

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 191 Twenty Miles Out Finished Daphne's eyes flicked to the side. Then she stood up and called out brightly, "His Highness is putting that wild horse down and taking the Duchess with him. We can't just sit here and ignore it. Come on. Let's go watch." There was one thing Daphne would never tell a soul. Back then, that horse had indeed been kept at a country estate by Clement, waiting for Elowen's leg to recover before sending it back to her. But while no one was paying attention, Daphne had secretly sold the horse to a dealer.

That was why Elowen had been separated from it for so many years. Every time Daphne pretended to care and went to comfort her, watching Elowen cry over the lost horse, she had felt a thrill of satisfaction. And now, after such a long separation, Elowen had finally reunited with the horse. How long had it even been? And now she was about to watch it get killed with her own eyes. Daphne could hardly contain her curiosity. She wanted to see it clearly, to take in every second of it. Twenty miles outside Vanelle, inside the carriage, Cassian sat with a letter in his hand.

The contents were brief, yet he had read it again and again the entire way here. The edges were nearly worn from how long he had been holding it. Across from him. Warren hesitated at first, but curiosity finally got the better of him. "Your Grace, that letter..." "It's from my wife," Cassian said calmly. He had clearly been waiting for the question. His tone was steady, but the curve at the corner of his mouth. was unmistakable. "She asked whether I was cold. Whether I brought enough clothes." Warren blinked. Looks like he is showing off.

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After a moment, he asked, "I heard the Duchess of Duskmoor is General Hale's daughter?"

Cassian's voice carried a trace of amusement. "Yes. His Majesty held the betrothal banquet for her. At the banquet, she personally asked His Majesty to grant the marriage. She insisted on marrying me. That settles it. He's absolutely showing off. Warren suddenly understood why Cassian had been in such a rush, pushing through fatigue without resting, unwilling to delay even a moment on the way back to Vanelle. It was because of the Duchess. 7883 2:42 pm ppp.

Chapter 191 Twenty Miles Out Finished She needed to stall. Elowen bit her lip and softened her voice. "I won't send word. I promise no one will pursue what happened today. Just let me go. And let Ember go." Alaric suddenly smiled and bent down, gripping her chin. "Do you really think that's possible?" When she met his mocking gaze, Elowen felt her stomach drop. "I've already come this far," Alaric said slowly, clearly. "I won't stop halfway. That horse dies today. And you will watch." Despair closed in around her. Her throat swelled painfully. She began coughing uncontrollably.

The blood she had just swallowed surged back up. It spilled onto the ground in a stark, vivid stain. 1.7K 1 3/3 2:42 pm ppp. admin

Chapter 192 Root Of Pain Suddenly, Elowen remembered. In her previous life, during the third year after she married into the Crown Prince's Wing, she had coughed blood often as well. It was only now she realized. It was not because she had forced her way into the Crown Prince's Wing that Alaric humiliated her endlessly. 0: Finished Even when she stayed far away from him, even when she married someone else, he still refused to let her ust like now. The root of her suffering had never been the marriage. It had always been Alaric. They had grown up together. That was true.

She had once saved his life. That was also true. But this world did not always repay kindness with kindness. More often, it returned kindness with resentment. Alaric was exactly that kind of person. She had done nothing wrong. Yet he would not leave her alone. Get up." His voice cut sharply into her ears. Elowen looked up. The Alaric of this life and the last overlapped in her vision. A wave of disgust surged through her. Looking at him, she felt an overwhelming urge to vomit. Seeing her still seated on the ground, Alaric frowned. He grabbed her forearm and yanked her up roughly.

"Your Grace?" Just as she was forced to her feet, swaying unsteadily, she heard a familiar male voice. She turned. A young man in a fitted riding robe strode toward them, brows drawn tight. "Your Highness, what are you doing? How can you drag the Duchess like this?" It was Kaelan. Elowen's eyes stung. But she did not feel much hope. Kaelan would protect her. But in front of Alaric, Kaelan could not truly shield her. You know I'm the Crown Prince," Alaric said coldly. "What I do is not something I need to explain to you" He tried to drag Elowen away again. 1/3 2:42 pmp pp.

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Chapter 192 Root Of Pain 7400 eFinished "Stop. Kaelan stepped forward and blocked his path. Alaric's patience thinned. "Move." Kaelan did not step back. His posture was upright, neither arrogant nor submissive. "If Your Highness wishes to leave, by all means. But the Duchess stays." Not long ago, Kaelan had finally allowed himself to fall for someone, only to discover she was his elder by marriage, and not just slightly. His heart had taken the blow. He even stopped going to the Academy, staying home to study for the examinations instead. His mother was a princess by birth.

He carried royal blood. That was why he was eligible to join the hunt. He had not planned to attend this year. But his mother had insisted that if he kept locking himself in to study, he would turn into a bookish fool. So he came. He had not approached Elowen. Seeing her well had been enough. Earlier, while hunting with Theodric, his palm had been cut by an arrowhead. He had returned to have it wrapped. He had never expected to see this. Alaric was furious. Elowen was disheveled, injured, blood still at her lips. Kaelan was suddenly grateful he had come. He said firmly.

"This is the Duchess of Duskmoor. She is also Your Highness's aunt by marriage. In broad daylight, before so many eyes, dragging her like this violates both decorum and law." "Decorum. Law." Alaric let out a short, amused laugh. Kaelan's handsome face remained stern. "His Majesty is not far. The hunt will end soon. Duke of Duskmoor is likely already on the road back to Vanelle. If they see Your Highness treating the Duchess this way, they will not overlook it." Alaric sneered. "I'm not mistreating my aunt. I'm doing this for her own good." "What do you mean?" Kaelan frowned.

"That blood-sweating horse is violent. It nearly hurt Miss Garrett earlier. Keeping it only risks more injuries. He shot Elowen a glance. "Besides, my aunt and Miss Garrett argued over it just now. They made a scene and even smashed a cup. Clearly that horse brings trouble. It's better to deal with it quickly" Elowen's face was pale. "Deal with it?" Kaelan repeated slowly. "What does that mean?" Alaric spoke clearly. "I'm going to kill it." 213 2:42 pm ppp. Chapter 192 Root Of Pain Kaelan froze. Alaric gestured to the attendants.

"Bring Kaelan along as well." Several men stepped forward and seized Kaelan without explanation. He struggled, but it was useless. He spent too much time reading. He was not strong

enough. "Your Highness-" Kaelan began through clenched teeth. Alaric cut him off. "I know you have... unusual feelings for my aunt." The last words were bitten out. Kaelan's face changed instantly. Finished Alaric said coldly, "Since you can't bear to see her upset watching the horse die, then you can stand beside her. Watch together." 1.7K 3/3 2:42pm admin

Chapter 193: Frenzy

The way things unfolded did not surpass Elowen's expectations. Once Alan spiraled, there was no stopping him. She and Kaelan together were nowhere near capable of restraining him. Her chest burned with urgency as her mind raced to find a solution. "Your Highness," Kaelan said, his brows furrowed, "that horse isn't wild. It only answers to Her Grace, the Duchess of Duskmoon. If it stays by her side, nothing will happen." Alaric seemed unfazed, as if he hadn't heard a word.

"Even if Your Highness insists on putting the horse down," E. Radian interjected, "why must it be done in front of Her Grace? It can be handled inside the stables." Aware of his disadvantage, Kaelan softened his tone, almost negotiating. "Her Grace is injured. A payuhan should be summoned to tend the wound; otherwise, it will scar. And if His Grace returns and sees the injury, and learns what happened today at the hunting grounds..." Alaric ruthlessly cut him off.

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"Do you think he can remove me from the Crown Prince's Wing?" Kaelan froze as Alaric let out a mocking laugh. "He won't. And he doesn't dare." Out of respect for Theodric, Alaric addressed Cassian as uncle. Over the years, Cassian, relying on Theodric's favor, had not hesitated to discipline him. In his youth, Cassian had been strict with him. Especially after marrying Elowen,

Cassian had repeatedly put him in his place. But he was the Crown Prince. How long was he supposed to endure it? "Your Highness, please," Kaelan tried once more.

Alan's patience wore thin. "Guards, gag him." The servants hesitated; Kaelan's mother was a princess, and his grandfather was a prince of the realm. One servant cautiously ventured, "Your Highness, perhaps this is not appropriate..." A sharp crack echoed as Alaric struck him across the face. The servant fell silent. Alaric pointed to another. "You." With that warning, the second servant dared not object. He approached, shot Kaelan an apologetic look, and forcefully gagged him with a cloth.

Kaelan could only struggle, his protests muffled. "Your Highness! Your Highness!" The servant sent to lead Ember returned disheveled, with dirt and straw on his clothes. "That horse can't be controlled. Anyone who approaches gets kicked!" Elowen raised her eyes slowly. Alaric frowned, glanced at the servant, then turned back, a faint smile forming. "Didn't you say that horse could read people?" Elowen froze, recalling her words to Alaric when they were young.

The first time Alaric met Ember, he had liked the horse but was too nervous to approach. She had told him Ember was clever and understood words, assuring him that if she declared him her friend, it would behave. She hadn't expected him to remember. Now he smiled faintly, ready to issue another order. "Back then..." Elowen's voice was hoarse. Alaric paused, his gaze on her. "Yes?" Her voice trembled visibly. "You rode Ember. You fed it carrots. It liked you." "Liked me?" Mockery flashed in his eyes. "No. It liked me once." He emphasized the last words, staring at her. "Isn't that right, Aunt?" Elowen froze, realizing he meant she had once liked him too.

As Alaric turned to command the servant once more, Elowen grabbed his arm. "If you hate me, if you resent me, then take it out on me. Do whatever you want to me. I won't flinch." Alaric

looked at her, smiling. "What are you saying, Aunt? Why would I hit you or scold you? I already told you. Killing that horse is for your own good." Once, his smile had warmed her, but now it chilled her to the bone. He was utterly mad.

Alaric turned to the servant. "Go. Tell that horse its owner wants to see it. I'll come along nicely." The servant hesitated. "Go!" Alaric commanded sharply. The servant ran. Elowen stood motionless, her eyes blazing, her limbs cold. At Alaric's order, a heavy wooden frame was brought into the clearing. Elowen turned to look, and Alaric stood beside her, both gazing at the frame. In a low, intimate tone, Alaric began speaking, each word cutting deeper than the last, resembling a lover's whisper from afar.

Chapter 194 Blade Words Finished "When they bring Ember here," Alaric said lightly, "they'll tie it to that frame. It's heavy. It won't break free." He glanced sideways at her. "And you're in my hands. Once it sees you, it won't struggle. It'll think you want to play." He gave a faint laugh. "Horses aren't exactly bright." Elowen's chest heaved with rage and anguish. She bit down hard on her lip until a thick metallic taste filled her mouth. Alaric continued calmly, "Of course, it will hurt. The first cut, it'll scream. But it won't get away. It'll just take the second cut.

Then the third." His tone stayed steady. "I'll make sure it bleeds out to the very last drop."

"Don't..." Elowen's face twisted with unbearable pain as she forced the word out. "What did you say?" Alaric asked mildly. "I didn't catch that." "I said, don't kill it." She closed her eyes. A tear slipped down. Alaric watched that tear closely. His heartbeat quickened, excitement tingling in his fingertips. 'Beg me,' he said. Elowen froze. Beside them, Kaelan struggled violently, making muffled sounds that clearly meant no. She did not want to. But the sound of hooves rang out, light and eager.

From far to near. The servant was leading Ember over. The horse believed it was finally going to see its beloved owner. It had no idea what awaited. Alaric kindly reminded her, "Time's running short." Elowen fell into utter despair. No one would come to help her save Ember. Compared to pride and dignity, survival mattered more. Not just her survival. Ember's too. Her parents were gone. Her brother was gone. Ember was all she had left. She could not endure losing anything else. It was just begging. Elowen drew in a breath, lowered her eyes painfully, her voice hoarse.

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"I'm begging you Let Ember go. Don't kill it." Alaric replied, "I don't feel your sincerity, Aunt."

173 2:42 pm ppp. Chapter 194 Blade Words Finished Elowen's face was pale. She looked at him.

"What do you want me to do?" Alaric smiled slightly. "Get down and beg properly." Elowen froze completely. Her pupils widened as she stared at him in disbelief. "Hm?" Inside, Alaric was wildly unhinged. On the outside, he appeared remarkably calm, even lifting a brow with a faint smile. "Did you not hear me?" Her lips moved slightly.

He seemed almost pleased to repeat it, enunciating clearly, "If you want that horse to live, get down and beg me." For a brief moment, Elowen seemed to lose focus. Kaelan kept shaking his head frantically, but several servants held him down. His eyes were red with urgency. "Or."

Alaric looked at her for a long moment, then changed direction. "You don't have to get down."

Elowen suddenly lifted her gaze and met his dark expression. She had once been captivated by that handsome face. Now only disgust remained. She turned her eyes away at once. That only irritated him further.

He grabbed her chin, forcing her to look at him again. He stared at her fiercely, madness swirling in his eyes. "Later, you'll go tell His Majesty you regret it. You don't want to marry Cassian.

You'll trade every military honor your father and brothers earned, everything Hale family has

accomplished, for a new decree." He paused briefly on his own words. Elowen's gaze remained emotionless. He did not mind. He licked his lips slightly. "Then you'll say you want to marry into the Crown Prince's Wing and become Crown Princess." Elowen stiffened sharply. His fingers trembled against her jaw.

He noticed and released her, but kept watching her face closely "Well?" Red marks had formed on her cheeks where he had gripped her. She faced him in silence for several moments. Alaric grew impatient. Then suddenly, Elowen let out a faint laugh. Alaric stiffened, his heart tightening. He frowned. "What are you laughing at?" She said nothing. Slowly, she let the trace of a smile disappear. 2:43 pm Chapter 194 Blade Words Finished "And?" he pressed, tension rising in his voice. Elowen interrupted him instead. "If I do as you say, will you keep your word?" Alaric did not respond immediately.

Her voice was light. "If I get down and beg, you let Ember live." His brow furrowed even deeper. He snapped, "Marrying into the Crown Prince's Wing is beneath you?" Elowen's tone was steady. "Daphne is already meant to be Crown Princess. Do you expect me to step in as his mistress?" She held his gaze. "The daughters of Hale do not live in another woman's shadow."

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Chapter 195 For Ember Finished Even if she had entered the Crown Prince's household without a title, she would have been nothing more than a kept woman. Elowen did not say it aloud. She had already lived through being tied to the Crown Prince once before. That life had been bleak, humiliating, suffocating. "I can give her up..." Alaric meant to say he could give up Daphne. But before he could finish, Elowen stepped back on her own, deliberately putting space between them. His words stalled. She lowered her gaze. Her face was pale, expressionless.

Then, without hesitation, she lowered herself to the ground before him. Her knees struck the gravel scattered across the earth. The impact hurt, but not as sharply as she had expected. It doesn't hurt as much anymore. That's because of Cassian. He had brought Hugh to treat her knee properly. After weeks of careful recovery, it had improved significantly. Another thought surfaced. If word spreads that I did this, will it shame Duskmoor Manor? That was the only thing that made her feel guilty. But for Ember, she could not think about that now. "Oh my- A shocked voice sounded behind her.

Daphne had arrived with several people who had followed to watch. They had walked straight into the sight of Elowen lowering herself before Alaric. Daphne covered her mouth. "Your Grace, why would you do that? Over a horse?" Someone whispered, "The Duchess of Duskmoor truly values loyalty... Daphne shot that person a look. "Loyalty? She is the Duchess of Duskmoor. She's not some nameless commoner. Dropping to the ground like that in front of everyone isn't just embarrassing for her. It reflects on Duskmoor Manor as well." She sniffed softly.

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"When Duke of Duskmoor returns, I doubt he'll be pleased. Who would have thought he'd marry someone like this." Elowen ignored the chatter and ridicule behind her. She lifted her face and looked at Alaric. Her expression was nearly numb. 2:43 pm Chapter 195 For Ember "Your Highness, I'm asking you. Please let my horse go." ∴. Finished Her hair fell across the corner of her eye, stinging. She blinked, and moisture gathered slowly, reddening her gaze. "I can't lose Ember." The blood on her face had dried. The corner of her mouth pulled slightly as she forced herself to speak.

"Please, Your Highness. Let her live." Ember was her favorite. The little mare loved carrots. She was picky. If they were not fresh, she would refuse them. Elowen had hated carrots as a child. No matter how her mother tried to coax her, she would secretly toss them away or pretend to be pitiful to avoid eating them. After Ember came into her life, she slowly started eating them. Even raw ones. Many times she would hold a small carrot in her left hand, nibbling it herself, while holding a larger one in her right hand to Ember's mouth. When they were full, she would mount up and ride out.

They raced. They always came in first. Now Elowen bent forward without hesitation and pressed her forehead against the cold, hard ground. Alaric looked down at her from above. Suddenly, he remembered the imperial betrothal banquet months ago. When Theodric had asked, "Who do you wish to marry? Speak freely." She had lowered herself just like this then, steady and resolute. She had said, "I grew up alongside His Highness, and I respect him. I have never had improper feelings toward him." She had also said, "I have long cared for Duke of Duskmoor.

If I may marry him, I will have no regrets in this life. Alaric's brows drew together tightly. Irritation churned inside him. She was determined. Back then she had refused him outright and claimed she cared for Cassian. Now she was the same. He had already made such a large concession. "Elowen." He ground out her name. She remained motionless. "If you care so much about that horse," he said slowly. 213 2:43 pm ppp Chapter 195 For Ember Finisher He crouched down in front of her, his voice low and cruel. "Then stay here and watch her die in front of you. The words struck her like a sudden blow.

Elowen jerked her head up. "You promised. You said if I asked you-" "Yes," Alaric replied, staring at her. "I said that. I changed my mind." "No... you can't..." She struggled forward and

grabbed his arm. "Guards!" Alaric turned sharply. "Tie that horse. Kill it." Cassian entered Vanelle from the north. The hunting grounds stretched into the northern hills. The main entrance lay to the south, but he was in a hurry and did not circle around. He came straight in from the northern side. Theodric was leading a group through the forest and had just sighted a deer.

As he drew the bowstring, he caught sight of the man in the wheelchair. He froze briefly, then broke into a broad smile. "You're back. Finally." He released the tension on the bow and handed it to Quin before striding forward. ◦ 1.7K M 375 2:43 pm admin

Chapter 196 The Return Bran stopped and bowed. "Your Majesty." Finished Cassian inclined his head. "Your Majesty. Lieutenant Wrenner has returned safely. He is in the carriage nearby."

Theodric nodded, though his attention was not fully on that matter at the moment. He circled Cassian once, studying him carefully. "You're not hurt?" Cassian smiled faintly. "Your Majesty told me to return safely. I wouldn't dare do otherwise." Theodric laughed. "Good. At least you listen." He looked him over again, and concern showed in his eyes.

"You've grown thinner." "I'll gain it back," Cassian replied calmly. "A few good meals will fix that." Theodric nodded. "I've heard your wife cooks exceptionally well." Then he gestured.

"Come. Hunt with me for a while. It's been too long." Cassian shook his head gently. "Another day. I don't have the time today." "Oh?" "It's been some time since I've seen her," Cassian said evenly. "She must be waiting." Theodric laughed aloud. "If you ask me, it isn't that she misses you. It's that you miss her." Cassian only smiled. "Well then," Theodric said heartily, waving a hand.

"I usually hunt for two full hours every year. No exceptions. But today I'll make an exception. You're my only brother." "You are also the only brother I respect, Your Majesty," Cassian

replied. Quin watched the exchange with a pleased smile. "Give the order. We're heading back," Theodric commanded. Quin bowed and went to relay the message. Theodric dismissed Bran and personally took hold of the wheelchair, pushing Cassian along the path. On the way, knowing Cassian was eager to return, he said, "Your wife caused quite a stir today" Cassian's attention sharpened.

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"What happened?" "Galen brought out a Tynelle bloodline stallion. Fierce creature. No one could ride it. Even the seasoned trainers couldn't manage it properly, Galen insisted his daughter could. She mounted it, yes, but was nearly thrown to her death." 2:43 pm PPP. Chapter 196 The Return Cassian listened silently 0:4 Finisher The interesting part Theodric continued, "was that when your wife approached, the horse calmed immediately it stood there as docile as anything. It even lowered itself before her. Turns out she raised it as a child. It had been lost.

Today they found each other again." Cassian remembered that Elowen had always been skilled on horseback as a child. He suddenly understood. So riding that is what she loves. "She must have been happy," he said quietly. "Of course. Theodric replied. "Making such a display before everyone." "That's not what I mean," Cassian said, shaking his head slightly. "Hale family fell. She is the only one left. Finding the horse she raised as a child... that must be one of the few pieces of her past she still has. So she must have been happy." After a pause, he lifted his gaze.

"Your Majesty, may I ask a favor?" Theodric smiled knowingly. "You want that horse given to her." "Yes" Theodric laughed. "You didn't need to ask. I already planned to gift it to her."

Cassian's expression warmed. "Your Majesty is generous." Noticing hunters carrying game in the distance, Cassian asked casually, "How did Alaric fare today? What did he bring down?" In past

years, Alaric's riding and archery had been mediocre. He often relied on attendants to pad his tally. "He didn't attend." Theodric replied. Cassian paused.

"He said Miss Garrett was frightened and stayed to accompany her." "Caelan surprised me," Theodric continued, shifting the topic. He usually keeps a low profile, but today he brought down quite a few solid catches. Not small game either. Theodric moved on to other matters as he spoke. Caelan was the sixth prince of Avenlor, sixteen this year, born to Eliya. Cassian remembered him as a polite and well-mannered boy. His essays were thoughtful, not overly ornate in language, yet often carrying sharp and original insight.

In Cassian's memory, Caelan had always seemed thin and unassuming, easy to overlook in a crowd. Today, however, he had drawn attention during the hunt. 2/3 2:43 pm Chapter 196 The Return Still, the one Cassian truly cared about was Alaric. 1.7K 3/3 a admin

Chapter 197 Shattered Reins Finished Theodric had said Cassian was not there. Elowen's knee had not fully healed. Naturally, she would not be attending the hunt. But a restless unease had been surging in Cassian's chest. He was afraid she would be mistreated. Especially by Alaric. "Your Majesty, ride faster," Cassian had urged. Back at the hunting grounds, a stable hand led Ember toward the wooden frame nearby. Ember walked obediently, offering no resistance, only glancing from time to time in Elowen's direction. Seeing her down on the ground, Ember looked confused.

Another servant, following Alaric's instructions, selected a sharp blade. Daphne put on a delicate, concerned tone. "Your Grace, it's only a horse. If you like one, you can choose another from the stables. Since this was His Highness's decision, there must be a reason behind it." "Be quiet."

Alaric barked suddenly. Daphne froze, stunned and wronged. Why is he snapping at me? But she

did not dare anger him further and reluctantly fell silent. That split second of distraction was enough. Elowen seized it. She shot to her feet. Alaric was still crouched in front of her.

She lunged forward, shoved both hands against his shoulders, and forced him flat onto the ground. She straddled his chest and clamped her fingers around his throat. "Let Ember go."

Alaric was startled for a moment, then laughed. "Elowen, you really are the same as when you were a kid. You throw hands the second you're upset." "Stop talking. Her eyes were bloodshot. Her grip tightened. "Let her go. Or I will..." The threat died in her throat. "Or you'll what?"

Alaric finished lazily. "Strangle me? Over a horse? You'd kill the heir of the realm?" Her heart pounded wildly. Her hands trembled.

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If she had nothing tying her down, if she stood alone in the world, maybe she would have done it. At worst, she would die. And after death, perhaps she would see her father again. Her brother. Her mother. But Cassian would be implicated. Tears rolled down her cheeks, large and uncontrollable. Chapter 197 Shattered Reins 0 Finished Alaric lay beneath her, watching. There was a twisted fascination in his gaze, a satisfaction even he could not quite explain. Elowen did not release him. She inhaled deeply, then turned toward Ember and shouted with every ounce of strength she had, "Ember! Run!

Go as far as you can!" Her voice rang bright and clear across the entire field. Everyone heard it. Ember heard it too. The mare tossed its head and reared sharply. The servant holding the reins had felt no resistance before, but suddenly a violent force wrenched against his grip. The rough leather tore through his palms, burning the skin raw. He shouted in pain and instinctively released it. Ember's hooves struck the ground hard, its muscles surging with raw power. The servant staggered backward, fear flashing across his face.

Through her tears, Elowen saw what was happening and felt the faintest flicker of relief. Then Ember turned its head back toward her. It was worried. Elowen forced a pale smile. "I'm fine. You just-" Before she could finish, a scream tore through the air, the unmistakable scream of a horse. Elowen's eyes widened. She had relaxed too soon. In the chaos, she had failed to notice another servant moving closer. Taking advantage of the confusion, he lifted the slaughter blade and drove it straight into the most vulnerable part of Ember's neck. Gasps and shrieks erupted from the crowd.

Some of the more timid onlookers screamed outright. Elowen was still sitting atop Alaric, completely frozen. The servant paused only a heartbeat before wrenching the blade free. Blood surged out in a violent spray, drenching him from head to toe in bright red. His hair, his face, all streaked with steaming blood, he turned toward Alaric, voice shaking with excitement. "Your Highness! It's done!" "See that, Aunt?" Alaric remained sprawled on the ground, grinning smugly at Elowen, "That's authority." But Elowen heard nothing. She stared at Ember. For a long stretch of time, she could not react.

Until Ember's strength finally gave out. Ember collapsed heavily to the ground, yet stubbornly lifted its head one last time, looking in Elowen's direction. Its eyes were clear. Elowen suddenly found it hard to breathe, as if her heart had been crushed. Alaric frowned, irritated by her expression. He reached to grab her wrist. "What's with that face? You should have agreed back then to-" Agree to enter the Crown Prince's Wing. Before he could finish, Elowen abruptly rose. As she stood, her right foot came down hard on his fingers.

Pain twisted Alaric's features. "Stop!" he shouted. But Elowen no longer cared. She stumbled toward Ember. The mare lay in a spreading pool of blood. She struggled to lift her eyes toward Elowen and let out a faint sound. It was almost like a soft cry. Almost like reassurance. 合 1.7K admin

Chapter 198 The Last Run "Doctor! Get a doctor!" Elowen's voice broke as she cried out. Only Mira answered and ran. Everyone else stood frozen, watching her collapse in grief. Elowen sat beside Ember. She wanted to gather her into her arms, but the wound was too severe. She was afraid of hurting her further. Tears fell without end. "Ember, don't be scared. I... I..." She wanted to say, "I'll save you." But she knew. It was too late. Ember, however, seemed strangely calm.

She nudged herself closer and gently rested her head against Elowen's leg, gazing at her as though trying to carve her image into memory. Ember did not understand the rules of the world or the complicated ways of people. It only knew one simple truth. From the very first moment it saw that small girl, it liked her, and that feeling never changed. It had always had a temper and did not like anyone climbing onto its back. Most people were met with pinned ears and sharp resistance. But its girl was different. Its girl could ride it. The girl's friends could too.

It loved the afternoons when they shared crisp carrots, standing nose to nose in the sunlight. It loved even more the open grass beneath its hooves, the rush of wind as they raced forward together and always finished first. Then one day, the girl stopped coming. The little mare did not understand why. Was it a game? The girl loved games. If it was a game, it was willing to wait and play along. It believed the girl would find it again, would swing into the saddle and guide it into the wind once more.

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The breeze would lift the girl's hair and run through its mane, and they would fly across the field together. That had always been its happiest moment. So it waited. It waited through changing seasons and long quiet days, keeping itself strong and well. Its coat remained bright, its legs steady and powerful. 1/3 2:43 pm ppp Chapter 198 The Last Run 0 Finished It refused every rider who tried to mount it. That place belonged to the girl alone. It kept waiting. And at last, it saw the girl again. The girl had grown, taller and older. Fortunately, it had grown as well.

Its body was larger and stronger now, capable of carrying the girl farther than before. But now everything hurt. It had no strength left, and no sound would come no matter how hard it tried. It felt as though its body was failing, as though it was close to dying. It was a pity they would not run together one more time. Still, seeing the girl again was already enough. It had often heard people speak of another life, something they mentioned with both regret and hope. If such a thing truly existed, it wished for only one thing. In another life, it wanted to be the girl's horse again.

And to run beside her, always finishing first. Elowen felt a sudden weight collapse into her arms. It was Ember. Its entire head dropped forward, hanging limply against her. It was dead. In that instant, a surge of grief crashed over her so completely that she could not even cry. The force of it hollowed her out, leaving her breathless and numb all at once. She remained on the ground, holding Ember's lifeless body, gasping for air in uneven breaths, yet no sound came from her throat no matter how hard she tried. "Elowen!" Alaric strode toward her, fury blazing, holding up his injured fingers.

'Do you have any idea what you just did: You'd better-' Before he could finish, thunderous hoofbeats rolled in from the distance. "His Majesty has returned!" someone shouted. "And the Duke of Duskmoor" Alaric froze. The realization hit him cold. He looked around in dawning

horror, suddenly aware of how outrageous his actions had been. He was finished. A rush of wind cut past him. Cassian was there. No one had seen how he arrived so quickly. 2:43 pm P PP.

Chapter 198 The Last Run Finished He stood tall and rigid, his expression dark and cold.

The sheer force of his presence made Alaric's legs feel weighted, impossible to move. Ella.

Cassian ignored Alaric entirely and dropped to one knee before Elowen. Seeing her covered in blood and tears, his face turned frighteningly grim. At the familiar voice, Elowen lifted her head stiffly. For a moment she thought she was imagining him. I'm back, Cassian said softly. His brows were tightly drawn as he reached up to wipe the tears from her face. The warmth of his hand jolted her back to reality. Your Grace..." Her voice was hoarse. All the grief and grievance she had held back burst free.

"Why did you come back so late?" she cried. Something slammed into Cassian's heart. The girl he treasured, the one he would not scold even lightly, had been hurt like this. Rage flared. Where are the guards he stations here? Where is his aunt? And guilt followed close behind. He had not arranged things thoroughly enough. He had returned too late. "Ember... my Ember..." Elowen's tears would not stop. She clung to the horse and looked up at him helplessly. "It's dead. I couldn't protect it. I'm useless." 1.7K 4 3/3 admin

Chapter 199 Make Her Beg Finished Cassian's breathing hitched. He did not care about the blood soaking into the grass or the filth on the ground. He bent down immediately and gathered Elowen into his arms with impossible gentleness. "Ella," he said softly, steadying her, "tell me exactly what happened." "It was... it was His Highness..." She had cried for too long. The words broke apart in her throat. "He told them to... to kill Ember..." Cassian lifted his head. His gaze turned sharp and freezing as it locked onto Alaric. Alaric's unease had already reached its limit.

Inside, every instinct screamed at him to run. Run now. But his legs would not move. "He made me beg him..." Elowen choked on the words. "He made me get down... and beg... Cassian froze for a fraction of a second. He turned back to her. "He made you get down and beg?" Her eyes were blurred with tears. She nodded. "I begged him. I got down and begged him. But he still... he still... right in front of me... he killed my... my Ember..." Cassian's face went completely dark. Something violent moved in his eyes. "Wait for me," he said quietly.

He brushed his thumb gently across her tear-streaked cheek, then released her and stood. He walked toward Alaric. His expression was colder than anyone had ever seen. No anger on the surface. No shouting. His eyes were pitch black and merciless. He looked at Alaric as if he were already dead. Alaric felt a chill crawl up his spine. He forced himself to step back. "You made Elowen get down and beg you?" Cassian's voice was low, almost calm. "No," Alaric said quickly, forcing composure. "Uncle, listen to me. At the time it was-" "You made her cry like this." Cassian's jaw tightened.

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"Alaric, are you looking to die?" "Uncle-" The word never finished. Cassian's fist came fast and brutal. Alaric was completely unprepared. The force sent him stumbling back and crashing to the ground. His head rang. For a moment, everything went blank. And it was not over. 13 2:44 pm PP p Chapter 199 Make Her Beg 29 Finished By the time Alaric managed to push himself up, Cassian was already walking toward him again. Instinct took over. Alaric turned and tried to scramble away. Cassian stepped down hard on his back, forcing him flat against the ground.

He bent, grabbed him by the collar, flipped him over, and drove another punch straight into his face. Then another. And another. Cassian's face was iron-hard. His fists came down again and again, the dull, heavy sound of impact echoing across the grounds. Everyone watched. Not one

person dared intervene. This is the Duke of Duskmoor. And he is beyond furious. Who dares step in front of him? Only Daphne reacted differently. Her eyes shifted, calculating. She turned toward Elowen. Elowen was still sitting on the ground, holding Ember's body in her arms. The horse's warmth was fading.

She did not move. She did not speak. She simply watched Cassian beat Alaric, her face blank.

"Your Grace, please stop His Grace," Daphne urged as she stepped closer. "If something happens to the Crown Prince, His Grace will face consequences." Elowen did not respond. "It was just a horse," Daphne said sharply, resentment rising in her voice. "Was it really worth this?" Elowen did not even blink. Daphne clenched her fists. There was nothing she could do. If Elowen would not speak, no one could stop Cassian. At first, Alaric's groans were loud, broken cries of pain. Gradually they weakened.

Then they faded to almost nothing. Cassian did not stop. "Cassian." Theodric's voice cut through the air, sharp and alarmed. "What do you think you're doing?" For the sake of Theodric, Cassian finally delivered one last punch and let Alaric go. He rose to his feet and gave a brief bow.

"Whatever punishment you see fit, I will accept." Theodric looked baffled and angry.

"Punishment? You haven't even told me why you nearly beat Alaric to death." He had only seen Cassian suddenly rise from the wheelchair. 2/3 2:44 pm ppp. Chapter 199 Make Her Beg Finished Theodric had been stunned by that alone.

Then Cassian had rushed forward like a man possessed. By the time the rest of them caught up, Alaric was already on the ground. Cassian did not answer. He turned and walked back to Elowen. Theodric's temper flared. A perfectly good hunt had turned into chaos. He pointed at those who had remained behind. "You. All of you. Get over here. Now. Tell me exactly what

happened." They dropped to the ground in fear, speaking over one another, recounting everything from beginning to end. The more Theodric heard, the darker his expression became. Meanwhile, Cassian crouched down beside Elowen again.

His voice softened immediately. "Ella. Did anyone else hurt you?" Elowen looked at him, then lowered her gaze to his hands. The skin over his knuckles was torn open. Blood coated them thickly, dripping steadily. Some of it was his. Most of it was Alaric's. 1.7K 1 3/3 2:44 pm P P P admin

Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 200 Your Call Watching that, the grievance and hatred inside Elowen slowly eased, little by little. She looked up at Cassian again. She wanted to ask how he had stood up. Had his leg healed? She wanted to ask if his hands hurt. But her head was spinning violently. Finished She had cried for too long. She had been hanging on by sheer force. The moment she relaxed, her body gave out. Her vision swayed. Cassian caught her instantly. She collapsed against his chest and lost consciousness. When Elowen woke again, two full days had passed.

It was afternoon. Birds were chirping outside the window. Mira's voice was low. "Have someone catch those birds. If they wake Her Grace, that won't do." Elowen lay still. She was awake, but she did not move or speak. Someone actually went to deal with the birds. After a while, the chirping disappeared entirely. Mira stepped inside and lifted the bed curtain to check on her. The moment she saw Elowen's eyes open, she gasped in relief. "Your Grace is awake." Her face filled with joy. "Your Grace, you finally woke up." Elowen's gaze drifted to Mira's forehead.

The wound from the hunting grounds was still there. Her voice came out rough. "Did you put medicine on it?" Mira froze. Tears flooded her eyes instantly. She wiped them quickly and

nodded. "Yes. It's almost healed." Elowen made a faint sound in acknowledgment. Mira sat at the bedside and lowered her voice. "Your Grace, the hunt caused a huge uproar. His Grace was furious. In the past two days... quite a few people in Vanelle have died." Elowen's eyes shifted slightly. "People died?" "Yes." Mira nodded. "Before leaving, His Grace placed two shadow guards by your side.

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That day, they were intimidated by the Crown Prince and did nothing. When we returned to Duskmoor Manor, His Grace executed them." Elowen stilled. "And the attendants and guards at the hunting grounds," Mira continued. "When the Crown Prince lost control, they did not stop him. Some even went along with it. His Majesty ordered several executed and several imprisoned." 1/3 Chapter 200 Your Call There was unmistakable satisfaction in her tone. Elowen turned her head slowly. "What about that person?" Mira blinked. "Which one does Your Grace mean?" Elowen swallowed. Her throat felt dry.

The one who killed... Ember." Ember had listened to her. Ember had been about to run. Finished It was that attendant who raised the blade while no one was looking. If not for him, Ember would still be alive. So many people had paid the price. What about him? "He's being held at Duskmoor Manor." A low, familiar voice came from the doorway. Cassian. Elowen heard the sound of wheels and looked over. Cassian entered slowly. The wheelchair beneath him was not the same one as before. Elowen pressed her palm into the mattress, trying to sit up, but she had no strength.

Mira hurried forward to support her. With help, she managed to sit, though she had to lean against Mira. Cassian stopped beside the bed. Elowen looked at him. "Your Grace... I thought your leg had healed." "It hasn't," he said calmly. "That day, I heard you crying." He had forced

himself to stand, ignoring the pain. Elowen let out a soft sound. Her gaze dropped to his leg.

"But Doctor Dray said if you forced it before it healed, it would make recovery harder later..."

"He was scaring you." Cassian replied evenly. "He shifted the topic."

"Ella, that attendant is at Duskmoor Manor." Elowen fell silent. "Whether you want him executed outright or made to suffer first, Cassian said as he looked at her steadily, "Ella, the decision is yours." Elowen understood the truth of that day. Many people had stayed silent because they were intimidated by the Crown Prince's status and did not dare speak for her. The attendant had only been eager to impress Alaric. She could understand it. But she could not accept it. 213 2:44 pm Chapter 200 Your Call If they were not at fault, then was Ember at fault?

Finished Was it enough that the horse had once belonged to her as a child to justify being run through with a blade? "If you prefer." Cassian continued evenly, "he can be kept alive and punished slowly. Daily pain, but never enough to let him die. Locked underground where he cannot tell night from day. It would not take long for him to break." His tone was calm, almost casual. Elowen let out a slow breath. "No. Don't do that. Just execute him." Torturing him would not bring Ember back. It would only consume the manor's time and resources.

And in the end, the true cause of it all was someone else. Cassian inclined his head. "Very well."

◦ 1.7K 373 admin