

# Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

## We Had Something Real But Didn't Handle It Right

### 661

Chapter 661 Banished from Vanelle

At this point, he was already imagining what kind of compensation the Duchess of Duskmoor might offer

him afterward.

Maybe she would help his father secure a promotion at court.

Or perhaps she would even arrange an official position for him personally.

The more he thought about it, the more triumphant he felt.

Then Elowen finally spoke.

“You three aren’t quite the same.” Her tone was calm and unhurried, almost gentle. “Leighton and Maddox are one thing, but you...” Her eyes settled squarely on Corbin. “As of today, you and your father can both get out of Vanelle.”

Corbin still wore that foolish grin when he instinctively answered, “Thank you, Your Grace...”

The words left his mouth before his brain caught up.

*Get out of Vanelle.*

She had just told him and his father to leave Vanelle.

The smile vanished from his face instantly.

He stared at Elowen in complete disbelief. “Your Grace... there must be some mistake. I’m the one who got hit!”

Elowen looked down at him coolly. “A moment ago, you said you were only trying to greet an old acquaintance.” Her voice remained perfectly even. “So tell me, which acquaintance exactly were you so eager to see?”

Corbin froze.

His face stiffened immediately.

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Only then did he suddenly remember hearing rumors some time ago that Stargazer Pavilion had been investigated because of the Duchess of Duskmoor.

And Scarlet had been taken away by her.

A terrible chill crawled down his spine.

Something was very, very wrong.

“Were you talking about Scarlet?” Elowen asked lightly.

Sweat immediately began forming across Corbin’s forehead

“It... it was...” His voice grew weaker with every word until it was barely audible

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Elowen watched him calmly before continuing, “Then let me ask something else. What sort of acquaintance are you to Scarlet?”

Corbin’s lips trembled violently

Sweat

rolled down the sides of his face while his mind went completely blank. No matter how hard he tried, he could not force out a single word.

Elowen watched his reaction coldly.

“Listen carefully,” she said. “You and your father are leaving Vanelle, and neither of you should ever back.” A faint smile slowly curved her lips. “Because if either of y

ou dares step foot in this city again, t guarantee you'll leave with all your limbs attached."

She paused briefly.

"To be precise, if you com

She was smiling whil

But there was noth

The coldness **in**

Corbin shoo

He holds a

Elowe

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personally make sure you arrive upright and leave in a coffin."

entle about that smile.

ough to freeze the air.

before finally stammering out, "B... but my father serves in court, Your Grace.

her tone carrying a trace of lazy mockery. "Commander of the Garrison Watch?" o  
ver him as though he were something beneath notice. "Is that supposed to be

**st** carelessly, "If I

hadn't happened to stop by this little meat pie shop today, someone even have had  
the chance to stand in front of me." Her eyes turned colder. "And if I should lose hi  
s position, all I need to do is say the word. Did you really think that would

orld spin around him.

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rained from his legs completely, and he collapsed onto the floor like a sack of grain  
,

ptied until only one thought remained.

ng's over.

looked down at him without the slightest trace of sympathy.

the way he behaved, it was obvious Corbin had spent his entire life bullying people under the ction of his family name.

ging from that arrogant

ow many people he had humulated

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over the years.

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The fact that he happened to run into her today could only be called justice finally catching up to him.

And honestly, Barrett deserved part of the blame too.

A man who could raise his son into this kind of worthless disgrace had no business serving in government.

Once she finished dealing with Corbin, Elowen shifted her attention toward the other two young nobles standing behind him.

The pair had already been terrified while watching Corbin's punishment unfold. The instant Elowen looked toward them, both men's knees buckled so quickly they nearly slammed face-first onto the floor.

"Your Grace, please spare us!"

"This had nothing to do with us! Corbin was the one harassing Scarlet! We didn't do anything, we swear!"

Elowen smiled faintly. "Why are the two of you panicking? It's not as though I'm sending you to the execution block."

That only made them shake harder.

Look

the miserable state they were in, Elowen suddenly lost interest in frightening them further.

ot have done anything unforgivable today,” she said calmly, “but that doesn’t mean you have eventually.”

then immediately lowered themselves even farther.

erstand! We’ll change, Your Grace!”

**wear** we’ll behave ourselves from now on! We’ll never cause trouble again!”

wen gave a small nod. “Good. Then get out of my sight.”

The two men looked as though they had just escaped a death sentence. They scrambled awkwardly to their feet while thanking her over and over again, though their legs were still shaking so badly they could barely stand without supporting each other.

Then Elowen added casually, “Take Corbin with you. If the three of you are such close friends, you should make the most of the trip home together. After today, you won’t be seeing him again.”

The pair nodded frantically before dragging the barely conscious Corbin upright between them.

The three men had swaggered into the shop earlier with all the confidence in the world.

Now they fled in complete humiliation.

Elowen watched them disappear down the street before finally withdrawing her gaze, her mood noticeably lighter afterward.

“Well then,” she said pleasantly, “we should head back too. If we wait much longer, the meat pies are going

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Chapter 664 Banished from Vanelle

to get cold.

She had only taken a few steps before suddenly remembering something and turning around again.

“Commander Hall, there’s no need to stay upset. I’ve already dealt with all three of them.”

Then she looked toward Leander.

“And Leander, you should head home as well. I already paid for the food, so don’t worry about it. Thank you for today.” Her lips curved slightly. “I’ll see you another time.”

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## 662

Chapter 662 Returning to Duskmoor Manor

+5 Pearls

Elowen spoke so quickly and decisively that neither man even had the chance to answer before she turned and walked straight out of the shop.

A moment later, she climbed into the waiting carriage.

Mira and Scarlet followed closely behind her.

As the carriage rolled through the crowded streets toward Duskmoor Manor, Mira finally gave up trying to contain herself and scooted eagerly closer to Elowen, her eyes practically sparkling.

“Your Grace, aside from Corbin, those other two were spoiled little creeps too. You can tell they spend all day throwing their weight around because of their families.” She blinked curiously. “And you really just let them go like that?”

Leaning comfortably against the carriage wall, Elowen smiled faintly. “That’s exactly why I asked for their names and their fathers’ positions.” Her tone remained light, but satisfaction lingered underneath it. “From this point forward, neither of them will ever pass the court qualification trials, and neither will ever hold office. As for their fathers, they can forget about promotions too. The rest of their lives are going to feel like running headfirst into locked doors.”

Mira's eyes widened instantly.

"So that was your plan all along!" she exclaimed excitedly. "You blocked every road ahead of them without even raising your voice. That's way more satisfying than beating them senseless!"

Elowen laughed softly before turning toward Scarlet.

Scarlet sat quietly in the corner of the carriage with her head lowered and both hands folded neatly *in her* lap, clearly lost in thought.

"Scarlet," Elowen called gently.

Scarlet lifted her eyes a moment later, her expression calm and composed. "Yes, Your Grace?"

"Did you remember all the names and titles those men mentioned earlier?"

Scarlet nodded softly. "I remembered all of them."

Elowen immediately relaxed. "Good. I forgot half of it the moment they stopped talking."

Then her voice softened slightly.

"Are you alright?"

The carriage suddenly fell quiet.

Even Mira's grin faded as she turned toward Scarlet with concern written all over her face.

After a moment, Scarlet smiled faintly.

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The smile was small, but sincere.

“Your Grace stood up Torne today,” she said quietly, “I’m very grateful.”

Elowen shook her head gently. “It wasn’t just me.”

Scarlet lowered her eyes once more.

“I should thank Commander Hall too.”

But Draven knew now.

He had heard those men call her a courtesan. He had heard every mocking, vulgar thing they said about

her.

Now he knew everything about her past.

Scarlet understood better than anyone what kind of life she used to live.

Scarlet knew better than anyone that she came from a past most people would rather pretend didn’t exist. Men like Corbin were like the mud and thorns buried beneath a roadside ditch. Even *after* the Duchess of Duskmoor had pulled her out and given her a chance at a different life, those old stains still had a way of reaching after her, dragging every humiliation and every buried shame back into the light for the world to

see.

Someone like Draven, a commander of the King’s Guard and one of Theodric’s most trusted men, with an entire future still waiting open before him, had never truly been someone Scarlet could imagine herself standing beside.

Before this, his kindness toward her existed only because he did not know the truth.

Now that he did... of course things would change.

And honestly, maybe that was for the best. That was what Scarlet kept telling herself.

So why did her chest suddenly feel so unbearably empty?

Elowen quietly watched every shift in Scarlet’s expression without saying a word.

Then she simply reached over and gently squeezed Scarlet's hand.

Scarlet startled slightly before looking up.

Elowen's expression remained warm and steady, carrying the sort of quiet reassurance capable of calming people without needing words at all.

Looking at her like that, Scarlet finally felt the ache in her chest ease a little.

Beside them, Mira immediately copied the gesture and wrapped both hands around Scarlet's fingers too.

Scarlet turned toward her.

Mira was staring back with wide, serious eyes, looking as though comforting Scarlet was currently the most

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Chapter 662 Returning to Duskmoor Manor

important responsibility in the world.

Scarlet could not help laughing softly at the sight.

Even so, her eyes still turned faintly red.

By the time the carriage returned to Duskmoor Manor, Mira and Scarlet climbed down first.

Elowen was just about to follow when a long, elegant hand appeared outside the carriage door.

She immediately poked her head out and smiled. "What are you doing here?"

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Cassian stood beside the carriage dressed in dark robes, tall and composed beneath the fading evening

light while warmth softened the sharpness of his features.

He waited for you I'd come out here

Elowen took she tilted h

“I broug

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tudy for quite a while,” he said calmly. “When you still hadn’t returned, I figured

d stepped down from the carriage. The moment both feet touched the ground, war  
d him with a bright smile.

ing good.”

w slightly. “And what exactly did you bring me?”

ack toward the carriage and lifted down a wooden food box. “Stew from my favori  
te shop

That shop’s been open for more

ten years, and the flavor hasn’t changed at all.” Her

slightly. “The moment I tasted th that?

oo

exactly like childhood again, so I brought some

rally took the food box from her hands, and the two of them started walking back t  
ogether shoulder while Mira and Scarlet followed several steps behind.

rossed the manor grounds, Elowen cheerfully recounted everything that had happe  
ned inside the lier that day.

iberately glossed over the parts involving Scarlet and simply described the inciden  
t as a group of young nobles bullying others until she finally lost patience and step  
ped in to iqach them a lesson.

enthusiastically explained how she pretended not to notice anything at first, how s  
he tricked them revealing their family backgrounds, and how frightened they beca  
me afterward.

the time she finished speaking, her entire face was glowing with satisfaction.

Cassian listened patiently from beginning to end before finally saying, “I actually know Barrett.”

Elowen immediately turned toward him curiously.

Cassian continued calmly, “Barrett has exceptionally beautiful handwriting. His family were poor farmers,

She spent years working the fields and sewing late into and he was raised solely by his wife

the chance to study for the examinations.”

the night just to support him

His tone remained steady

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“To his credit, Barrett never disappointed her. He passed every stage of the examinations step by step and eventually entered government service.” Cassian paused briefly before continuing. “But during one examination season in Vanelle, he was robbed by thieves and lost all his travel money. He had nowhere to stay and ended up curled beside an alley wall for an entire night.”

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## 663

Chapter 663 Things Left Unsaid

Elowen asked, “So what happened after that?”

Cassian smiled faintly, his tone easy and unhurried.

“Rodney happened to ride past and noticed him crouched there with a book still clutched in his hands, so he took pity on him and helped him out a little. He found the man a place to stay and even gave him enough money to get back on his feet.”

Cassian glanced down at her as he continued. “After Barrett passed the court qualification trials, he brought his widowed mother to the Jones estate personally to thank Rodney. The man bowed before him three times in gratitude, and after that he made a point of visiting the Jones family every holiday with gifts and formal greetings. People eventually started calling him one of Rodney’s protégés.”

Elowen genuinely could not make sense of it.

“He grew up struggling himself, didn’t he? So how did he end up raising a son like that?” Her brows drew together slightly. “You’d think someone who’s suffered before would know how to show a little compassion.”

Cassian’s expression remained calm.

“That would be the reasonable outcome, yes, but people don’t always work that way.” His voice carried the

weight of seeing far too much of the world already.

It was a kind of detached understanding that came from

“When someone climbs from poverty into comfort, it’s easy for pride to swell along with everything else. And Barrett only had one child. His mother spoiled that boy beyond reason and treated him like something too precious to even touch too hard.” A

trace of dry amusement flickered in his eyes. “Barrett also couldn’t bring himself to challenge his mother/directly, so little by little the boy turned into exactly what you saw today.”

After walking quietly for a few more steps, Elowen suddenly looked up at him again.

“Do you think Rodney’s going to be upset about what I did?” she asked. “Barrett’s practically one of his people, and I not only drove his son out of Vanelle but stripped him of office too. That can’t make Rodney look particularly good.”

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Cassian only laughed softly.

“As long as you’re happy, there’s no reason to worry about whether anyone else is.” His gaze settled warmly on her face. “Otherwise what exactly would be the point of me being Duke of Duskmoor?”

Then his smile deepened slightly.

“And besides, you’re the Lady of Grace and Virtue now, Ella. Even in Vanelle, there aren’t many women whose standing outranks yours.” His tone remained gentle, though there was unmistakable confidence beneath it. “Forget Barrett. Even if Rodney himself showed up in front of you, you still wouldn’t need to yield an inch”

That finally made Elowen smile properly.

The irritation lingering from earlier faded from her expression, and her whole mood visibly lightened.

Several steps behind the Scarlet quietly watched the easy affection between husband and wife, and something inside her chest shifted softly at the sight.

Pretending she felt no envy at all would have been a lie.

But she had long since stopped expecting that kind of love for herself.

If nobody else loved her, then she would simply learn to take care of herself instead.

That was how she had survived all these years.

And honestly, life had never seemed unbearable because of it.

Elsewhere, Draven was on his way toward the royal residence.

As commander of the King’s Guard, he rarely had time to rest properly, and most days he barely noticed exhaustion until it caught up with him hours later.

Unfortunately, his mood was terrible.

He could not even explain exactly why.

Maybe it was because of the disgusting things those idiots had said to Scarlet earlier.

Or maybe it was because Scarlet had avoided looking at him entirely from beginning to end.

After walking for some distance, Draven suddenly noticed another set of footsteps following behind him. The moment he turned around and recognized the figure trailing him, his brows immediately pulled together.

Leander.

Draven stopped and turned fully toward him, his tone far from welcoming.

“Leander, where exactly are you headed?”

Leander stopped several paces away and lifted his chin slightly, looking entirely unbothered by the hostility.

“To the palace.” His tone remained perfectly calm. “You’re heading there too, aren’t you, Commander *Hall*? Since we’re going the same way, I figured I might as well walk with you. Vanelle’s full of trouble these days, and staying near the commander of the King’s Guard seems considerably safer.”

Draven stared at him blankly.

*Trouble?*

*Who in Vanelle would be dumb enough to go after the Deputy Minister of Rites?*

Too irritated to keep entertaining the conversation, he turned and continued walking with long, impatient strides that clearly signaled he had no interest in company.

Then Leander’s voice drifted lazily after him.

“Still, I have to admit, what happened at the shop earlier was pretty entertaining.”

Draven did not bother turning around.

“What exactly was entertaining about it?”

Leander laughed softly.

“You charging in like some legendary knight rescuing a lady from a pack of drunken idiots.” His voice carried unmistakable amusement now. “Shame the lady you rescued barely looked at you afterward.”

Draven’s jaw tightened immediately.

“You seem unusually interested in other people’s business today, Leander.”

Leander remained perfectly relaxed.

Draven finally stopped walking again before turning back toward him, his expression noticeably darker

now.

“Leander.” His voice lowered. “What exactly are you trying to say?”

Leander halted several steps away and regarded him thoughtfully.

“I was just remembering something I heard before Apparently the Duchess of Duskmoor once brought two women back from Stargazer Pavilion.” His gaze lingered meaningfully on Draven. “I never knew who they were until today. One of them was Scarlet.”

Draven froze briefly.

Leander let out a quiet sigh.

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“She seems like a genuinely good woman,” he said honestly. “Which makes it unfortunate.”

Draven frowned immediately.

“Unfortunate how?”

Leander answered matter-of-factly. “Her background, obviously.”

Then he looked at Draven with

open curiosity.

“What about you, Commander Hall?” he asked. “Don’t tell me you genuinely don’t care about her past.

The question caught Draven off guard completely.

Memories of Scarlet’s past surfaced in Draven’s mind almost immediately, tangled together with the ugly

remarks those men had been throwing around earlier about how she used to work at Stargazer Pavilion, pouring wine, performing music, and entertaining wealthy nobles night after night.

But when Draven actually tried picturing Scarlet there, he realized he could not imagine it at all.

Instead, what came back to him was the image of Scarlet sitting quietly in a corner inside the Crown Prince’s Wing, completely focused on her work with that calm, careful expression she always wore.

Then another memory surfaced.

Scarlet standing inside the Great Hall at Duskmoor Manor while afternoon sunlight spilled softly across her face, her eyes lowered, her expression peaceful enough to quiet the entire room around her.

And all at once, Draven understood something he should have realized much earlier.

The one who truly cared about Scarlet’s past had never been him.

It had always been Scarlet herself.

Everything suddenly made sense.

No wonder she kept her distance from him. No wonder she always acted so guarded around him.

It was because of those old scars she still carried alone.

A realization flashed through Draven's mind so abruptly that he reached out and grabbed Leander by the arm.

"Leander," he said urgently, "do me a favor and report my leave at the palace for me. Tell them I'm unwell and won't be coming in today."

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Chapter 664 Rumors at Duskmoor Manor

Leander nearly grimaced from the force of the grip.

Before he could even answer, Draven had already released him and turned away again.

At first he walked quickly. Then he broke into a jog.

And within moments he was outright running through the crowded street.

In the blink of an eye, he disappeared around the corner entirely.

Leander stared after him before rubbing the spot where his arm still throbbed.

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"Honestly," he muttered under his breath, "men who spend their lives carrying swords really are impossible." He frowned slightly. "What in the world was important enough to make him run off like that?"

The following day, Duchess Yvonne arrived at Duskmoor Manor with Sylvia.

Sylvia was visibly pregnant now as well, her figure fuller than before and her complexion healthier and brighter.

The moment she entered the room, she greeted Elowen sweetly as before settling herself beside her with obvious familiarity.

The servants had barely begun pouring warm mulled cider when Yvonne could no longer hold back the latest gossip spreading through Vanelle.

“Have either of you

I what happened to Draven”

Elowen had just lifted her cup when the question immediately caught her attention.

Elsbeth looked intrigued. “Draven? What happened?”

Yvonne laughed.

“You know how obsessed that man is with duty. Back when he served under the Duke of Duskmoor and even now as commander of the King’s Guard, he practically lives inside the palace barracks. Aside from the festival, he barely takes a day off all year.” She shook her head with amusement. “Most people thought he’d die in armor someday before willingly missing work, but now he’s suddenly taken leave“

Elsbeth blinked in surprise.

“Then something serious must’ve happened.”

“That’s exactly what I thought too,” Yvonne replied immediately. “Especially because it wasn’t only one day He missed yesterday, and he still hasn’t shown up at the palace today either. Her voice lowered conspiratorially. “People at court have already started talking. The commander of the King’s Guard disappearing for two days straight is practically unheard of.”

Elowen raised her cup toward her lips but forgot to drink, listening carefully instead

Lumors of Duskmoor Manor

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Elsbeth leaned forward with growing curiosity.

“So what’s the reason?”

Yvonne covered her smile with one hand, clearly enjoying herself.

“I asked around because I was curious too, and eventually I found out he was injured.”

Elsbeth frowned immediately.

“Vanelle’s becoming more dangerous by the day if even the commander of the King’s Guard can get hurt.”

Yvonne waved the concern away at once.

“Oh, it had nothing to do with criminals.” Her smile widened. “Draven got beaten by his parents.”

The room fell silent in collective shock.

Elsbeth stared at her. “His parents beat him? He’s a grown man and commander of the King’s Guard. Why would they still hit him?”

Without drawing attention to herself, Elowen accepted the cup Scarlet handed her and took a slow sip while keeping her eyes on Yvonne, waiting for the rest of the story.

Yvonne continued eagerly.

“Apparently he went home and announced he wanted to marry someone. His parents were thrilled at first because they thought their son had finally shown interest in women.”

She laughed softly. “Naturally they started asking which noble family the girl belonged to. But somehow the conversation took a turn, and before long they were furious enough to beat him half to death.”

Elsbeth clicked her tongue in fascination.

“Then the woman he wants to marry must be truly outrageous.” She sounded increasingly entertained. “What, did he fall for some tavern singer? Or one of the famous girls from a pleasure house? I can absolutely see parents losing their minds over that.”

Yvonne shook her head.

“That’s the strange part. Draven’s famous for being disciplined and proper. Nobody’s ever heard of him spending time in those kinds of places. During all his years in the King’s Guard, he barely even joined the others for drinks.” Her brows lifted meaningfully. “And besides, if it really were just some singer or dancer, he could’ve quietly kept her as a mistress. Why make a formal announcement about marriage?”

The more Elspeth thought about it, the more entertaining she found the situation.

“Don’t tell me he announced he planned to marry some holy maiden from a cathedral and frightened his poor parents half to death.”

That finally made Yvonne burst into laughter.

“At this point, who knows? The Hall family’s keeping the whole matter tightly sealed. I had people asking

Chapter 664 miors of Duskmoor Manor

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questions all morning and still couldn’t learn much.” Her smile turned knowing. “All anyone’s managed to uncover is that Draven got thoroughly beaten and is now recovering at home.”

Elowen lowered her gaze toward her cup thoughtfully.

After what happened yesterday, Draven had almost certainly learned about Scarlet’s past.

He had already cared about her before that.

Now, judging from Yvonne’s story, he must have gone home intending to ask permission to marry her and answered honestly when his parents asked who she was.

The Hall family might not have been nobility, but they were still respectable people.

How could ordinary parents calmly accept their son marrying a woman who had once worked at Stargazer Pavilion?

No wonder the conversation had ended in violence.

Nearby, Scarlet continued quietly serving drinks as though none of the discussion had anything to do with

her.

But after hearing everything, her lashes trembled once, though the silver pitcher in her hands remained perfectly steady.

Scarlet lowered herself into a polite bow before silently withdrawing from the room.

Once outside the Great Hall, she stopped beneath the stone arcade and stared blankly at the small vegetable garden in the courtyard while something heavy tightened painfully inside her chest.

He said he wanted to marry someone.

Who was it?

She should not have let herself wonder.

And she definitely should not have let herself hope.

”

But the thought rooted itself stubbornly in her mind like ivy climbing through old stone, impossible to tear away no matter how hard she tried.

Inside the Great Hall, Yvonne turned back toward Elowen, her expression becoming more serious,

“Oh, right, Your Grace. I heard you dealt with a man named Barrett yesterday?”

Sylvia looked up curiously as well.

Elowen gave a small nod.

“Yes. Something like that did happen.”

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## 665

Chapter 665 The Thing She Wanted Most

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Yvonne lifted her cup of warmed berry wine and said, "I heard the Crowe family started packing to leave Vanelle yesterday afternoon. Apparently Barrett found out his son had offended the Duchess of Duskmoor and beat the boy so badly he couldn't even stand afterward. His grandmother tried to stop him but failed, then cried until she fainted. Later, after Rodney heard what happened, he even arranged a carriage to escort the family out of the capital."

Elowen smiled faintly, though there was little pity in her expression.

"If she can't accept how things turned out," she said softly, "then she shouldn't have spoiled that grandson of hers so recklessly in the first place."

Sylvia immediately nodded beside her.

"Your Grace is already far too merciful," she said with complete sincerity. "If you chose to handle things this way, then that man clearly deserved it. Honestly, even if he'd been beaten half to death, it still wouldn't have been undeserved."

Yvonne could not help glancing toward Sylvia again.

Her daughter-in-law was wonderful in every possible way. She was clever, gentle, considerate, and easy to love.

But when it came to the Duchess of Duskmoor, Sylvia's admiration had reached an almost alarming level.

As long as something involved Elowen, Sylvia believed she could do absolutely no wrong.

And anyone foolish enough to offend her immediately became unforgivable in Sylvia's eyes.

Sometimes Yvonne genuinely felt as though Sylvia were not the Duke of Duskmoor's cousin at all, but Elowen's.

Elowen's gaze drifted toward Sylvia's rounded stomach, and her voice softened a little.

"You're carrying a child now," she reminded her gently. "Try not to talk about blood and killing all the time- You should be careful not to upset yourself."

Only then did Sylvia obediently nod.

The three women continued chatting for a while longer before Yvonne finally noticed how late it had become and rose to leave.

Elowen personally escorted them all the way to the manor entrance and stood there watching until their carriage disappeared beyond the gates before finally turning back inside.

But as she walked, her thoughts kept circling the same thing over and over.

The moment she returned to Stillwater Court, she headed straight for the study without stopping anywhere else first.

Cassian was seated behind the desk reviewing official reports when she entered

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Chapter 665 The Thing She Wanted Most

Elowen walked directly toward him and said, "Cassian, maybe you should go check on Draven."

Cassian lowered the parchment in his hand and looked up at her. "Why?"

Elowen tried very hard to keep a serious expression.

"I heard his parents beat him because he insisted on marrying someone they didn't approve of, and honestly, that's kind of tragic. You used to serve together, so it'd probably be good if you went to see him."

Cassian slowly raised an eyebrow.

"My dear Ella," he said with quiet amusement, "are you really worried about him?"

Elowen's cheeks immediately warmed.

"Well... I do feel a little bad for him," she admitted awkwardly. "He's risking everything just to marry Scarlet. He angered his parents, got beaten for it, and when you really think about it, he's had a rough time."

Then after hesitating briefly, she lowered her voice and leaned closer toward him.

“But mostly, I’m worried about Alaric’s head. They’re moving the body out of the palace in the next few days, right? If Draven’s hurt that badly, will he still be able to help us get it out?”

Cassian looked at her for several seconds before finally laughing softly under his breath.

Then he reached over and lightly pinched her cheek.

“You little troublemaker.”

After letting go, however, his expression gradually turned serious again.

“I already spoke with Draven about it,” he said calmly. “He agreed, and once he gives his word, he doesn’t back out. Besides, his parents bruised him, they didn’t cripple him. He’s still perfectly capable of stealing a head.”

Only then did the last trace of worry in Elowen’s chest finally ease.

“So you’re really going to visit him?” she asked.

Cassian rose from his chair with a smile.

“If Her Grace is giving orders, how could I possibly refuse?”

Elowen immediately burst into laughter.

“You’re impossible.”

Chuckled as he headed toward the door, but just before stepping outside, he suddenly paused and

back toward her again.

The amusement in his eyes faded slightly, replaced instead by unmistakable seriousness.

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Chapter 665 The Thing She Wanted Most

“Ella,” he said quietly, “don’t worry. I’ll bring you what you want.”

Warmth instantly spread through Elowen’s chest.

She nodded obediently, her voice soft.

“Come back early.”

Cassian lifted one hand in acknowledgment before striding out of the study.

Elowen remained standing there in the doorway for a long while afterward, quietly watching his figure disappear farther and farther down the corridor.

A gentle breeze drifted through the cloister outside and brushed softly across her face, and for reasons she could not quite explain, her heart suddenly felt unusually calm.

Only after Cassian had completely vanished from sight did she finally turn and walk back toward the bedchamber.

The room carried the faint warm scent of milk.

Caius and Emily were both still nestled in the nurses’ arms feeding quietly.

Caius drank with complete concentration, his eyes squeezed tightly shut while his tiny mouth worked furiously, both little fists clenched as though he were pouring every ounce of effort he possessed into the

task.

Emily, meanwhile, was infinitely more delicate and composed.

She drank quietly and slowly, perfectly content until the moment Elowen leaned closer.

The instant she noticed her mother, she immediately stopped feeding altogether and looked over with wide dark eyes before stretching both tiny arms toward Elowen, opening and closing her little fingers insistently as though trying to say, “Pick me up. Pick me up.” \

One of the nurses laughed softly nearby.

“She wants Your Grace.”

Elowen smiled immediately and carefully gathered Emily into her arms.

The little girl melted against her chest the moment she was held, warm and impossibly soft beneath the blankets.

Lowering her head slightly, Elowen blinked playfully at her daughter.

Emily stared at her for several seconds before suddenly breaking into a wide toothless grin nearly made Elowen's heart ache.

Then, still smiling, she burrowed happily into Elowen's embrace, rubbing her cheek against her mother's chest before settling there contentedly without i

ving again!

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

## 666

Chapter 666 What Was Owed

Elowen's heart softened completely.

How can someone be this soft and sweet?

Then almost immediately, another thought followed.

Oh. Right. She's mine.

At that moment, Elowen genuinely felt happier than she ever had in her life.

And once Emily settled comfortably into her mother's arms, absolutely no one could coax her away again.

When the nurse reached out to take her back, Emily immediately turned her face aside and buried herself deeper against Elowen's neck in protest.

Even after growing sleepy enough that her eyelids kept drooping shut, she still stubbornly wrapped both tiny arms around Elowen's neck and refused to let go.

The servants nearby all looked helplessly amused, but Elowen merely smiled softly.

“It’s alright,” she said gently. “Let Poppy stay with me.”

By the time Cassian returned later that evening, the room had already gone completely quiet.

The moment he stepped inside, he saw both mother and daughter sleeping peacefully together on the

bed.

Emily lay curled tightly against Elowen’s chest, one/tiny pink hand wrapped firmly around Elowen’s finger.

Elowen slept on her side facing the child, one arm draped protectively over her daughter while her breathing rose and fell slow and even in deep sleep.

Cassian sat quietly beside the bed and watched them for a very long time.

Long enough for the fading sunlight beyond the windows to gradually shift from one side of the chamber to the other.

Only then did he reluctantly rise and head for the study to deal with the official matters still waiting for him.

The next morning, by the time Elowen finally woke, daylight had already flooded the entire room. She remained tangled lazily beneath the blankets without the slightest desire to get up.

She had slept deeply the night before, and now her mind still felt wrapped in haze, heavy and unfocused enough that she could barely think straight.

Turning over, she buried her face deeper into the pillow and nearly drifted back to sleep again

Then suddenly, footsteps approached from outside.

Chapter 666 What Was Owed

Finished

The velvet bed curtains were pulled aside.

“Ella.”

Cassian’s voice.

Still half asleep, Elowen blinked her eyes open and saw him standing beside the bed, his brows drawn together slightly.

“The investigation into Alaric’s murder was officially concluded this morning,” he said quietly. “All responsibility was placed on Daphne. They’re burying him this afternoon. In the end, His Majesty still relented and allowed him to be laid to rest in the royal crypts.’

Elowen jolted fully awake instantly.

She sat upright so quickly the blankets nearly slid off the bed entirely before grabbing Cassian’s arm tightly.

“What about Alaric’s head?”

Cassian immediately turned his hand over and clasped hers in return.

“I left it outside the room.”

Elowen’s heartbeat slammed violently against her ribs.

She drew in a sharp breath, then another, but the pounding in her chest still refused to settle.

Without another word, she threw aside the blankets/and hurried to climb out of bed.

Cassian quickly stepped forward to steady her.

“Careful,” he said helplessly. “Slow down before you trip. At least put your shoes on first. The floor’s freezing.”

But Elowen was far too distracted to care.

She shoved her feet hurriedly into her slippers before standing upright and looking directly at him.

“Cassian,” she said slowly and clearly, “we’re leaving the city.”

Her fingers tightened around his wrist.

“I want to go see Ember.”

The carriage departed through the northern gates of Vanelle and traveled steadily farther from the capital.

The entire journey passed in silence.

Neither Elowen nor Cassian spoke.

The wooden box rested quietly in the corner of the carriage occasionally shifting with a dull nud

napter 666 What Was Owed

whenever the wheels struck uneven ground.

Leaning silently against Cassian’s shoulder, Elowen kept staring toward the box the entire way there, stil unable to fully process the fact that everything had actually reached this point.

After traveling for nearly half an hour, the carriage finally stopped near the foot of a mountain trail.

Once they stepped down, Cassian carried the wooden box himself while Elowen lifted a heavy basket fille with fresh fruit and pastries.

Cassian led the w

She had neve

All this ti

to come

head while Elowen followed quietly behind him.

his path before.

ever dared ask where Ember had been burfed, nor had she ever found the courage

Cass

T

handled everything quietly for her without ever forcing her before she was ready.

ollowed the narrow trail upward through the hills, and after ten minutes, the landscape

y rested deep within the mountainside, surrounded on all sides by thick green woodland d it completely from the outside world.

spread across the clearing like velvet.

he very center stood a grave.

not large, but it had clearly been cared for meticulously.

a single weed grew nearby, and pale white stones had been carefully arranged around the front of the ve marker.

lowen suddenly thought that Cassian truly understood her.

He loved her.

And because he loved her, he had also cared for the little mare she had loved so dearly.

(

Ember had always adored beautiful places when she was alive, especially flowers and open fields.

Resting somewhere like this would have made her happy.

Elowen slowly crouched beside the grave and carefully arranged the fruit one piece at a time before the

marker.

Everything she brought had once been Ember's favorite.

Finally, she spoke soft

"I'm sorry, Embe

but I was afra

bring myself to face you missed you so much,

8:37 am PUM

Chapter 666 What Was Owed

Finished

Her voice trembled faintly.

“But now I can finally come see you properly. Are you happy?”

Beside her, Cassian quietly placed the wooden box before the grave.

Elowen slowly reached out and lifted the lid.

Inside rested Alaric’s severed head.

His hair hung loose and tangled around his bloodstained face.

Because it was still fresh, the smell had not yet fully turned foul.

Elowen lowered her eyes toward it and spoke again in an almost gentle voice.

“Ember, look. This is Alaric’s head.”

Cassian stood silently beside her, watching without interrupting.

“When he killed you, you must’ve been in so much pain.”

At last, Elowen’s voice broke.

Tears slipped silently down her face while the entire valley fell quiet around her, so quiet that even the birds hidden among the trees seemed to stop singing.

“At the time, I was too weak to protect you,” she whispered through tears. “But I never forgot what he did to you. Look at him now. I took everything from him. His place as heir. His power. His reputation. Even his life.”

Her gaze remained fixed on the severed head resting inside the box.

“Ember... this was always a debt he owed you.”

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# 667

## Chapter 667 A Mother's Grief

Elowen wiped the tears from her face before looking quietly toward the grave.

"Ember," she said softly, "if there's another life after this one, let's run the open fields together again. We'll race beneath the wind, drink from the same stream, and lie in the grass watching the clouds drift across the sky.

A breeze swept through the valley just then, stirring the wildflowers and rustling through the treetops with a long, whispering sound that lingered in the air as though the mountain itself were answering her.

Like a promise.

Like a gentle and certain reply.

"Alright."

Meanwhile, far away at the royal crypts, Isla finally arrived after dusk had already begun settling across the hills.

Cold wind swept through the vast burial grounds carrying the damp scent of old stone and rain-soaked earth, sharp enough to chill straight through bone.

Her carriage was stopped outside the cemetery gates.

"My Lady, the burial hour has already passed," one of the royal attendants said stiffly. "His Majesty ordered the interment to begin precisely before sunset. Once the gates are sealed, no one may enter. Those are the royal rites, and we do not dare disobey them."

Isla slowly pushed aside the carriage curtain, her expression dark and terrible.

Before sunset?

But the time delivered to her had been much later.

under

She had survived inside the palace for too many years not to understand exactly what that meant.

Someone had done this deliberately.

Someone had intentionally fed her false information so she would miss her own son's burial.

Isla narrowed her eyes coldly.

"You know who I am, and you still dare stand in my way?" she demanded. "I'm going to see my son one last time. Open the gates."

The official immediately lowered himself deeply before her.

"My Lady, forgive us. His Majesty's orders cannot be violated. Once the burial hour passes the crypts remain sealed. Those are ancient royal customs. We cannot break them."

"Customs?" Isla's voice suddenly sharpened. "My son is buried inside; and you're telling me I'm forbidden

Chapter 667 A Mother's Grief

from seeing him one last time because of some ridiculous ceremony?"

She stepped down from the carriage too quickly and nearly stumbled before Hilda rushed forward to support her.

But Isla shoved her aside almost immediately and strode toward the cemetery entrance without another word.

The officials hurried after her in alarm, trying desperately to stop her, but Isla never once slowed her pace, and in their panic they struggled to catch up.

At that moment, Alaric's coffin still rested at the entrance to the underground crypt, not yet fully sealed away.

The black lacquered coffin looked enormous beneath the fading evening light, its polished surface gleaming coldly in the dusk.

Several workers were carrying out the final burial rites nearby, but the moment they saw Isla approaching, all of them immediately paled and dropped into deep bows.

Isla ignored every one of them.

Her eyes were red with grief as she stared fixedly at the coffin.

“Alaric,” she whispered hoarsely, “your mother came too late.”

Once someone died, the living somehow only remembered the good parts afterward.

No matter how many mistakes Alaric had made while alive, no matter how often he had defied her or angered her, he was still her son.

And now, when she thought of him, she no longer remembered the arguments or disappointments.

She remembered the infant she had once cradled in velvet blankets, pink-cheeked and sleeping peacefully in her arms.

She remembered the boy growing older little by little, bent over books beside the firelight while carefully practicing his letters.

At last, Isla reached out and rested trembling fingers against the cold coffin lid while tears streamed soundlessly down her face.

Then she began striking the coffin weakly with her hand as she cried.

Again and again.

The dull sound echoed through the crypt grounds heavily enough to make even the servants nearby lower

their heads.

“Open it.”

Her voice came suddenly.

Chapter 667 A Mother’s Grief

The workers kneeling nearby exchanged alarmed glances, but no one dared move.

“I said open it!” Isla screamed, tears streaking down her face. “I want to see my son one last time!”

The lead worker finally forced himself to speak.

“My Lady... the coffin has already been sealed. If we reopen it now...”

Before he could finish, Isla grabbed the iron lantern sitting nearby and hurled it directly at him.

The heavy metal edge struck his forehead instantly.

Blood poured down his face.

%

“Are you deaf?” she shrieked. “I am Lady Delphine! I am the mother of the Crown Prince! I will see my son one final time, and no one here has the right to stop me!”

The worker did not even dare dodge.

The others immediately scrambled to obey, terrified of provoking her further.

They hurried forward with tools and broke apart the wax seals around the coffin before slowly forcing the heavy lid open with a groaning scrape.

“Enough. Leave.”

Isla’s voice turned ice-cold.

No one dared hesitate.

The workers retreated as quickly as possible until the burial chamber was left almost entirely silent.

Only then did Isla finally lower her gaze into the coffin.

And the moment she saw what lay inside, her entire body froze completely.

Alaric’s body rested there dressed in formal burial robes, his hands folded peacefully across his chest exactly as royal tradition required.

But above the collar of those robes, where his head should have been, there was nothing.

Nothing at all.

For a very long moment, Isla simply stood there staring blankly into the coffin, unable to move

Unable to breathe.

“Where is it? she whispered.

Where is his head?”

Chapter 667 A Mother’s Grief

Fincher

Isla continued staring at the headless body for what felt like forever before a broken laugh finally escaped

her throat.

“Cassian... Elowen...

Her voice trembled violently.

“You killed my son... and even after his death, you still refused to leave him whole.”

“My Lady!”

Hilda rushed forward in tears.

“They’ve gone too far. This is monstrous. We should return to the palace immediately and tell His Majesty everything. His Majesty will punish them for this!”

But Isla’s expression only grew colder.

“Tell His Majesty?” she repeated bitterly. “These days, all he sees are the Duke and Duchess of Duskmoor. Do you really think he’d listen to a single word I say? If I told him the truth, he would probably protect them all over again.”

Then she shoved Hilda aside and staggered toward the exit,

“Back to the palace.”

Her son had died without even being left whole.

As his mother, she would make certain the people responsible paid for it.

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## 668

### Chapter 668 Before Nightfall

By the time Isla returned to the palace, the tears on her face had already dried completely.

A young palace servant had apparently been waiting outside her residence for quite some time, because the moment he spotted her, he hurried forward wearing an eager, flattering smile.

“My Lady,” he said carefully, “I heard something interesting today, and i thought perhaps you might want to know... though I wasn’t sure whether I ought to speak of it.”

Isla glanced at him once and immediately understood what he wanted

“Give him ten dollars,” she said coldly.

The moment the coins were placed into his hands, the servant’s smile became infinitely more enthusiastic.

“It’s like this, My Lady. Earlier today, the Duke and Duchess of Duskmoor left Vanelle. They’ve already been gone for nearly an hour.”

Isla’s

gaze sharpened instantly.

“Where did they go?”

The servant lowered his head apologetically.

“That part couldn’t be discovered. But if they left the capital together and stayed gone this long, then it must’ve been somewhere important.”

A cold laugh escaped Isla’s lips.

Wherever they had gone no longer mattered.

In fact, this timing suited her perfectly.

They had left Vanelle.

That meant tonight was the night.

Isla slowly turned toward Hilda, and the look in her eyes was so ruthless and absolute that even Hilda’s breath caught.

“Make the arrangements,” Isla said quietly. “Before this night ends, I want both of them dead”

Hilda’s face instantly turned pale with shock.

But Isla continued speaking before she could respond.

“And Tamsin, the maid serving beside Elira.. she despises Iris, does she? Co tell her I need extra bands for an urgent matter here tonight. Say the work is exhausting and I need someone capable seg over immediately

Hilda stared at her

Finished

This time, Isla had truly made up her mind.

Nothing anyone said would change it now.

In the end, Hilda could only bow her head quietly and obey before withdrawing from the chamber.

Meanwhile, inside Elira’s residence, Iris was standing beneath the covered stone walkway hanging freshly washed clothes to dry.

Some belonged to her.

Most belonged to the other palace maids.

Ever since Elowen had arranged for Iris to enter Elira's household, Iris herself had rarely been assigned difficult work.

But after Tamsin was punished over the wine incident, her hatred toward Iris had only deepened.

Eventually, Tamsin had gathered the other maids together and argued that Iris had far too much free time while everyone else remained overworked, so naturally all the laundry duties should be handed over to her instead.

That way, the others could devote themselves fully to serving Elira more comfortably.

And just like that, nearly every servant's clothing in the residence became Iris's responsibility.

Every morning she woke to mountains of laundry waiting for her.

"Iris!"

An impatient voice suddenly called from behind her

Iris turned around immediately.

Tamsin stood beneath the corridor archway looking her up and down impatiently.

"There's work that needs doing in another residence," she said. "They're short on servants, so you're going over there to help."

Iris brushed the water from her hands and began standing up.

Then Tamsin added casually, "You'll be serving over at Lady Delphine's residence. Since Lady Delplune isn't exactly favored these days, don't go gossiping about it afterward."

Iris paused slightly before looking up.

"The work is at Lady Delphine's residence?"

Tamsin immediately frowned:

“What, is that a problem? In this palace. His Majesty is your inaster. Lady Elira is your taster, and Lady Delphine is still your master too. If someone above you gives an order, then your obey it stop dragging

Chapter 668 Before Nightfall

your feet.

Iris pressed her lips together softly but said nothing more.

Still, unease quietly rose inside her chest.

Something was going to happen tonight.

She could feel it.

And somehow, she was standing directly in the middle of it.

By dusk, the carriage belonging to Duskmoor Manor had finally returned to Vanelle.

The wheels rolled steadily through the city gates while Elowen leaned quietly against Cassian’s shoulder.

Her eyes were still faintly red, but her expression had relaxed in a way Cassian had not seen in a very long time.

Cassian wrapped an arm around her and lowered his head to press a gentle kiss against her forehead just as hurried hoofbeats suddenly thundered toward them from behind.

“Your Grace! Your Grace!”

Anson’s anxious voice rang out from outside the carriage.

Cassian immediately ordered the carriage stopped before leaning slightly out the window.

“What happened at the palace?”

Anson lowered his voice quickly.

“They say Iris was summoned to Lady Delphine’s residence earlier under the excuse of helping with work but she never came back out. Caelan sent people to ask about her, but Lady Delphine claims she’s never seen Iris at all.”

Elowen froze instantly, her brows tightening.

Anson continued quickly.

“His Highness is still inside the palace trying to figure out what happened. He sent Cedar to deliver word to Your Grace and the Duchess immediately.”

At that moment, Elowen no longer had the energy to question why Caclan seemed this anxious over Iris disappearing.

After all, Iris had only become a target because of Alaric.

And more than that, because Flowen herself had once asked Iris to betray hum for her sake.

Without hesitation. Elowen turned immediately toward Cassian.

“You’re coming with me to the palace

Chapter 668 Before Nightfall.

Finlahed

Cassian nodded at once.

“Of course.”

Then Elowen looked toward Scarlet and Mira, her tone urgent but still steady.

“This matter cannot become public. The Duke and I will go ahead to the palace. The two of you return to Duskmoor Manor as planned.”

Mira nodded repeatedly.

Scarlet, meanwhile, quietly said, “Please be careful, Your Grace.”

There was no more time for discussion.

Elowen and Cassian immediately hurried toward the royal palace while the carriage continued onward through the streets of Vanelle toward Duskmoor Manor.

## 669

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### Chapter 669 He Came for Her

Inside the carriage, Mua kept murmuring to herself as through rege the words co somehow steady her nerves. “Iris is going to be all right. Her Grace we

her back safely... nothing’s going to happen to her

Scarlet gave a faint nod but stayed silent:

Her thoughts felt tangled beyond reason, and no matter how hard she tried inexplicable unease continued pressing heavily against her chest.

Something doesn’t feel right.

The carriage had only just turned into a narrow stone lane when ashriill whistle carddenly ripped trong the air outside.

Then came the unmistakable hiss of a bolt cutting through the wind,

Before Scarlet could even react, Mira lunged forward and shoved her down hard against the cura throwing herself protectively over her at the exact moment a crossbow bolt blasted through the carriag wall.

The iron-tipped shaft tore over their heads before embedding itself violently into the opposite panel withs a heavy crack, the wood splintering around it while the bolt continued trembling from the force of impact

“Assassins!”

The driver’s panicked shout exploded from outside the carriage.

Almost instantly, the entire lane descended into chaos as steel collided against steel, horses shrieked in terror, and somewhere nearby someone let out a horrible scream of pain.

Scarlet's heartbeat pounded so violently she could barely think. Her fingers locked desperately around Mira's sleeve while her mind went completely blank.

Mira, however, had grown up at Hale Manor and had witnessed scenes like this far more often than Scarlet ever had.

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Even now, she managed to stay calmer.

"They probably came for His Grace and Her Grace," she whispered quickly, relief briefly surfacing in her expression despite the chaos outside. "Thank God we were the ones inside the carriage instead

Then she lowered her voice further. "Scarlet, we can't stay here. It's too dangerous. We need to get out before they break through..."

She never finished the sentence.

The carriage curtain was violently ripped open.

A blade flashed downward toward them.

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Chapter 664 Came for Her

Scarlet instinctively shut her eyes and threw herself over Mira without thinking.

But the strike never landed

A tremendous crash shook the entire carriage sideways as another weapon slammed hard against the doorframe instead.

Scarlet opened her eyes.

A tall figure stood directly before the carriage entrance, a longsword braced in his hands as he blocked the assassin's killing strike head-on.

He stood with his back toward her, broad shoulders filling the doorway beneath the gray afternoon light spilling into the lane.

Part of his sleeve had already been sliced open during the clash, exposing hard muscle beneath the torn fabric, yet his stance remained completely unmoved.

Scarlet recognized him instantly.

Draven.

“Don’t panic.”

He never turned around while speaking, but his voice carried the kind of steady certainty that instantly calmed the fear spiraling through her chest.

Emotion struck Scarlet so suddenly that her eyes burned.

Watching him standing there between her and death, the terror clawing through her finally seemed to settle.

“Find somewhere hidden and stay there until this is over.”

The instructions came quickly.

Then Draven tightened his grip on the sword and charged back into the fighting before either of them could answer.

Mira finally scrambled upright. “Scarlet, come on.”

Scarlet forced herself to steady her breathing before nodding quickly. “Right.”

Even to her own ears, her voice sounded dangerously close to breaking.

Outside, the narrow lane had already become a battlefield.

r

Steel flashed cold beneath the cloudy daylight while Draven cut through the assassins with brutal precision, every strike carrying enough force to send grown men crashing onto the stones.

But there were simply too many of them.

And worse, these men clearly had no intention of leaving alive.

hirten grands had accompanied Cassian and Elowen earlier that day: leaving only the carnage guin dod attendat behind. Though they could defend themselves well enough under

wollenn fighting without fear of death.

uickly overwhelmed against enem

veryone there. Draven w

casily the strongest fighter.

Even so, the man could only do so much alone.

Especially now.

The injuries Roger Hall and Maud Hall had left on him several days carber had barely begun healing before fresh wounds opened across the same battered body all over again.

Still, he never stepped back once.

Because Scarlet was behind him.

Hidden in the shadows beside Mira, Scarlet found herself unable to look away from him.

She had no idea how he had arrived in time.

She only knew that if Draven had not appeared today, she would already be dead.

And now he was bleeding for her.

Tears slowly filled Scarlet's eyes.

He already knew about her past. So why was he still risking his life for her like this?

Is he completely out of his mind...?

At that exact moment, one of the assassins lunged from the side.

Draven twisted away quickly enough to avoid the killing blow, but the blade still sliced across his arm, cutting through cloth and skin before blood immediately spread across the torn sleeve.

He grunted through the pain before driving his own sword straight through the attacker in the same motion, sending the man collapsing onto the stones.

Scarlet's chest tightened painfully at the sight.

No.

She could not just hide there watching this happen.

No one was invincible. Not even Draven.

If this continued, he was going to die.

Scarlet forced herself to take several slow breaths, desperately trying to calm the panic hammering through her chest.

end

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Chapter 864

There has to be something I can do.

Then suddenly, beside her, Mira mustered under her breath, "They all fight the same way."

Scarlet froze slightly.

Her eyes swept back across the fighting.

After watching carefully for several moments, she began noticing it too.

Just as Mira had said, the assassins' attacks all followed the same rhythm, and every strike carried nearly identical tells beforehand.

"Mira." Scarlet said suddenly, "I'm going to help Commander Hall."

Mira blinked in surprise. “But you...”

Then she stopped halfway through the protest before nodding firmly instead.

“All right. Go.”

Scarlet gave her a quick grateful smile before climbing out from hiding.

“Commander Hall!”

Her clear voice rang sharply through the chaos.

“The man on your left leads with his off hand. His opening’s under the right ribs!”

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Awakening i ve Rehom to Be His Duchess

## 670

Chapter 670 Side by Side

Draven reacted instantly.

The moment Scarlet called the warning, he pivoted without hesitation and drove his sword hard toward the assassin’s exposed side,

The man failed to defend himself in time.

A strangled cry escaped him before he collapsed heavily onto the stones.

“He’s aiming for your left shoulder!

“Back up. He’s reaching for a throwing knife!”

Scarlet continued calling out warning after warning while Draven adjusted perfectly to every single one, his movements syncing with her voice so naturally that it felt as though the two of them had fought together countless times before.

In truth, they had never stood side by side in battle even once.

Yet now their coordination fit together flawlessly.

One assassin after another fell beneath Draven's blade.

Though he gradually gained control of the fight, fresh wounds still continued appearing across his body.

One.

Then another.

Then several more.

But he barely seemed aware of them.

He no longer felt tired. Barely even felt pain.

At one point, an absurd thought suddenly crossed his mind. If only there were more of them.

If the assassins kept coming, then this moment could last a little longer.

Even if all he could do was fight with his back toward Scarlet while listening to her voice calling warnings behind him like "Left side!" or "Watch your shoulder!" it already felt like enough.

More than enough.

But the instant that thought distracted him, everything changed.

One of the assassins suddenly noticed Scarlet standing nearby.

Without warning, the man abandoned the fight entirely and charged straight toward her.

M

The Tanent Draven saw it, his expression changed completely.

Scarlet!”

e immediately turned toward her and tried to force his way through the remaining assassins.

if several of them threw themselves at him at once, trapping him where he stood.

ar could do was shout her name.

arlet saw the assassin rushing toward her and instinctively stumbled backward.

she had no martial training.

No strength.

No chance of outrunning a trained killer.

The assassin reached her in moments and raised his sword high.

Then suddenly, a thick wooden club came crashing down onto his head with a brutal crack.

The blow struck hard enough to send him staggering sideways.

“That’s cheating!”

Mira’s furious voice immediately followed behind it.

“If you’re jealous she’s helping from the sidelines, maybe find your own strategist!”

The absurdity of the moment snapped Scarlet out of her panic.

Her gaze darted downward. A sword lay abandoned near her feet.

Without wasting another second, she grabbed it.

She had no idea how to properly wield a blade, and she certainly lacked the strength to kill anyone with it. but she remembered enough of Draven’s movements from moments earlier to imitate them clumsily.

Gripping the hilt with both hands, she thrust awkwardly toward the assassin’s wrist.

The blade pierced flesh.

The assassin cried out in pain, and the sword in his hand clattered onto the stones.

Mira understood immediately.

She swung the club again with every ounce of strength she had left and smashed it against the assassin's

skull a second time.

The impact

The ass

on before.

he finally collapsed unconscious onto the ground.

9:46 am P PM

Chapter 676 Side by Side

345 Pearls

Scarlet's hands still trembled violently around the sword hilt while she struggled to catch her breath.

Mira looked no better.

She was shaking so badly she could barely hold onto the club anymore and ended up leaning weakly against the carriage for support.

"Did... did we kill him?" she asked shakily.

Scarlet stared down at the unmoving body and swallowed hard. "I... I don't know."

By then, Draven had already dealt with the remaining assassins.

Ignoring the exhaustion threatening to give out beneath him, he staggered only once before hurrying straight toward Scarlet.

He arrived just in time to hear her answer.

“Not dead,” he said roughly between breaths. “Still hanging on.”

As he spoke, he raised his sword toward the assassin’s throat.

“Commander Hall!” Mira hurriedly shouted. “Leave one alive! His Grace and Her Grace can still find out who sent them!”

Draven paused briefly before lowering the blade again.

Then he bent down calmly and dislocated the assassin’s jaw instead.

“This way he won’t be able to bite through poison.”/

Only after finishing that did he finally turn properly toward Scarlet.

“Are you hurt?”

Scarlet dropped the sword from her trembling hands before shaking her head weakly. “No.... I’m fine.”

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But the moment she looked at him clearly, her breath caught.

His clothes were soaked with blood.

The wound along his left arm looked the worst, blood still steadily seeping through the torn fabric while the hand gripping the sword trembled faintly from strain.

Scarlet’s chest tightened painfully.

Instinctively, she wanted to help him.

But she had nothing.

After fumbling helplessly through her sleeves and pockets, she managed to find only a handkerchief.

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ward and pressed the cloth, firmly against the deepest

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lood soaked through the pale fabric, staining it dark crimsons.

'xheart tremble all over again.

that for a second.

and quickly, forcing a grin despite the exhaustion in his voice.

shit vice Doesn't even hurt!

und that deep did not hurt.

N

e finally asked the question that had been circling endlessly through her mind since

by were you here?"

way immediately.

y, he actually looked embarrassed.

Parrassed.

finally admitted quietly, "Truth is... I haven't really been staying home recovering y. Yesterday I spent most of the day waiting outside waiting outside Duskmoor Manor, and this

you'd gone out with the carriage..." He rubbed awkwardly at the back of his neck w voice. "I followed behind from a distance."

rlet so hard that tears instantly spilled down her face again.

meone who cried easily.

ion, she had survived every humiliation imaginable.

12.6K

9:46 am P p M

Awakening Cen