

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 161 Rumors Ignite Finished Elowen said nothing. Marwen was going to drag her name through the mud, she could feel it. No, not going to. Marwen was absolutely going to do it. At the Crown Prince's Wing, the ladies who had arrived early were already gathered in tight little circles, whispering about the scene from a few days ago, when Alaric had been forced into a public penance that left the entire palace buzzing. Marwen stopped short when she heard that. "What are you all talking about? That day the Duchess tripped in the training yard and scraped her palm.

His Highness just happened to be nearby. She turned around and blamed him, then insisted the Duke of Duskmooor take her to the palace to complain to His Majesty." One of the women looked at her doubtfully. "That doesn't sound right." Marwen lifted her chin. "I am the Duke of Duskmooor's aunt by marriage. I live at Duskmooor Manor. Why would I lie about something like that?" The ladies exchanged looks. "I've met the Duchess of Duskmooor. She didn't seem like that." "You never really know what someone's like behind closed doors." Another woman frowned.

"But what would she gain from it?" Marwen let out a short laugh. "Jealousy, what else. Didn't you know? She and His Highness grew up together. Now she is the Duchess of Duskmooor, and His Highness is about to marry a Garrett daughter. You think she's completely fine with that?" The women looked at one another, their expressions turning thoughtful. Someone leaned in. "Does the Duke of Duskmooor know about all this?" Marwen sighed dramatically. "What can he do even if he does? The Duchess has him wrapped around her finger. She took over the entire household the moment she married in.

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He handed her everything and goes along with whatever she says." A woman nearby smiled faintly. "Isn't that how it should be? If the Duchess doesn't manage her own household, who should, an outsider?" The word outsider stung like a slap. Marwen shot her a sharp look. "You don't understand. She didn't marry into Duskmoor Manor with good intentions. She only chose the Duke because she couldn't marry His Highness. And after the wedding she still refuses to act like a proper Duchess. She pushes me around, blocks her cousin's match, and stirs up trouble everywhere she goes.

At this rate, Duskmoor Manor will fall apart in her hands" Not far away, Isla sat with a round silk fan in hand, a faint smile curving her lips. The matron beside her leaned in. "Your Majesty, Marwen truly has begun spreading rumors about the 1/3 2:39 pm Chapter 161 Rumors Ignite Duchess of Duskmoor. The things she's saying are quite harsh." Isla gave her fan a slow wave. "She is His Majesty's and the Duke's aunt. It is rare for her to attend gatherings." The meaning was clear, let her talk. The matron bowed in understanding. Isla lifted her gaze.

More and more women were drifting toward Marwen, drawn in by the story. The smile at Isla's lips deepened almost imperceptibly. The matter of His Highness being punished had already spread. But very few people knew the full story. What Marwen was saying was not true, yet it was exactly what Isla preferred people to believe. She was not worried about it harming Alaric's reputation. In this world, people were far harsher on women. When a boy and girl grew up close and later married other people, if there were whispers afterward, it was always the woman who bore the blame.

That was exactly where Elowen stood now. Isla understood that well, which was why she let Marwen keep going. In the end, the one who would be shamed would only be Elowen. Suddenly

Isla caught sight of a figure. Her fan stilled. She rose gracefully. She stepped forward, wearing a perfectly timed warm smile. "There you are." It was Elspeth, aunt to Theodric and Cassian.

Elspeth inclined her head slightly. "Your Majesty." Isla immediately reached for her hand. "No need for formalities. We are family" They walked inward together, still chatting, just in time to hear Marwen's voice rise again.

"She barely scraped her hand and started tearing up, insisting the Duke take her to the palace to accuse His Highness of pushing her. With the Duke standing there, how could His Majesty refuse? Of course His Highness had to be disciplined. He stood there for over two hours. The entire palace saw it. And Her Majesty, kind as she is, never argued with His Majesty She just swallowed the insult Elspeth's brows drew together. Beside her, Isla's lips curved faintly By the time Elowen arrived at the Crown Prince's Wing, her name had already become the most talked about subject in the hall.

The moment she stepped inside, she felt it Waves of eyes fixed on her. No one needed to say anything. She could read it in their looks, amusement, curiosity, ridicule, even open disdain. It pressed in from every direction. Chapter 161 Rumors Ignite Fiche But the men and women were seated separately. She could not simply turn around and go find the Duke of Duskmoor. 1.7K B admin

Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 162 The Hairpin She drew in a quiet breath and prepared to walk forward. 1944 Finished Then something occurred to her. As if on instinct, she lifted her hand and adjusted her hair in full view of everyone. Naturally, every gaze followed. There, gleaming in the light, was a gold hairpin. Under the sunlight it flashed brilliantly, the craftsmanship so fine it was almost blinding. It was clearly no ordinary ornament.

These women handled jewels and silks every day. In an instant, their attention shifted from gossip to the hairpin.

Whispers rose again. "A piece like that, I thought only the palace had them." "I heard His Majesty granted it to her personally." "Honestly, even what Her Majesty wears does not look that exquisite." The voices were soft, but Isla still caught the meaning. A flicker of irritation passed through her eyes. She glanced coolly at the two women speaking. Elowen approached. The whispers faded. "The Duchess of Duskmoor may be young, but she certainly knows how to make an entrance," Elspeth said coolly.

"Arriving late so everyone can admire how favored you are." Others might be cautious because of Cassian. Elspeth felt no such restraint. And truthfully, she had never had a good impression of Elowen. Not only because of Marwen's words. The last time she visited Duskmoor Manor, Elowen had claimed she was resting and refused to see her. No sense of propriety at all. Today, Elspeth was deliberately making things difficult. Yet Elowen showed no sign of discomfort. She stepped forward, gave a composed bow, and said evenly, "Today is His Highness's betrothal.

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The Duke was concerned for His Highness and came with me. His leg makes travel slower than usual, so we were delayed. I hope you will forgive us." Everyone knew Cassian used a wheeled chair. Everyone knew that meant moving slowly. The explanation was reasonable and precise. Elspeth found herself briefly at a loss. Elowen continued, "Thankfully the banquet has not yet begun. We hurried as best we could and did not miss the appointed hour." She had not arrived late. That was undeniable. Elspeth had nothing to seize on.

Isla maintained her gracious smile. "You are right on time." She added warmly, "Come sit. Once the banquet begins, Alaric will greet the elders. His knee has not fully recovered yet, he may still be limping a bit. Do not laugh at him." Elowen's lashes trembled slightly. Elspeth said coolly, "How His Highness injured that knee, you know better than anyone. If I were you. I would not dare laugh." Elowen looked at Elspeth. She did not dislike her. In her previous life, they had crossed paths as well. The first year after she married Alaric, there had been a family banquet at the palace.

Elspeth had returned to attend. During the feast, someone called out that Elowen was skilled with a blade and should perform for everyone. It had been snowing that day. Her knee ached so badly she could barely stand, let alone perform. If she forced herself through it, she might not be able to get out of bed for days. She had clenched her fingers and looked at Alaric, still foolish enough to hope he would see her discomfort and speak for her. Alaric glanced at her coldly. "Go on. It is a holiday. Are you trying to spoil the mood? In that instant, her heart sank.

Just as despair closed in and she prepared to rise anyway, Elspeth let out a sharp laugh. "There are plenty of dancers already. Now you are eyeing the Crown Princess too. What is it, was the performance arranged by His Majesty and Her Majesty not entertaining enough for you? Should I play something myself to keep you amused?" The man who had started it quickly laughed it off, claiming he was joking. Isla smoothed things over. The matter passed. But Elowen never forgot it. After the banquet, she had gone to thank Elspeth. Elspeth's expression had been cool.

"No need to thank me I was not defending you I just do not like seeing people make a scene at the Crown Prince's Wing At the time. Elowen had believed her. Now she understood. Elspeth simply could not stand to see a young woman being put on display. Saying it 273 2:39 pm P p p

Chapter 162 The Hairpin was for the Crown Prince's Wing had been her way of sparing Elowen any burden. Cassian had been right. This aunt's heart was not bad. She was just too easily swayed. She stumbled into the same trap again and again.

Finisher In her previous life, in the second year after Elowen married into the Crown Prince's Wing, Elspeth died suddenly. Only later did Elowen learn that her death had been part of a carefully laid scheme. ◦ 1.7K admin

Chapter 163 The Easy Snare The scheme itself was not particularly sophisticated. It only worked because Elspeth had exactly that kind of temper. With someone like her, you never saw the trap until you were already standing in it. Elowen took her seat and answered obediently, "I know. It was His Majesty's own order. I was told to stand out on the courtyard stones in full view." Elspeth let out a sharp, disbelieving laugh. "So now you are hiding behind His Majesty again?" Elowen tilted her head and looked at her. "Marchioness of Havenstead, you are His Majesty's aunt.

You know him better than anyone. His Majesty is decisive and clear-minded. He does not hand down harsh punishment because of a few whispered words. If he made such a public example of His Highness, then His Highness must truly have crossed a line." Elspeth went still. With Theodric's temperament, he would never come down hard on His Highness just because someone fanned the flames. Her gaze shifted again to the gold hairpin at Elowen's temple. If she remembered right, it had once belonged to Isolde's most treasured set of gilded gemstone regalia.

Isla had admired it for years, yet Theodric had never passed it on to her. Elspeth had a fierce temper, but she was not foolish. Now that she had calmed down, something finally clicked. She glanced at Isla with new scrutiny. Isla sensed the shift and smiled at just the right moment. "His

Majesty and the Duke of Duskmoor are brothers, after all. His Highness is still young. If he was disciplined, then he was. It is hardly the end of the world." The hour arrived, and the banquet officially began. For the time being, the matter was dropped.

Halfway through the feast, Elowen rose and dipped into a graceful curtsy. "Your Majesty, may I be excused for a moment?" Isla's smile remained gentle. She nodded. "Of course, Go on."

Elowen left with Mira, Isla cast a subtle look at the matron behind her. The matron understood immediately and slipped out. As she passed another table, she brushed Marwen's shoulder without drawing attention. Marwen turned and caught sight of Elowen's retreating figure. Her heart jumped. She quietly followed. Keeping a careful distance, Marwen watched Elowen stop midway and say to the maid guiding her.

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"I 1/3 (2:39 pm ppp. Chapter 163 The Easy Snare know the rest of the way. You can head back." The maid answered and withdrew. 040 Finished Elowen waited until the maid was well out of sight. She scanned the corridor to make sure no one lingered nearby. Only then did she turn to Mira. "Go to the front court. Tell His Highness I have something important to discuss with him, and it must be in person." Hidden behind the stone wall, Marwen heard every word. Her eyes widened. Meeting His Highness in secret. On the night of his own betrothal banquet. Unbelievable. Inside, she sneered at Elowen.

But to Marwen, this was perfect. If Elowen were caught alone with His Highness tonight, she would be thrown straight out of Duskmoor Manor. And His Highness's engagement to the Garrett family would collapse with her. Then Sylvia would have her pick. The Duke of Duskmoor or His Highness. The thought made Marwen's pulse race. She followed Elowen farther and saw her settle in a pavilion, clearly waiting. So it was real. Marwen's fingers curled

tight, trembling with anticipation. She hurried back toward the hall. She headed straight for Isla, only to be stopped at the entrance by the matron.

Marwen snapped, "Move. I have something urgent to report to Her Majesty." The matron smiled politely. "Her Majesty is hosting guests at the moment. If you would like, you may tell me, and I will relay it." Left with no choice, Marwen leaned close and whispered everything she had seen and heard. The matron's expression grew serious. She returned to Isla and murmured a few words. Isla had been smiling. After listening, her expression shifted at once. Elspeth noticed. "What happened?" Isla lowered her voice. "Marwen claims she saw Elowen meeting Alaric alone in the pavilion." Elspeth stared.

"What?" Just moments ago, she had almost felt sorry for Elowen. And now this? "It is only what she says." Isla replied carefully. "It may not be true. I would like to see for myself. But this is 2:39 pm Chapter 163 The Easy Snare Alaric's betrothal banquet. If I leave now..." "I will go, Elspeth cut in immediately. Finished That was exactly what Isla had been waiting for. Satisfaction flickered in her eyes, though she kept her tone hesitant. "Are you sure?" Elspeth patted her hand. "Do not worry, Your Majesty. I know how to handle it. I will not cause a scene.

But if it turns out to be true, then the Duchess of Duskmoor needs to be removed from Duskmoor Manor without delay." She rose, face cold, and strode out. Marwen led the way. As they walked, Marwen fumed, "That woman circles around the Duke of Duskmoor one minute and slips off to see His Highness the next. Men everywhere, yet she keeps blocking Sylvia's future on purpose." Elspeth's expression darkened. "She still refuses to settle Sylvia's match?" "Yes," Marwen said quickly. "Sylvia could have married His Highness. The Duchess refused.

Then Piers from Falconcrest Manor took a liking to Sylvia, and she refused again. Sylvia is my daughter. I cannot let her end up widowed young. I was planning to go back and beg the Duchess in a few days. She can scold me. all she likes. I will take it. As long as she agrees to arrange Sylvia's marriage..." 。 1.7K 1 33 admin

Chapter 164 Behind The Blossoms Elspeth's eyes turned dark. Elowen... Finished Ahead, the pavilion lay half hidden among flowering branches. Through the leaves, the outline of a man and a woman could be seen. The man stood with his back turned. His face was hidden. But the woman was unmistakably Elowen. Elspeth strode forward, jaw set, and then she heard Elowen's soft sigh drift through the air. "...Yes. I have missed you." Elspeth's brows shot up.

"Unbelievable," she muttered. Beside her, Marwen scoffed.

"Married to the Duke of Duskmoor and still sneaking off to whisper things like that to another man. Just wait, next they will be all over each other." Privately, she was thrilled. Only catching them red-handed would finish Elowen for good. Marwen turned eagerly to Elspeth. "You are the Duke of Duskmoor's own aunt. You have to stand up for him. A woman like that should be dragged straight to the ducking pool." "I have missed her too." The man's voice carried clearly from the pavilion. Marwen froze. Elspeth, who had been about to step forward, stopped short.

The man continued, "But my mother still will not let me see Sylvia. She refuses to approve our match. That was not Alaric's voice. And this did not sound like a secret affair at all. It sounded like something entirely different. Elspeth frowned. Marwen, meanwhile, had recognized the voice instantly. Piers. A chill ran down her spine. Elowen had not come here to meet His Highness. This had been deliberate. She had been maneuvered into this. But by now it was far

too late. Inside the pavilion, Piers sighed. "Sylvia and I fell for each other the first time we met. You were going to 2:39 pm ppp.

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Chapter 164 Behind The Blossoms Finished help us formalize things that day. No one expected Marwen to storm in. She did not know who I was. She thought I was some nobody and berated my mother right in front of everyone, said I looked like trouble. It was humiliating." Elowen replied gently. "She even said you had a father but no proper upbringing, and that if you had a mother at all, she must have been nothing but a disgrace. She said it in front of Duchess of Falconcrest. I tried to stop her." Elspeth slowly turned to Marwen. Her teeth clenched.

"Did you not just tell me the Duchess was the one holding Sylvia's marriage hostage? Because that is not what I am hearing." Marwen shifted, avoiding her gaze. "She did not explain things clearly that day. And besides, what was she doing meeting Piers alone tonight? What was that about? Maybe she has her eye on him." Before she could finish, Elowen's calm voice floated out again. "Piers, you do not need to worry. I have been thinking about you and Sylvia. A few days ago, I went to see His Majesty and asked that he formally grant your betrothal. He agreed. The decree should arrive soon.

Once it does, even your mother will have difficulty objecting." Piers sounded stunned. "A royal decree? Your Grace, I... I do not know what to say." His voice trembled. "I truly do not know how to thank you." "There is no need." Elowen said warmly. "Sylvia is the Duke of Duskmoor's cousin. That makes her family to me as well. The two of you care deeply for each other. Of course I would help. I would not let you carry regret for the rest of your lives." She smiled. "Just promise me you will treat Sylvia well." "I will. I swear it," Piers replied at once. Marwen stood speechless.

By now, Elspeth understood everything. "Marwen," she said coldly, each word deliberate, "you have some nerve." She had even used Marwen's given name. That alone showed how furious she was. It is over. Marwen's legs gave out. She stumbled back and dropped hard onto the stone path. The noise startled both people in the pavilion. Piers stepped out first. Seeing the two women behind the shrubs, he paused, then inclined his head politely. "Marchioness of Havenstead. Mrs. Ashcroft." Elowen followed a moment later, surprise written across her face.

"Marchioness of Havenstead, what are you doing here?" Then her gaze shifted to Marwen. Her expression stilled, as though she understood immediately, and she 2:39 pm ppp. Chapter 164 Behind The Blossoms sighed softly. That look said everything. So it's Marwen. Anger flared in Marwen's chest. Finished She pushed herself up, brushed off her skirts, and dropped any pretense of courtesy. She pointed at Elowen. "Do not pretend you are innocent. Tonight happened exactly the way you planned it. This was your setup." admin

Chapter 165 Reckoning Elowen frowned. "Scheming? What are you even talking about?"

Finished Marwen let out a sharp, humorless laugh. "You planned every step. When the Marchioness of Havenstead came calling, you pretended you were asleep and wouldn't see her, just to make her dislike you more. In public you never brought up Sylvia's marriage, but behind the scenes you went straight to His Majesty and asked for a royal decree. And today, you knew I followed you out. You said someone was going to fetch the Crown Prince, but the only one who showed up was Piers.

You knew I would bring people to catch you in the act. You set me up so I'd make a fool of myself." Elowen was honestly taken aback. So she figured out that much. Marwen had actually traced most of the plan. There were still differences. In Elowen's original arrangement, Marwen

had not been part of it. After offending Theodric in the past, she would never have been invited to Alaric's betrothal banquet. Yet Marwen had come. She had heard Isla personally sent the invitation. That unexpected move had saved Elowen a great deal of trouble.

With Marwen present, everything became quicker and cleaner. "You vicious little snake!" Marwen spat. "You-" Smack. Before the next insult could land, a loud, crisp slap cut her off. Elspeth lowered her hand and stood there coldly. "You call that humiliating you? No. This is humiliating you." Half of Marwen's face went numb. She stood frozen, ears ringing. "Schemes, schemes, that's all you talk about. She's barely more than a teenage girl. How would she mastermind all that?" Elowen immediately put on a harmless, wide eyed look. Elspeth's heart twisted with guilt and pity when she saw it.

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"And besides, she's the Duchess of Duskmoor. What exactly could she want from you? What do you have that she needs? You're lucky she didn't plot against you. And you dare say she blocked your daughter's marriage. It was your own stupidity that wrecked Sylvia's match. She cleaned up your mess and went to His Majesty for a decree, and you stand here calling her names." Elspeth's teeth clenched. "So all those awful things you said about her before were lies" Marwen felt miserable. "I..." 1/2 2:39 pm ppp. Chapter 165 Reckoning Elowen gave a soft sigh at just the right moment.

"It's my fault." 0:01 Finished Marwen's heart jumped. Her first instinct was to rush over and shut Elowen up. When she started like that, it never ended well. Too late. "On my first day after marrying into Duskmoor Manor, Aunt sent someone to summon me to greet her. I didn't go. Later, I took over management of the household and had her entry token withdrawn." Elowen

said gently. You are the Duchess. Of course the household authority should pass to you." Elspeth frowned. "But why didn't you greet her? She is Cassian's aunt. That makes her your aunt as well.

A new bride should pay her respects." Elowen lowered her gaze. "Because that morning I went to the palace first to see His Majesty and Her Majesty. I thought if I skipped them and went to Aunt first, people would say I didn't understand proper order. They might even criticize Aunt for it." That is the proper order," Elspeth said firmly. She shot Marwen a look of pure contempt.

"What makes you think a new Duchess should come to you before the palace? Why not just claim the throne while you're at it?" Marwen's face went pale. Elspeth turned back.

"And the entry token?" Elowen answered softly, "Cassian's courtyard is heavily guarded. No one is allowed in without permission. Even Aunt cannot enter without a token. Cassian trusted her and gave her one. But Lucien took it and slipped into the courtyard late at night. He intended to attack Cassian." "Attack?" Elspeth stared at her. Lucien dares? "Yes. Out of respect for Aldric, Cassian chose not to pursue it. He let the matter go. If you don't believe me, you can ask him."

Elowen's expression was steady and open. Elspeth could tell she was telling the truth.

Elspeth's cool features darkened. Not long ago she had seen Lucien, praised his appearance, and even given him a valuable Etched Heirloom Pendant. Thinking back on it now made her skin crawl. In the end, Elowen lowered her head even further. No matter the reason, I should have handled it better. If I'd been more considerate of Aunt's feelings, maybe she wouldn't resent me so much" Marwen's eyes bulged. She wanted to lunge at her. But Elspeth believed every word. Her voice softened despite herself. "How is any of this your fault?"

You did everything right." 22 Chapter 165 Reckoning "She-" Marwen tried again. 1.7K Finisher admin

Chapter 166 Truth Told Smack. Elspeth struck her again. "Enough." 0:45 Finished Marwen was completely dazed. "I only respect you because you raised three children for my brother. And this is how you behave? Bullying the Duchess of Duskmoor and trying to fool me. You even wanted me to persuade Cassian to cast her aside. If anyone should be thrown out, it's you and your idiot son." Hearing that, Elowen knew the plan she had worked so carefully on had succeeded. Elspeth glanced at her, a little awkward. "Shall we head back?" Elowen nodded obediently. They walked in silence.

The air between them felt strained. Elowen did not know how to begin. As they rounded the flower wall, a wheelchair stood steady in the shadows ahead. Cassian sat upright, clearly waiting. The moment she saw him, Elowen felt her chest loosen. Then it hit her. This spot was not far from the pavilion. Anyone with decent hearing could have caught what was said. Which meant he might have heard every word of her soft, pitiful act. Heat rushed to her face. "You came out here?" Elspeth asked. "I have something to discuss with you," Cassian said plainly. "I'll go on ahead," Elowen said at once.

Piers had been uncomfortable the second he saw Cassian. "I'll head back too." Without waiting, the two of them slipped away in opposite directions, almost fleeing. Cassian paused. Piers leaving is whatever. Why is Ella running? He did not call her back. After a moment, he decided it made no difference. "What did you want to say?" Elspeth asked. Cassian looked at her seriously. "You've heard that I've loved someone for years. Because of her. Fretused to marry." Elspeth huffed. "Of course I've heard. I always wondered who she was, the woman who had you so devoted.

But you wouldn't tell me a thing." 2:39 pm ppp. Chapter 166 Truth Told Finished "The woman I love is my wife, Elowen," Cassian said evenly. Elspeth froze. "You mean the Duchess? She's the one?" He nodded. "Yes." She stared at him. "Then why keep it secret?" "Because she is a woman. In this world, a woman's reputation is fragile. One careless rumor can ruin her. If I had let anything slip, gossip would have torn her apart. I would not let that happen." Elspeth slowly understood. "Now that you're married properly, you can finally say it." He gave a quiet sound of agreement.

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She still struggled to accept it. "You're the Duke of Duskmoor, His Majesty's only brother. If you wanted to marry someone, who would dare refuse? And you waited all those years." Cassian pressed his fingers to his brow. "She is much younger than I am." "Then you could have brought her home early," Elspeth said. Cassian gave a faint laugh. "Besides, she and Alaric grew up together. They were close in age and close in heart. I couldn't bring myself to come between them." "Then why did you marry her now?" "She went to His Majesty herself and asked to marry me." A small smile curved his lips.

Elspeth's expression grew complicated. "And she and Alaric..." "She doesn't love him now," Cassian said clearly. He paused, then his tone shifted. "There is something more important. In a few days, I will head north to meet Lieutenant Wrenner. It will be dangerous. Elowen will stay in Vanelle. Because of my position, she will face risks. I hope you can look after her." Elspeth sighed. "I feel like she must resent me." "She won't. She's always been broad minded." It sounded reassuring. Elspeth thought for a moment. "Then I should give her something to make it up to her. Jewelry? Paintings?"

Or maybe a manor." Cassian blinked. "One manor isn't enough? Then two. One in Vanelle, one in Rivenshire" He let out a low laugh. "Please don't scare her." "She's afraid of property?"

Chapter 166 Truth Told 010 Fivshed "That's not what I mean, Cassian said. "She's shy. Recently His Majesty gifted her a set of gilded gemstone regalia. She didn't dare accept it at first. Even after she did, she wouldn't wear it. Today at the betrothal banquet, I insisted before she agreed to put on a single hairpin. Elspeth remembered the gold hairpin at Elowen's temple and nodded slowly.

"So nothing too extravagant." 1.7K 3/3 W 2:39 pm P pp. Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 167 Learning Her Finished Elspeth glanced at Cassian and said. "Tell me something, do you actually know what your wife is into?" Cassian paused, caught slightly off guard, and only then realized he did not have an answer. In their day to day life. Elowen was always composed and easy to get along with, never asking him for anything. The one time she mentioned wanting something, it was just to grow a few things in the courtyard. That hardly counted.

The truth was, he did not really know her, or maybe she had never let him get close enough to see what mattered to her. The thought settled in, leaving a quiet, bitter weight he could not quite shake. Seeing him go quiet. Elspeth understood. "You two just got married. This is when you're supposed to be figuring each other out. Besides. I'm here. I'll be staying in Vanelle for a while, so I can spend time with her and see what she likes. Cassian looked up at her. "You and Marquess of Havenstead fought again?" Elspeth let out a short, cool laugh. "Fought? Who said we fought? We're doing great.

Couldn't be better. Respectful. considerate, the perfect couple. People in Rivenshire can't stop talking about us." Cassian said nothing. That settles it. It has to be a serious fight. There was a good chance she had even taken a swing at Marquess of Havenstead. Other people might not know, but he did. On the surface, Elspeth seemed distant and composed, but in reality, she had a temper and never hesitated to act on it. "Forget him," she said, waving it off. "We're talking about your wife." "She's young enough to be my daughter.

I always thought if I had one, I'd dress her in the finest gowns. pick out the prettiest pieces for her, spoil her properly. Instead, I ended up with two sons. But now, I've got Elowen. At the mention of Elowen, her expression softened with genuine affection. "That poor girl. No scheming, no guard up, just kind to a fault. She doesn't even try to defend herself, just takes everything on her shoulders. I misunderstood her earlier and almost gave her a hard time." A faint smile touched Cassian's lips. His wife was anything but naive. Elspeth continued, fully wrapped up in her own thoughts.

"Her mother passed from grief, didn't she? Then from now on, she's half mine. I'll make sure she's taken care of" Elsewhere, Elowen knew nothing about this. After parting ways with Piers, she headed back toward the hall to rejoin the banquet. Halfway there, a soft. overly sweet voice drifted through the corridor "Your Highness, wait up." 2:39 pm admin

Chapter 167 Learning Her 0140 Finished The sound made her skin crawl instantly. She recognized Daphine's voice right away, which meant Alaric was with her, and her good mood dropped on the spot. The voice came from the shorter path ahead, so Elowen turned the other way instead. A few extra steps were worth it if it meant not running into the two of them. After putting some distance between them, the voice finally faded. Elowen let out a quiet breath, but

thinking back to that tone, she still pulled a face. How did anyone even talk like that? Or was that what men liked? Cassian...

Does he like that too? Still thinking, she turned the corner and nearly walked straight into someone. She stopped short, and when she looked up and saw Alaric, her brows pulled together in irritation. She had not expected him to come this way after all, and the detour she had taken ended up meaning nothing. For a split second, something like relief flickered in Alaric's eyes, but it disappeared almost immediately. He stood there, frowning slightly, his tone deliberately cool. "What are you doing here?" Elowen answered evenly, "Her Majesty sent me an invitation.

As your aunt, I was expected to attend." "This is my engagement banquet," Alaric said, watching her closely. "You don't have anything else to say?" He searched her face, looking for even a hint of disappointment. There was none. "Congratulations," Elowen said, her tone polite but distant, without the slightest trace of emotion. Alaric's jaw tightened. "That's it?" Elowen thought for a second. "Then I hope everything goes well for you. A big family and all that." Alaric almost choked. He was getting engaged to someone else. Shouldn't she feel something?

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And she was standing there wishing him well? Before he could say anything else, a soft cry came from behind. "Ow!" Elowen turned to look. Daphne had fallen to the ground, one hand clutching her ankle as if she had twisted it rushing over She looked up at Alaric, eyes glossy, voice soft. "Your Highness, it really hurts Could you help me up?" Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 168 Same Trick She was still using that same overly sweet voice. Elowen felt goosebumps rise again. Finished As for Alaric, he had no real interest in dealing with Daphne.

These past few days, the thought of his engagement and the upcoming wedding had been putting him on edge. Something about it felt off, though he could not explain why. The woman meant to stand beside him as Crown Princess did not feel like it should be Daphne. So he had been distant. But in this moment, he stepped forward anyway. Right in front of Elowen, he bent down, his voice noticeably softer. "How did you manage that? Does it hurt bad?" Elowen paused. She had never seen him like this. So this was what he liked. It did not stir anything in her. She moved to walk past them.

"Your Grace," Daphne called, leaning into Alaric, looking fragile and pitiful. "Could you go get a physician for me? I'm hurt, and His Highness needs to stay with me. You're the only one free right now. You wouldn't just leave me like this, would you?" Elowen did not slow down. Daphne bit her lip slightly and raised her voice just enough. "Are you upset with me? Because I'm the one standing beside him now? Because I took the place that was supposed to be yours?" Elowen stopped. She turned back, a faint frown forming. In her previous life, this had been Daphne's go to move.

After entering the Crown Prince's Wing as a secondary consort, she did this all the time. Whenever she and Elowen were together, something would happen. A fall, a burn, something minor but noticeable. Then she would say in that soft voice, "It wasn't Her Highness's fault. Please don't blame her. I'm fine." And just like that, the blame would shift. Alaric would accuse Elowen of being narrow minded, unable to tolerate another woman. Every time, Daphne would step in, acting kind, asking Elowen to go get a physician. If Elowen tried to explain, Alaric would go cold.

"You caused this, and you won't even call for a physician?" 173 2:39 pm admin

Chapter 168 Same Trick So she went. Flushed And when she tried to leave afterward, he would stop her. "You think you can just walk off? Stay." She would stand there, watching Daphne lean into him while he spoke gently, and it felt like something was cutting into her over and over again. Every breath hurt. Right now, a flash of satisfaction slipped across Daphne's face. "Where are your attendants?" Elowen asked. She had already noticed neither of them had anyone nearby. Daphne answered softly, "It's his engagement day. There are guests everywhere, everyone's busy.

I wouldn't ask you if I had another choice. You're not going to refuse, are you?" Elowen gave a small nod. "So there's no one with you." Then she smiled, the kind of smile that clearly meant something. The moment Daphne saw that smile, something in her chest tightened. She had seen it before. Back when Hale family still stood, when Elowen was the treasured daughter of the household and did whatever she pleased, Daphne used to follow behind her. Every time Elowen wore that expression, something was about to happen. When she was nine, a boy from a neighboring house had started bothering her.

He would find chances to get her alone, touching her in ways that made her uncomfortable. But he always brought sweets, things her parents never bought for her. She liked them, so she said nothing. Afterward, he would tell her, "Don't tell anyone. This is our secret. If you do, I won't bring you anything next time. So she kept quiet. Until one day, Elowen noticed marks near her collar and pressed her until she told the truth. Elowen had gone straight to that house. She smiled. Then had him beaten so badly he stayed in bed for half a month. People said he was never the same after.

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That same smile was on her face now. Daphne's heart started pounding. Something felt very wrong. She was about to speak. Elowen suddenly lifted her foot and kicked her straight in the ankle. Daphne froze for a second, then cried out, "Your Grace, I'm already hurt. Why would you do that?" 2:39 pm Chapter 168 Same Trick Finished She bit her lip, eyes filling with tears, and looked at Alaric. "Please don't be upset with her, Your Highness. This must be my fault. If she needs to take it out on me to feel better, that's fine.

I deserve it." 1.7K 。 2:39 pm P PP Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 169 Public Reckoning The look on Daphne's face was painfully familiar. Finished Elowen let out a cold laugh. "That's interesting. You twisted your left ankle just now. I kicked your right one. So why are you crying?" Daphne's sob caught in her throat. "I.. I did twist my left ankle, but Your Grace kicked so hard my right one hurts too." "So hard?" Elowen lifted a brow. She stepped forward and drove her foot straight into Daphne's ankle again. Her knee had stopped aching. She could put real force behind it now.

This time she did not hold back. Daphne froze for half a second, then shrieked. Tears flooded her eyes instantly. That did it. Elowen could tell this time the pain was real. Alaric frowned, though the corner of his mouth curved up in spite of himself. "What exactly are you doing?" He had known it. Elowen still cared. The second he helped Daphne up gently, Elowen lost control. She could not hide it anymore. She just lashed out, didn't she? Still, Alaric was not about to let her off easy. He put on a stern look. "You're always picking on Daphne.

Can't you stand her?" "Not just her, Elowen said evenly. Her gaze shifted to him. "I can't stand you either." Before he could react, she swung her leg and kicked him square in the knee. Harder than she had kicked Daphne. Even so, it was nothing compared to the injury she had taken for

him years ago. After that incident, whether in the past life she remembered or this one, he had never shown a shred of gratitude. Instead, he kept showing up just to make her sick. And today, with no attendants around, he still had to provoke her. What did he expect?

She was not some helpless girl who only knew how to swallow insults. Back then she had no one backing her up. This time was different. "Elowen!" admin

Chapter 169 Public Reckoning Finished Alaric sucked in a breath through his teeth, fury flashing across his face. He forgot all about formalities. "You dare lay a hand on me?" Elowen did not look the least bit shaken. "So what if I did? Go ahead and complain. I won't admit to anything. Let's see who believes you." She felt light and satisfied as she turned to leave. "Stop right there!" Alaric barked. Ignoring the sharp pain in his knee, he pushed himself up and lunged for her arm. But after what happened at the garrison, Elowen had been on guard the whole time.

The second he reached for her, she pivoted sideways and slipped out of his grasp. He grabbed nothing but air. Off balance, he crashed down onto both knees with a heavy thud. A sharp bolt of pain shot up his leg, twisting his handsome features. Elowen looked back and burst out laughing. "Serves you right." Then suddenly she felt something strange. On instinct, she looked up. Not far away, beneath a canopy of tangled garden branches, Cassian sat alone in his wheelchair. The late sun slanted across him.

He watched them with an unreadable calm, almost amused, as if he had front-row seats to a very entertaining show. The laughter died on her lips. Her stomach dropped. She lowered her gaze at once, not daring to meet his eyes. When she was bullied and fought back, Cassian would stand behind her. That did not mean she could go around starting fights. And no matter what,

Alaric was still his nephew. He must have seen that kick. He probably thought she was wild and unreasonable. After all, men preferred gentle, sweet women.

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Alaric forced himself upright and offered a stiff bow in Cassian's direction. "Uncle" Daphne was still sitting on the ground, her voice trembling, "Your Grace, forgive me. Her kick hurt so badly I can't stand. I'm afraid I cannot greet you properly" Cassian said nothing. Daphne swallowed and pressed on, "She kicked His Highness as well." A quiet hum left Cassian's throat. "I saw." (Chapter 169 Public Reckoning Finished Daphne hurried to add. "I don't know why she suddenly acted like that.

Perhaps because His Highness and I are now betrothed, and she-" "If I could stand." Cassian cut in coolly. "I would have given you both a couple of kicks myself." Silence fell. Daphne stared at him. Alaric stared at him. Elowen looked up in shock. "Come on." Cassian said. "Ella, we're going home." His tone softened when he spoke to her, so gentle it felt almost unfamiliar. Elowen walked over obediently and followed him. Alaric and Daphne were left standing there, stunned. Alaric could not wrap his mind around it. What exactly does Elowen do to have Cassian wrapped around her finger like this?

1.7K 2:39 pm ppp. Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 170 Shifting Tides And that name. Ella... So intimate. He used to be the only one who called her that. "Your Highness..." Daphne's voice turned soft and fragile, hoping to stir his sympathy. Alaric snapped back to reality. His gaze was icy. "Don't pull something like that again." She blinked. He turned and walked away without another word. Daphne remained seated, fists clenched tight. Elowen... It is all Elowen's fault. Years ago, when Elowen beat up the boy next door, the entire Hale family heard about it.

Finished Clement went straight to the palace to see Theodric. That very day, the neighbor's whole family was reassigned and sent out of Vanelle overnight. Meanwhile, Elowen's parents and brother praised her decisiveness. They said she was worthy of Hale family's name and rewarded her with a large box of honey. Daphne had watched in envy, certain she would be praised the same way. Instead, when she returned home, she was met with furious scolding. Her mother accused her of being shameless, of risking her reputation for the sake of candy.

Her father said she had disgraced the Garrett family and humiliated him in front of Clement. Daphne had been hurt and furious. She regretted ever telling Elowen about it. She blamed her for making it public. Now her resentment only grew. Why did every good thing, every good person, revolve around Elowen? Was she not worthy too? Her nails dug into her palms as she swore silently that one day she would take everything Elowen had. On the carriage ride back to Duskmoor Manor, Elowen sat stillly, sneaking glances at Cassian from the corner of her eye.

She tried to read his mood, unsure whether she should speak first. "Did it hurt?" Cassian asked suddenly. She jumped. "I didn't mean to. Daphne faked that fall and tried to make me fetch a physician for her. She kept saying things that were just... disgusting. I lost my temper." She lowered her head. "I know I was wrong. Please don't be upset. I won't do that again." 1/3 admin

Chapter 170 Shifting Tides Finished Cassian exhaled quietly. "Ella, I'm not upset. I'm asking whether kicking them hurt your foot." She stared at him. He's not blaming me. He's worried about me? She turned toward him. "You're really not angry?" One brow lifted. "Why would I be?" "Because..." She faltered. "Because you pretended to be pitiful in front of Aunt, or because you kicked Daphne and His Highness?" he supplied calmly. Color rose to her cheeks. She

lowered her gaze. "I really am sorry." "You don't need to apologize." Cassian's brows drew together faintly. "Ella, I'm not angry.

"I think you handled it well." She, blinked. He thought she handled it well? That was unexpected.

"Ella." After a brief silence, he called her name again. "Yes?" "I leave the day after tomorrow."

She looked at him. "To meet Lieutenant Wrenner?" Yes. He nodded. "I've asked Aunt to look after you. If anything happens in Vanelle that you can't handle. go to her." Elowen hesitated.

"The Marchioness of Havenstead?" A faint smile curved his lips. "She's bold enough to scold His Majesty to his face. With her behind you. you'll be just fine in Vanelle." Elowen felt embarrassed.

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She had no intention of throwing her weight around. Today had been self-defense, nothing more.

She pressed her lips together, wanting to ask how long he would be gone. But Cassian spoke

first. "Is there anything you want? I'll bring it back for you." She shook her head gently. "No. I

don't need anything." He had already treated her more kindly than she could have expected. If

she kept asking for things, one day he might grow tired of her. For some reason, that answer

made him frown slightly. 2:39 pm ppp. Chapter 170 Shifting Tides Finished She hurried to add.

"Thank you for thinking of me.

Truly. But Duskmoor Manor lacks nothing. I'm not missing anything either." He gave a quiet

hum in response. His mood, however, did not seem to improve. Elowen felt puzzled. Is he

unhappy? She replayed the conversation in her head. She had not said anything wrong. Men

were impossible to read. For the rest of the ride, neither of them spoke much. That night, as

usual, she waited until Cassian returned before getting into bed. While he washed up, she lay

there alone, her heart thudding uneasily in her chest. 1.7K B 3r3 2:39 pm admin

