

# Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

## Chapter 261: The Injured Leg

"But-" Elowen attempted once more, seeking any excuse to hold onto. "Your leg hasn't healed yet." Cassian nodded swiftly, almost too quickly. "Right," he said smoothly. "Still injured."

Relief flooded over Elowen. Good. He comprehended. "Exactly," she replied, releasing a breath.

"So let's get some rest. We can always-" Cassian chuckled softly under his breath, a sound that weighed heavy on Elowen's heart.

Finished, he leaned closer and whispered, "My leg's injured. Which means you'll have to take care of me." Elowen blinked at him.

"...What?" By the time everything concluded, Elowen lay against Cassian's chest like a spent rag, utterly exhausted. She lacked the strength to even move a finger. Cassian sounded thoroughly content with himself. Leaning down, he kissed her cheek. "Sleepy?" Elowen emitted a faint, drowsy sound with her eyes closed. Cassian lightly kissed her lips. "Then let's get you to bed." Rising to his feet, he effortlessly lifted her out of the hot spring, stepping onto the stone edge. Elowen was too fatigued to think clearly.

Something felt slightly amiss about the situation, but her mind refused to cooperate. She allowed him to carry her as he pleased. Her eyes closed. Sleep claimed her almost instantly.

She had no idea how long she slept. When she woke, it felt as if someone had disassembled her body overnight and put it back together incorrectly. Warmth lay beside her. She turned slightly.

Cassian still slept, his breathing steady. The memories from the previous night flooded back all at once, causing Elowen's face to burn.

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She quickly turned away, gazing out the window. It was still early, the sky obscured by thick clouds, making it hard to determine the time. A pale gray light filtered through the gauzy curtains, faint and colorless. Elowen felt completely awake. Her throat was parched, yet she hesitated to call for a servant. A small table stood nearby, so she decided to pour herself a drink. However, as she pushed herself upright, a deep soreness swept through her body, causing her to emit a quiet hiss of pain.

After waiting for the discomfort to ease, she cautiously lowered her legs off the bed, placing her feet on the cool floor. Dressed in a soft nightgown with neatly tied ribbons, Cassian must have washed and changed her clothes after the events of the previous night. A cool pot stood on the table. Elowen poured herself a cup of chilled water and sat on a small stool, sipping slowly.

From the bed behind her, Cassian's voice, still rough with sleep, drifted towards her. "You're up early." Elowen turned towards him and nodded. "Would you like some water?" "No."

There was a brief silence before his tone softened. "Come here, Ella." The thought instantly appeared in Elowen's mind with absolute clarity. That bed was the most perilous place. If she approached it, Cassian would engulf her without hesitation.

Almost instinctively, she pressed her sore legs together and shook her head. "No." Cassian regarded her with mild amusement. "Come here," he coaxed. "Just a hug. I won't do anything." Elowen didn't believe that promise for a moment. She shook her head more firmly. "I'm perfectly comfortable here, so I'll stay put." Cassian paused briefly. Sitting over there is comfortable, but

sitting beside me isn't? The words remained unspoken as he swallowed them back, cleared his throat quietly, and let out a soft sigh.

"My leg hurts." Elowen's head shot up. "Again?" Only then did a memory surface in her mind. The previous night, after the second time, Cassian had carried her out of the hot spring. At that moment, she had been too dazed to consider it. However, upon replaying the scene, something was evidently amiss. He should not have been able to do that with an injured leg. A wave of guilt washed over her, prompting her to rise quickly and hurry back to the bed. "Did you strain it last night?" she inquired anxiously.

"Should we call Doctor Dray to take a look? If something worsens-" Before she could finish, a warm, steady hand grasped her wrist.

The grip was firm yet gentle, preventing her from pulling away. Cassian tugged, catching Elowen off guard, causing her to stumble forward onto the bed, landing in Cassian's arms.

His familiar clean scent enveloped her, leaving her with nowhere to retreat. Still preoccupied with his alleged injury, Elowen twisted slightly to examine his leg. "Cassian, you said it hurt last night too. Perhaps we should send for Doctor Dray, because if-" Cassian silenced her with a kiss. Elowen's breath caught, realization dawning upon her. There had been no pain in his leg. He had deceived her. Flushed with embarrassment, Elowen pushed against his chest, finally managing to speak, her face crimson.

"Cecilia told me that married couples are supposed to pace themselves."

Chapter 262 The Threat Cassian lifted a brow. "Alright," he said calmly. "Then the moment we return, Cecilia goes back to the palace." Elowen froze. "What?" Her thoughts tangled instantly.

Heat rushed to her face and she struggled to form words. "I... I..." Cassian did not let her finish. Finished He kissed her again, slower this time, his lips moving downward along her throat. Elowen's breathing unraveled on its own. Her chest rose and fell unevenly, her body responding before her mind could catch up.

Just when she felt herself slipping completely under the tide of it, Cassian suddenly stopped. He looked down at her. The expression in his eyes carried quiet amusement, but there was something deeper beneath it. "Do you want this?" he asked. Elowen bit her lower lip. Her thoughts argued fiercely with the warmth running through her body. Her body won. She let out a small, helpless sound. "Mm." Cassian's mouth curved slightly. He kissed her again.

Just as he had the second time the night before, he drew her onto his lap and lifted her by the waist, Elowen squeezed her eyes shut in pure humiliation. And still Cassian asked, his voice low near her ear, "What are you thinking about, Ella?" Elowen forced out the words between uneven breaths. 1/1 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 ... Chapter 262 The Threat 40 Finished "If I ever believe you again when you say your leg hurts, then I must be the dumbest hound alive... mm..." Cassian laughed under his breath.

"Then I suppose our stubborn little hound deserves a reward." When everything finally settled, Elowen slept for a long time. When she woke again, Cassian was gone. Only the faint warmth he left behind lingered. Outside, the sky was still gray and dull. Thick clouds pressed low over the hills. For a moment she could not tell whether it was morning or evening. Elowen slowly pushed herself upright, pulling the blanket close around her shoulders. Mira had been waiting outside. Hearing the movement inside the bed curtains, she stepped in quietly and stopped beside the bed.

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"Duchess, you're awake?" Elowen spoke, her voice hoarse. "What time is it?" "Evening," Mira answered respectfully. Elowen blinked. "Evening?" Mira nodded. "His Grace gave orders before he left the room. He said you were exhausted yesterday and no one was to disturb you." Heat rose to Elowen's face again. She quickly changed the subject. "Where is he?" Mira lifted the bed curtains as she answered. "His Grace woke before dawn. Around midmorning he had someone bring Doctor Dray to examine him. He should be in the study now.

He also ordered the kitchen to keep supplements and a few light dishes ready, so they can be served the moment you wake." Elowen let out a quiet huff. At least Cassian still has a trace of conscience. 2/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 U Chapter 262 The Threat : Finished With Mira's help she washed, changed into fresh clothes, and ate the supplements and light dishes prepared for her. The food settled her stomach, and some strength returned, though a faint soreness still lingered in places she would rather not think about. After rinsing her mouth, Cora entered.

"Duchess, Anwen from the Baker family has arrived. Clarisse is with her." Elowen frowned. Anwen and Clarisse? Why would they come here? After a moment's thought she said, "Bring them to the Great Hall." "And invite Yvonne and Elspeth as well. Tell them Anwen and Clarisse have arrived and I would like them to join us." "Yes, Duchess." Cora left immediately. Elowen made her way to the Great Hall and took the main seat. Her thoughts drifted briefly toward Cassian's leg. Hugh had already examined him. So is he better now, or worse? Anwen and Clarisse soon entered, led by a maid.

But Elowen's attention shifted immediately to the man walking behind them. He was enormous.

\* Nearly seven feet tall, broad across the shoulders and thick through the back, his work clothes stretched tight over heavy muscle. He looked like a man shaped by open fields and hard labor,

rough and powerful in a way that lacked any polish. Elowen recognized him instantly, In her previous life, at the lookout, he had been the one holding Clarisse. Later he had climbed into the carriage with her and another man. Elowen had not expected Clarisse to be bold enough to bring him here openly.

3/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 262 The Threat Today he wore plain laborer's clothes. 40 Finished His head was lowered, his posture exaggeratedly submissive as he followed behind Anwen and Clarisse. He stopped beneath the eaves outside the Great Hall and stood quietly with his hands at his sides, looking like nothing more than a harmless servant. Clarisse wore a pale green gown. It was simple but elegant, showing off her slender waist. Her cheeks carried a faint blush. When she saw Elowen seated above, Clarisse performed a proper curtsy. Anwen stepped forward first, smiling eagerly.

"Greetings, Duchess," she said warmly. "We heard that His Grace and the duchess were resting at this estate, so I brought my daughter to pay our respects. If we've intruded, please forgive us." Elowen returned a polite smile. "You're very thoughtful. Please sit. As it happens, Yvonne and Elspeth are staying here as well. I've sent for them. They should arrive shortly and we can speak together." Anwen's eyes flickered. She hesitated before speaking again, her tone suddenly strained. "To be honest, Duchess, I did not come merely to visit.

There is something urgent I hope to ask of you." Elowen tilted her head slightly. "Oh?" Anwen sighed deeply. "I only received confirmation at noon today. Yesterday my husband acted foolishly while serving in the army and committed a grave mistake. His Grace was furious and ordered an investigation himself." 1.8K 4/4 admin

Chapter 263 Busy Elowen's hand paused on the cup. So that was why Cassian had been busy. 40  
Finished That explained why he left so early that morning and could not accompany her to  
Sunspire Hill. Elowen said nothing and calmly took a sip of water. Anwen watched her  
expression carefully. Seeing Elowen remain composed made her even more uneasy, but she  
continued. "It was not... some catastrophic matter. He simply let greed cloud his judgment. He  
diverted a portion of the army's grain and supplies and brought them home. And on the pay  
roster...

he added several names that were not real, so the extra wages could be drawn." Elowen stared at  
her. Military rations and wages fed the soldiers of the realm. And she called that "not  
catastrophic." Anwen continued, "I heard His Grace left in a hurry yesterday. My husband has  
been detained, but no punishment has been decided yet. And the matter has not been reported to  
His Majesty." She studied Elowen again and sighed sorrowfully. "That is why I came. I only  
hope you might speak a few gentle words to His Grace. He cares deeply for you, Duchess.

Surely he would listen." Elowen sighed and set her cup down. "Anwen," she said sincerely, "you  
may remember what I said at the banquet when His Grace was still unconscious. I said I wished  
to marry him with all my heart. That is how I ended up in this position. It was His Majesty's  
grace. His Grace treats me decently because of His Majesty. But saying he deeply cares for me is  
an exaggeration. And matters of the army are not something I understand. I stay within the  
household. I would never dare interfere." She paused before adding gently, "If you are anxious,  
His Grace is here at the estate.

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Why not speak with him directly? I could even take you there." Anwen's face turned pale  
instantly. She waved her hands quickly. "N-no, how could I?" 1/3 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter

263 Busy 40 Finished Cassian's reputation in Vanelle was terrifying enough. If she appeared before him herself, she might be thrown out before she finished speaking. She came here because Elowen looked young and easier to persuade. Anwen's eyes reddened. "Duchess, I truly have no other way. Please help me." She began to rise, as though preparing to drop to the floor. Elowen quickly reached out and stopped her.

"Please don't do that. Stand up." But Anwen seized the opportunity and clung to it. "If you refuse me, I won't rise." Then she pleaded pitifully, "You only need to mention it to His Grace in private. One sentence from husband. And saving him saves our entire family." you could save my It sounded like begging. But it was also pressure. Elowen looked at her for a long moment, as if weighing a difficult decision. "...Very well. I'll go speak with His Grace and see what he says." Anwen looked up instantly. "Truly?" Elowen nodded. "He may not listen.

But I can ask." Anwen's tears turned into smiles immediately. "Thank you, Duchess. Thank you." "It's nothing," Elowen said gently. "Your husband is fortunate to have such a devoted wife. Please wait here." Elowen left the Great Hall, Anwen finally let out a long breath and wiped her face with a handkerchief. Clarisse spoke softly, "Mother, I'd like to step outside for some air." Anwen glared at her. "Outside again? Sit down." "Yvonne and Elspeth will arrive soon. You'll stay right here." Clarisse frowned but said nothing more.

Instead she turned her gaze toward the doorway, watching the grounds outside as though 2/3  
14:39 Sat, Apr 11 .. Chapter 263 Busy ... waiting for someone. Elowen walked quickly. : 40  
Finished As she passed the large man waiting beneath the eaves, a crawling discomfort ran down her spine. She turned her head slightly and met his eyes. He made no attempt to hide the look in them. It was heavy and greedy, sliding over her like a hand. The way he looked at her made her

skin crawl, as though he were stripping away her clothes with his gaze. Elowen's brows tightened. Anger and disgust rose together.

She turned away and quickened her pace. Only after reaching the courtyard did she finally release a slow breath. She had no intention of going to Cassian. Instead she slowed and began walking along the gravel path. Mira followed behind, confused. "Duchess, didn't you promise Anwen you would speak to His Grace?" Elowen answered calmly, "I lied. Stealing military provisions and wages is a serious crime anywhere. It cannot be erased with a few pleading words. When my father served in the army, men who did worse were executed on the spot.

And anyone who tried to plead for them received the lash." 1.8K W admin

Chapter 264 Military Mira nodded slowly. "That makes sense." Elowen continued, "Cassian runs the army as strictly as my father once did. If I went to him and begged for mercy, he would despise me. And even if he somehow listened and concealed the matter for my sake, what would that make of military law? If His Majesty learned the truth later, he would be furious. How could Cassian face him then?" Mira asked, "Should we go find His Grace and let him handle Anwen?" Elowen shook her head. "No. She is Her Majesty's sister in law.

If Cassian drives her away personally and word spreads, people will say he showed no respect to Her Majesty." And besides, Elowen did not want to see Cassian right now. Just thinking about him made her legs feel weak. Memories of last night alone made her waist and thighs ache. Elowen steadied her breathing. "We'll walk here for a while. Elspeth and Yvonne will soon reach the Great Hall, so Anwen will not be alone. Later we will return and tell her that His Grace said he will consider the matter. With witnesses present she cannot keep pressing me." Mira looked at Elowen with admiration.

Your Grace is becoming sharper. They wandered slowly through the courtyard. The Sunspire Hill estate was smaller than Duskmoor Manor, but it was built along the mountainside, with spring water flowing through the grounds and terraces rising one above another. Elowen kept her pace deliberately slow as she walked through the estate gardens, because Cassian had been far too relentless the night before and her body still carried a lingering fatigue she could not quite ignore. When they reached a cluster of ornamental rocks arranged into winding paths, she paused for a moment.

The rock garden had been designed with careful attention, the stones stacked in layered formations that created narrow passages and hidden corners, and a small stone bench sat nearby beneath the shadow of the tallest rock. 1/4 14:39 Sat, Apr Chapter 264 Military Finished

Deciding she needed a moment to rest, Elowen sat down briefly. Her throat felt dry again, so she turned slightly and gestured to Mira. "Could you bring me some water?" she asked. Mira bowed her head and left immediately.

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Left alone, Elowen wandered a little deeper into the rock garden, moving slowly along one of the winding paths between the stones. She had barely rounded the side of one of the taller formations when a sound reached her ears, faint but unmistakable enough to make her pause. Tilting her head slightly, she listened more carefully. A woman's voice drifted through the narrow space between the rocks, sharp with irritation. "Why are you holding me like that? Weren't you staring at her earlier?"

"Do you think she's prettier than me?" A man answered her with a rough laugh that carried easily through the stone passages. "She is prettier," he said bluntly. "But she's not nearly as wicked as you are, miss." Elowen froze where she stood. Almost against her own will, her gaze shifted

toward the direction of the voices. Through a narrow gap where two large rocks overlapped, she caught sight of movement in the shadowed space beyond. Two figures were tangled together behind The woman wore a pale green dress. Clarisse.

The broad man she had noticed earlier was leaning over her, their bodies pressed close together while neither of them seemed to notice anyone nearby. Clarisse's skirt had been pushed up and gathered messily around her lower back, and the muffled sound she made left no doubt about what was happening, For a moment Elowen's mind went completely blank. They're on the estate grounds, in broad daylight, and yet they dare to behave like this... Before the thought could fully form, her vision suddenly went dark. A warm hand had covered her eyes.

2/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter 264 Military 40 Finished The hand was large and steady, the long fingers familiar enough that she stiffened instantly and tried to pull away. A low voice spoke close beside her ear. "It's me." Cassian. Elowen froze even harder, confusion flooding her mind. Why is he here? "Let's go," Cassian said quietly. Before she could react, he lifted her cleanly off the ground. One arm held her securely against him while the other kept his hand firmly over her eyes, blocking her view as he turned and carried her away from the rock garden.

Unable to see anything, Elowen felt her thoughts tangle together in confusion. Cassian is standing. And he is carrying me. Another voice soon reached her ears, dry and mildly disapproving. "Your leg has barely recovered halfway, and you're already showing off," Hugh remarked. "You walked all the way here and carried someone back. Don't you think that's pushing things a little too far?" A moment later Elowen felt herself being set down gently on a cushioned couch. The hand covering her eyes finally lifted, and she blinked as her vision slowly adjusted to the indoor light.

The room around her was neat and tastefully arranged, with the faint scent of medicinal herbs lingering in the air. Hugh sat off to one side, calmly wiping down a set of needles as if nothing unusual had happened. But Elowen's attention was fixed entirely on Cassian. In the past, whenever Elowen saw Cassian, he was usually lying in bed or sitting in that wheelchair, and rarely standing like this. Now he stood there with an easy composure, his tall frame relaxed yet striking.

His shoulders were broad and open, his waist firm and well defined beneath a dark everyday coat that made the clean lines of his build even more distinct, Sunlight filtered through the lattice window behind him, laying a pale gold glow across his figure and tracing the strong lines of his back. The muscles there were not exaggerated or bulky, yet the quiet strength in the way he carried himself was unmistakable, balanced and controlled in a way that felt both powerful and restrained. 3/4 admin

Chapter 265 His Only Remedy Finished Cassian had always been striking in appearance, the kind of beauty that carried a dangerous edge, with sharp brows and a straight, aristocratic nose that made people look twice. Yet seeing him standing like this had a completely different impact, one that felt immediate and almost unreal. that He held himself upright with quiet composure, his tall frame steady and balanced in a way made the dark folds of his coat shift lightly when he moved, briefly revealing the firm strength along his forearm.

For a fleeting moment, he looked less like a man recovering from injury and more like a figure stepped out of an old portrait hanging in some gallery. Elowen opened her mouth to speak, only to realize her voice trembled the moment the words left her lips. "Cassian... how are you..." " Cassian's mouth curved into a faint smile, and his tone remained warm and unhurried. "I found

out last night that I can stand for a short while," he explained. "So this morning I had Hugh come take a look.

After the treatment, I can stay on my feet for a bit longer." Across the room, Hugh wiped down a row of silver needles with the bored patience of someone who had already lost interest in the conversation. "That's enough," Hugh said flatly. "Sit down." Cassian behaved as if he had not heard a single word. His gaze remained fixed on Elowen. Elowen pressed her lips together before speaking softly. "Cassian... you should listen to him. Please sit." Only then did Cassian give in.

He returned to the wheelchair and settled into it with an ease that made the movement look deliberate, as though sitting had been his own decision all along. Hugh stared at him. So that's how it is? Playing favorites now? What, the problem isn't just your legs-your ears don't work either? Elowen suddenly remembered something and turned toward Hugh. "Doctor Dray, his legs improving like this... is it because of the hot springs?" Hugh slid the cleaned needles neatly back into their case before answering.

1/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 U Chapter 265 His Only Remedy 40 Finished "The hot springs certainly help," he said. "The warmth improves circulation, which benefits his condition. But that alone would not explain such a sudden change." He paused, then cast Cassian a long, meaningful look before continuing. "When I checked his pulse this morning, I noticed something unusual. Recently, he experienced several strong shocks to the system." Elowen blinked in confusion. "Shocks?" "Yes. Three times." Elowen froze. A heartbeat later, realization struck.

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Color rushed up her face so quickly it reached the tips of her ears. Hugh continued in the same calm tone, completely unmoved by her reaction. "Those three shocks caused his blood to surge and break through several blocked pathways in his body. In a way, they forced circulation where it had been stagnant." His eyes narrowed thoughtfully. "And if you think about it, when he woke from that long coma before, it was also triggered by some kind of shock.

Unfortunately I was not in Vanelle at the time, and it happened long ago, so I have no idea what caused it." He snapped his case shut with a quiet click. Without lingering, Hugh offered a few routine reminders about rest and treatment, then tossed out a casual farewell. "I'll come back tomorrow." With that, he walked out. The door closed softly behind him. The room fell silent, leaving only Elowen and Cassian. Without warning, Elowen felt her nerves tighten. Then something struck her all at once, and she jumped to her feet. "Oh no. Mira. I asked Mira to fetch water earlier.

If she went toward the rock garden..." Cassian reached out and caught her wrist before she could rush away, guiding her gently back onto the couch. "It's alright," he said. "The guards will stop her." 2/4 Chapter 265 His Only Remedy Finished He gave her hand a small reassuring squeeze.

"Ella, do you know why I woke up from the coma back then?" Elowen blinked. She had wondered about that many times. In her previous life, Cassian had remained unconscious for years. Cassian spoke slowly, his "It was because of you." gaze soft. Elowen stared at him, momentarily speechless. "You married me.

You slept beside me." Cassian lowered his eyes slightly. "For me, that was... a tremendous shock." He began to continue in the same calm voice. "As for my legs, and those three shocks..." "I know," Elowen cut in quickly, her face burning with embarrassment. "I know what you mean.

You don't have to explain." Cassian lifted his brows slightly at her flustered expression.

Amusement flickered in his eyes before he changed the subject without warning. "Who named you Elowen?" The sudden question caught her off guard. "My grandfather," she answered after a brief pause. Cassian nodded slowly.

His gaze lingered on her a little longer. "He chose well." Elowen tilted her head, puzzled. "What do you mean?" Cassian looked as though he were smiling and not smiling at the same time.

"What a good name." The words were spoken softly, yet each one struck her heart with quiet force. Elowen went still. In that moment, she thought of her grandfather. When her mother had been expecting her, Julian had been at that age when boys seemed determined to turn every day into trouble.

Wanting some peace before the birth, her mother 3/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 265 His Only Remedy had returned to her own family's estate to deliver the child there. 39 Finished The Wynne family had practiced the healing arts for generations, and people often said her grandfather possessed an extraordinary gift for it. Throughout the entire pregnancy, her mother's health had remained under his careful watch. So when the time came to name the child, the decision naturally fell to him. Years later, once she was old enough to understand, her grandfather sometimes spoke about those days.

They had been difficult years, filled with endless worries and responsibilities that rarely left him in the mood to smile. But the moment she was born, when he first saw that tiny pink face wrapped in blankets, something inside him quietly eased. That was why he chose the name Elowen. Part of the reason, he once told her, was that the child had eased something in his heart,

as though she had mended a small place that had long been worn thin. The other reason was simpler. To a physician like him, the art of healing was the most precious thing in the world.

His granddaughter, in his eyes, was no different. And now, hearing Cassian's words, Elowen could not help noticing that the meaning was almost the same. Yet at that moment the thought lingering in her mind was far less sentimental. If she was meant to be Cassian's cure... then where, exactly, was hers? 1.8K W 1 NA 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 ... admin

Chapter 266 Quiet Schemes At Dusk 39 Finished By morning, the soreness from the night before still lingered stubbornly. A dull ache settled through her body in a way that made both walking and sitting feel faintly uncomfortable. Cassian then reached inside his coat and drawing out a small celadon jar shaped with elegant restraint. His tone remained casual, as though he were mentioning something entirely ordinary. "Hugh left this for you." Elowen blinked and looked down at it. "What is it?" "For swelling and irritation," Cassian replied evenly.

She stared at the jar for a moment before the meaning reached her. When it did, heat rushed across her face so suddenly that even the tips of her ears felt hot. "H-how would he know..." she stammered, mortified. Cassian's brows lifted slightly, amusement glinting faintly in his eyes. "He's a physician. It's not hard for him to guess." After a short pause he added, still in that same composed tone, "And besides, Ella, if you happen to be carrying our child later on, everyone in Vanelle will know well enough that we shared a bed." The remark was blunt, though impossible to argue against.

Elowen could not think of anything to say in response. Her gaze dropped until she found herself staring at the tips of her shoes. After a brief silence she steered the conversation somewhere safer. "Cassian... Anwen came earlier today. She said she wanted to plead Laurent's case."

Cassian made a quiet sound of acknowledgment while his fingertips tapped lightly against the edge of the table. "I know." Elowen studied him for a moment before asking, "Then... what should we do?" "You're already handling it the right way," Cassian replied calmly.

"Leave her waiting." Without changing expression he continued explaining that he had already sent word to his aunt, who would soon pay Anwen a visit and see her off. In front of Yvonne, Anwen would not dare push the matter further. Elowen tilted her head slightly. "Why not?" 1/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 266 Quiet Schemes At Dusk 39 Finished "Because Anwen has always tried to stay on Yvonne's good side," Cassian said. He explained that Anwen knew perfectly well Yvonne favored Clarisse, and she had long been hoping Yvonne would be the one to propose the marriage alliance herself.

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His tone remained steady, but the meaning carried a sharp edge. Falconcrest Manor, after all, was the kind of house that stirred ambition in people. Elowen nodded slowly, then frowned in thought. "But you said a lot of families want to marry Clarisse. Would they really need Falconcrest Manor that badly?" "There are plenty of offers," Cassian acknowledged. "But Falconcrest Manor is the most desirable of them." A faint, knowing curve touched his mouth as he looked at her. "And besides, Ella, you already know what Clarisse has been doing behind closed doors." Elowen's lashes fluttered.

"Does Anwen know about it too?" Cassian answered without hesitation. "When a man and a woman have been involved long enough, anyone paying attention can see the signs. Clarisse has been bedding servants for years. Anwen isn't naive, and she's hardly inexperienced. There's no chance she hasn't noticed something." His voice remained practical and unembellished as he explained that Anwen had likely suspected the truth but lacked the courage to confirm it.

It was easier to pretend ignorance and hurry Clarisse into a prestigious marriage, as though once the girl was properly wed, every inconvenient secret would vanish with it. Elowen nodded again as the logic settled into place. In her previous life, near the very end, Falconcrest Manor truly had been negotiating a marriage alliance with the Jett family. But things had changed this time. Because Elowen had intervened, Theodric had issued a royal match that bound Piers to Sylvia, and Elowen had carefully arranged matters so Yvonne witnessed Clarisse's behavior with her own eyes.

That alliance had collapsed before it could ever take shape. A faint crease appeared between Elowen's brows as she sighed softly. "Cassian... do you think Yvonne will eventually come to like Sylvia?" "Perhaps not," Cassian said. "But she won't reject her the way she once did. Sylvia is no fool. She knows how to manage herself." His tone shifted slightly then, and his gaze deepened as it settled on Elowen. "Right now, the person who matters most is you." 2/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 266 Quiet Schemes At Dusk Elowen lifted her head and met his eyes.

Finished Cassian slowly turned the celadon jar between his fingers while his voice took on a teasing note that was impossible to miss. He asked whether she intended to use the ointment or not. For one dreadful second Elowen was certain he meant to apply it himself. Alarm shot through her at once, and heat surged back across her face. She sprang to her feet, snatched the jar from his hand, and declared with flustered urgency she could take care of it herself. that Before Cassian could react, she pushed him out the door, shut it with a firm thud, and slid the latch into place.

Outside, Cassian regarded the closed door in silence while his fingers tapped lightly twice against the armrest of the wheelchair. It seems she embarrasses easily. This sort of matter

required patience. Inside the room, Elowen leaned back against the door while she tried to slow the frantic rhythm of her heartbeat. She lowered her gaze to the cool jar resting in her hands, her thumb brushing slowly across the smooth porcelain while the warmth still lingered in her cheeks.

After carefully applying the ointment and straightening her clothes again, she heard a servant's voice outside reporting that Anwen was preparing to depart. Elowen checked her reflection in the mirror, making sure nothing about her appearance looked out of place before leaving the room and heading toward the Great Hall. When she arrived, Anwen stood near the entrance speaking politely with Elspeth and Yvonne, though her attention kept drifting toward the inner courtyard as if she were waiting for something. The moment she noticed Elowen approaching, her expression brightened.

Elowen didn't give her the chance to speak first. She let out a small sigh and said, "I tried. I argued with Cassian for quite a while, but he wouldn't budge." 3/4 admin

Chapter 267 A Plea That Backfires 39 Finished Elspeth's expression hardened at once. "Laurent is the one who crossed the line, so why are you the one running around begging for mercy?" Anwen's face tightened further. Her lips parted as if she meant to explain, yet no explanation seemed able to leave her mouth without making things sound worse. Elowen adopted a mild, almost guileless expression, as though the whole situation had simply confused her. "Lady Anwen told me it wasn't anything serious.

I don't understand military affairs, and she cried so miserably that I couldn't help feeling awful for her." Her tone remained earnest and gentle. "So I swallowed my pride and went to speak with Cassian, hoping he might say a word to His Majesty." Elspeth's frown deepened into open irritation as she turned sharply toward Anwen. "That man is your husband. If he's the one who

made a mess of things, then you should be the one pleading with Cassian. Why on earth would you push Ella into doing it? Because you think she's too kind to refuse?" Anwen's face drained of color.

She stood there trembling, humiliation written across every line of her expression, yet she could not find a single reply that wouldn't make the situation worse. Elowen lowered her gaze, her lashes casting faint shadows that made her look harmless and almost sweet. After this, she will think twice before coming to me again. That alone makes the trouble worthwhile. "Mother." Clarisse's voice drifted in from the covered walkway, slightly hoarse.

Everyone turned, Clarisse stepped into the hall from the back courtyard, that broad-shouldered man following a step behind her, The moment Yvonne noticed them, her brow creased faintly. The reaction was subtle, but unmistakable. She shifted her gaze away at once, as though looking at them for too long might leave a stain. Elowen watched them as well. Clarisse looked perfectly composed. Her gown was neat, her hair arranged with careful precision. Nothing about her appearance suggested anything improper.

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1/4 14:39 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 267 A Plea That Backfires 39 Finished It was almost impossible to connect the poised, elegant woman before them with the one Elowen had glimpsed earlier among the rocks behind the garden. There was another thing Elowen could not quite understand. Sharing a bed with a man was not purely miserable, but it was hardly comfortable either. Even afterward there was that lingering soreness, that strange swollen discomfort. So why does Clarisse enjoy it so much? The moment they left the hot-spring estate, the pleasant smile Anwen had been forcing onto her face vanished.

She strode straight to the carriage, then spun around. Her brows were drawn tight, her face dark with restrained fury as she glared at Clarisse. "Where did you go just now?" Clarisse showed no sign of hurry smoothed a faint crease from her forehead and answered in a tone as calm as if they were chatting about the weather. "What exactly are you imagining? What could I possibly have been doing? I was just walking around. The scenery here is rather nice."

Anwen's expression darkened further, the vein at her temple pulsing as her temper threatened to break loose. Clarisse let out a small laugh edged with open disdain. "You embarrassed yourself in front of everyone, so now you plan to vent it on me?" She lifted her eyes and met Anwen's gaze directly. "Father's in serious trouble, and Cassian clearly has no intention of going easy on him. When the time comes, who do you be relying on? It certainly won't be him. It'll be me." Anwen narrowed her eyes. "What exactly are you implying?" Clarisse adjusted the bracelet at her wrist with an air of bored calm.

"Once the family loses its standing, if you still want silk gowns and decent dinners, won't you simply marry me off to whichever wealthy house is willing to take me?" Her tone remained flat and matter-of-fact. "That's how most families survive hard times. They trade their daughters for security. It's hardly unusual." "You-" Anwen trembled with anger, but the words stuck in her throat. Clarisse regarded her steadily. "There's no point arguing.

"If you want to save him, get in the carriage and come with me to the Royal Court." 2/4 14:40 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter 267 A Plea That Backfires : 3 Finished "Go to the Royal Court?" Anwen frowned. "And what exactly would we do there?" "To see His Highness." Anwen's expression twisted. "Why would His Highness help? You know perfectly well he's never liked your father. We should be asking Her Majesty instead." Clarisse gave a quiet snort. "And you think Her

Majesty is any fonder of him? It's the same problem either way. His Highness is the better choice." Anwen's frown deepened.

"But everyone knows His Highness is wary of Cassian..." Clarisse smiled faintly and lowered her voice. "Mother, didn't you notice something at the wedding in the Crown Prince's Wing?"

Anwen stared at her without understanding. Clarisse's lips curved slightly. "His Highness barely paid any attention to the Crown Princess that day." She paused before finishing softly. "He spent most of his time watching the Duchess of Duskmoor." She shrugged lightly. "We're simply going to ask for help. That's all." Anwen hesitated, uncertainty still written across her face.

"Do you really think this will save your father?" "You'll find out if we try." Anwen had no better option. Even if Clarisse's plan felt dangerously uncertain, there was nothing else left for her to grasp. With a weary sigh, she climbed into the carriage. Not long afterward, they arrived at the Crown Prince's Wing, The red palace gates opened slowly, revealing the austere complex beyond. Inside the study, Alaric sat behind a heavy wooden desk, his expression cold and unreadable. A cup rested in his hand as he looked down at the mother and daughter standing before him.

Anwen's eyes were red with tears. Her voice trembled as she pleaded. 3/4 14:40 Sat, Apr 11

Chapter 267 A Plea That Backfires 39 Finished "Your Highness, please... for the sake of family, show mercy and help us. Save Laurent. Blood should count for something." Alaric did not react. He simply looked down at her with calm indifference. He was not Elowen. And his heart was not easily moved. 1.8K 1 admin

Chapter 268 The Prince's Quiet Calculations 39 Finished Even though she was technically his aunt by marriage, the sight of Clarisse's tears stirred nothing in Alaric. To him, they carried no

more weight than ordinary drops of rain. Clarisse finally spoke, her voice soft and carefully measured. "Your Highness, please allow me to explain. My mother and I went to Serenity Church to offer prayers.

When news reached us about Father, we went straight afterward to Sunspire Hill to seek an audience with the Duchess of Duskmoor." She paused at just the right moment, her eyes glistening faintly." "Since Father serves under the Duke of Duskmoor, we hoped she might be able to help speak on his behalf." Her voice wavered slightly before she continued. "We pleaded with her. It did no good. The Duchess of Duskmoor was gracious and promised she would try, yet even she could not move His Grace.

With no other path left to us, we had no choice but to trouble Your Highness." Only then did Alaric lift his gaze. The look he gave her was sharp enough to cut. "You saw her?" he asked. Clarisse kept her tone gentle. "Yes. Did Your Highness not hear? The Duke of Duskmoor and his duchess are staying at the Sunspire Hill hot-springs estate." A faint line appeared between Alaric's brows. Clarisse continued smoothly. "People say the waters there are restorative.

Since the Duke's legs were injured, I imagine he's staying there to recover." Alaric gave a quiet, dismissive scoff, Cassian's legs had been shattered by a devastating injury. In his previous life, the man had spent years confined to a wheeled chair. A few days soaking in hot springs would never make him stand again. Impossible. Clarisse went on as though it were nothing more than idle conversation. "I also heard Sylvia is there. Not long ago, Cassian invited Cecilia from the royal court to instruct her in proper conduct. Now he has taken her along to the estate as well.

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I wonder whether she has learned 1/4 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 · Chapter 268 The Prince's Quiet Calculations enough." Alaric's expression darkened instantly. He knew perfectly well what Cecilia taught. : 39 Finished And his investigations had already confirmed something else- Cecilia had not been instructing Sylvia alone. Elowen had been receiving the same lessons. Now Cassian had taken Elowen to Sunspire Hill. Is he planning to give her a child? Alaric's face hardened. The cup in his hand creaked faintly as his grip tightened, the knuckles draining of color. Then another thought pushed through. No.

That couldn't be true. Elowen held him in her heart. How much affection could she possibly have for Cassian? How could she willingly share his bed? He had kept himself untouched for her. Elowen would never allow such intimacy with Cassian. That certainty eased the tension in his expression slightly. He narrowed his eyes, studying Clarisse for a long moment before speaking. "The matter concerning your third uncle will be dealt with in due time," he said coolly. "You may return home." Outside the study, the chill wind struck Anwen's face.

Only then did she realize that her back was soaked with cold sweat. Clutching her handkerchief, she dabbed at her eyes again and again, her voice trembling. "What did he mean by that? I can't tell. Is he helping us or not?" Clarisse answered quietly, "He will help." Anwen stared at her. "How can you be certain? What if-" 2/4 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 .. Chapter 268 The Prince's Quiet Calculations 39 Finished "There is no 'what if,'" Clarisse interrupted calmly. "Because His Highness is a man." Anwen looked even more bewildered.

"And what does that have to do with anything?" Clarisse glanced at her, something close to pity in her eyes. "Mother," she said gently, "you truly don't understand men." At that wedding banquet, the way Alaric had looked at the Duchess of Duskmoor had been anything but innocent.

There had been hunger in that gaze. Possession. And a man who wanted a woman would inevitably stand against the man who already had her. If Cassian sought to imprison someone, then Alaric would feel compelled to protect them. Clarisse paused briefly before continuing in a calm, analytical tone.

"Cassian may be His Majesty's brother, but His Highness is His Majesty's son-and Her Majesty still holds the palace." Her voice remained level. "A case involving members of the royal family is never simple. Every move affects the balance of power. Factions will push and counter one another, and that takes time. Without several months passing, no final outcome will appear." She finished quietly, "So at least for now, Father is safe." Anwen did not fully understand the reasoning, but Clarisse's calm certainty eased her somewhat.

As they departed, Anwen climbed into the carriage first, still weighed down with lingering worry. Geoffrey stood beside the carriage, posture straight and rigid, When he saw Clarisse approach, he inclined his head respectfully, "Miss," he asked, "shall we return to Sunspire Hill?" Clarisse turned sharply, her eyes narrowing. Sunspire Hill. She remembered the way he had stared at the Duchess of Duskmoor earlier-openly, 3/4 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 268 The Prince's Quiet Calculations shamelessly. A bitter heat rose in her chest. Clarisse let out a cold, humorless laugh.

: 39 Finished "You're that eager to go back?" she said lightly. "What is it there-gold? Or something that steals a man's soul?" She did not wait for his answer. With a swift, impatient flick of her sleeve, she said, "Home." The carriage door shut with a heavy thud. Geoffrey stared at the closed door for a moment, rubbing the bridge of his nose. And despite himself, the memory surfaced again-the soft, delicate features of Elowen's face. Something restless stirred in his chest.

He drew in a long breath, forced the wandering thoughts down, then climbed onto the driver's seat and steered the carriage away. Back at Sunspire Hill, Elowen sneezed hard without warning. She rubbed at her nose and muttered under her breath, "Someone talking about me behind my back?" 1.8K 1 admin

## Chapter 269 A Day Ignored Finished

Then, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, he reached out and pressed his fingertips lightly against her temples, massaging them with steady and practiced pressure. "What time is it?" Elowen asked, her eyelids lowering slightly as the tension eased.

"It's past ten."

"That late already..." Which meant it was time to sleep.

Elowen hesitated for a moment before speaking again in a careful tone that sounded almost like negotiation. "Cassian... tonight could we..." She searched for a word that would explain what she meant before finally settling on one. "Sleep normally?" Cassian blinked once and then laughed quietly, the sound vibrating faintly in his chest. His wife always managed to phrase things in ways that made him both amused and restless at the same time. "Normally?" Cassian repeated with one brow lifting. "So there are also... other ways of sleeping?" Elowen nodded with complete seriousness.

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Cassian's eyes creased with amusement as he agreed without hesitation. "Alright." Even so, Elowen clearly did not trust him. Too many times he had claimed his legs were hurting only to lure her closer. She raised one slender finger as if she were establishing a formal condition. "Just

once. Really," Cassian looked at her with warm patience, his voice sincere enough to sound convincing. "Just once." He extended his hand toward her. "Come on. I'll help you wash up." Elowen's first instinct was to refuse.

"No, I don't need-" Cassian did not interrupt her, nor did he push. He simply remained where he was, his tone smooth and coaxing. "You look tired. Let me help. It's nothing." His voice was too gentle and his gaze too persuasive. Before she realized it, Elowen nodded. She regretted it soon after.

Inside the bathing chamber, the air was thick with warm steam. And before long that warmth turned into a completely different kind of heat. Cassian's idea of "help" clearly had nothing innocent about it.

By the time it ended, Elowen's eyes were unfocused and her entire body felt boneless as she slumped weakly against his chest. Cassian carried her back to the bed afterward and laid her down carefully. She was exhausted. The moment her head touched the pillow she began drifting toward sleep. Just as she was about to slip into unconsciousness, that broad and rough hand began wandering again. Elowen did not even bother opening her eyes. She protested purely on instinct, her words thick with sleep. "You promised... once..." Cassian's voice sounded low and hoarse, yet entirely unapologetic.

"Once in the bath. Once in bed." Elowen forced her heavy eyelids open in disbelief. "Who counts it like that?" In the darkness she could not see his expression. What she did feel was his breath drawing close before his teeth caught her earlobe, firm enough to sting but not enough to hurt. His voice dropped into a whisper. "Please, Ella. I'll make you feel good."

Elowen fell silent. After that, her memory became hazy.

She only remembered crying softly and helplessly, her voice breaking between tears as she scolded him. "You... never... keep... your word... You're... terrible... You're... awful..." Her complaints carried no real bite. If anything, they only made Cassian's chest tighten with a strange, helpless kind of fondness. He listened as though savoring every moment. Instead of being annoyed, he bent down and kissed away the tears at the corners of her eyes while murmuring with quiet satisfaction, "I like hearing that. Say it again." That night Cassian slept more deeply than he had in years.

He could not remember exactly when his sleep had grown so light, perhaps sometime after he decided to help his brother fight for the throne. From that moment forward his nights had been shallow, every sound and movement enough to wake him. It was the kind of vigilance born from danger, the knowledge that at any moment an enemy might strike. But after being with Elowen, he felt something unfamiliar. Fatigue. He slept until late morning before finally waking. Sunlight filtered through the curtains and filled the room with brightness. Cassian turned his head. The space beside him was empty.

Chapter 270 Remedy Elowen is gone. Where did she go? He reached out, only to find the bedding completely cold. Has she really been awake that long already? Cassian pushed himself upright. "Ella?" Finished Footsteps sounded outside the room, but he immediately knew they did not belong to her. Bran's voice followed. "Your Grace, you're awake." Cassian asked directly, "Where is the Duchess?" Bran answered at once. "She woke early this morning, had breakfast prepared in the kitchen, ate a little herself, and she's been in the next room reading." Cassian nodded.

He dressed, settled into his wheelchair, and allowed Bran to push him into the adjoining room. The study was quiet. Elowen sat beside the window. She wore a pale robe the color of moonlight. Her hair had not been styled formally, only twisted loosely at the crown and secured with a simple silver pin while the rest fell down her back in a long smooth cascade. Sunlight streamed through the half-open window and made her skin appear almost luminous. She was completely absorbed in her reading.

One hand rested lightly on the page while her posture remained straight, the line of her shoulders and neck elegant and composed. Cassian stopped in the doorway and watched her. 1/4 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 270 Remedy He had read phrases like peaceful years in books before. Finished He had always thought them meaningless, something writers invented because they had never known real danger. But looking at Elowen sitting quietly in the sunlight, he found himself wondering if such a thing truly existed. "Your Grace," Bran asked softly, "should I take you inside?" "No," Cassian replied.

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"Go eat." Elowen had been thoroughly exhausted the night before. Today she could read peacefully. When she finished, she would come find him. And sooner or later they would share lunch and dinner anyway. So Cassian finished his breakfast and later went to Hugh for treatment. By the afternoon he had run out of patience. He called Bran over. "What is she doing now? Shouldn't it be lunchtime?" Bran went to ask and returned shortly afterward. "The Duchess said she wasn't hungry earlier. She took a nap and woke up a little while ago. She's reading again." Cassian stared at him.

Bran added cautiously, "Your Grace, if you're hungry I can ask the kitchen to prepare- "I'm not eating." Cassian waved him away, "Leave." So he waited. Elowen could not possibly spend the

entire day reading. Except she did. 19 By the time evening came and her empty stomach finally began protesting, Elowen at last set the book aside and stretched. At that moment Mira stepped forward. 2/4 Finished 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 Chapter 270 Remedy "Duchess, the kitchen asked when you and His Grace would like dinner served." "Bring it," Elowen said with a nod.

"I'll go get him." When she entered Cassian's room, he appeared to be reading as well. His eyes were on the page, but it was obvious his mind was somewhere else. "Cassian," Elowen said. Cassian acknowledged her quietly but did not look up. Elowen stepped closer and leaned slightly to see his face. "What's wrong? Are you upset?" Cassian finally lifted his gaze. "I am." Elowen blinked. "Why?" Cassian answered plainly, "You've been ignoring me." Elowen looked genuinely confused. "I have?" Cassian reached out and pinched her cheek. "You woke up early and went straight to your book.

You didn't eat lunch or dinner with me. If that's not ignoring me, what is?" With her cheek still pinched, Elowen's voice came out slightly muffled. "That's not what happened... I just got absorbed in the book. And I came to get you now so we could have dinner." Cassian ignored that explanation entirely. He leaned closer, his voice lowering. "Ella. Do you not enjoy being with me?" Elowen answered quickly, "That's not it." Cassian leaned closer still. "Do you not enjoy sleeping with me?" Elowen went quiet. After a moment she spoke cautiously, "Well...

about that..." 3/4 14:41 Sat, Apr 11 J Chapter 270 Remedy 9 Finished Cassian froze. "You truly don't enjoy it?" Elowen avoided his gaze. "It's not that I don't..." But it clearly was. Cassian ground his teeth. "Why? Tell me honestly." Elowen considered the question carefully before answering in a small voice. "Because it only feels comfortable for a little while." Cassian

narrowed his eyes. "What does that mean?" Elowen lowered her voice even further. "We agreed on once, but you did it on purpose.

I applied the ointment yesterday and it felt better, but this morning it was worse again." Cassian's gaze dropped. Guilt entered his voice. "That's my fault." He paused. "I'll be more careful next time." Elowen blinked. "Huh?" Cassian spoke quietly, "I'll be more careful... to make you feel good." Elowen's face turned bright red. "You just need to stop overdoing it. Cecilia said the best rhythm is three or four times a month, with five or six days in between, and it shouldn't last too long either. Cassian, you last far too long." 1.8K 2 admin