

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 111 Sylvia's Resolve Finished Marwen snorted dismissively, "His monthly salary? How much do you think that was? The rewards were many, yes, but I had to save! What if something happened in my own family? I needed funds to help them!" "But, Mother, did you ever think of Father?" Sylvia's voice choked. "When I was little, he took me to the market. I wanted a sweet pastry. He couldn't even find a single coin on him. Thankfully, the vendor recognized him and gave me one for free. That embarrassed look on Father's face-I could never forget it. I used to blame myself for being greedy.

Why did I want that pastry? Later, I realized you were at fault too." Sylvia swallowed a sob. "You think life was hard because Father had no title. My sister married into an Earl Manor. But is she happy? Does any of her husband's family like her? They treat her like an outsider! Even her own husband is cold to her... The only reason she's still in that house is that our cousin commands respect, and the Earl's family must save face for him! You misjudge people, Mother. You aim too high and see only what glitters. I was right not to listen to you.

It's not a lack of gratitude!" Marwen's face flushed red with rage, but she had no retort. In a fury, she raised her hand to strike. This time, Sylvia didn't flinch. She met her mother's gaze squarely. "Go ahead, Mother! Strike me! Better yet, ruin my face so I can never marry!" Marwen froze at the defiance. She turned and slumped into a nearby chair, beginning to wail. "Grown up now, are you? Don't need your mother! Don't need your brother! How could I have given birth to such an ungrateful viper!" Sylvia felt no triumph, only a hollow ache as she watched.

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Her mother was crying out, but not a single tear wet her cheeks. Sylvia could bear no more. She stood. "If you say I am a viper, then I am." Picking up her half-finished embroidery, she turned and left without looking back. Behind her, Marwen's curses grew louder, more vile. Sylvia's face remained impassive as she walked quickly away. Only when she reached the safety of her own small room did the tears finally fall. She leaned back against the door, her body shuddering with silent sobs. It took a long time for the storm to pass.

When she finally calmed, she stood and noticed a small cluster of lotus seed pods lying quietly on her table, a note tucked beneath them. She unfolded the paper. "The bitterness removed." It was Piers' handwriting. He had found a way to send it to her. 1/3 2:32 pm P pp. Chapter 111
Sylvia's Resolve Finished She examined the seed pods. They were still fresh, dewy. More importantly, the seeds had clearly been carefully dug out, processed, and meticulously re-inserted. She picked one and found the tiny, bitter green core had been neatly removed from every seed.

Placing a seed in her mouth, she chewed. A tear traced a path down her cheek, but a small, genuine smile touched her lips. The day of the lily-viewing arrived as planned. At breakfast, Cassian told Elowen, "There's something at the army camp today. I have to swing by first..." Elowen looked up from her food. "Please, don't let me keep you. I'm going to Falconcrest Manor with Mrs. Wrenner. We'll have each other for company and conversation." Cassian gave her a long look, then finished his sentence. "...Once I'm finished, I will come to Falconcrest Manor to find you." Elowen paused.

"Don't want me interrupting your time with Mrs. Wrenner?" he asked. "Of course not!" Elowen averted her eyes, a little guilty. "I just thought... you might be too busy to make it." Cassian

didn't call her out. He simply chuckled, "I'll make time." "Alright then." Elowen nodded. Well, that will cut my chat with Mrs. Wrennershort. Cassian left after the meal. Elowen attended to some manor affairs before it was time to depart. Just before boarding her carriage, she stopped and looked around. "What is it, Your Grace?" Mira asked, puzzled. I thought Lady Marwen might come." Elowen mused.

Given Marwen's character, she would surely have tried to force her to bring Sylvia along. She had schemed her eldest daughter into an Earl Manor; she wouldn't let the chance with the Falconcrest heir slip away easily. "Lady Marwen won't be coming, Your Grace, rest assured." Gerda stepped forward, smiling. "His Grace gave specific orders before he left today. Lady Marwen is to be confined to Rose Hall and is not to leave without permission again. This should prevent any disturbance to you." Elowen was taken aback. A strange, warm feeling blossomed in her chest.

Being looked after like this-it had been a long time. (Chapter 111 Sylvia's Resolve Cassian was... truly good to her. Finisher In her past life. Elowen had been pushed into the pond. She'd meant to get her payback today. But now, for Cassian's sake, as long as no one messed with her in this life, she'd let it go. They arrived at Falconcrest Manor while the morning sun was still gentle. As Elowen stepped down from the carriage, she lowered her head to adjust the silk ribbon at her waist. 1.7K admin

Chapter 112 The Seal Of The Duke Of Duskmoor "Your Grace. It has been a while." A familiar voice sounded beside her. Elowen looked up. It was Daphne. She remained silent. Finished Daphne glanced past Elowen, a slight frown-and a hint of disappointment-crossing her features. "Is His Grace not attending? I had thought the Duke so doted on you that he accompanied you

everywhere." Elowen smiled thinly, "Did you grow fond of kneeling under his orders? If you wish to kneel again, I can arrange that." Daphne's expression tightened. Then, perhaps seeing something, she took a step closer to Elowen.

"I just think the Duke doesn't care enough for you. If anything happens today, what then?" She was too close. Elowen could smell the powder Daphne had used, mixed with the lingering medicinal scent from her unhealed knee. The combination was unpleasant. As Elowen moved to step back, Daphne reached out as if to grasp her wrist. Elowen instinctively pushed the hand away, using little force. Yet Daphne stumbled backward, landing on the ground with a soft thud. Elowen was stunned. At that moment, Alaric's cold voice rang out behind them.

"What is going on here?" "Your Highness..." Before Elowen could speak, Daphne's tearful voice filled the air. She remained seated on the ground, a picture of injury. "It was my fault. I shouldn't have asked Her Grace why the Duke wasn't with her today. But... I didn't know it would upset her so..." Alaric's brow furrowed. He turned his accusatory gaze on Elowen! "If my uncle isn't here, it's because he didn't want to accompany you. More likely you did something to displease him. Why take it out on Lady Daphne? Are you so jealous?" Elowen's displeasure sharpened.

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"Jealous of what?" Alaric sneered, "Lady Daphne is Azure, a woman of talent and renown. And furthermore..." He paused, his gaze darkening. "You must have heard by now. My father and mother have decided that I am to marry Lady Daphne. She will be Crown Princess." In his mind, both facts-especially the latter-must be sources of bitter envy for Elowen. Hadn't she always wanted to marry him? He could think of no other reason for her to push Daphne. 1/3 Chapter 113 The Seal Of The Duke Of Duskmoor Finished To his surprise. Elowen's tone was dismissive. "I did not push her.

She fell on her own." On the ground. Daphne shook her head, her expression the very image of wounded innocence. Alaric clearly didn't believe it. "Nonsense. Who would throw themselves to the ground? To what purpose?" "To disgust me." Elowen retorted, glancing at Alaric. "And as for your claim that I'm jealous she will be Crown Princess, that is truly laughable." She actually laughed. "Is the position of Duchess of Duskmoor inferior to that of Crown Princess? When we meet, who is expected to bow to whom?" Alaric's face darkened.

Moreover, Elowen continued, her voice crisp, "whether she is Crown Princess or not, as the Duchess of Duskmoor. I am her elder by marriage. If I choose to reprimand her, or even push her, it is her place to accept it!" She raised a brow. "Speaking of which, neither of you has offered the proper greeting to me. Is this how you show respect?" Alaric felt a sharp pang of fury. Daphne, helped up by her maid, now cowered slightly behind him, peeking at Elowen with feigned timidity. She tugged gently at his hand. "Your Highness, perhaps we should greet her. If the Duke hears of this disrespect.

he will be angry with you again." Alaric gritted his teeth. "My uncle isn't coming today. No one is here to shield her." How do you know he isn't coming?" "I was informed this morning that he went to the army camp. How could he come?" "He did go to the army camp," Elowen confirmed calmly. "But he told me he would join me once his business was concluded. He also said that anyone who offends me offends the King and him, and I'm free to punish them." Her gaze swept over both of them. Daphne shrank further behind Alaric. Alaric's jaw tightened. "No need to bluff." Elowen raised a brow.

"Gerda." Gerda stepped forward promptly. "Tell them," Elowen instructed. "Is that what the Duke said?" Elowen had thought that Gerda, a senior maid who had served Cassian for years and

had palace 2/3 2:33 pm ppp. Chapter 112 The Seal Of The Duke Of Duskmooor experience, would carry more weight. If they wouldn't believe her, they would have to believe Gerda.

Finished She hadn't expected what happened next. Gerda pulled out a small, exquisitely engraved bronze signet. Elowen didn't recognize it. But Alaric, seeing it, paled visibly.

It was his uncle's personal seal-the seal of the Duke of Duskmooor. Alaric remembered, as a child, playing in his uncle's study. He had been captivated by the beauty of this very seal, holding it in his small hands to admire the craftsmanship. 1.7K 3/ admin

Chapter 113 The Seal Of Authority Finished His uncle saw it, immediately snatched the seal away, and delivered a sharp kick that sent young Alaric sprawling. His chin had split open on the floor, pain and tears flooding his senses. Paralyzed with fear of this uncle, he hadn't dared make a sound. Clutching his bleeding chin, he had fled in disgrace. Later, when his father learned of it, there was no sympathy, only a hard slap to the back of his head and a furious shout: "You little fool!

Set foot in your uncle's study again, and I'll beat you to death!" The incident had left a deep scar of fear. Seeing the seal now made Alaric's head buzz, a cold sweat breaking out on his back.

How How could Uncle have given this away? "Before His Grace departed this morning." Gerda explained, her tone cool and measured, "he expressed concern. He feared Her Grace, being young, new to the household, kind-hearted and gentle, might encounter shameless types at Falconcrest Manor and be taken advantage of. As he could not arrive immediately, he entrusted me with this seal.

Anyone who offends the Duchess of Duskmooor offends His Grace." Her gaze swept over them.

"Your Highness, Lady Daphne, I would advise careful consideration." "What seal? This is just a

trick," Daphne scoffed, tugging at Alaric's arm. "Your Highness, surely-" "Be silent!" Alaric cut her off harshly, shaking her hand away. Daphne flinched, startled, and immediately fell quiet. Gritting his teeth, Alaric turned and bowed toward the seal in Gerda's hands. "My respects, Uncle. Aunt." Daphne stared, stunned. Alaric turned on her, his eyes frightening.

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"Bow!" Tears welled in Daphne's eyes, but under his fierce glare, she bit her lip and performed the required curtsy, her movements stiff. Watching Alaric's reaction, Elowen grasped the profound significance of the seal. She was astonished. She had known Cassian would support her, but she hadn't anticipated such a powerful, unmistakable declaration. He really is... exceptionally good. "Remember this well," Elowen said, assuming an air of authority.

"Any further lapse will not be met with such leniency." 0:4 Chapter 113 The Seal Of Authority
Finished Gerda stood beside her, the seal held reverently in both hands, its silent presence a formidable deterrent. Alaric and Daphne dared not utter a word of protest. Seeing them forced into a posture of grudging respect when they clearly despised her filled Elowen with a profound, almost giddy sense of satisfaction. At that moment, her gaze traveled past them and landed on a familiar figure just alighting from a carriage. It was Rowena, having just arrived.

They hadn't seen each other for a few days, and Elowen had missed her a little. She didn't say more. She ran over, cheerful and light. Alaric's brow remained tightly furrowed. Daphne watched Elowen's retreating back, her fingers clenched so tightly they ached. Endless jealousy and malice churned in her eyes. Enjoy your triumph while you can, Elowen. The Duke is coming, you say? Perfect. I have a spectacular scene prepared just for you both. Let's see how brightly you smile then! On the other side- Elowen, drawing closer, saw that Rowena wasn't alone.

Following a few steps behind was Kaelan, dressed in a dark green, close-fitting fine wool tunic, secured by an ornate leather belt inlaid with silver filigree. Kaelan's gaze was fixed intently on Elowen. With a mix of deference and reluctant resignation, he greeted, "Your Grace." Elowen smiled warmly, "Mr. Page, you and your aunt have such a close relationship." Kaelan inclined his head slightly. "Your Grace may call me Kaelan. 'Mr. Page' is too formal." Elowen accepted easily. "Alright, Kaelan." She looked him up and down. "The more I look, the more I think you're easy on the eyes."

On a blazing day like this, and you still accompany your aunt to view lilies." "Easy on the eyes, huh. Kaelan felt a flush of pleasure at the compliment. Elowen turned to Rowena with a sigh. "I wish I had a nephew like this." Kaelan's pleasure instantly evaporated. Nephew was not the role he wished to play. Rowena laughed gently, "Well, Kaelan's maternal grandfather and your husband are brothers. That makes you family now." 2/1 Chapter 113 The Seal Of Authority Finished Elowen tilted her head, thinking. "Then... would Kaelan have to call me... Grandma?" Kaelan felt a wave of dizziness.

Rowena corrected softly, "According to Vanelle custom, it should be 'Grandaunt.'" Kaelan's heart sank. Grandma, Grandaunt-what's the difference? Elowen looked a little embarrassed. "I've never been good with family titles and relations. In the past, I'd just look to my mother when meeting relatives. She'd tell me what to call them, and I'd say it." But her mother was gone now. There was no one left to teach her. Rowena, aware of the Hale family's tragedies, softened her smile and patted Elowen's hand. "Your mother raised you well." The sun was still gentle, the morning young. 1.7K admin

Chapter 114 The Trap Is Set Finished As in her past life, the Duke of Falconcrest had erected rows of shaded pavilions along the water lily pond, setting out tables with fruit and pastries for guests to rest and admire the blossoms. The difference was that Elowen was not timidly trailing behind Alaric. She strolled leisurely with Rowena along the water's edge, with Kaelan following at a respectful distance. A thought occurred to Elowen. "By the way, how is Elara?" At home," Rowena replied. 'Still hasn't come to terms with things?" Elowen asked quietly. Rowena offered a wry smile.

Elowen sighed in sympathy. she was about to offer some comforting words when a voice sounded behind her. "Greetings to the Duchess of Duskmoor." Persistent as a ghost-figures. She turned to see Daphne approaching, surrounded by a cluster of other young noblewomen. Daphne performed a correct, if somewhat stiff, curtsy. The expressions of the other women were complex and unreadable. Daphne looked around at her companions. "Why are you all so slow to greet Her Grace? She is, after all, he Duchess of Duskmoor now. A most elevated position." Her words were dripping with obvious sarcasm.

Elowen recognized most of these women. They had grown up together, their status once similar. Now, marriage had drastically altered their standings. Daphne was deliberately stirring their feelings of envy and resentment. 'Lady Daphne, no need to envy," Rowena spoke up before Elowen could, her voice light but firm. "Once you become Crown Princess, will you not hold comparable honor? I imagine these ladies' families will soon be seeking your favor." A flicker of irritation crossed Daphne's face before she smoothed it over. Elowen's eyes crinkled with a smile. A good friend indeed. "Look!

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A koi!" someone cried out up ahead. "Is that a golden koi?" "It must be!" 1/3 Chapter 114 The Trap Is Set Elowen's heart gave a small, familiar lurch. In her past life, such an exclamation had come at this very moment. In Vanelle, golden koi were exceedingly rare, considered symbols of good fortune. Hearing of its appearance, the crowd had surged forward. Finished In the jostling. Elowen had felt a distinct, powerful shove in the center of her back, sending her stumbling uncontrollably into the water. "They say they've seen a golden koi," Rowena said, her own interest piqued.

She very much wanted to see it and make a wish-for her daughter to let go of her infatuation with Cassian and abandon her impossible dreams. Already, people were gathering near the pond's edge. Elowen smiled, "Go ahead and look." "Aren't you coming?" Rowena asked. "Not just yet," Elowen replied with a soft laugh. She was waiting for the bait to be taken. "Alright, wait for me here," Rowena said, turning to go. Elowen looked at Kaelan. "Shouldn't you accompany your aunt?" Kaelan hesitated.

Elowen teased, "Or are you worried about leaving your grandaunt alone?" The words "grandaunt" sent a pang through Kaelan. He turned and followed his aunt without another word. "Your Grace, aren't you going to look?" Daphne took advantage of the growing commotion to step closer. "If I were you, I'd go make a wish for the Duke to forget the woman in his heart quickly. Otherwise, if she returns, there may be no place for you in Duskmoor Manor." Elowen replied unhurriedly. "Haven't you heard? The woman in his heart is me." Daphne stared. "You? Impossible!" Of course, Elowen was bluffing.

It couldn't possibly be her. But she wasn't afraid of being found out. A slight smile played on her lips. "The Duke himself told me. If you don't believe it, feel free to ask him. Assuming you're not

afraid of another session of kneeling." She paused, as if in thought. "If I recall, the next penalty would be... six hours, wasn't it?" The memory of the punishment made Daphne's knees feel weak. 2.33 ph Chapter 114 The Trap Is Set 0:41 Finished She forced herself to steady, offering a strained, placating smile. "Your Grace, won't you accompany me to see the koi?"

You know, I am to be married soon..." This was Daphne's lie. Her marriage would go off without a hitch. Why bother wishing on a koi? The Crown Prince favored her; he would surely treat her well. Right now, she just needed to lure Elowen to the water's edge. Elowen said nothing, merely looking at Daphne with an expression that seemed to hold amusement. A sudden panic gripped Daphne. Did she see through it? Her mind raced, searching for another angle to persuade her. "Lord Piers," Elowen spoke suddenly, addressing someone behind Daphne. "Do you keep golden koi in your pond?" Daphne started.

Piers is here? Piers, hearing the question, nodded. "I believe we have one, though it's not been seen in years." He asked, "Would you like to see it, Your Grace?" Elowen gestured to Daphne. "She wants to see it. She's trying to drag me along." Piers' gaze shifted to Daphne, his brow furrowing almost imperceptibly. Given the previous spat outside the palace gates, his impression of her was far from favorable. 1.7K 2:33 pm admin

Chapter 115 The Tables Turn Piers asked. "Lady Daphne, you believe in it as well?" Daphne forced a smile. "Yes..." 0:7 Finished "Well, since Lady Daphne truly wants me to go with her," Elowen said with a touch of helplessness, "let's go." Something about this felt off to Daphne, but she couldn't pinpoint what. Still, if Elowen was willing, that was all that mattered. "Good." She had briefly worried Piers might follow, but he did not. Good. He wouldn't disrupt the plan. The

pond's edge was already crowded. People craned their necks, searching the water for a glimpse of gold.

"Can you see it, Your Grace?" Daphne asked, subtly edging Elowen closer to the water. Elowen allowed herself to be guided nearer the edge, counting silently in her mind. Three. Two. One. She sensed the faint rustle of fabric behind her. Drawing on her past life's memory, she shifted smoothly to her right. "Ah-!" A sharp cry, followed by a heavy splash. Elowen looked down at the water, where Daphne thrashed and flailed. In her past life, after falling in, Elowen had looked up from the water to see Daphne, standing on the bank, calling out, "Someone fell in!

Help!" with an expression of pure, malicious glee. Elowen had always suspected Daphne was the one who pushed her. Later, after Daphne also entered the Crown Prince's Wing, Elowen had asked her directly, and Daphne had admitted it. She had said then, "I pushed you. But shouldn't you thank me? If not for me, you'd never have known how little the Crown Prince truly cared for you. You were in such a pitiful state, and he felt not an ounce of pity." Now, Elowen was curious to see if Daphne would look just as pitiful in the water and whether Alaric would feel any pity for her.

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"Someone's in the water!" "Help! Help!" 1:3 Chapter 115 The Tables Turn The golden koi was forgotten. Shouts filled the air. Finished Alaric had been in the main hall, conversing with the Duke of Falconcrest and several other high-ranking officials. A servant came running in, breathless. "Duke of Falconcrest! Someone has fallen into the pond!" Fallen in? A strange, unsettling feeling shot through Alaric. An image of Elowen, panicked and struggling in the water, flashed unbidden in his mind. Forgetting decorum, he stood abruptly. "Is it Elowen?" The servant was confused.

"No, Your Highness, it is Lady Daphne..." Alaric stared. Daphne? How could it be her? Only then did he notice the odd looks from the Duke and the others. His face tightened. He sat back down stiffly. The Duke turned to him, his expression respectful. "Lady Daphne's accident is a serious matter. Your Highness, shall we go and see?" Alaric gave a stiff nod, frowning as he stood again. He couldn't shake the feeling that the Duke and the others, while saying nothing, regarded him with subtle, knowing amusement. It was humiliating, fanning the flames of his irritation.

Back at the pond, Daphne, who could not swim, was choking, nearly drowning. It was Piers who finally pulled her out. Drenched, her hair a tangled mess, Daphne knelt on the bank, coughing violently. A ring of spectators surrounded her, their gazes a mixture of concern and morbid curiosity. Shame and fury burned within her. She looked up and met Elowen's cool, detached gaze from above. "It was you!" she cried, lifting a trembling, accusing finger. "You pushed me!" Instantly, all eyes shifted to Elowen. Elowen adopted an expression of pure innocence. One had to admit, Daphne had nerve.

In her past life, after being rescued. Elowen had simply shivered alone on the bank, knowing she'd been pushed but unable to name her attacker. Chapter 115 The Tables Turn Finisher Daphne was different. No wonder, back then, Elowen had been her punching bag. In this world, the overly soft-hearted did not survive long. Kaelan stepped forward, his brow furrowed. "Lady Daphne, accusations require evidence. How can you be certain it was Her Grace?" "She was the only one beside me! Who else could it be?" Daphne spat. Murmurs spread through the crowd.

"I did see them go to the water's edge together." "Could it really have been the Duchess?" "Is she perhaps... jealous..." The murmurs tactfully faded at that point. The noble circles of Vanelle all

knew of Elowen's childhood bond with Alaric, and of its unresolved end- one married to the Duke of Duskmoor, the other about to wed Daphne. To suggest there was no lingering resentment was naive. Hearing the whispers, Daphne regained her confidence. She looked up at Elowen with feigned vulnerability. "Your Grace. I know you dislike me.

You reprimand me, you punish me using your status-I have borne it all. But how could you be so cruel as to try to kill me? You know I cannot swim! I would have drowned!" 1.7K (2:33 pm admin

Chapter 116 Reversal Of Fortune Finished The crowd's gaze toward Daphne softened with pity, while their looks at Elowen turned disapproving. "Bullying her is one thing, but to want her dead..." "That's ruthless." "No wonder they say a woman's heart can be the most poisonous..." Elowen's expression was one of cool derision. "Lady Daphne, if I wanted you dead, I have a thousand ways to achieve it. Why would I do so in front of a crowd, by first taking you to the water's edge and then pushing you in? If seen, I would be condemned for murder.

Even if unseen, suspicion would naturally fall on me, wouldn't it?" Her words gave the onlookers pause. It did make sense. Moreover." Elowen continued, her tone deliberate, "you were the one who insisted on going to the water. I was reluctant. To claim I plotted your harm is pure nonsense!" I can attest to that as well," Piers spoke up, stepping forward. Seeing him, Elowen knew the situation was secured. in her past life, he had been nearby when she fell, which was why he had rescued her.

Today, she had deliberately delayed, waiting for him to draw closer before accompanying Daphne to the edge. Piers was known for his sense of justice, and as the heir to Falconcrest, his words carried significant weight. Now, standing beside Elowen, he fastened a dry cloak over his

own damp shoulders-he had been offered one for himself after the rescue, and had initially considered giving it to the seemingly pitiable Daphne, but after hearing her accusations, he thought better of it. It was Lady Daphne who pleaded with Her Grace to accompany her to the water," he stated clearly.

His testimony instantly shifted the crowd's opinion. So it couldn't have been Duchess Elowen!" She must have slipped by accident." And then blamed someone else..." Daphne gritted her teeth. "But it's still possible she saw me near the water and seized the chance-" Elowen cut her off. "Or it's possible you, bearing a grudge, deliberately threw yourself in to frame me." Why would I bear a grudge against you?" "You do," Elowen said, her words precise.

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"Because you once followed in my shadow and felt inferior And 173 Chapter 116 Reversal Of Fortune Flashed because you were punished by the Duke of Duskmoor on two occasions. You dare not seek revenge against him, so you transfer your anger onto me. The long-standing friction between the Hale and Garrett families was well-known in Vanelle. The recent incident where Duke of Duskmoor had publicly humiliated the Garretts for Elowen's sake was a popular topic of gossip. The spectators' expressions grew even more knowing. You... I...

Daphne stammered, finding herself cornered, her eyes reddening with frustrated tears. She looked genuinely pathetic. Just then, she saw Alaric striding over, attendants in tow. Hope surged within her. The Crown Prince must have heard I fell in! He's come to support me! Previously, whenever she confronted Elowen, Cassian had been present, resulting in her punishments. Now, Cassian hadn't arrived, but Alaric had. With Alaric on her side, Elowen couldn't possibly escape unscathed! Thinking this, Daphne adjusted her kneeling posture to appear even more delicate and vulnerable.

She lifted her tear-stained face toward Alaric. "Your High- she began, but got no further. "Get up at once!" Alaric's cold voice cut her off. "What are you doing on the ground? Have you no shame?" Daphne froze, utterly stunned. This wasn't right. Shouldn't he be concerned for her? "Someone, assist Lady Daphne to her feet!" the Duke of Falconcrest promptly instructed. Two maids stepped forward to help her up. Daphne stood, her elaborate hairstyle in complete disarray, hairpins dangling precariously.

Summer garments were light, and her drenched clothes clung to her like a second skin, outlining her form unmistakably. Among the crowd of onlookers were many men, their gazes lingering on her with varying degrees of lewd interest. This would have been embarrassing enough ordinarily, but news of her impending marriage to the Crown Prince had spread. Her current state was a public humiliation that reflected directly on Alaric. 23 2:33 pm ppp. Chapter 116 Reversal Of Fortune Alaric watched coldly, feeling not a shred of pity. His gaze shifted to Elowen.

Finished She stood calmly by the water's edge, dressed in a silk gown embroidered with cloud patterns, her skin like fine porcelain. Against the backdrop of the endless pond and red lilies, she was a picture of serene elegance. The contrast with Daphne could not have been more stark! Looking from one to the other, Alaric felt his irritation flare. "Your Highness, it was Duchess Elowen who pushed me..." Daphne, noticing Alaric's attention on Elowen, leaned into the supporting maids and spoke in a choked voice as she was brought to his side. "Shut it!" Alaric snapped, his face dark.

Hadn't she embarrassed him enough already? Tears welled and spilled from Daphne's eyes. 1.7K 3/3 W Finished 2:33 pm ppp. admin

Chapter 117 He Is My Husband The Duke of Falconcrest, sensing the escalating tension, quickly gestured to the maids. "Escort Lady Daphne to the west wing to change her garments." Yes." As Daphne was led away, tears streamed down her face, a mix of humiliation and confusion. She couldn't understand it. She had pushed Elowen, so why had she missed? And Alaric-he liked her, he was kind to her. Why was he so cold to her today? The more she thought, the more her hatred for Elowen burned. It's all her fault! She gritted her teeth. She would have her revenge for today's disgrace.

On the other side, Elowen had observed the scene quietly. She watched Daphne's display of wounded innocence and Alaric's utter lack of sympathy. Strangely, she wasn't surprised. She figured, in her last life, Alaric hadn't necessarily hated Elowen that much, and in this life, he didn't have to dislike Daphne either. It was simply his nature-impatient, and obsessed with his own dignity and face. Thankfully, this life's Elowen had made the excellent decision to stay as far from him as possible.

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"Everyone!" The Duke of Falconcrest addressed the dispersing crowd with a practiced smile, clasping his hands. "A minor mishap, please pay it no mind! Refreshments have been laid out in the pavilions. Please, enjoy yourselves!" The guests, willing to oblige their host, gradually dispersed into smaller groups. The Duke then approached Elowen, his manner respectful. "I hope today's fuss didn't disturb you. Your Grace?" This was the deference owed to the Duchess of Duskinoor. Elowen noticed Alaric's gaze also resting on her from a distance.

The look in his eyes made her skin crawl, though she gave no sign. She offered the Duke a polite smile. "I'm quite alright, my lord. Thank you for your concern" 1/3 2:33 pm Chapter 117 He Is My Husband Finished checking on Lady Daphne, your future Crown Princess. She fell into the

water trying to see some koi, lost all dignity, and then tried to falsely accuse me. Perhaps she needs your attention more." Alaric's gaze fixed on her. "Did you push her?" "I said I did not." Elowen retorted, her displeasure evident. "If her word is law, then I say Cassian instructed me to push her.

Would you believe that and go question him?" Irritation flared in Alaric. "Why do you always have to drag him into it?" Elowen almost laughed in frustration. "He is my husband. What fault is there in invoking him?" Husband. The word was like a needle, piercing both Alaric and Kaelan.. "Your Grace." A senior maid from Rowena's side hurried forward, her face etched with anxiety. Elowen dismissed Alaric from her mind, taking a steadying breath. "What is it? Where is Mrs. Wrenner?" 1.7K 3/3 2:33 pm admin

Chapter 118 A Fragrant Trap Finished The senior maid spoke hurriedly, "Mrs. Wrenner just received word that Miss Wrenner slipped out of the house, and no one knows where she went. Mrs. Wrenner was terribly worried she might get into trouble, so she rushed back home immediately. It was an emergency, and she didn't have time to tell you personally. She instructed me to inform you and ask you not to worry." Elara slipped out of the house... A sudden jolt struck Elowen's heart. Could she be heading here? As soon as his duties at the army camp were concluded, Cassian prepared to leave.

"Your Grace!" A tall, burly officer called out, chasing after him with an earnest, smiling face. "My personal matter before caused quite a stir in the camp. Thanks to Your Grace for not holding my past mistakes against me and even offering counsel to help resolve the trouble. It's a rare quiet day today. Allow me to buy you a drink!" This was the officer whose marriage to another woman had led his former lover to cause a scene at the army camp. Without a moment's

thought, Cassian refused. "No. I've got plans." What matters, Your Grace? All the camp's affairs are settled for today.

"You don't have to go to the palace either. What could be so urgent?" "I'm going to Falconcrest Manor," Cassian stated flatly. "My wife is there." The officer was taken aback for a second, then chuckled and nodded. "Ah! Of course! Your Grace is newly wed. How thoughtless of me! Please, go ahead. Her Grace must be waiting for you!" A faint flicker passed through Cassian's eyes. 's Elowen waiting for me? He said nothing more, boarding his carriage and departing the camp for Falconcrest Manor. As they passed a side gate, Cassian heard shouting from outside. "Duke Cassian! Duke Cassian!"

"Duke Cassian!" Stop." The coachman obeyed, halting the carriage promptly. Cassian pushed open the carriage door and saw a round-faced servant boy standing by the side gate. Bowing and scraping with an ingratiating smile. Cassian looked down at him coolly. "What is it?" The servant offered a sycophantic grin. "Duchess Elowen sent me, Your Grace." 1/3 2:33 pm Chapter 113 A Fragrant Trap At the mention of Elowen. Cassian's face eased. "What about her?" Finished "Her Grace is perfectly well, resting in the west wing at the moment," the servant replied eagerly.

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"She sent me to fetch you the moment you arrived and bring you to her straight away." Cassian's eyes narrowed slightly. "My wife asked for me. Did she say anything else?" The servant seemed surprised by the question. He paused, pretending to ponder, then sighed with feigned concern. Your Grace, you wouldn't know. Today, Lady Daphne fell into the water, and after being rescued. she had the gall to accuse Her Grace of pushing her! From what I saw, Her Grace was

quite wronged. She told me if I saw you, to hurry you over. She looked like she might cry."

Cassian stared at him darkly.

His fingers tapped the armrest of his wheelchair-soft, unrhythmic. The servant grew nervous, looking down at his own feet, his heart uneasy. ... Lead the way then." After a long moment,

Cassian spoke slowly. The servant finally breathed a sigh of relief, his smile returning. "This way, please!" With the servant leading, Bran followed at a distance, pushing the wheelchair.

Halfway there, the servant turned to Bran with a smile. "Sir, perhaps let me push the chair? It's terribly hot. You could take a rest." Bran ignored him, looking to Cassian instead.

A silent exchange passed between their eyes. "You may rest," Cassian said slowly. Bran understood, acknowledging the order with a nod. Overjoyed, the servant took over, pushing Cassian forward. He glanced back frequently, confirming that Bran was not following, a faint, triumphant smirk touching his lips. Entering the west wing, the servant pushed Cassian directly to a room's doorway, Even through the door, Cassian's keen senses caught a strange, familiar scent. He knew that smell. The servant stepped forward and knocked on the door with false ceremony.

"Your Grace, His Grace is here." Without waiting for a response from within, the servant pushed the door open and wheeled Cassian inside. Inside, the scent was stronger, its source a censer on the table where incense burned. A wine jug and two cups also sat on the table. 2:33 pm ppp.

Chapter 118 A Fragrant Trap Finished "Her Grace will be here shortly. Please wait a moment, Your Grace." With that, the servant left without a backward glance, closing the door behind him. Footsteps sounded from the left. Cassian looked over, but the face that met his was not Elowen's.

Elara stood there, clad in a gown of pale, moon-white gauze, her expression delicate and pleading. "Cassian." she called softly. Cassian's face showed no emotion. "Was it not Elowen who wanted to see me?" "It was, but she hasn't arrived yet." Elara walked to the table, poured a cup of wine, and approached Cassian, holding the cup with slender, delicate hands. "Her Grace asked me to see to it that you have some wine first. She said you must be hot and weary after traveling under the scorching sun all this way.

Please have a rest first." She offered the cup to Cassian, her voice sweet and cloying, worming its way into his ears. "Cassian, won't you drink?" The round-faced servant retreated from the room, meeting a maid by the rockery at a corner. The maid asked nervously, "Well? How did it go?" 1.7K H admin

Chapter 119 I Don't Want To Force You! Finished "Of course it went smoothly!" the servant boasted, his eyes gleaming with self-satisfaction. "You doubt me?" The maid was still uneasy. "Are you sure you didn't arouse his suspicion? The master emphasized that the Duke of Duskmoor is notoriously cautious, not easily fooled." The servant chuckled, "Well, maybe marriage has dulled his wits. The moment I mentioned Duchess Elowen, he was hooked." Seeing her lingering doubt, the servant insisted, "I swear it's true! I sent Bran away and wheeled His Grace right into the room myself!

He's probably face-to-face with Miss Wrenner by now!" Convinced by his earnestness, the maid relaxed slightly, a sly smile curling her lips. "Good. Not a waste of my effort, hauling Miss Wrenner out of the house." "Now it's up to her to get him to drink the aphrodisiac wine." "Even if he doesn't drink, it won't matter much," the maid said with a knowing smile. "The incense

burning in that room is just as potent, if not more so." The servant nodded in satisfaction. "So now we just wait for the Duke to succumb to the effects and get tangled up with Miss Wrenner.

The master's task will be complete!" The maid shook her head. "Not enough." "Not enough?" the servant frowned. "The Duke merely taking Miss Wrenner to bed isn't enough. The master said that given the Duke's immense power, he could simply deny everything afterward." "Ah, true enough!" The servant slapped his forehead. "Then what do we do?" "We need them caught in the act!" The servant grew eager. "Should I go lure some guests from the garden party over?" \ The maid snorted, "Our job is done. Why expose yourself? If someone remembers your face, it could lead back to our master.

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I already have a better candidate to lure people over." "Oh? Who?" The maid tilted her chin toward the neighboring room. "In there-Lady Daphne, daughter of the Lord Chancellor, the future Crown Princess. She's supposedly very close to Duchess Elowen, Who better to gather a crowd for a scandal?" The servant's face lit up with understanding. "Brilliant! And today she's already claiming Duchess Elowen pushed her into the lake.

If she finds out the Duke is dallying with another woman, she'll do everything to blow it sky-high, make it the talk of the town, humiliate and break Duchess Flowen's heart!" Inside the room, Cassian's gaze rested on the ripples in the wine cup. He spoke slowly, "Who helped you sneak out?" 13 2:33 pm P P p Chapter 119 I Don't Want To Force You! Finished "I arranged everything myself! I just love you so much... Cassian, please, drink this. I'll do everything to please you, to make you happy!" The door's insulation was poor.

Every word carried clearly into the hallway, falling straight into Daphne's ears. Her eyes widened, then gleamed with a spark of vicious excitement. 1.7K 1 B 3/3 2:33 pm Awakening

Love Reborn to B admin

Chapter 120 Caught Red-handed 0:01 Finished After changing her dress, Daphne had overheard a whispered conversation outside her window—a servant and a maid were muttering that Cassian was on his way here, without Elowen in tow, as if he was sneaking off to meet someone in secret. Anything related to Elowen always caught Daphne's full attention. After quickly adjusting her hair, she had slipped out to investigate. She never expected to catch such a bombshell of a conversation! The man inside was undoubtedly Cassian. But the woman's voice was clearly not Elowen's.

It sounded like someone else entirely. So, he really had come to meet another woman. What they were about to do was obvious. A wide, triumphant smile spread across Daphne's lips. How perfectly convenient. Oh Elowen. Aren't you all high and mighty? Don't you rely on Cassian backing you up, trashing me and pushing me around? Now, your husband is taking another woman to his bed, where will your pride be? Daphne slipped away silently, heading back toward the main garden. She wasn't in a rush to tip people off and drag a crowd to catch them in the act.

For this kind of affair, one had to wait until they were in the throes of passion, then burst in.

They'd be locked in a passionate embrace, clothes askew, lost to the world. Caught red-handed, there would be no possible denial! And Elowen's reaction... I can't wait to see it. The mere thought lifted Daphne's spirits immensely. Back in the main garden, Elowen was mulling over the situation with Rowena and Elara, an uneasy feeling tightening her chest. "Elara is just a girl. I doubt she can cause much trouble."

Even if she did sneak out, she couldn't have gone far," Kaelan said softly, trying to reassure her. Elowen remained silent, unconvinced. Elara's dramatic scene at Duskmoor Manor, her threats of suicide to force a marriage to Cassian-it all pointed to a dangerously obsessive girl. She valued Cassian above her own life. She wouldn't give up so easily. 1/3 2:33 pm Chapter 120 Caught Red-handed Finished This wasn't a simple escape. It was likely a carefully laid plan. "Greetings, Your Grace." Elowen looked up at the familiar voice. Daphne stood before her, a knowing smile playing on her lips.

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Elowen knew that smile all too well. From two lifetimes of knowing Daphne, that particular smile always heralded some scheme aimed at her. Like in her past life, after Elowen became Crown Princess, Daphne had once visited the Crown Prince's Wing wearing that exact smile. They hadn't yet turned openly hostile then, and Elowen, glad to see a friend, had poured out a lot of her heart. Only a few days later, Elowen was blindsided by the news that Alaric was taking a concubine. And that concubine was Daphne. When the news hit, Elowen froze on the spot like she'd been struck by lightning.

Their next meeting was the day after Daphne had entered the Crown Prince's Wing and shared Alaric's bed. Daphne arrived two hours late to pay her formal respects. Dressed to kill, cheeks aglow, she bowed to Elowen. "My apologies. I served His Highness quite late last night and simply couldn't get up this morning. Your Highness, you don't mind, do you?" Her words were an apology, but that same smile remained on her face. The smile she wore now was identical, down to the precise curve of her lips. Elowen frowned. "Lady Daphne, your hair is still damp.

You should have rested longer in the west wing. There was no need to rush here to see me."

Daphne didn't take offense. Her smile persisted. "Your Grace mentioned earlier that His Grace

would be coming today, though later. I wonder when exactly he arrives." Elowen, of course, didn't know the specifics. "When he arrives, he will surely send for me." "Is that so?" Daphne's smile widened. "How can you be so sure he won't go to see someone else first?" Elowen's brow furrowed with displeasure. "What nonsense are you spinning now?" "We'll see soon enough, won't we?" Daphne said with feigned mystery.

"Just hope you don't end up crying. Elowen grew suspicious. Does she know something? Before she could question further, a familiar voice interrupted. 2:33 pm pp p Chapter 120 Caught Red-handed Finished "Your Grace." She turned to see Bran approaching-alone. "Is the Duke here?" Elowen asked immediately. "He arrived a short while ago..." Bran scratched his head, looking confused. "But why are you here, Your Grace? Didn't you say you'd be waiting for him in the room in the west wing?" Elowen was momentarily stunned.

"What?" "Oh my!" Daphne raised a hand to her mouth in exaggerated surprise, her voice rising to a shrill pitch. "Could it be that His Grace has mistaken another woman for you?" Her sharp, carrying tone successfully drew the attention of everyone nearby. "What's going on?" The Duke of Falconcrest hurried over, alerted by the commotion. Daphne put on a mask of concern. "Your Grace, did you know Duke Cassian is here?" The Duke faltered. "Duke Cassian? Here? Since when?" "He just arrived," Daphne said sweetly. "I heard he went to the west wing. But Duchess Elowen is right here.

So what did he go there for?" 1.7K admin