

# Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 231 Storm Wedding 41 Finished At Duskmoor Manor, the storm showed no sign of letting up. Rain hammered against the windows, the courtyard outside a mess of mud and chaos. Daphne felt the irritation clawing its way up her chest, sharp and suffocating. A wedding day, and it had to pour like this. Everything was inconvenient, sure, but worse than that, it felt like a terrible omen. Daphne's brows pulled tight. She pointed straight at Seline. "Mom, didn't you say you had the court astrologer look at the date? You swore today was supposed to be perfect. Look at this storm.

My gown is soaked. How am I supposed to walk in like this?" Seline faltered, clearly flustered. "He was absolutely certain. He said it was the most favorable day in years. I even paid him handsomely for it. How was I supposed to know it would turn out like this..." Daphne let out a sharp, incredulous laugh, her voice rising. "You paid him that much just to pick a date? Do you have any idea how many charlatans make a living off people like you? Some court astrologer. Could you even tell if he knew what he was doing?" Seline's face hardened immediately.

"And whose idea was this wedding date to begin with? You were the one who insisted on it. I only tried to double check so you could feel at ease. And now you're turning around and blaming me. Honestly, have you no sense of gratitude?" Daphne trembled with anger. She swept the jewelry box off the vanity in one motion. It hit the ground with a sharp crash, hairpins and ornaments scattering everywhere. She collapsed over the table, covering her face as she broke into sobs. Seline frowned even deeper.

"Now you're crying too..." "What's going on here?" Galen strode in through the rain, his expression severe, Seline spoke first. "You came just in time. Ask your daughter. She picked this date herself, and now that it's raining, she's blaming everything on me." "Enough," Galen cut her off sharply. "That's enough." Seline let out a quiet scoff and turned her face away. 1/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 231 Storm Wedding Daphne's crying only grew louder. Finished Galen looked at her, his brow tightening. His tone turned stern. "Today is your wedding day.

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What kind of state are you in, crying like this? Get yourself together. The Crown Prince's procession will be here any moment." Daphne lifted her tear-streaked face. Her voice trembled. "But Father, look at the rain. People are going to talk. They'll say I'm cursed..." "Let them talk," Galen snapped. "The marriage is already set. The palace won't go back on it. And besides, you're Azure. You've made quite a name for yourself in Vanelle. Plenty of people admire you. It's just a bit of rain. What are you afraid of?" Those words eased something in Daphne's chest.

She raised her hand and wiped away her tears. That was right. She was Azure. Her new work had taken Vanelle by storm. No one would call her unlucky. And even if someone did, her supporters would shut them down. At the Crown Prince's Wing, Alaric sat in the main hall, still dressed in dark everyday clothes. Rain poured endlessly beyond the windows. A cold edge lingered in his eyes. He had always hated rainy days. In his last life, it had rained like this on his wedding day too. The difference was, back then, the bride had been Elowen.

He had been soaked through, water seeping into his boots, irritation boiling over inside him. But the moment he stepped into the bridal chamber and saw her under the glow of candlelight, everything shifted. Her face had been soft and luminous, her gaze shy, her expression gentle, In that instant, even the storm outside had felt brighter. He had thought maybe rain wasn't so

unbearable after all. But Daphne... What was she compared to Elowen? How could she even begin to compare? "Your Highness..." The attendants filled the hall, heads bowed as they stood in rigid silence.

Tristan stood at the 2/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 231 Storm Wedding 41 Finished front, clutching the crimson wedding robes, his hands trembling. "Your Highness, the hour is nearly upon us. Please change into your formal attire. If we delay, we will not escape punishment..."

Alaric let out a cold laugh. "A storm like this on a wedding day. Doesn't that say enough? She's clearly ill fated. Why not report it to His Majesty and call off the marriage?" "What nonsense are you saying?" A sharp voice came from outside. Isla entered, supported by her attendant, her gaze filled with anger.

Alaric rose at once and lowered his eyes. "Mother." Isla glanced at the untouched wedding robes. "Why aren't you dressed yet?" Alaric kept his gaze lowered. "This storm came without warning. It may not be a coincidence. Perhaps it would be wiser to reconsider the marriage while there is still time." "Enough." Her voice turned cutting. "I chose this match. I selected the date myself. Are you suggesting that the warning is against me? That I am unfit to be your mother?" Alaric froze, then quickly shook his head.

"That's not what I meant." "Your father has already approved this marriage," Isla continued, her tone colder now. "He hasn't said a word against it. And you think you can run to him and ask to cancel it? What would that make you look like?" She paused, then spoke more quietly, but with weight. "It's only rain. The Garrett girl is Azure, she has a reputation in Vanelle. If you abandon her over something like this, what will people say about the Crown Prince's character?" 1.8K 2

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Chapter 232 Shifting Power Alaric clenched his jaw. Daphne being Azure had caught him off guard. 41 Finished In his previous life, he had never known. He had always assumed she was nothing more than a pretty face, someone skilled at pleasing men. He hadn't expected her to have any real talent. And yet, the memory still made his stomach turn. She had betrayed him. With a guard. She had humiliated him completely. Those things, however, could not be spoken aloud now. "Stop acting like a child," Isla said, catching the resistance in his expression.

"What matters right is showing your father that you can take responsibility. Secure your position. Once you sit firmly as heir, once you inherit everything, what in this world would be beyond your reach?" now She leaned closer, lowering her voice. "When that day comes, you won't need to fear Cassian anymore. One decree, and you can send him to the far frontier. Do you think he would dare refuse?" Thunder cracked outside. Something lit up in Alaric's eyes. That was right. Everything under the heavens belonged to the throne. Once he ruled, power would be his to command.

Even if Cassian refused to let Elowen go, he could simply take her. Keep her in the palace if he wanted. The thought finally eased his irritation. Alaric bowed his head. "I understand." He took a breath, then turned and walked toward the wedding robes. Elowen had slept in, but she still felt drowsy. Even after getting into the carriage, she couldn't stop herself from drifting off. Cassian's voice was lazy, "Want to lean on me and sleep?" Elowen hesitated. "That wouldn't be proper..." Cassian slipped an arm around her waist and drew her closer. 1/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 .

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Chapter 232 Shifting Power 41 Finished His chest was warm and steady. Her body relaxed almost instantly, her eyes falling shut before she even realized it. "I'll just rest for a bit," she murmured. "Wake me when we get there..." A low sound of acknowledgment came from above

her. Time blurred. She didn't know how long had passed, or whether they had arrived. Through the haze, she heard rain hitting the carriage, mixed with voices outside. "I've never seen a wedding with rain like this." "Right? It's like someone's done something wrong." "She's always been like that, acting so full of herself.

Calling herself the future crown princess before she's even married. And I read her book. It's not even that good. Messy writing. I don't get why people hype it up..." Voices gathered, gossiping about Daphne. Elowen shifted slightly. Then a sharp voice cut through. "What are you all whispering about? Want me to have your tongues for it?" Elowen recognized the voice immediately. Maerwyn. Outside, the girls greeted nervously. "Your Highness..." Another voice followed, bright and calm.

"Maerwyn, what brings you here?" Inside the carriage, Elowen tilted her head up at Cassian and silently mouthed, "Lyra?" Cassian gave a small nod. Elowen remembered. Lyra was Elira's daughter, twelve this year. In her last life, they had barely crossed paths. Elowen had died before Lyra ever reached marriageable age. Outside, Maerwyn let out a cold laugh. "This is my brother's residence, Why wouldn't I be here? You, on the other hand, bringing people here to gossip about my sister in law. What exactly are you trying to do? Should I report this to His Majesty?" Lyra's tone remained gentle.

"Please don't be upset. It was only casual conversation. There's no need to be so angry. But if I remember correctly, you're still under restriction, His Majesty allowed you to attend today's ceremony, but only in the front halls. If he finds out you came here..." 3/2 14:33 Sat, Apr 11

Chapter 232 Shifting Power 15 41 Finished Maerwyn choked on her words. "You..." She flicked

her hand sharply. "Don't think mentioning Father will scare me. Even if I'm confined for life, I won't let you insult Azure." Lyra softened her voice. "Maerwyn...

have you read the new work going around?" "Of course I have." "Then don't you think it feels completely different from Tales of Luminara? It's like it was written by someone else."

Maerwyn's expression hardened. "What are you implying?" "I'm only saying, Azure's identity might not be what it seems. Perhaps Daphne is using the name without truly being the author."

"That's ridiculous," Maerwyn snapped. "How could she possibly be an impostor?" "I heard it from Caelan," Lyra said. "He's seen the Hale family's manuscripts before. Every line was brilliant. As for Daphne's writing...

it feels shallow. Not nearly the same." 1.8K O 3/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 ... : 41 admin

Chapter 233 A Public Trap Maerwyn scoffed, refusing to back down. "If Daphne isn't Azure, then where did she manuscript she gave me on my birthday? That's not something just anyone can get!" get Finished that The more she spoke, the angrier she got. "You're just jealous. Jealous that my mother is Queen, and my brother is the crown prince. You keep bringing up Elowen, but in my eyes, Daphne is a thousand times better than her. I don't want Elowen as my sister-in-law. It's embarrassing.

If she ever married my brother, I'd make sure she regretted it." Inside the carriage, Cassian's brows drew together. He was about to speak when Elowen reached up and gently covered his lips. Cassian looked at her, puzzled. Elowen waited until the girls outside finished gossiping and drifted off, their voices fading into silence, before she let go. She spoke first, her voice soft.

"Thank you, Your Grace." Cassian blinked. "For what?" "I didn't even get the chance to stand up for you." Elowen's eyes curved with a quiet smile. "You let me sleep against you.

Hearing a few petty comments doesn't bother me at all. If I'd been stuck awake the whole ride, that would've been miserable." Cassian's expression eased, amusement flickering across his face as he pinched her cheek lightly. She really wasn't upset. After that illness not long ago, Elowen had come to realize that a few whispered comments meant nothing. The real moment of this wedding hadn't even come yet. Whether it was Daphne or Alaric, they would both have done. The wedding ceremony was held in the main hall.

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ave to face the consequences of what they A heavy downpour had thrown everything into chaos, both for the Garrett family and the Crown Prince's Wing. The scheduled hour had been missed. 1/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 233 A Public Trap 41 Finished Still, under Isla's strict control, no one dared speak out of line. The ceremony continued in perfect order. Not long after Elowen and Cassian took their seats, it officially began. Alaric and Daphne, dressed in deep crimson, stepped into the hall under everyone's watchful gaze. Theodric sat at the head, the entire hall silent. Cassian, seated close by, held his place beside him. Cassian glanced outside. "Rain's letting up. Guess she's got luck on her side." Theodric glanced at him and gave a small nod. "Seems that way." Nearby, Maerwyn straightened proudly. After the ceremony, Theodric turned his attention to Daphne, his tone warm. "I've heard you're Azure?" Daphne flushed lightly. "Yes, Your Majesty." "I've read your earlier work, Tales of Luminara," Theodric said. "There's real talent there. When your new work is ready, I'd like to see it as well." Daphne lit up, quickly agreeing. Theodric then looked at Alaric, his tone sharpening. "Your wife is widely praised for her talent. Treat her well. If I hear otherwise, you won't like the outcome." Alaric forced a smile. "Yes, Your Majesty." The hall shifted. The way people looked at Daphne now carried open admiration. Who else could achieve this? Not only praised across the land, but even Theodric himself spoke

highly of her. Now she had entered the Crown Prince's Wing, with Theodric's favor behind her. Her future looked effortless. Even Elowen, as Duchess of Duskmooor, might not match her standing. Daphne knew it too.

Heat spread through her body, excitement barely contained. 2/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 233 A Public Trap : She took a breath and looked up. "Your Majesty, I have a request." Theodric was in a good mood. He tilted his chin slightly. "Go on." 41 Finished A flicker of cunning crossed Daphne's eyes. "Today, I would like to receive a blessing from the Duchess of Duskmooor." Theodric paused. "From her?" Daphne nodded. "She grew up with His Highness, and she and I have known each other since childhood. Now that she's married into Duskmooor, she's part of the family.

If she offers her blessing, today's marriage will surely be blessed." At once, every gaze turned toward Elowen. No one was foolish. Vone understood what this really was. A blessing? No. It was a public test. Elowen had once been meant to marry into the Crown Prince's Wing. And recently, there had been too many entanglements between her and Alaric. To make her bless them now was to put her on display. Theodric frowned, clearly disapproving. Daphne didn't notice. She looked at Elowen expectantly. "You won't refuse, will you?" All eyes gathered on her.

Elowen lifted her head, her gaze filled with just the right touch of uncertainty, her voice soft with the slightest tremor. "Me?" That single word landed in Alaric's ears. Looking at her pale, delicate face, something surged in him, tangled with old affection, guilt, and anger. 。 admin

Chapter 234 A Forced Blessing 41 Finished Alaric turned sharply to Daphne, his voice low and sharp. "Have you had enough? Do you even understand where we are right now?" Daphne didn't

flinch. If anything, her smile grew more confident. "Your Highness, I would never act out of line. I'm only being sincere. I simply wish to hear a blessing from her. Don't you care for her as well? If she gives us her blessing today, our marriage will surely thrive." "You-" Alaric's jaw tightened, veins standing out at his temple, but with Theodric present, he swallowed back the harsher words.

Daphne's face only looked more unbearable to him now. Before he could speak again, Maerwyn cut in, unable to hold back. "Alaric, I think she has a point. It's just a blessing-" She didn't get to finish. A cold glance from Theodric shut her down instantly. She shrank back, the rest of her words dissolving into a mutter. "She is Azure..." Alaric shot her a glare. How could his own sister be this foolish? Completely blinded. His gaze returned to Daphne.

That satisfied look on her face made his hand twitch, the urge to strike her almost uncontrollable, But when his eyes flicked to Theodric, still watching from above, he forced it down, his hand tightening into a fist inside his sleeve. Daphne caught every bit of that restraint. Of course he wouldn't dare act in front of Theodric, For years, she had lowered herself in front of Elowen, swallowing humiliation, enduring whispers and resentment. All of it had festered inside her. Now, with her rising fame and her new position, she stood at the peak of her life. How could she let this chance slip?

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This was her moment to humiliate Elowen in front of everyone. 1/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 ... Chapter 234 A Forced Blessing :. 41) Finished To crush her completely. More than that, it was her chance to establish authority in the Crown Prince's Wing. If even the Duchess of Duskmoor could be forced into submission, who else would dare defy her? This was the power she wanted. The kind no one dared challenge. The only one she was wary of... was Cassian. Even Theodric

showed him respect. As expected, Theodric frowned slightly. "If she's unwilling, then let it go." Disappointment surged through Daphne.

But before she could react, Cassian lifted his gaze. "Your Majesty, it's fine." His voice was calm, steady, carrying through the hall. He looked at Elowen, his tone unreadable, but firm. "It's a wedding. A celebration for all. As family, offering a few words is only proper." Daphne's heart jumped, then surged with excitement. She almost couldn't believe it. Cassian...is siding with me? So the rumors were true. He had already grown tired of Elowen. Maybe he even wanted to see her embarrassed. She could already imagine how the story would spread across Vanelle.

The Duchess of Duskmoor, humiliated at the crown prince's wedding, forced to bow her head before her rival, And she, Daphne, not only Azure, but the rightful lady of the Crown Prince's Wing, would stand above even her. The thrill of it made her fingertips tremble, She lifted her chin, looking at Elowen with open triumph. Elowen stood alone, her lashes trembling slightly, casting soft shadows across her pale face.

2/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 234 A Forced Blessing 41 Finished She pressed her lips together, as if with no other choice, then turned toward Theodric and Isla, lowering herself in a respectful bow. "Your Majesty... today is a joyous occasion for the realm. I... am truly happy for His Highness and the Crown Princess." Her gaze shifted back to Daphne. Her voice remained steady, perfectly composed. "I wish you unity and harmony. May your marriage remain steady and without conflict.

May the Crown Prince's Wing stay peaceful and undisturbed." When she finished, she lowered her gaze and stepped back quietly. Daphne listened, satisfaction flooding through her. In her eyes, Elowen's light was fading. And she was rising, step by step, standing at the peak that

belonged to her. in an She didn't notice the faint, almost imperceptible curve at Elowen's lips, cold and gone instant. The hall fell into a brief silence, something subtle lingering in the air, until a maid hurried in and went straight to Isla, leaning close to whisper in her ear. 1.8K 1 admin

Chapter 235 The Wrong Guest Finished At the Crown Prince's Wing, the hall had fallen so still that even a hushed exchange carried, and when Isla heard the report, a faint crease touched her brow before a flicker of impatience crossed her face, her voice dropping as she dismissed it, "No sense of decorum, just have him turned away, there's no need to bring this to me." The hall was too quiet for that to go unnoticed, and Theodric turned slightly, his gaze steady, "What is it?" Isla immediately smoothed over her expression, her tone turning composed and measured, "Nothing of consequence, Your Majesty, there's an old man at the palace gate claiming to be an illustrator, saying he's an old acquaintance of Azure and came to offer his congratulations." "An acquaintance of Azure?" Theodric's gaze shifted toward Daphne.

Daphne's heart dropped. An acquaintance? She wasn't Azure, how could she possibly recognize anyone?

"He claims so, but that doesn't make it true," Isla continued, her tone calm, "the guest list was arranged well in advance, and this man appeared out of nowhere, poorly dressed and clearly out of place, most likely just a drifter hoping to slip in and take advantage of the occasion, I was about to have him escorted out." Daphne immediately turned toward the attendant, eager to push it forward, "Mother is right, you should-" "Wait." Before she could finish, Maerwyn suddenly spoke up, her eyes lighting with excitement, "That might not be a drifter, he could really be Daphne's acquaintance." Daphne's expression stiffened instantly.

Maerwyn leaned forward, her voice bright with enthusiasm, "Have you forgotten, when Tales of Luminara became so popular, it wasn't just the story, the illustrations played a huge part too, and those were all done by an older artist, you even thanked him at the end of the book, and now people say your new work doesn't feel as good, I think it's because the illustrations are missing." She turned eagerly to Isla, unable to hide her excitement, "Mother, please have him brought in, Daphne will definitely be happy to see him." Alarm bells rang sharply in Daphne's mind, and she couldn't help cursing Maerwyn for meddling.

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1/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 235 The Wrong Guest : Every word she had just said was pushing her straight toward disaster. 41 Finished Yet under everyone's gaze, she couldn't show even the slightest resistance, so she could only hold onto a stiff smile.

Seated above, Theodric fell into brief thought, his fingers tapping lightly against the armrest as he spoke, "I do remember the illustrations from Tales of Luminara, the technique was refined and the atmosphere was striking, easily comparable to the finest work from the court." His gaze shifted to Daphne, carrying a quiet weight, "If your new work had the same illustrations, it would only elevate it further." Daphne's chest tightened as she lowered her gaze at once, forcing her voice steady, "Your Majesty flatters me, I hardly deserve such praise." She tried one last time to turn things away, "But as Mother mentioned, the man's appearance is...

unpresentable, and with so many distinguished guests here today, I worry that if he loses his composure before Your Majesty, it would reflect poorly on me." Theodric waved it off without concern, his tone firm, "That's not how this works, the nobles are my people, and so are those who live outside these walls, even someone from the streets stands under my rule, and if I turn someone away simply because of how they look, then what right do I have to sit here?" He

paused, his gaze sharpening slightly as it rested on her, "Besides, today, is your wedding, if someone has come all this way to offer you their congratulations, how could you refuse to see him, you accepted Elowen's goodwill, so you can hear his as well." Without giving her any room to respond, he turned to Quin, "Bring him in." "Yes, Your Majesty." Quin bowed and left at once.

Daphne stood frozen where she was, fear rising so quickly it made her dizzy, and she tightened her hands at her sides, her nails digging into her palms as the sting barely kept her steady enough to remain composed, Alaric stood beside her, watching everything. His brow tightened slightly as doubt crept in. Under normal circumstances, an acquaintance arriving like this would bring at least some recognition, even if not warmth, then calm familiarity, So why was she reacting like this? 2/3 14:33 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 235 The Wrong Guest : 41 Finished So tense, so resistant.

As if she had something to hide. "Are you nervous?" Alaric asked suddenly. Daphne flinched, caught off guard, and without daring to meet his gaze, she answered quickly, "Your Highness... it's just that it's been many years, so things naturally feel unfamiliar." Maerwyn leaned in, curiosity getting the better of her. "So what's he like, does he have that whole old master vibe, like someone who's seen everything and just... carries it with him?" Daphne's thoughts grew more chaotic by the second. She had no idea what the man looked like.

She wasn't Azure, and no one had ever described him to her. With no choice, she forced out a vague answer, "He... isn't very tall, but he's gentle, very easy to be around." 1.8K admin

Chapter 236 The Truth Breaks : 41 Finished Maerwyn's anticipation only grew, her eyes fixed on the entrance without blinking, and after a short while, steady footsteps echoed from outside as Quin returned, his voice carrying clearly, "Your Majesty, the man has arrived." Every gaze in the

hall turned toward the doorway. The moment the figure stepped inside with Quin, the entire hall fell into stunned silence. Daphne's face drained of color in an instant. The man who entered looked nothing like anyone had expected.

He was tall and powerfully built, completely unlike the refined, slender image one would associate with an artist, and though he wore a worn dark cloak, his presence felt more like someone who had traveled far and seen hardship rather than someone who spent his days painting. His face was marked by time and weather, with two distinct scars crossing his left cheek, adding a sharp, almost formidable edge to his appearance, while a few strands of gray hair fell loosely over his brow, making it clear he was no longer young.

Everything about him suggested a seasoned wanderer, not a quiet illustrator. Maerwyn stared, stunned, "Lord Jett... are you sure you brought the right person?" Quin started to speak, but the man stepped forward first, dipping his head in a measured show of respect, his voice steady as he said, "Elias, at your service, Your Majesty... Your Majesty." His gaze swept across the hall, and when it passed Elowen, it paused for the briefest moment before moving on without any sign of recognition.

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Theodric studied him carefully, uncertainty clear in his expression, "You're the one who illustrated Azure's work?" "Yes, Your Majesty," Elias replied without hesitation. Sensing the doubt, he remained calm and continued, "In the lower corner of each illustration, there is a small mark that can only be seen upon close inspection, it reads 'Elias,' which is my name, and it is carved from a walnut seal, one of a kind." As he spoke, he took out a small cloth bundle from inside his cloak and carefully unwrapped it, revealing the seal.

Quin stepped forward, received it with both hands, and presented it to Theodric. Chapter 236 The Truth Breaks Finished Theodric examined it closely, noting the fine craftsmanship despite its small size, the clean lines and precise carving unmistakable. Still uncertain, he turned his gaze toward Maerwyn. She understood at once, stepping forward to take the seal, and after only a brief glance, she nodded firmly, "It's real, every illustration had this exact mark, and this tiny chip along the edge is the same, I remember it clearly." At that point, there was no room left for doubt.

Maerwyn, unable to hold back, asked eagerly, "Did you come all the way to Vanelle because you heard about Daphne's wedding, to congratulate her?" Elias frowned slightly, confusion crossing his face, "Daphne?" "The Crown Princess, Azure," Maerwyn said, gesturing toward Daphne. Following her direction, Elias turned to look at Daphne. His gaze sharpened as he looked her over from head to toe, his expression growing more serious with each passing second.

"The Crown Princess?" He shook his head without hesitation, his voice firm and decisive, "I've never seen her before." Those words hit like a spark dropped into dry tinder, and the entire hall erupted at once. "What? She's not Azure?" "Then where did the new book come from?" "So she's been pretending all along?" "That seal was verified, both His Majesty and Her Highness confirmed it, if he dares here..." "If it's false, that's deception at the highest level..." say this The whispers spread rapidly, sharp and relentless, like needles pressing in from every direction.

Daphne stood at the center of it all, her face turning completely pale, even her lips losing all color. 2/3 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 . Chapter 236 The Truth Breaks It was over. 41 Finished Everything she had relied on, everything she had built to secure her place, collapsed in that single moment. The noise around her blurred into a dull roar as the world seemed to tilt beneath her feet.

Maerwyn was the one who refused to accept it, stepping forward in urgency, "Is it possible that she kept her identity hidden before, so you never saw her clearly, and that's why you think you've never met her?" 1.8K 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 admin

Chapter 237 Truth Laid Bare : 41 Finished Elias looked straight at Maerwyn, calm and unflinching. "Your Highness, you can judge for yourself. Most people may never have seen Azure in person, but I've known her for years. Watched her grow up, in fact. Time changes a person, sure, but not enough to turn her into someone else entirely." He turned toward the throne, where Theodric's expression had already darkened, then bowed deeply. "Your Majesty, I'm just a common man, but even I know better than to lie in a place like this, on a day like this. I would never dare deceive the crown.

Every word I've said is the truth. The Crown Princess... is not Azure." Each word landed hard. The hall erupted. "But she's been claiming she is Azure this whole time. That's how she got this marriage!" "That new book she released is awful. Flat writing, predictable plot. Nothing like Tales of Luminara. Now it all makes sense, she's a fraud." "And earlier she was pushing so hard, demanding a blessing from Your Grace." "Where does she even get the nerve..." Every comment hit like a slap. Daphne swayed, her vision spinning, her whole body trembling out of control.

She turned instinctively to Alaric, her eyes already red. "Your Highness..." She reached for him. n na a Alaric's face twisted with disgust. He pulled away sharply, brushing her off without hesitation. Daphne froze, all color draining from her face. Beside Cassian, Elowen watched in silence. She had never really cared about the name Azure being taken. A name could be stolen. Talent couldn't. Daphne had used that name to marry into the Crown Prince's Wing, and Elowen hadn't even bothered to expose her, But Ember-That was different.

1/4 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 237 Truth Laid Bare : Daphne had helped Alaric kill Ember. That alone made everything unforgivable. Finished So when Elowen heard that Daphne had been using Azure's name again to promote her new work across Vanelle, she didn't stop it. She fueled it. She spent money. She used people from Duskmoor Manor. She made sure the hype grew louder. At Falconcrest Manor, Elowen had told Aveline plainly that Daphne was Azure, and the rumor spread faster than wildfire, sweeping through Vanelle until, by the time of the wedding, nearly half the city had already heard.

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And just as she had expected, Daphne lost herself in it. Elowen had known she would. Daphne craved attention, thrived on admiration, needed to be seen and praised, so when she came asking for Elowen's approval, Elowen gave it without hesitation, played along, let her bask in the spotlight, and even helped lift her higher and higher. Because the higher she stood, the harder she would fall.

Long before the ceremony, Elowen had already written to Elias, the only person who truly knew what Azure looked like, and at the very peak of Daphne's triumph, he arrived at the Crown Prince's Wing and shattered everything in a single stroke. Daphne had always cared about one thing above all else. Her image. And now, it was gone. Yes, she had become Crown Princess, but Alaric did not want her. Theodric and Isla would never see her the same way again, and Maerwyn, who had once adored Azure, would only feel disgust now. What kind of life did that leave for Daphne? None.

She had brought all of this upon herself. A dull thud broke through the hall. Daphne's body gave out, her vision going dark as she collapsed to the floor, and a wave of gasps rippled outward before dissolving into murmurs. Chapter 237 Truth Laid Bare "Did she faint?" "That's all it

took?" "Oh please, she's faking it. Trying to dodge the consequences." "Pathetic. Even the servants back home wouldn't pull something that obvious." Elowen almost laughed.

Finished If Daphne had any real strength, she would have stood her ground, denied everything, fought for her place, and there might still have been a way out. But this? This was no different from admitting the truth. "The ceremony stands. Take the Crown Princess inside." Theodric's voice cut cleanly through the noise, calm and final. Elowen was not surprised.

No matter what had happened, the marriage was already sealed, her name recorded, her position fixed, and in that moment, Daphne represented the royal family itself, which meant Theodric would never allow the situation to spiral any further. Several attendants stepped forward at once, carefully lifting Daphne and carrying her toward the inner chambers. The moment Theodric's gaze swept across the hall, every whisper died instantly. Music rose again. The officiant resumed the proceedings.

Guests returned to their seats, lifting their cups, laughing, talking, as though nothing had happened at all, as though the entire scene had been nothing more than a passing illusion. Seated beside Cassian, Elowen idly picked at the fruit before her, her attention drifting toward Elias among the outer seats. As if sensing her gaze, he turned. Their eyes met. Something unspoken passed between them. 3/4 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter 237 Truth Laid Bare 41 Finished Then he rose. Elowen's focus sharpened at once, already searching for a reason to excuse herself and follow.

"Planning to step out?" Cassian asked. 1.8K D admin

Chapter 238 A Quiet Reunion Finished Elowen froze for a split second, then nodded, a faint blush touching her cheeks. "I had a bit too much to drink earlier.". Cassian lifted a brow. "Then go." She flashed him a quick, almost guilty smile, then rose and slipped out of the hall. As she walked, a thought crept in. Does Cassian suspect anything?If he ever finds out she's Azure... Just imagining it made her cringe. She rounded a courtyard bursting with flowers-"Thud!" The sound came from ahead. Elowen looked up. There he was.

Elias had just stumbled on the stone steps and was now pushing himself back up, slow but steady. Years had passed, and time had left its mark on his face. But his eyes were as sharp as ever, clear and alive, giving him a presence that hadn't faded at all. Something in Elowen's chest tightened. She hurried over. "Are you alright?" Elias straightened, brushing dust off his clothes. "I'm fine, thank And you. you are...?" Mira stepped forward brightly. "This is Duchess of Duskmoor." Elias immediately brought his hands together in a respectful gesture. "Elias, at Your Grace's service.

My apologies for the disturbance." Watching him play along so seriously, pretending not to know her, pulled Elowen straight back to years ago. Back when she had been secretly writing. Back when he had quietly helped her bring those stories to life. Whenever things got close to being discovered, he would switch just like this, acting like a stranger, helping her cover it 1/3  
14:34 Sat, Apr 11 U Chapter 238 A Quiet Reunion "I've read Tales of Luminara. Your illustrations were incredible," Elowen said smoothly, matching his tone. "You haven't drawn in years.

How have you been?" Finished A flicker of understanding passed through his eyes, meant for her alone. "I appreciate Your Grace's concern. I went back home, got myself a small patch of land.

Plant in the spring, harvest in the fall. I've got a dog to keep me company. It's a simple life, but a good one." Elowen nodded. But her eyes stung. Back then, he had been barely getting by, selling paintings no one cared about. Talent didn't matter in Vanelle. Reputation did.

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Julian had once said, "Those famous painters could smear mud on a canvas and people would still fight to buy it." Elowen had been the only one willing to pay for Elias's work. Elias had never forgotten any of it. He had been to Hale Manor, had seen Ember with his own eyes, had even painted her himself, and somewhere along the way, he had grown fond of that fiery little horse, just as he had come to care deeply about Elowen.

He had told her stories of his past, of the years he once led men into battle, long before betrayal carved those scars into his face, and how, after everything fell apart, he chose to walk away from it all and disappear into a quieter life. Because he was the only one who knew the truth. Azure had never been anyone else. It had always been Elowen.

She had poured her heart into the heroine she created, shaping every detail with care, and he had taken those words and brought them to life with his drawings, the two of them working side by side, selling those stories together until everything grew too large, too visible, too dangerous to keep going. So she stopped. And he left. He returned to the countryside, saying that after a certain point in life, all anyone really wanted was a piece of land that belonged to them, something steady, something real. There had been a time when he wrote to her, asking for money.

She had not had much herself, but she still sent him something of value. 2/3 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 U  
Chapter 238 A Quiet Reunion : 41 Finished A hairpin. And recently, when her letter reached him

again, asking for help, he did not hesitate for even a moment. That was why he had come today, stepping straight into the Crown Prince's Wing and tearing Daphne's carefully built illusion apart in front of everyone. By all logic, this was revenge. It should have felt satisfying.

But as Elowen looked at him now, all she felt was a tightness in her chest, something fragile and overwhelming, as if the slightest breath might break it open. Elias noticed. His voice softened as he spoke, steady and grounded. "What's gone is gone. Holding onto it won't change anything. It just weighs you down. What matters is what's still in front of you." He paused, then let out a small, easy grin. "And from where I'm standing, Your Grace's future doesn't look bad at all. Cassian carries himself well, and once he's fully recovered, you'll have a house full of little ones running around.

Sounds like a pretty good life to me." Elowen let out a soft laugh, her eyes still bright, and nodded as she tried to steady herself. She sniffed lightly, then looked at him. "What about you? Are you staying in Vanelle for a while?" 1.8K W admin

Chapter 239 Not Enough Finished Elias chuckled, shaking his head. "Vanelle's a fine place, no doubt. But the wheat back home is about to ripen, and even the old farm dog's probably waiting by the gate for me." After seeing him off, Elowen made her way back alone, her thoughts still unsettled. Part of her ached. Elias's sudden appearance had stirred up memories she had long tried to bury, people and moments she could never have back. And yet, there was a quiet warmth beneath it. She had once believed Ember was her last, fragile link to everything she had lost. Now she knew that wasn't true.

Elias was still here. Her grandfather was still alive. They had not spoken in years, but he had loved her dearly... She was not as alone as she once thought. 5 2 ū Z AR She was still lost in

those thoughts when a familiar male voice called out from behind her. "Aunt." Elowen recognized it instantly. Disgust tightened her brow. She did not slow, only quickened her pace, intent on leaving as fast as possible. "Ella!" When she ignored him, Alaric's voice sharpened with urgency. He hurried forward, reaching out as if to grab her wrist. Before he could get close, a figure appeared out of nowhere.

The man moved like a shadow, dressed in black, broad-shouldered and silent, planting himself firmly between them like an unyielding wall, cutting off Alaric's reach completely. Elowen let out a quiet breath, the tension easing from her chest. She had almost forgotten. Ever since the hunting incident, Cassian had arranged for guards to stay at her side. Alaric's temper flared at the interruption. The words he had meant to say stuck in his throat as his gaze snapped toward the guard's expressionless face. 1/4 Chapter 239 Not Enough Then his eyes narrowed.

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"It's you." At Falconcrest Manor, it had been this very man who had fed him lies, claiming Elowen still longed for him, luring him to that pavilion, only for him to make a complete fool of himself. In that brief moment of distraction, Elowen had already moved several steps ahead, nearly reaching the corner of the corridor. Alaric could not afford to lose her. "Ella, wait. Please. I need to talk to you." Elowen did not turn back. "We have nothing to say to each other." Her voice was calm, final. Watching her walk away, something in Alaric's chest burned, raw and unbearable.

He clenched his jaw, a stubborn edge creeping into his voice. "What if I begged you?" Elowen slowed. Then stopped. She turned back slowly. Hope flashed across Alaric's face. "I knew it. You still care about me. You wouldn't- "Then do it," Elowen said flatly. The words cut him off. His expression froze. "You want me to beg?" He was the Crown Prince. How could she even ask

that? 11 How could she be so cold? Elowen had no interest in arguing. She turned as if to leave again. Of course. He had been the one to say it, yet now he hesitated. Nothing had changed.

Before she had taken more than a couple of steps, a heavy sound rang out behind her. A dull thud., Elowen turned. Alaric was on the ground. He had lowered himself onto one knee on the cold stone, his posture rigid, his head tilted up toward her, eyes locked on hers. His crimson ceremonial robes spread across the ground, stark and striking. 2/4 Chapter 239 Not Enough Finished There was too much in his gaze. Humiliation. Desperation. And something that looked dangerously like devotion. In another lifetime, seeing him like this would have broken her heart.

He had once stood untouchable, admired by all, someone who carried himself with effortless grace. A man like him was never meant to humble himself like this. But now... Elowen felt nothing. If anything, this was far from enough. "You said you had something to tell me," she said. Alaric's eyes reddened. "Ella, I regret everything. I-" "Come here," Elowen cut in. Her tone left no room for refusal. Alaric instinctively began to rise... "Stay where you are," she said, her voice still calm, yet carrying quiet authority. "Come to me like that." Alaric froze. The color drained from his face.

"But..." Elowen looked down at him, her expression distant. "Otherwise, I'm leaving." His fingers tightened, the knuckles whitening. For a long moment, he said nothing. Then, teeth clenched, he shifted forward, keeping himself lowered as he dragged himself closer, inch by inch, each movement slow and strained. The fabric of his robes scraped against the rough stone with a soft, grating sound. It took time. But eventually, he reached her. Looking up at her, his voice trembled. "Ella... I was blind before. I never wanted you to marry Cassian. I've only ever cared about you. Believe me.

Give me time. One day, I'll bring you the Crown Prince's Wing the way you deserve." into 3/4  
admin

Chapter 240 Shattered Pride 41 Finished Elowen listened to his promise, something faint and  
mocking curling at the corner of her lips. Then she asked, almost casually, "Did you say that to  
Isla first?" Alaric froze. He did not understand. But Elowen had already looked past him. She  
lowered her gaze slightly in a composed, flawless gesture of respect toward someone behind  
him. Then she turned and walked away without hesitation. Alaric remained where he was. A cold  
laugh sounded behind him. He spun around. Isla stood by the corridor pillar, her expression dark,  
her eyes sharp with anger.

It was clear she had seen everything. Alaric quickly pushed himself up. Isla stepped closer, a  
chill clinging to her presence. Her voice was ice. "The heir to the throne, dressed in ceremonial  
robes on his wedding day, lowering himself like this before his aunt. What a disgrace." Alaric's  
face went pale. "Today was already humiliating enough with the Azure scandal. And instead of  
holding things together, you run off to stage this pathetic display?" Isla's voice stayed low, but  
every word cut deep. "Do you want the entire court to know you covet Cassian's wife?

Or are you hoping to give Theodric a reason to strip you of your title?" Something in Alaric  
snapped. The frustration he had been holding back surged forward, overriding his restraint. "And  
none of this is your doing?" Isla stared at him. "Mine?" "I told you again and again I didn't want  
this marriage," he said, his voice tightening. "You forced it anyway." His jaw set. "Daphne being  
exposed today, everything turning into a joke, it all started because 1/3 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 J

Chapter 240 Shattered Pride you chose poorly and refused to listen-" : The sound of the slap rang  
sharp in the air.

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40 Finished Isla's hand trembled slightly as she pointed at him, her voice shaking with fury.

"Ungrateful. If I had known you would turn out like this, I would never have-" Alaric said nothing. A clear mark bloomed across his cheek. He tilted his head slightly, pressing his tongue against the inside of his jaw, his gaze stubborn, unyielding. "Fine," Isla said coldly. "If your heart is so set on Elowen, then go after her. Take her from Cassian if you can." Her eyes narrowed.

"But remember this. You were the one who killed her horse. Do you think she forgot?"

What happened at Falconcrest Manor, what happened today... have you considered that this might all be her way of paying you back?" Alaric frowned. His voice was firm. "You're wrong about her. Ella has never been calculating. She wouldn't do something like that." Isla let out a short, sharp laugh. "Of course. She's pure, and I'm the villain." She turned sharply. "Do whatever you want from now on. I'm done interfering." With that, she walked away. Alaric stood there, watching her leave, his brows still drawn tight. He glanced down. His robes were stained, wrinkled, a mess. And yet...

A strange sense of satisfaction lingered beneath it all. If Isla had not been there, if he had just said a few more words... Elowen would have softened. He was certain of it. "Your Highness!" Tristan's voice came rushing closer. Alaric turned, his tone steady again. "What is it?" Tristan hurried over, slightly out of breath as he stopped in front of him. "Your Highness, they've been searching everywhere for you. The bride's awake, and she's waiting in the chamber.

It's time." 2/3 19% 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 240 Shattered Pride : At the mention of Daphne, a flicker of undisguised disgust crossed Alaric's face. Tristan hesitated, choosing his words with care. "It's still your wedding day. There are... formalities that have to be seen through." Alaric didn't answer right away. 40 Finished Instead, he turned his head and looked once more in the

direction Elowen had disappeared, his gaze lingering as if unwilling to let As Crown Prince, there were expectations placed on him, obligations he could not simply walk away from, no matter how much he wanted to.

But at least now, one thing had become painfully clear to him. There was only one person he truly wanted. And it was not Daphne. Whatever role he had to play tonight, whatever appearances he had to keep up, he would draw the line where it mattered. He would not touch her. Not even once. At the same time, Elowen was making her way back toward the main hall. Thinking back on Alaric's behavior just now, and the way he had forced his way into Duskmoor Manor before just to see her... It all felt wrong. Like he had become an entirely different person.

1.8K 3/3 14:34 Sat, Apr 11 admin