

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 241 Something Changed It felt like... he wasn't the same person anymore. The thought struck Elowen out of nowhere, sharp and sudden like a lightning bolt. What if... Alaric comes back too? The idea sent a chill racing down her spine. "Ella?...Ella?" 40 Finished Someone called her name a few times before she snapped out of it. She turned and saw Elspeth beside her. Elowen curved her eyes into a smile. "Aunt, what is it?" Elspeth studied her. "Where did you drift off to? I've been calling you." Elowen waved it off casually.

"Nothing serious, just thinking about a few things back at Duskmoor Manor." She shifted the topic smoothly and slipped her arm through Elspeth's. "Did you just arrive? I didn't see you earlier." Elspeth frowned slightly. "Something came up at home, and the rain didn't help. I ended up arriving late and missed the ceremony. How was it? Lively?" Elowen let out a light laugh. "Very. If you have time later, come stay at Duskmoor Manor. I'll tell you everything." Elspeth nodded. "That works. I was planning to stay there for a couple of days anyway." Elowen caught something off in her expression.

Looking closer, she realized Elspeth looked far more worn than usual. "Aunt... did something happen at home?" Elspeth had been holding it in for too long, Now that she started, she didn't stop. "It's her again. This time she didn't just come alone, she brought her daughter with her. Nina, eight years old." Her tone turned sharper. "The girl's always been fragile. Pale, thin, like she'll fall apart in a strong breeze. She clings to him constantly. Either she's asking for stories or insisting he spend time with her, making kites, playing games..."

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It doesn't stop." 1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter 241 Something Changed 40 Finished Elspeth's voice rose, frustration spilling over. "Even late at night, after we've already turned in, they send someone over saying the girl had a nightmare and won't calm down unless she sees him." She exhaled sharply before continuing. "Last night, I heard the first chapter of Azure's new book was already selling out, so I went out to get a copy. On the way back, I picked up some pastries, just trying to be polite. They're guests, after all." Her expression darkened. "And what happens?

That girl eats them and gets sick. Vomiting, stomach cramps. This morning they call a doctor, and suddenly it's food poisoning. And guess what they say? That she only ate what I brought." Elowen's brows drew together slightly. Elspeth scoffed. "Lydia plays it nice, saying, 'Oh, I'm sure it has nothing to do with you.' But then Alistair turns around and asks me if there was something wrong with the pastries." She laughed, bitter and sharp. "He actually suspected me." Alistair. That was the name behind it. Elspeth's chest rose and fell with the lingering anger.

Elowen asked quietly, "And then?" Elspeth's voice turned cold. "I slapped him. Then I walked out and came straight to the Crown Prince's Wing." Elowen blinked. That solution was... direct. She hesitated, then asked, "And Lydia... what exactly is her connection to him?" Elspeth answered without pause, "He was close to his uncle and aunt growing up. They only had one daughter, Lydia. Before they passed, they left her in his care," Her voice tightened. "And he takes promises like that seriously. Once he decides something, he won't let go. No matter what." Elowen frowned slightly.

2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 .. Chapter 241 Something Changed None of this had come up in her previous life. : 40 Finished That meant things between Elspeth and Alistair were far more complicated than she thought. Elspeth waved it off. "I didn't tell you all this to make you worry. I

just don't want to see their faces for a couple of days. Let me stay with you and get some peace."

Elowen answered immediately. "Stay as long as you want." Elspeth added, "But sooner or later, I'm sending them back to Rivenshire. I'm not letting them stay here." Then she seemed to remember something.

"By the way, Ella, the marriage at Falconcrest Manor was delayed for the Crown Prince's wedding. Now that it's done, Sylvia's situation should move forward soon, right?" They had already stepped into the main hall. Elowen was about to answer when voices drifted over.

Yvonne was speaking with several ladies nearby. "...now that the Crown Prince's wedding is finished, it's about time too." your sons start settling down Someone laughed lightly. "Oh please, how could ours compare to yours? Your son is accomplished, and even his marriage was arranged personally by His Majesty.

You're the one we should envy." Yvonne only gave a polite smile. Another woman leaned closer, lowering her voice. "You know, she actually had someone else in mind before all this. The queen's niece, Clarisse. Good family, well-educated, graceful... everything you'd want." A flicker of regret crossed Yvonne's eyes, though her smile didn't falter. "What His Majesty arranged is naturally the best choice. Better than anything I could have chosen." 1.8K 3/3 Awakening Love:

R admin

Chapter 242 Unwelcome Truths The words sounded right. But they didn't feel sincere. & Finished Elowen leaned toward Elspeth and murmured, "You heard that, right? Duchess Yvonne doesn't like Sylvia." Elspeth nodded slightly. "That niece of Her Majesty, I've met her before. She really is impressive. I heard there was even talk of her becoming Crown Princess at one

point." Elowen only smiled. Clarisse might be perfect. But she had already promised Piers. She would make Yvonne accept Sylvia. No matter what. Nearby, another lady laughed.

"If you ask me, just don't end up picking someone like Azure. Who even knows what's real with her?" The implication was obvious. They were mocking Daphne. The group burst into quiet laughter. Elowen's smile deepened. Elspeth looked confused. "What is that supposed to mean? What happened?" Elowen patted her hand lightly. "I'll explain everything when we get back."

The point was simple. After today, Daphne had lost a lot of face. She wouldn't be causing trouble anytime soon. That meant Elowen could finally shift her focus to Sylvia and Piers, By the time the banquet ended, night had fallen.

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Back at Duskmoor Manor, Elowen got busy settling Elspeth in, choosing a spacious courtyard for her, arranging attendants, making sure everything was comfortable, More importantly, she planned to walk her through everything that had happened at the wedding, in full detail, In the study, a shadow guard stood before Cassian. 1/3 Chapter 242 Unwelcome Truths Finished "Your Grace, after leaving the hall, Her Grace met with Elias, then later encountered His Highness... and..." He hesitated. "...she forced him to his knees." Bran and Cassian spoke at the same time.

Bran's voice was full of disbelief. "She really did that?" Cassian's tone carried a hint of amusement. "Impressive." Bran turned to look at him, stunned. Are you serious? Cassian raised a brow, offering no explanation. The guard added, "Her Majesty was nearby at the time. She saw it happen." Bran frowned. "Wouldn't that offend the Crown Prince's Wing? Her Majesty won't forget this." Cassian sounded unconcerned. "He chose to do that. How is that her fault?" Bran had no response. Cassian asked instead, "She spoke with Elias earlier?" The guard confirmed and repeated the conversation in detail.

Bran listened, then said, "That man knows his literature. Even quoting Blythe." Cassian let out a quiet scoff, a knowing smile tugging at his lips. "Idiot." It's obvious now, Elias and Ellago way back, and the real Azure... is his own duchess. Ella, how many more surprises are you still hiding from me? The rain over Vanelle finally stopped. Water dripped from the eaves, forming a steady rhythm as it hit the damp stone below. After seeing Elspeth off, Elowen walked back across the courtyard.

Inside, Cassian sat in his chair, dressed in dark patterned fabric, reading under the soft glow of a glass lamp. The flickering light softened the sharp lines of his face, giving him a calmer, almost scholarly air. At the sound of the door, he looked up, A faint smile touched his lips. "You're back. I thought you'd stay with your aunt tonight." 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 242

Unwelcome Truths Elowen froze for a split second. 40 Finished He got that exactly right. She had considered it. She quickly recovered, stepping closer with a bright, almost overly sweet smile.

"That's not true, Your Grace. You're being unfair." Her voice softened, just a hint of playfulness. "I can't sleep properly without you." Cassian only smiled. Elowen crouched beside him, resting near the arm of the chair, looking up carefully. "So... the guards reported everything?" Cassian gave a low hum. Her heart skipped slightly. She chose her words with care. "So you know I spoke to Elias?" Cassian remained calm. "I heard. He seems well-read. Even knows Blythe."

1.8K W admin

Chapter 243 Close Distance Elowen let out a quiet breath, the tension easing from her shoulders. Good. Cassian still hadn't figured out that she was Azure. 40 Finished The thought lifted her mood, and her tone turned lighter. "So, Your Grace... you heard about what happened with

Alaric too?" Cassian gave a small nod. Elowen tilted her head, studying him, a little uncertain.

"Do you think I went too far?" "Not at all," Cassian said without hesitation. Warmth spread through her chest.

She was just about to smile when he added, unhurried, his tone calm but firm, "Just don't do that again." Elowen blinked, confused. Cassian's lips curved faintly. "I'd rath not give Alaric the wrong kind of satisfaction." Elowen froze. Satisfaction? That didn't make sense. Wouldn't anyone else feel humiliated, furious, completely mortified? Seeing the confusion on her face, the amusement in Cassian's eyes deepened, but he didn't explain further. He closed the book on his lap and set it aside, ending the topic. "It's late.

Get cleaned up." "Okay," Elowen said quickly, dropping the strange thought. She slipped behind him, all smiles, hands settling on the handles of his chair. "I've got you, Your Grace. I'll take you in." She guided him carefully through the room, weaving past the furniture. The wheels rolled softly over the polished floor. They washed up one after the other. Elowen finished first. She changed into a soft nightgown and slipped beneath the covers, waiting quietly. 1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 . Chapter 243 Close Distance 40 Finished The room was dim, candlelight flickering gently.

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Outside, rain tapped steadily against the windows, making everything inside feel even more still.

She heard the faint sound of the chair approaching. A moment later, the bed curtains shifted.

Cassian stepped in, already out of his outer robe, dressed in a pale night shirt. His dark hair was loose, still slightly damp at the ends, softening the sharp lines of his face. He moved with practiced ease from the chair to the bed. Elowen instinctively started to get up to help, but he had already settled himself. The mattress dipped beside her. His presence closed in instantly.

There was a clean, cool scent to him, something like soap and fresh water, mixed with something distinctly his. It made her feel strangely at ease. Without thinking, Elowen leaned closer. She pressed near his neck, curious, breathing him in. "You smell really nice," she murmured.

Cassian's breath hitched, just slightly. His hand came up, resting against her head, holding her in place. With her so close, she could feel the tension in him more clearly now. Even through the fabric, his arm felt tight, controlled, like something wound too taut.

"Your Grace," Elowen said softly, "you're really tense." She meant his muscles. Cassian heard something else entirely. His hand tightened just a fraction. His voice dropped, rougher now. "Do you know where that tension comes from?" Elowen lifted her head, looking up at him, "Where?" Cassian looked down at her, at that completely unguarded expression. For a brief moment, something darker flickered in his eyes. Then it faded. He exhaled quietly, letting it go. 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 243 Close Distance "Did Her Majesty never arrange proper guidance for you?" he asked instead.

Elowen nodded. That hadn't changed, not before, not now. 40 Finished Back then, Isla had never really accepted her. Letting her stumble through things had only made the marriage worse. And this time... Isla probably never expected Cassian to wake at all. What use was any of that knowledge to a wife meant to spend her life alone? Cassian's gaze deepened. "We'll bring someone in from Duskmoor Manor. You and Sylvia both." He paused, then added, almost under his breath, "Mostly you." Otherwise, this would only get harder to ignore. Elowen went quiet. A faint flush crept up her cheeks.

She felt like she almost understood... but not quite. 1.8K () admin

Chapter 244 Unspoken Lines. : 40 Finished After a long moment, she gathered her courage, her voice barely above a whisper, shy but determined. "If you already know all that... then you don't have to wait. I mean... you could just... go ahead. I might not understand much, but I'll do my best." She looked oddly resolute, like she had made up her mind to face something difficult. Cassian's expression softened instantly. He reached out, brushing his fingers gently across her cheek, warm, a little rough from calluses. His voice was low. "My situation's a little different, Ella.

If you're not prepared at all, it won't be easy on you. Or me." He kept it vague. Elowen did fully follow, only gave a small, confused "Oh." Just then, a hurried voice came from outside. "Your Grace, are you resting?" Elowen turned slightly toward the door. "I'm still awake. What is it?" Gerda answered from outside, her tone tight. "There's a woman at the gate. Calls herself Lydia, says she's related to the marchioness. She's brought a small child with her. The girl doesn't look well, and they're insisting on coming in.

I didn't dare decide on my own." Elowen straightened instantly, fully alert. Cassian frowned slightly. "Lydia? From Havenstead?" Elowen nodded. "Yes, Earlier today, Aunt mentioned her. After her husband died, she brought her daughter Nina to Havenstead. Yesterday, Nina got sick after eating something, and it caused an argument. That's why Elspeth came here." She frowned. "I didn't expect her to follow us here." Cassian's response was immediate. "Have the guards turn them away." Elowen shook her head. "That won't solve anything. If she's determined, she'll come back another way.

That only buys time," Before she could finish, hurried footsteps sounded again. 1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 244 Unspoken Lines 40 Finished Cora's voice came in, panicked. "Your Grace,

something's wrong. Marchioness of Havenstead heard and has already gone to the front gate." Elowen's heart jumped. Elspeth's temper... If she ran into Lydia like this, it could turn into a mess. "Get my clothes," Elowen said immediately. She slipped out of bed, pulling on an outer layer, quickly gathering her hair before heading out.

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Elspeth had been in a good mood earlier, but the moment she saw Lydia and Nina, her expression turned cold. "So this is what you're doing now?" she said sharply. "Showing up here in the middle of the night?" "Please don't be angry..." Lydia lowered her head, her voice soft and fragile. "I know this is inappropriate, but Nina's been sick. She kept asking for you. I couldn't bear it..." She placed a hand on Nina's thin back. "Go on, apologize. Tell her you're sorry." Nina stumbled forward, small and unsteady. She looked up timidly, her voice trembling. "It's my fault... please don't be upset..."

it wasn't the food... it was just me..." Elspeth's face hardened, though she didn't lash out at the child. Instead, her gaze snapped to Lydia. "Enough. Don't use a child to play games with me. Leave." At this hour, Elowen and Cassian should have been resting. She had no intention of dragging them into this. But Lydia didn't move. Tears filled her eyes. "If you won't forgive me, I can't go back." Elspeth's patience snapped. "What are you all standing around for?"

Get them out of here." The servants hesitated, then stepped forward, Hands pulling, voices rising, the courtyard quickly descended into chaos, That was when Elowen arrived. "Stop." Her voice cut clean through the noise. Everyone froze. Elspeth turned toward her. 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 .
Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 245 Tears At The Gate A sharp cry broke through the tension. 40 Finished Nina let out a startled yelp and went down hard, her small body hitting the stone, her chin striking the ground with a sickening thud.

Lydia rushed forward at once, pulling her daughter tightly into her arms. Blood streamed down the child's chin, and Lydia's voice rose into a trembling wail. "Please, don't be angry, I'm grateful you took us in. I've never had any other intentions... I know you don't like me. You think I took his favor from you. If you're upset, take it out on me. Nina is only eight. She's innocent..."

Elspeth's face darkened, anger flashing in her eyes. "What nonsense are you talking about?"

"Please don't be angry..." Lydia looked up through tear-filled eyes, her voice breaking. "I've had no luck in life.

My parents died not long after I married. I barely had time to raise Nina before my husband passed too. I had nowhere else to go. For her sake, I came here... I've always treated you with respect, tried to be careful around you. I don't understand why you can't stand us..." Her voice cracked, tears slipping down her face one after another. Avenlor never truly slept. Even now, with night settled in, the streets were still lit and alive. The commotion at the gates of Duskmoor Manor had grown loud enough to draw a crowd.

Lydia sat on the ground, her clothes plain and slightly worn, her frame slender, her hair loosened just enough to look unkempt. Tears clung to her cheeks, making her look fragile, wronged, like someone pushed too far. In her arms, Nina looked pale and shaken, dried blood still marking her chin, wide eyes filled with fear. Across from them, Elspeth stood rigid with anger, her voice sharp, her posture unyielding. The contrast was enough. The crowd began to lean. "A widow raising a child on her own... that's not easy." "Look at that poor girl, that must hurt.

Any mother would be beside herself." "They're family. There's no need to go this far..." Murmurs built, growing louder. Then someone in the crowd shouted, "Jealous shrew!"

1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr
11 J admin

Chapter 245 Tears At The Gate The word hit like a spark in dry grass. The whispers turned into open criticism. "They're already struggling, and she's still pushing them this far..." "The Marchioness of Havenstead is too harsh..." Voices rose one over another, pressing in. 40 Finished Elspeth trembled, fury and humiliation twisting together. She had never been subjected to this kind of public judgment. "You fools-" She was about to snap when a hand gently caught her wrist. Elspeth turned sharply, meeting Elowen's calm gaze.

"Ella..." Her eyes stung, the anger giving way to something raw and close to breaking. Elowen gave her hand a light squeeze, steadying her, then looked toward Lydia, who was still weeping on the ground. Her voice was unhurried, almost conversational. "When I was little and got hurt, my mother would call for a physician right away. If she had spent all that time crying instead, the bleeding would've stopped on its own." Lydia's sobbing faltered. She forced a weak smile.

"You're right... I'm not used to these situations. I saw her bleeding and panicked.

I didn't even think to call for help..." Elowen didn't press her. Instead, she turned slightly. "Cora, go bring Doctor Dray." Cora nodded and left at once. Elowen's gaze swept across the onlookers before settling back on Lydia. Her tone remained even. "My aunt came here earlier. If you wanted her to return, you could've come sooner. Why choose this hour?" Lydia's eyes flickered. "Are you suggesting I came with ulterior motives? I-" "I'm not suggesting anything," Elowen cut in smoothly. "I just don't understand. You keep saying you care about the child.

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You're alone, carrying a frail little girl all the way here, then sitting outside the gates making a scene. It's late, the roads are long, and the air is cold. Does that really look like care?" 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 245 Tears At The Gate The words landed clean and sharp. 40 Finished The crowd shifted, glancing at one another. The earlier accusations began to fade. Lydia's expression

tightened. She bit her lip, tears pooling again. "I was only worried about you and the Marquis-" "They're husband and wife," Elowen said calmly. "If they argue, they'll work it out between themselves.

Since when does a cousin step in and manage their marriage? Or do you think things weren't tense enough, so you decided to add more pressure?" Lydia had no answer. She lowered her head, shoulders trembling. People near the front exchanged looks. "She's right. Bringing a sick child out this late doesn't make sense." "I thought something felt off. The girl's hurt, and instead of treating it, she's out here talking about family issues..." "You think this was on purpose?" At that moment, Hugh arrived in a hurry, carrying his medical kit.

1.8K 3/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess admin

Chapter 246 Lines Drawn : 40 Finished He wore a face covering, revealing only a pair of cool, composed eyes. Stepping forward, he gave Elowen a respectful nod. "Doctor Dray is here."

Elowen inclined her head. "Take the child inside and see to the wound. It's late, close the gates." The heavy doors of Duskmoor Manor shut slowly, cutting off the noise and stares from outside. Lydia lifted Nina and followed the attendants toward the side hall. Elspeth remained where she was, her body still trembling, whether from anger or something deeper, it was hard to tell.

"Aunt," Elowen said gently, "let's go in." Elspeth frowned. "I don't want to see her." Elowen stepped closer, lowering her voice. "The show's not over yet." Elspeth glanced at her. Elowen gave a small, reassuring smile. "It's fine. I'm here." They entered the side hall and took their seats. Doctor Dray finished treating Nina's wound, wrapping it neatly before closing his kit. "Keep it dry. Change the dressing once a day. It should heal in a few days." Lydia nodded

absently, her eyes drifting toward the doorway now and then, as if waiting for someone. Before long, a servant stepped in.

"Your Grace, the Marquis of Havenstead has arrived." Elspeth's first reaction was immediate.

"Tell him to leave-" Elowen pressed her arm lightly, stopping her. "Show him in." The servant bowed and left. Elspeth muttered under her breath, displeased. "Why let him in? He's just going to take their side again..." Before she could finish, footsteps approached, steady but urgent.

Alistair entered the room. 1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 246 Lines Drawn 40 Finished Nearing fifty, he still carried himself with a straight-backed ease. Broad shoulders, a defined waist, his dark robe fitted him cleanly.

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Under the candlelight, his features came into view, sharp brow, deep-set eyes, and a well-kept beard that gave him both authority and refinement. "My lord-" Lydia spoke first, her voice trembling, almost pleading. Elowen's brow tightened slightly. The wife hadn't even spoken yet, and the cousin had already stepped forward. No sense of place. Alistair didn't look at Lydia. His gaze went straight to Elspeth. "What happened?" Elspeth glanced at Elowen. Elowen met her eyes calmly. "Say it as it is." Elspeth's expression hardened. She turned back, voice cold. "Why ask me?"

"Ask cousin." Elowen pressed her fingers lightly to her temple, letting out a silent breath. She was starting to understand why these two never stopped clashing. your dear Alistair frowned, about to speak-Then Lydia suddenly dropped to the floor, her body folding down as if all strength had left her. She looked up at him through tear-streaked cheeks, voice breaking. "My lord... this is all my fault. I know she resents me... but I couldn't stand seeing the two of you drift apart because of me. I lost my head."

I brought Nina here, hoping to ask her to come back..." Her shoulders shook as she cried. "Blame me if you must, but please don't be angry with her. It's all my fault... I shouldn't have come. I shouldn't have made myself a burden..." Elspeth's temper snapped. "Stop pretending!" she shot back. Lydia flinched, shrinking in on herself, voice small and pleading, "If you're angry, take it out on me. Just... please don't stay upset with him. That household needs its lady. If it comes to it... I'll leave Vanelle with Nina. We'll never show our faces again..." The words sounded humble.

But every line pressed harder. Elspeth's anger flared, sharp and immediate. "Then leave. Leave now." 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 246 Lines Drawn "Elspeth." Alistair's voice cut in, low and firm. She didn't back down. "You go with her." 40 Finished His brows drew together. "They're alone, with no one to rely on. Why push them this far?" Elspeth laughed coldly. "Feeling sorry for her again? Then divorce me and bring her in instead." His expression tightened, frustration clear. "You're the one escalating this." The tension snapped tight between them, ready to break.

"Aunt's not the only one here, my lord." Elowen's voice cut in, calm but unmistakable. Alistair exhaled slowly, forcing himself to steady. He turned to her and inclined his head. "Your Grace." Elowen met his gaze evenly. "If anything, Lydia seems more concerned about my aunt than you are. You hadn't even acted yet, and she was already here, asking her to return." 1.8K admin

Chapter 247 Quiet Interrogation 40 Finished Alistair inclined his head slightly. "Your Grace, I had every intention of coming myself once I finished my duties. I was only delayed by a few matters at the last moment." Elowen gave a small nod. "Then it seems the fault lies with Lydia." She turned to Lydia. Her tone remained calm, but there was an edge beneath it. "If you knew the

Marquess would come personally to escort aunt, why rush here in the middle of the night with a child in such a fragile state? The road is long, the night air is cold.

If anything had happened along the way, would that not have been blamed on her?" Lydia stiffened. "I was worried there might be tension between you and the Marquess. I only came to help smooth things over. I didn't think about the hour..." "If you truly meant to mediate," Elowen said evenly, "you could have waited for the Marquess and come together. Or sent a servant ahead with a message, explaining the situation discreetly. Why bring a sick child all the way here at night, only to remain outside the gates, crying and pleading instead of entering?" Her gaze settled on Lydia.

"Those who know you might say you acted out of urgency, though poorly judged. Those who don't might think you meant to draw attention, to air private matters in public, to stir conflict until it turned into something irreparable." "I... I didn't..." Lydia's face flushed, then drained of color. Her lips trembled as she tried to argue, but her words collapsed under the weight of Elowen's questions. She looked helplessly toward Alistair. Alistair remained silent, his expression unreadable, offering no defense. Elspeth had never had the upper hand like this before.

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Watching Lydia falter, she felt a rare sense of satisfaction. Her gaze toward Elowen grew brighter with each passing moment. Unhurried, Elowen shifted the subject. "By the way, I heard Nina fell ill recently after eating some pastries, vomiting and suffering from severe stomach upset, She's only just recovered. Since we're here, Doctor Dray should take a closer look. A child's health is not something to take lightly." At once, Lydia panicked. "That won't be necessary, Your Grace. Nina is much better now. The physician said rest would be enough.

There's no need to trouble another doctor." 1/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 U Chapter 247 Quiet

Interrogation 40 Finished Elowen seemed not to notice her reaction. "That won't do. One can never be too careful with a child. Or do you doubt the skill of the physician I invited?" She let out a quiet breath. "I know I'm young, and my position may not command respect. Many may not take my words seriously." Lydia hurried to correct herself. "That's not what I meant..."

Elowen smiled faintly. "Then let Doctor Dray examine her." Lydia fell silent, unable to respond.

Only then did she realize she had already walked straight into a trap. Hugh stepped forward and gently took Nina's thin wrist. The child shrank back in fear, but Hugh steadied her with calm assurance. Silence filled the room. Only the faint crackle of candlelight could be heard. Every eye Hugh's fingers resting against that fragile wrist. Lydia's nails dug into her palm. She barely dared to breathe. fixed on After a moment, Hugh released her. His gaze remained steady. "Her pulse shows mild weakness in the stomach, consistent with recovery. However, there is no sign of sudden severe illness.

The vomiting was not caused by spoiled food." He paused briefly. "It is more likely she caught a chill during the night." Another pause. "There are still traces suggesting she was not kept warm. Possibly even exposed to cold water. That would explain her condition." Elspeth let out a sharp, satisfied scoff, her expression saying everything. Alistair said nothing, his face dark. Lydia's voice shook. "You... you must b "How could that be?" misread it..." Elowen's tone carried mild surprise. "Doctor Dray was personally invited by His Grace from afar. Even His Majesty has praised his skill.

It is unlikely he would be mistaken." Lydia bit down hard on her lip, her face pale. Elowen did not give her time to recover. She turned to Nina, her voice gentle. "Nina, when you sleep at

night, doesn't your mother remind you to stay covered and keep warm?" I keep The child looked at her, then at Lydia. Her lips trembled. "I did... but the blanket was too short. 2/3 14:35 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 247 Quiet Interrogation My feet were cold... and later Mother wiped me down, but... the water was cold..." Her small voice cut through the room like a blade.

Elsbeth let out a long breath, as if a weight had finally lifted. 40 Finished She shot a sharp look at Alistair, then at Lydia. "For the sake of framing me, you'd go this far with your own child?" 1.8K H admin

Chapter 248 Truth Exposed Lydia's face turned completely pale. Tears filled her eyes. (40) Finished She looked up at Alistair, her voice trembling with grief. "Alistair, she's just a child. She must have been frightened and said the wrong things. She means everything to me. I left everything behind just to give her a stable life. How could I ever harm her? That would be like tearing out my own heart. You may resent me, but how could you question a mother's love?" Elspeth let out a cold laugh. "Keep acting." Elowen suddenly sighed softly.

"Marquess, if we look at it carefully, Lydia's words are not entirely without reason." Elspeth turned sharply, startled. The proof is right there, and you're still taking his side? Speaking up for someone outside the family? Elowen continued at an even pace. "Though Lydia lost her parents and her husband, her family still holds some standing. She is not without means. If she came here, it may not have been purely for her own comfort." A brief pause. "And as I recall, when you married Aunt, you swore before her family that you would take no other wife. Lydia would know this.

She could never become your concubine. And with Aunt in good health, she would never take her place." She lifted her gaze slightly. "So if she insisted on staying in your household, it could

only have been for Nina." Her words sounded gentle, but each one stripped away the truth layer by layer. Alistair's expression slowly turned cold. He was no fool. He had simply chosen not to doubt her. Until now. Realization struck like ice through his veins. He had been deceived. He had nearly destroyed his own household. Lydia trembled. "Alistair..."

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I..." "Go back." His voice cut through her words, low and final. 1/2 14:36 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 248 Truth Exposed : 40 Finished "Alistair..." "I said, go back." His tone sharpened. Lydia froze. She had never heard him speak like this. When she met his eyes, there was nothing left there but disappointment. Fear gripped her chest. "Guards," Alistair said. "Take Lydia and Nina back." Two attendants stepped forward at once, lifting Lydia up as she collapsed. "Alistair, for the sake of my parents-" Her plea was cut short as a cloth was pressed over her mouth. She was dragged out without hesitation.

After she was taken away, Alistair turned back to Elspeth, guilt written plainly across his face. "Today was my mistake..." Elspeth shot him a sidelong look. "Just today?" He paused, then corrected himself at once. "You're right. I've been wrong before as well." He stepped closer, his tone softening. "Calm down. You can scold me, hit me if you like. I won't complain." Elspeth rolled her eyes. "You make it sound like I'm unreasonable." He smiled quickly. "Not at all.

You've always been the most reasonable." She let out a small huff, turning her face away, though her expression had already softened. He read her mood carefully and continued, gentler now.

"It's late. Shall we head back? I promise, I won't upset you again." 1.8K H 2/2 14:37 Sat, Apr 11 J Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 249 Sudden Chaos "My lord, my lord, something's wrong!" Just as Elspeth's expression began to ease, a maid's panicked voice broke in

from outside. The girl rushed into the side chamber, breathless, all composure forgotten. "My lady... she just now...

she got too overwhelmed and suddenly fainted!" Alistair's brows drew tight at once. 40 Finished The maid was still catching her breath as she hurried on, "And little Nina was frightened, she's crying terribly, she keeps asking for her uncle..." Alistair's frown deepened. He instinctively moved to leave, but the moment his foot stepped forward, he seemed to remember Elspeth beside him and forced himself to stop. Elspeth caught that hesitation in full. The trace of calm on her face vanished instantly. She let out a cold laugh, her voice sharp as frost. "If you want to go, then go.

No one's stopping you. That poor cousin of yours and her child clearly matter far more." Alistair stiffened slightly at her words. "You misunderstand, that's not what I meant. Let's go back together and handle this, alright?" "I'm not going back," Elspeth cut him off without hesitation. "I'll be staying at Duskmoor Manor for the next few days. It's quiet here." Alistair tried again, "They have only just married, they should have their peace. If you stay here, it might be an inconvenience-" Elspeth interrupted, irritation flaring. "This is Duskmoor Manor. It's large enough.

I'll be in the guest wing, not sharing their bed. How exactly would I be in the way?" Elowen stood off to the side, unable to step in. If she spoke for Elspeth, it felt justified. If she sided with Alistair, what right did she have? Before she could decide, the soft roll of wheels echoed from the corridor. 1/3 14:37 Sat, Apr 11 J admin

Chapter 249 Sudden Chaos : The sound alone made her breathe out in quiet relief. Cassian entered, seated in his chair, Bran guiding him forward at an unhurried pace. 40 Finished The

night air lingered in the hall behind him. Lantern light cast a faint golden glow over his figure, and as he moved into the room, the candlelight caught his features, sharpening every line into something strikingly composed. "Your Grace," Alistair said quickly, collecting himself as he offered a respectful bow. Cassian gave a slight nod, his voice cool. "Elowen and I have already made plans.

In a few days, we'll be heading out to the estate beyond the city for the hot springs. My aunt will be joining us to rest and recover. There's no need for you to concern yourself." Elowen blinked. Hot springs? She met his gaze, deep and unreadable, and understood at once. He was backing Elspeth, and sending Alistair away. "...Yes, that's right," she said, following his lead. Cassian's eyes shifted back to Alistair. His tone remained even, but the pressure beneath it was unmistakable. "You can leave with peace of mind now." Alistair knew there was no taking her back today.

With a quiet sigh, he relented. "...Very well. Then I'll have to trouble you both." He bowed again, more solemn this time. "Please take good care of her these next few days. I'll take my leave." Cassian's expression did not change. "My aunt is under my care. You needn't trouble yourself." Alistair cast one last look at Elspeth before turning and walking away. Only when his figure disappeared beyond the corridor, his footsteps fading into silence, did Elspeth finally look away. She let out a sharp, humorless laugh. "Ella, you saw that, didn't you?"

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He says he knows he was wrong, but the moment he hears that 2/3 14:37 Sat, Apr 11 .. Chapter 249 Sudden Chaos 40 Finished fragile little cousin fainted and the child started crying, he's already halfway out the door. If you and Cassian weren't here, I would've slapped him myself." The more she spoke, the angrier she became. "Men are all the same. Not a single one worth

trusting." Cassian paused. Aunt... has it crossed your mind that I'm a man too? For a brief second, something unreadable crossed his face.

Elowen quickly soothed Elspeth, speaking gently until the servants guided her back to rest. On the way back, Elowen's brows remained faintly drawn. "No wonder she's looked so worn these past few days. This must have been weighing on her. If I hadn't arrived in time today, she would've been the one left swallowing all the hurt again. And even now, she's still the one suffering. The moment he hears something's wrong with Lydia or Nina, his mind just drifts."

Cassian's response was brief. "He's uncertain." Elowen nodded. "I'm just worried..."

if this keeps going, the misunderstandings will only grow. What if it really ends in separation?"

"That wouldn't be a problem," Cassian said calmly. "She has status, wealth, and independence. She doesn't need him to survive. If it truly comes to that, there will be no shortage of men lining up to marry her, from Vanelle's gates all the way to the docks at Rivenshire." 1.8K (admin

hapter 250 What Comes Next Elowen fell silent. : It struck her then how different women could be. 40 Finished Some learned to hold onto a husband's affection, navigating every hidden rivalry within a household. Others never needed to. They had enough standing to choose for themselves. The thought eased her unease. Back in her room, Cassian noticed the lingering fatigue in her expression and smiled faintly. "Don't dwell on it. You've done enough today. Get some rest. The instructor will arrive tomorrow. Spend a couple of days learning properly, then we'll leave for the estate." Elowen paused.

"We're really going?" She had thought it was only an excuse. Cassian nodded. "Hugh says the springs there will help with my recovery." Elowen let out a soft sound. If it was for that, she

couldn't refuse. "Alright. Then we'll go." But something still puzzled her. "If it helps, why not leave tomorrow? Why wait for the instructor?" Cassian looked at her, his gaze deep in the candlelight. "Because this trip isn't just about the springs." Elowen blinked. "Then what else?" A faint smile touched his lips, "You'll see." He brushed her cheek gently.

"For now, focus on your lessons." "Alright." Exhaustion caught up with her quickly that night. The moment her head touched the pillow, she drifted into sleep. 1/3 14:37 Sat, Apr 11 U Chapter 250 What Comes Next 0: The next morning, she woke to Mira's soft voice. Cassian was already gone. "Your Grace, wake up. The instructor has arrived." Elowen rubbed her eyes, her thoughts slowly clearing. 40 Finished "Have Cora settle her in first. Place her in the guest room near our wing.

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I'll see her shortly." After washing and dressing, she had someone summon Sylvia as well, then called for the instructor. They met in the study. Sylvia arrived first. After she had taken her seat, a well-dressed matron entered not long after, following Cora inside. She paused at a respectful distance, then inclined her head in a composed, courtly manner. "My name is Cecilia," she said evenly. "I was invited here by His Grace to instruct you both." Elowen sat upright at the table, a small notebook and quill already in hand.

She listened with full attention, then carefully wrote the name down on the first page in neat, deliberate strokes. Cecilia caught the motion from the corner of her eye, a faint smile touching her expression. She's unexpectedly earnest. Once the water was set, the lesson began. Cecilia did not hesitate. "What I teach concerns the private duties between husband and wife," she said, her tone steady and composed.

"How to maintain harmony within marriage, how to fulfill one's role, and how to ensure the continuation of the family line." Elowen lowered her head at once, writing everything down with careful precision. Beside her, Sylvia sat stiffly, her composure slipping. A soft flush spread across her face, climbing from her cheeks to the tips of her ears and down along her neck. Cecilia observed them both, then gave a calm, reassuring smile. "There is no shame in this," she continued. "These matters are essential to the stability of a household and the continuation of a noble line.

They are guided by both nature and order. There is no need for embarrassment." 2/3 14:37 Sat, Apr 11 .. 40 Chapter 250 What Comes Next Finished Elowen leaned forward slightly, intent on recording every word. Cecilia let out a quiet, amused breath. "You needn't write everything down. It's enough to understand." Elowen paused mid-note, glancing up with a hint of confusion. Cecilia continued, her tone turning more instructive. "Moderation is the first principle. Excess brings harm.

One must consider timing, condition, and balance, and never act to the point of exhaustion." She paused briefly, her expression growing more serious. "There are also boundaries. During violent storms, illness, fatigue, or certain physical conditions, it is best to refrain. One must respect both the body and the order of nature." Elowen considered this, then nodded slowly. Cecilia gestured lightly toward the notebook. "These, you may write." 1.8K W 6 admi