(w)(O)rM.c(0)m+5 Pearls 25 It had been a quiet week since Mrs. Carter mentioned the vow renewal, but my mind had been anything but calm. Every time I saw Daniel, the memory of the sex we had that night slipped back. No one knew, not even Brian, and I had no plans to ever speak of it. Still, something about it unsettled me, how natural it had felt, and how complicated it made everything afterward. So when Brian stopped by my office one afternoon, I was almost grateful for the distraction. He leaned against the doorway with his usual confidence. "You're free this weekend, right?" "That depends," I said without looking up from my computer. "Why?" He walked in and set a small card on my desk. "Charity gala. I need a partner." I looked at the card. "Can't you take someone from the council?" "I could," he said, "but I'd rather take someone I trust. And before you ask—no, it's not romantic. It's just good optics. They expect me to show up with someone from the leadership circle." I gave him a skeptical look. "You're terrible at convincing people you have no ulterior motive." He laughed. "That's because I always do. But this time, it's

purely professional.” I hesitated, then nodded. “Alright. But only because I need a change of scenery.” He smiled. “Perfect. I’ll pick you up at seven.”

When the evening came, I almost changed my mind. The dress I chose was simple—navy blue, elegant but modest. As I walked down the staircase, Brian was waiting near the foyer, wearing a black tuxedo that looked like it had been made for him.

He looked up and smiled. “You clean up well, Doctor Amy.” “Don’t push it,” I said, but I smiled back anyway. Nobody had actually called me that since I started med school.

The gala was held at one of the city’s oldest hotels, the kind where the chandeliers looked older than the guests. The moment we stepped in, I realized this wasn’t just a charity event but a political show disguised as philanthropy. Every handshake came with an agenda. Every smile hid a question. Brian navigated it effortlessly. He introduced me to business owners, council affiliates, and a few reporters. I mostly stayed quiet, nodding when needed and keeping conversation polite. Still, it felt good to be out of the estate, away from the quiet tension that hung around Daniel and me like unspoken words. When dinner was served, Brian leaned toward me. “Doing okay?” “Fine,” I said. “You didn’t tell me this was going to feel like an interrogation with wine.” He chuckled softly. “That’s the beauty of events like this. Everyone’s pretending to care.

10:18 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 97 Love Triangle 69% +5 Pearls Despite the crowd and the flash of cameras, the night went smoothly. I even caught myself laughing once or twice. For the first time in weeks, I wasn’t constantly thinking about the past or the future. But peace, as usual, didn’t last. By the next morning, I was barely through the door when my phone buzzed with notifications. Photos of Brian and me from the gala walking in together, talking by the entrance, even one where he was helping me adjust the clasp on my bracelet were everywhere. The headlines were predictable. > “Love Triangle in the Carter Pack?” > “Alpha’s Wife Seen with now Councilman Brian at Charity Gala.” > “Inside Sources Say Sparks Are Flying.” I dropped the phone on my desk and rubbed my forehead. “Unbelievable.” A few minutes later, Brian came by, holding his own phone. “I assume you’ve seen it?”

“I have,” I said flatly. “They’re making it sound like we were on a date.” He sighed. “I should’ve known the media would twist it. I’ll issue a statement.” “Don’t,” I said quickly. “That’ll only make it worse. They’ll think we’re trying to cover something up.” He nodded. “Alright. Then we do nothing.” Doing nothing sounded simple enough, but by noon, the situation had spread beyond social media. The press showed up outside the company, and the staff couldn’t stop whispering. I knew it was only a matter of time before Daniel saw it. When he finally came into my office that afternoon, I stood to explain, but he held up a hand. “I’ve already seen it.” His tone wasn’t cold, just... measured. Like he was choosing every word carefully. “I know how it looks,” I started, “but it’s not—” He interrupted, shaking his head. “Amy, I’m not asking for an explanation. I know it’s saying.” That caught me off guard. “You do?” He gave a faint smile. “Yes. I also know how the media works. They’ll turn anything into a story

if it makes people look twice.” I studied his face, trying to read what he wasn’t saying. You’re not upset?” “Would it matter if I was?” he asked softly. “You have every right to go wherever you want. Brian’s a friend. I trust both of you.” His calmness made me more unsettled than anger ever could have. “Still,” I said, “I don’t want this to cause problems for the company.” “It won’t,” he said firmly. “I already spoke to the press this morning. I told them there’s nothing to speculate about and that they should focus on the actual work the Carter Foundation is doing instead of personal 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 R Chapter 97 Love Triangle lives.” That surprised me. “You did?” He nodded. “Someone had to.” For a moment, I didn’t know what to say. “Thank you,” I said quietly. He shrugged slightly. “You’ve had my back more times than I can count. Consider it even.” 69% +5 Pearls Something about the simplicity of that statement made my chest tighten. There was no bitterness in his tone, no jealousy—just respect. That evening, the estate felt unusually calm. The news had started to fade already, replaced by the next trending topic. I found Daniel in his office, reading through reports, the faint light from the desk lamp casting shadows on his face. He looked up when I knocked. “You should get some rest,” he said. “I just wanted to say thanks again,” I replied. “For handling things the way you did.” He leaned back slightly, his gaze steady. “I told you before, Amy. I trust you. That hasn’t changed.” There was a stillness in the room after that, not tense—just quiet. I nodded once and started to leave, but before I reached the door, he said softly, “You looked good that night, by the way.” I turned slightly, surprised. “At the gala?” He gave a small smile. “Yeah. Even Brian looked nervous standing next to you.” That made me laugh quietly. “Goodnight, Daniel.” “Goodnight, Amy.” When I got to my room, I realized that I wasn’t confused about how I felt. There was pe everything made sense, but because for once, it didn’t have to.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-7 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 98

Chapter 98 A Little Normalcy AMY 69% A strange news came the next morning. I was in the middle of reading through a report when Brian knocked and stepped into my office with that look that always meant something’s up. He didn’t waste time. “It’s about Clara,” he said. I looked up slowly. “What about her?” +5 Pearls “She’s in a hospital abroad. Swit. I think. They said it’s a mental health facility. Word is, she had a breakdown.” For a moment, I just stared at him. Not out of shock, but because it took a second for the words to sink in. Clara.

Hospitalized. Abroad. Brian set the paper down on my desk, the headline short and cold: The former beta daughter was admitted to a treatment center after public disappearance. *www.V.N@reilWOr(m).Com* So that was where she had gone. After the ritual that night, it had been like she vanished. No calls, no sightings, nothing. Even Mark had disappeared around the same time. I had assumed they went into hiding, but now it made sense. I leaned back in my chair. "Mark's with her?" Brian nodded. "Apparently, he's the only one. He's been handling her care. No one else from her family's involved." I didn't know how to feel. There was no satisfaction, no bitterness. Just a finality. "Does Daniel know?" I asked. "He does," Brian said. "He told me not to make a fuss about it. Said it's not our concern more." He was right. It wasn't. But a small part of me remembered the last time I saw Clara, tucked in her eyes, the way she'd been desperate to prove herself through that ritual. Something in her had been unraveling long before that night. When Brian left, I sat there for a while, thinking about how different things felt now compared to then. The endless tension, the schemes, the distrust—everything that used to define our lives felt like a distant echo. Later that afternoon, I ran into Daniel in the hallway. He looked calm, maybe even lighter than usual. "You heard?" I asked quietly. He nodded. "Yeah. Brian told me." "And?" He gave a small shrug. "There's nothing to say, really. I don't hate her. I don't wish her harm. I just... don't have anything left to feel about it." That was exactly how I felt too. Dec 30 R Chapter 98 A Little Normalcy "I'm glad she's getting help." I said. "Maybe she'll find some peace." He nodded again, thoughtful. "Mark's a good man. He'll make sure she does. We didn't talk about it after that. There was no point in reopening old wounds. I ended a long time ago, even if neither of us had realized it until now. 69% +5 Pearls as a chapter that had That evening, Mrs. Carter brought it up during dinner. She had the day's paper folded beside her plate.

"Well," she said, pouring herself some tea, "I suppose that explains why things have been unusually quiet lately." Daniel looked up from his food. "You're relieved," he said plainly. "I am," she admitted. "Don't misunderstand me—I don't wish her ill. But that girl caused enough trouble to last a lifetime. Maybe now, we can have some peace." I smiled faintly. "You sound hopeful." "For once, I am," she said. "This family has been through enough chaos. It's time we stop living like the next disaster is always around the corner." Her words stuck with me. Maybe it was because for the first time, they felt true. After dinner, I went out to the balcony for some air. The estate was quiet, the kind of quiet that used to make me uneasy but now felt almost comforting. Daniel joined me a few minutes later, leaning against the railing beside me. "Do you ever think about how different things are now?" he asked. "All the time," I said. "Sometimes I can't believe it's the same life." He nodded. "Back then, I couldn't imagine things calming down. It felt like every day was another battle." "It did," I agreed. "But we made it through." He turned his head slightly toward me. "We did." We stood there in silence for a while, just watching the lights from the city flicker in the distance. For once, there was no

tension, no unsaid words hanging between us. Just peace. The next day at the office, Brian stopped by again, this time looking more relaxed than I'd seen him in weeks. "You know," he said, leaning on my desk, "Clara was her own undoing. She couldn't let go of her ambition, even when it was eating her alive." I looked up from my computer. "You're not wrong." He shrugged. "She had a choice. We all did. Some of us learned from the mess. Some didn't." "Do you think people really change?" I asked. www.NovelWorm.com Brian smiled faintly. "You did." I didn't answer. Maybe he was right. 2/3 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 ADO Chapter 98 A Little Normalcy When the day ended, I packed my things slowly, taking a moment to look around steady now. Not perfect, but steady. There were still unanswered questions about me but for the first time, it didn't feel like the world was collapsing. 69% +5 Pearls fiction. Everything felt uncertain, still working to Driving home, I thought about how far we had come. From chaos to something resembling peace. From secrets and suspicion to quiet trust. www.NovelWorm.com At dinner, Daniel was already home, helping his mother sort through some old files. He looked up when I walked in. "Long day?" he asked. "Just a normal one," I said, setting my bag down. "It feels strange, doesn't it?" he said. "Having normal days again." "It does," I admitted. "But I think I could get used to it." Mrs. Carter smiled faintly without looking up. "That's the plan." Later, when I was alone in my room, I thought again about Clara and Mark. Maybe they would find their own kind of peace, far away from all this. Maybe everyone eventually does if they stop fighting long enough to let it happen. www.NovelWorm.com I felt grateful for the silence and I really hoped it would last. A little bit of a normal life would not hurt at all.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 99

Chapter 99 A Scandal AMY 69% 45 Pearl Days after that have been quiet. I woke up as usual and went to have breakfast. The morning started quietly, which should've been my first warning. In this house, peace rarely lasted long. I had just poured myself coffee when Mrs. Carter walked into the dining room, phone in hand and her expression tight. She didn't greet me or even sit down. She placed the phone on the table in front of me, screen glowing. "Explain this," she said. It was a picture of me and Brian from the charity gala. We were standing close, smiling, talking. Nothing inappropriate, but the headline above it said otherwise: Is There Trouble in the Carter Marriage? Sources Hint at Jealousy Between Daniel

and His Partner.” I stared at it for a few seconds before meeting her eyes. “It’s just a photo.” “It’s not just a photo,” she snapped. “This is on every news site this morning. They’re calling it a scandal, Amy. Do you realize what this does to our name?” “Our name?” I repeated, setting the cup down. “Mrs. Carter, I went to a charity gala. That’s all. There’s no scandal here unless someone decides to make one.” She crossed her arms. “People already have. Do you think anyone cares about the truth once the story spreads? You went there as Brian’s date—” “I went as his guest,” I corrected. “There’s a difference.” “Not to the public,” she said sharply. “Not to the investors. They see one thing and make their assumptions. You’ve put this family in a bad position.” I took a slow breath, trying to keep my tone calm. “I didn’t do anything wrong. I represented the company, I supported a colleague, and I came home like a responsible adult.” She gave a short, humorless laugh. “Responsible? Do you even realize how much the first wave of gossip? Now it’s resurfaced because of you.” The tension in my chest finally broke. “You act like I’m the one who leaked the photo. I can’t control what people choose to believe.” Mrs. Carter’s gaze was cold and firm. “You can control how you present yourself. The Carters don’t give the public room to speculate.” “I’m not a PR strategy,” I said, standing now. “I’m a person. I went to one event, not a secret affair.” She stepped closer, lowering her voice. “You are part of this family. Every step you take reflects on all of us. Carters do not have the luxury of acting like ordinary people.” “That’s not fair.” I said quietly. “I’m allowed to have a life” Her reply came fast, almost too fast. “Carters do not have a life. They have responsibilities. Appearances. Power. That’s what keeps this house standing.”

For a moment, the room went still. The air felt thick with tension with everything she wasn’t saying and that 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 99 A Scandal 3.69% +5 Pears she’d spent decades maintaining this image, building the Carter legacy, and she was about to let anyone, especially me, chip away at it. When I spoke again, my voice was calmer but firm. “I didn’t marry into this for Mrs. Carter. I’ve done everything asked of me. I’ve worked, supported Daniel, and when no one else would. But I won’t apologize for attending a public event.” Her eyes flickered, like she didn’t expect me to push back. “Watch your tone, Amy.” “I am,” I said. “You’re the one shouting.” I spoke like a shadow, protected this family. We stood there in silence for a few seconds. Then she picked up her phone again, her lips pressed tightly together. “You’ll stay out of public events for the next few weeks. No interviews, no appearances, no unnecessary contact with Brian outside of work.” I frowned. “You’re punishing me for something I didn’t do.”

“I’m preventing more damage,” she said coldly. “If you can’t understand that, you’re being naïve.” Before I could answer, Daniel walked in. He looked between us, instantly sensing the tension. “What’s going on?” “Ask your wife,” Mrs. Carter said, turning toward him. “She’s the reason our name is trending again.” Daniel’s brows drew together. “Because of the gala

photo?" "Exactly," she said. "I told her we should have handled it differently. Now it's turned into a public mess." Daniel sighed. "Mum, it's a photo. The media loves a story that doesn't exist. We'll issue a small statement and move on." Mrs. Carter turned to him sharply. "You're being careless. This kind of rumor can't just be ignored." www.NoVeLwoRm.cOm He met her gaze evenly. "I'm not ignoring it. I'm refusing to make it bigger. If we act scandalized, it'll only feed them more." She opened her mouth to argue, but he raised a hand slightly, firm but respectful. "P" handle this." She looked from him to me, clearly irritated that he wasn't taking her side, then left the room without another word. Once she was gone, Daniel turned to me. "You okay?" I nodded, though my chest still felt tight. "I'm fine. She just thinks I embarrassed the family." He gave a small, tired smile. "She always thinks that. You could save a village and she'd still say you should've worn a different outfit while doing it." I couldn't help but chuckle. "That sounds about right." He walked over to the table, glancing at the phone she'd left behind. "I saw the headline earlier. I knew she'd react like this." "I didn't think it would get this bad," I said quietly. "It was a charity event. We talked, took a few pictures, and went home." www.NoVeLwoRm.cOm 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 R Chapter 99 A Scandal He nodded. "You don't have to explain it to me. I trust you." 68% +5 Pearls Something about the way he said it eased some of the tension inside me. Simple words, no performance, just trust. "Thank you," I said softly. www.NoVeLwoRm.cOm He leaned against the table, looking at me for a moment. "Mum's trying to protect the family's image, but sometimes she forgets that people aren't headlines. She doesn't mean to hurt you." "I know," I said. "But it still does." He reached for his coffee and nodded. "She'll calm down eventually. Just give it time." I wanted to believe that, but I wasn't so sure. Later that day, at work, I caught Brian in the hallway. He gave me a sheepish look. "So, I guess we're front- page news now?" "Unfortunately," I said dryly.

Bound To The Broken Alpha

6-8 minutes

When Dawn Breaks Slowly Hope Finds Space To Grow by Jin Rowan 100

Chapter 100 Necessary Incident AMY 68% +5 Pears www.NoVeLwoRm.cOm Work had been unusually quiet the days that followed. The atmosphere had shifted since the string of council meetings which made everyone at the office mind their business. People were careful with what they said, who they spoke to, and how long they lingered in conversation. Daniel and I on the other hand had been spending more of our time ramshaking old files to see if we would find anything that would help with our investigation. We'd gone through everything we

could find like meeting minutes, personal logs, archived messages but most of it led nowhere as usual. Everything felt too clean and edited but we still kept searching. It felt like looking for needles in a haystack. Later in the afternoon, I was seated in my office with my legs crossed and surrounded by boxes from the lower storage. The documents was full of dust. Daniel was on the other side scanning through digital archives while I sorted the physical records. The silence between us was comfortable now, not heavy like it used to be. I was halfway through another folder when I noticed a file with a red seal a tag that read "Restricted Correspondence." one I hadn't seen before. It had That alone made me pause. I opened it carefully and saw the first line: To the Council Head, in confidence. At first, it looked like another standard internal note, until I saw the name at the bottom – Elias. I read the content and I noticed that the words were too formal for casual communication. "The Alpha's growing influence must be contained. The balance is shifting in his favor. A necessary incident will reset the hierarchy and restore order before his leadership becomes irreversible." "Necessary incident." was in quote My chest tightened. I looked over at Daniel, who was still focused on his screen, un found. I set the folder aside and wiped my hands on my skirt, trying to keep calm of what I had "Daniel," I called out quietly. He glanced up. "Yeah?" "I think I found something." He stood up immediately to meet me. "What is it?" I handed him the paper. "It's addressed to the council head. Signed by Elias." His brow furrowed as he read. His eyes moved slower with each line. When he reached the end, his hand stayed still on the page, his jaw tightening. "This is proof," I said softly. "He planned it. The ambush Daniel didn't answer right away. He just stared at the document, his expression unreadable. "Elias," he said finally, almost to himself. "He was supposed to be my family and trusted friend." I wanted to comfort him, but I didn't know how. He wasn't angry not yet. He looked more like someone 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 DO Chapter 100 Necessary Incident trying to make sense of a puzzle he didn't want to solve He finally set the paper down and rubbed the back of his neck. "How long has DF 台 68% +5 Pearls sitting here?" "In the archives? Years, probably," I said. "It was mislabeled under old administrative files. Whoever filed it must not have known what it was."

He nodded slowly, still processing. "So Elias wanted to contain' me. That's what he called it." I hesitated. "He was afraid of how powerful you were becoming." "Afraid enough to try to kill me." I stepped closer, "He didn't do it alone. This kind of thing doesn't happen without support. Someone in the council must've helped him." "I know," he said. "But we can't accuse anyone without proof. Not yet." **WWw.ñ0VeLw@rM.(C)om**He picked the letter back up, staring at it like it was a piece of his past he couldn't recognize anymore. "He visited me at the hospital after the attack," he said quietly. "Sat beside my bed like a loyal friend. My mother trusted him." I didn't know what to say to that, so I remained quiet. After a while, he placed the paper back into the folder. "We'll keep this between us for now," he said. "Not even my

mother should see it yet." I nodded. "Agreed." We spent the next hour going through the rest of the box, but neither of us found anything else that pointed directly to Elias. Eventually, Daniel sat back, shoulders heavy. "That's enough for today," he said. "Let's not stay late again." I packed the files carefully and followed him out of the office. Back home, dinner that night was quiet. Mrs. Carter joined us in the dining room, a relaxed. The table was set and the faint sound of the fountain outside filled the silence. www.NoVeloRm.com "Ice, she seemed Daniel spoke little, but I could tell his mind wasn't on the meal. His fork moved, but his thoughts were somewhere else entirely. His mother noticed. "You're both quiet," she said, glancing between us. www.NoVeloRm.com "Just tired," I replied quickly. "It's been a long day at work." She studied Daniel for a moment, then gave a small nod accepting the answer. "You both have been doing well lately," she said. "I can feel the company stabilizing again." Daniel gave a faint smile. "That's good to hear." After dinner, I started to head upstairs, but Daniel stopped me near the staircase. "Amy." I turned. "Yeah?" He looked tired, but there was something gentle in his eyes. "Thank you for today," he said. "You didn't have 10:18 Tue, Dec 30 Chapter 100 Necessary Incident to go through those archives, but you did. You didn't let it stay buried." I smiled a little. "The truth always comes up eventually. It just needs someone dig." 68% +5 Pearls He nodded slowly, holding my gaze for a few seconds longer than he should have. There was something in that silence that said more than words could. "Get some rest," he said finally. "Tomorrow might be worse." "Always the optimist," I teased lightly. He laughed a little and turned toward his study. When I went upstairs to my room, I sat on the edge of the bed and thought about what we'd uncovered. Elias being the man Daniel once trusted completely had been the one behind everything. It wasn't relief I felt, not even satisfaction. It was the awareness that the truth could hurt more than lies ever could.