

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

We Had Something Real But Didn't Handle It Right

681

Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 681 Blood on the Arrow

Finished

On the ride back to Duskmoor Manor, Elewen finally turned toward Scarlet and asked softly, "Tell me everything that happened today. Don't leave anything out."

Scarlet nodded and carefully recounted the entire attack from beginning to end.

She told her about the carriage turning into the narrow back lane, the arrows punching straight through the carriage walls, the masked men appearing out of nowhere, and Draver arriving at the last moment like a knight charging onto a battlefield.

When she finished, Scarlet lowered her gaze slightly.

"Everyone from the manor made it back safely. A few people were hurt, but only lightly."

Elowen gave a quiet nod.

"That's good."

Then she looked at Scarlet more closely.

"Commander Hall nearly died protecting you today. After everything that happened... do you see him differently now?"

At the mention of him, Scarlet's eyes turned faintly red.

She lowered her head, her voice soft and restrained.

“If Commander Hall hadn’t come today, I probably would’ve died in that alley.”

Her fingers tightened lightly against her skirt before she continued.

“Earlier, when he spoke honestly about how he felt about me, I told him plainly that my past wasn’t something respectable. But... he didn’t look down on me for any of it. I never thought there’d really be someone willing to overlook everything that happened to me and risk his life for mine.”

Elowen listened quietly without interrupting.

After a long pause, Scarlet finally lifted her head.

“So, Your Grace... I’ve decided that no matter how difficult things may become later on, I want to face them together with him.”

The words made Elowen’s heart ache warmly all at once.

She reached over and gently squeezed Scarlet’s hand.

“As long as I’m here,” she said softly, “the two of you won’t have to carry it alone.”

By the time they returned to Duskmoor Manor, Draven had already been settled inside the manor’s receiving hall while Hugh treated his injuries.

8:27 am G

pp

ct

alt

Chapter 681 Blood on the Arrow

His coat had been removed, exposing a broad, hard-built frame covered in old scars and fresh wounds alike. Linen bandages wrapped around his shoulder, ribs, and arm, and faint traces of blood had already soaked through the pale fabric.

The sight alone was enough to make anyone wince.

The moment Draven saw Elowen and Scarlet enter, he instinctively reached for his coat, clearly intending to cover himself properly in front of the ladies.

Hugh shot him a sharp look.

Draven immediately stopped moving.

Elowen walked closer and asked, “How badly are you hurt?”

Draven instantly tried to stand and greet her formally, only for Hugh to shove him right back into the chair.

Left with no choice, he stayed seated and gave a respectful nod instead.

“It’s nothing serious, Your Grace. Just cuts and bruises. Honestly, I’d still be alive even without the bandages.”

Hugh let out a cold laugh.

“The blade on your arm barely missed the bone, and you’re calling that nothing serious? Where exactly does all this confidence come from?”

Draven grinned a little despite the scolding.

“I did spend years serving under His Grace.”

From nearby, Cassian replied lazily, “That’s definitely not what I taught you.”

Hugh glanced toward him, only for his expression to darken immediately when he noticed the scrag across Cassian’s hand.

“You’re hurt too?!”

Then he ground out irritably, “None of you have the slightest talent for making a physician’s life easier.”

Later that evening, news arrived from the palace.

Theodric’s ruling regarding Isia had officially been delivered.

She was confined to her residence within the palace grounds and forbidden from leaving without imperial permission. Her household stipend had also been suspended for a year as punishment.

The sentence was neither especially severe nor especially light.

But after today, everyone understood one thing clearly.

The Baker family would never recover their former standing

t

8:27 am GP P

Chapter 681 Blood on the Arrow

Quin delivered the message personally and lingered afterward instead of leaving immediately. Once he finished explaining Isla's punishmetik, He smiled toward Cassian and added, "Your Grace, His Majesty also passed along another order. Formal negotiations with Nordia begin tomorrow. His Majesty hopes Your Grace will give the matter your full attention. The discussions have dragged on long enough already, and he'd like the treaty settled within half a month."

The next morning, before dawn had fully broken across the sky. Casstan quietly rose from bed.

Elowen stirred beneath the blankets and opened her eyes sleepily. Outside the windows, the world still looked gray-blue with early morning mist.

Her voice came out soft and drowsy.

"Cassian..."

He immediately leaned down and kissed her forehead gently.

"I'm meeting with the Nordian envoys this morning," he murmured. "The meeting starts at sunrise. Go back to sleep. It's still early."

Elowen gave a sleepy hum in response, rolled over beneath the blankets, and drifted right back to sleep.

Cassian watched her curled comfortably beneath the covers for a moment before quietly leaving the

room.

By the time Elowen fully woke again, sunlight had already flooded the chamber.

Cassian still had not returned, but Emily and Caius were already awake in the wet nurse's arms, babbling happily to themselves.

The moment Emily spotted Elowen, she immediately reached both arms toward her with bright eager

eyes.

Elowen laughed softly and picked her up, bouncing her gently once or twice before widening her eyes

“You’ve gotten heavier.”

Gerda smiled nearby.

“She eats well and sleeps well every day. Of course she’s growing.”

After holding Emily for a while, Elowen passed her back before reaching for Caius instead

The moment she lifted him, however, she looked genuinely startled.

“When did he get this heavy?”

The wet nurse laughed warmly. “The young heir has an excellent appetite.

That immediately made Elowen worry. “He’s not going to grow into a little buperball, is he

Gerda chuckled reassuringly.

1 shift

end

enter

ctrl

8:27 am G PP

Chapter 684 Blood on the Arrow

“Not at all. Your Grace. His Grace was round-faced as a little boy too, but once he grew older, he became tall and lean. Look at him now?”

That finally seemed to reassure Elowen.

As she looked down at Caius resting in her arms, she could almost imagine traces of Cassian as a child, and the thought softened her heart completely.

After breakfast, Elowen brought Scarlet with her and prepared to head to Silverloom Exchange.

12.7K

ctrl

682

Chapter 682 The Missing Official

Outside the manor gates, the carriage had already been prepared.

The coachman stood respectfully beside it and bowed the moment Elowen approached.

Just as she was about to step inside, though, something suddenly felt off.

She glanced instinctively toward the side of the carriage.

Finished

Normally, Leander would already be there waiting with account ledgers or workshop sketches tucked beneath one arm.

Today, however, his familiar figure was nowhere to be seen.

In his place stood an unfamiliar middle-aged official wearing the formal robes of the Ministry of the King’s Works. The man looked to be in his forties, with a clean-shaven face and slightly heavy build

He bowed respectfully.

“I am Everard, Deputy of the King’s Works. My greetings, Your Grace.”

Elowen kept her expression calm.

“Everard? Then where is Leander? Is he unwell?”

Everard straightened and answered with carefully measured politeness.

“Leander has officially resumed his duties within the Ministry of Rites under His Majesty’s direct orders. Since Silverloom Exchange technically falls under the Ministry of the King’s Works, Leander felt handling both responsibilities at once would become too difficult. He worried it might delay Your Grace’s affairs as well, so he respectfully requested to step away from this matter. His Majesty understood and assigned the remaining work to me instead.”

Elowen listened quietly, though inwardly she understood everything immediately.

(

Leander was not overwhelmed with work.

After accidentally learning about Scarlet’s past, he had simply felt awkward and quietly chosen to distance himself without making matters uncomfortable for anyone.

At least he had handled it gracefully.

Elowen simply nodded.

“Then I’ll leave things in Everard’s hands from now on.”

Everard immediately responded that he hardly deserved such trust before stepping forward to hold open the carriage door for her personally.

Elowen climbed inside, and Scarlet followed after her.

ctrl

Chapter 682 The Missing Official

Once the carriage door shut and the horses began moving through the streets, silence settled between them for a brief moment.

Elowen turned toward Scarlet.

Scarlet sat quietly with lowered eyes and a perfectly calm expression.

“Scarlet,” Elowen said gently.

Scarlet looked up immediately.

“Yes, Your Grace?”

Elowen hesitated briefly before speaking plainly.

“You don’t need to take Leander’s reaction to heart.”

Scarlet thought quietly for a moment before answering seriously.

“If everyone could be as kindhearted and forgiving as Your Grace, that would naturally be wonderful. I’ve only been able to live peacefully these past years because Your Grace never judged me for my past.”

Then she smiled faintly.

“But I can’t expect everyone else to feel the same way. Back then, when those men humiliated me publicly, Leander still stood up for me. I’ve always been grateful for that. Even if he’s uncomfortable with my past now, he never said anything cruel to my face. Instead, he chose to step away quietly and respectfully. Honestly, I think that was already more grace than most people would offer.”

Elowen listened and felt unexpectedly emotional.

Scarlet truly had changed.

Once upon a time, she would panic whenever Draven came near her and quietly bury herself in shame. over her past.

” Now she no longer looked like that frightened girl hiding inside herself, terrified someone might see the scars she carried.

She had work she cared about, a future she wanted, and dreams she was willing to chase openly.

Most importantly, she had finally accepted herself completely.

Whether Leander stayed or left no longer had the power to wound her.

Elowen suddenly smiled teasingly.

“Still, maybe it’s better this way. Otherwise Commander Hall would probably keep sulking every time he saw Leander near you.”

Scarlet’s entire face flushed bright red instantly.

For several long seconds, she could not get a single word out

ctrl

Chapter 692 The Missing Official

Half a month later, Elowen returned from Silverloom Exchange and had barely stepped into the courtyard of Duskmoor Manor before the rich aroma of roasted lamb and fresh herbs drifted through the evening air.

Cassian emerged from the dining room carrying the last bowl of lamb stew, a kitchen apron still tied around his waist.

“We wrapped up the final point in the peace negotiations today,” he said easily. “The treaty just needs to be signed tomorrow. I got back early and figured you were probably missing my cooking by now,

Elowen nodded immediately

“I absolutely was.”

As she spoke, she stepped closer and began untying the apron strings at his waist herself.

“Honestly, the negotiations went even smoother than I expected. I guess there’s a reason everyone keeps talking about the Duke of Duskmoor like he’s some legendary diplomat.”

Cassian laughed softly.

“Nordia’s being generous because of you.”

Elowen looked up at him with a smug little smile.

“Well, that still means Your Grace made a very smart decision marrying me.”

Cassian lightly squeezed her fingers.

“Go wash up first. Dinner’s ready.”

As they walked together toward the washstand near the hearth, Elowen suddenly asked. "Where are Aunt Elspeth and Nina?"

"They went out again," Cassian replied. "Yesterday they were trying taverns in the eastern quarters. and today they're exploring the western district instead. The two of them are enjoying life quite inoroughly."

Elowen laughed.

"That's what happens when a woman has inoney. Fine food, good wine, and whatever else she wants whenever she wants it."

She rolled up her sleeves slightly and washed her hands beside him before adding, "Oh, right. Tomorrow' also the official opening day for Silverloom Exchange."

Cassian glanced sideways at her.

"You're going in person?"

"I technically don't have to," Elowen admitted. "Most things are already being handled by Scarlet now. But since it's the opening day, I feel like I should still show up and support it properly,"

3.27 am GPP

Chapter 682 The Missing Official

"What time?"

Late morning.

Cassian nodded once, committing it to memory.

"Then once the treaty signing is finished, I'll come pick you up."

Elowen obediently nodded.

"All right."

The following morning arrived bright and beautiful beneath clear spring skies.

After getting up, Elowen sat before the dressing mirror while Mirand Cora carefully arranged her hair and jewelry.

Today she would appear publicly at Silverloom Exchange not simply as Elowen, but as the Duchess of Duskmoor and Lady of Grace and Virtue herself.

Naturally, her appearance needed to look elegant, dignified, and perfectly suited to her station.

12.7K

ctrl

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

683

Chapter 683 A Fever Before Dawn

Cora had only just begun brushing out Elewen's hair when hurried footsteps sounded outside the chamber.

A moment later, Gerda rushed in looking pale with alarm.

"Your Grace," she said quickly, struggling to steady her breathing, "His Grace is burning up. I'm afraid taken a dangerous fever."

Elowen turned immediately, and even Cora stopped what she was doing.

"When did this start?" Elowen asked at once.

Gerda clasped her hands tightly together. "His Grace was perfectly fine last night. This morning the wet nurse even mentioned how unusually quiet he'd been because he hadn't cried once all day. But when she went to check on him again, his face was red and his whole body felt burning hot. Nobody dared make decisions on their own, so I came straight here."

Elowen's expression tightened.

Emily and Caius were her first children, and she had always been careful with them.

No matter how busy matters at Silverloom Exchange became, she still made time every day to stay with them personally.

She had selected every wet nurse herself after investigating their histories, families, reputations, and health.

Cassian had even deliberately kept Hugh at Duskmoor Manor so the children could receive treatment immediately if anything happened.

And despite all of that...

Something had still gone wrong.

Elowen forced down the unease rising inside her and spoke calmly.

“Send for Doctor Dray immediately and have him examine Caius.”

Then her tone sharpened.

“And bring everyone who’s been around him these past few days. Wet nurses, maids, attendants, kitchen servants, anyone who entered his rooms or handled his things. I want all of them waiting in the front

In an ordinary household, a fever might simply be blamed on cold weather or a passing illness.

But this was Duskmoor Manor.

Her children were not ordinary children.

She could not afford to overlook anything.

Chapter 683 A Fever Before Dawn

Gerda seemed to steady herself somewhat after hearing Elower’s calm instructions.

doesn’t know...”

“Should someone notify His Grace?” she asked care fully. “If the young prince is this ill and the Duke

Elowen shook her head.

Finished

“Cassian is still meeting with the Nordan envoys over the peace treaty. There’s no reason to drag him away now.” She paused briefly. “Even if he returned immediately, he’d make the same arrangements I already have. The negotiations should finish soon enough, and he’s barely rested these past several days as it is. Let him focus on the treaty without worrying about things here.”

Gerda nodded and quickly left to carry out the orders.

Mira and Cora still stood nearby looking stunned, but Elowen had already risen.

“We’ll finish getting ready later,” she said. “I’m going to see Phoenix first.”

Emily disliked noise and usually slept in Elowen’s own chambers. Elowen stepped inside briefly and found her daughter still peacefully asleep.

Caius, however, cried much more often and had been moved into the neighboring room some time ago.

When Elowen entered, Caius lay wrapped tightly in blankets, his cheeks flushed dark red. His tiny brows remained faintly drawn together, and every so often he made a weak, uncomfortable sound in his sleep.

Elowen reached down and pressed her hand gently against his forehead.

The heat startled her.

For a moment, guilt hit her so suddenly she could barely suppress it.

If she hadn’t moved Phoenix into another room... Maybe this would never have happened.

She stroked his burning cheek gently.

“Phoenix,” she whispered softly, “I’m here. You’re alright.”

Footsteps sounded outside just then, followed by Hugh entering with his satchel of medicines.

“Your Grace.”

After bowing briefly, Hugh walked directly to the bedside and reached for Caius’s wrist without wasELEOR another second.

Elowen stood beside him silently, watching every change in his expression.

Hugh's brows slowly tightened.

He checked one wrist. Then the other.

After several long moments, he finally let go. "This isn't an ordinary fever, he said quietly

and Atever Before Dawn

Elowen's heart sank immediately.

"Then what caused it?"

Hugh considered his words carefully before answering.

"Based on his pulse, I believe the problem came from the milk he's been drinking. Infants are extremely delicate. If the wet nurse consumed the wrong medicine, spoiled food, or something harmful without realizing it, those effects could pass into the milk." He glanced toward Caius. "That can easily trigger fever and stomach sickness in a child this young."

A chill crept through Elowen instantly.

The milk?

She had personally screened every wet nurse before allowing them near her children.

Yet Hugh would never make careless claims.

"Focus on lowering the fever first," Elowen said quietly, her voice growing colder. "I'll investigate the rest myself."

Hugh nodded and began preparing medicine from his satchel.

After watching briefly, Elowen turned and left the chamber.

The front hall was already crowded with the servants.

Every person who had recently cared for Caius or entered his rooms had been brought there without exception.

Now they knelt together across the cold stone floor, faces pale with fear.

684

231 am p p pp

Evening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 684 The Wet Nurse

Elowen sat at the head of the hall while her gaze moved slowly across the kneeling servants gathered

before her.

Her expression revealed nothing.

After a long silence, she finally spoke.

Who fed Phoenix these past few days? Who carried him? Who changed his clothes? Who entered his ms?" Her voice remained calm and controlled. "I want every detail. Don't leave out a single person."

ith stood behind her chair with a severe look on her face.

Nelly," she said sharply, "you were the one feeding His Grace most often these past two days, weren't you?"

The woman immediately began trembling.

Your Grace, I swear I've done nothing wrong," she cried anxiously. "Whenever His Grace became hungry only fed him as instructed. Besides, Gerda and Edith were always nearby while I was with him."

Edith turned toward another woman.

And you, Celia?"

The questioning continued one by one.

very wet nurse insisted she had done nothing suspicious.

ry maid claimed she only worked outside the nursery and never entered Caius's chamber directly.

the senior attendants explained they only supervised household labor and rarely touched the child

themselves.

Gerda listened quietly until everyone had finished speaking,

Only then did she answer.

"I have no intention of falsely accusing anyone," Her voice remained even, though the pressure behind it made several women visibly shake harder. "But I also won't allow anyone responsible to escape

punishment. Phoenix carries royal blood. If someone knowingly harmed him, the consequences will be far worse than any of you seem to understand."

Several wet nurses immediately lowered themselves against the floor in terror.

Your Grace, we truly know nothing. This has nothing to do with us.

Elowen did not respond.

Instead, she looked toward Gerda.

Can you see whether Doctor Dray has finished treating Phoenix. If he has, bring him here?

Chapter 684 The Wet Nurse

Gerda quickly obeyed.

Not long afterward, Hugh entered the hall.

After bowing respectfully, he spoke first to reassure Elowen.

"The medicine's already been given. If all goes well, the fever should begin breaking within the hour"

Only then did some of the tension finally ease from Elowen's chest.

"Thank you, Doctor Dray."

Then she gestured toward the servants kneeling across the hall.

“But I’ll need your help again. Since the problem came through the milk, examining the wet nurses directly should tell us where it started.”

Hugh nodded and stepped forward.

Edith immediately barked another order.

“One at a time. Cooperate properly.”

The wet nurses stretched out trembling hands while Hugh carefully examined each pulse in turn.

He checked every woman thoroughly.

Finally, he stopped before Nelly.

The moment his fingers touched her wrist, he paused slightly.

Instead of pulling away, he adjusted his grip and checked again more carefully before finally looking up at her.

Nelly’s face instantly turned white.

Sweat began running down her temples.

At last Hugh released her wrist and turned toward Elowen.

“Your Grace,” he said quietly, “there are traces of medicinal residue in her system. The substance itself wouldn’t seriously affect an adult, but if passed through milk to an infant, it could easily trigger severe fever and stomach illness.” His expression darkened. “In serious cases, it could even become fatal

Elowen’s brows tightened sharply as she looked toward Nelly.

The woman immediately collapsed forward against the floor.

“Your Grace, please believe me,” she sobbed desperately. Truly didn’t know. Grace, I’d never dare do such a thing Please spare me

Elowen remained silent.

would never dare hams

8:31 am Pppp.

Chapter 684 The Wet Nurse

Flushed

Deep down, she already understood this likely had not been intentional.

If Nelly truly wanted to harm Phoenix, she would never have been foolish enough to poison her own milk.

She was the only woman feeding him.

The moment something happened, suspicion would naturally fall on her first.

That would have been suicide.

Far more likely, someone had manipulated matters behind the scenes and caused her to consume something without realizing it.

But regardless of intent, the damage had already been done.

And now it had to be dealt with.

After a long pause, Elowen finally spoke.

“Nelly, I’m willing to believe you didn’t do this intentionally.” Her voice stayed calm but firm. “But Phoenix became ill after drinking your milk. That responsibility still belongs to you.”

Tears streamed down the woman’s face as she looked up helplessly.

Elowen glanced toward Gerda..

Understanding immediately, Gerda stepped forward.

“Her Grace is sparing your life,” she said coldly. “But/from today onward, you may no longer remain at Duskmoor Manor. Gather your and leave before nightfall.”

Nelly’s entire body stiffened.

thing

She looked as though she wanted to beg further, but no words came.

In the end, she simply bowed deeply toward Elowen.

“Thank you for Your Grace’s mercy...”

Elowen did not look at her again.

Instead, her gaze shifted toward the remaining wet nurses.

“From today onward, Celia and Ruth will alternate feeding Phoenix.” Her tone grew colder. “Their backgrounds will be investigated again immediately. And from now on, every meal served to the wet nurses must be inspected, recorded, and signed for by every servant who handles it.

Her eyes swept across the hall. “If another problem occurs, the personally.”

person responsible will answer for it

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

685

Chapter 685 Uneasy Signs

Fanshed

Celia and Ruth immediately dropped into deep formal bows, answering so quickly their voices nearly ran together.

“We understand, Your Grace. We’ll care for His Grace properly and won’t overlook a single thing.”

Elowen gave a quiet nod before rising from her chair. Without another word, she turned and walked back toward the bedchamber.

Inside, Caius was still curled beneath the blankets. His little face remained faintly flushed, but his breathing had finally steadied.

Elowen sat beside the bed and rested the back of her hand gently against his forehead.

Still warm.

But no longer frighteningly hot.

Only then did the weight pressing against her chest finally ease a little.

“Phoenix, sweetheart, Mother’s here,” she murmured softly while smoothing his hair back from his forehead. “There’s nothing to be afraid of.”

She stayed there quietly for a while, watching his breathing become slower and calmer before finally straightening and calling Cora over from the doorway.

Cora stepped inside silently.

“Your Grace?”

“Nelly should be finishing her packing by now,” Elowen said quietly. “Go speak with her privately. Tell her I know she’s been wronged and that someone likely manipulated things behind the scenes. But Duskmoor Manor has rules, and I can’t openly make exceptions for her. If I do, the rest of the household will start expecting the same treatment.”

Cora listened carefully, nodding once.

“Nelly’s family has never had much money,” Elowen continued. “Take ten dollars to her and tell her it’s a gesture of goodwill from both me and Duskmoor Manor. Then talk to her personally and ask her to think carefully about the last few days. Who she’s been close to, whether she ate or drank anything unusual. whether she noticed someone acting strangely around her.”

Elowen paused briefly before continuing in the same calm tone.

“If she remembers anything useful, it’ll count as a real service to the manor. Even if she can’t remain here afterward, I’ll remember the favor and help place her elsewhere in the future. Falconcrest Manor should

welcome a child soon as well.”

Cora memorized every instruction carefully before slipping quietly from the room. Elowen leaned back slowly against the chair, rubbing her fingertips together thoughtfully

686

#fruached

At this point, she still could not tell whether the person behind everything had been targeting her or

Cassian.

But either way, she knew perfectly well this could not possibly end with Caius merely suffering a fever for one night.

At the same time, outside Silverloom Exchange, the atmosphere could not have been more different.

Today marked the grand opening of the new establishment, and banners hung above the entrance while the gilded sign bearing the name Silverloom Exchange gleamed brightly beneath the afternoon sun.

Finn looked especially cheerful today. He had even put on the finest coat he owned for the occasion. After pacing near the entrance for a while, he finally leaned toward Scarlet with visible curiosity.

“Scarlet, where’s Her Grace?” he asked quietly. “Shouldn’t she have arrived by now?”

Scarlet had dressed carefully as well. Her lavender gown was newly tailored, and her hair had been pinned neatly into place.

*

At the question, she smiled softly.

“Anson came earlier with a message,” she explained. “Something urgent came up at Duskmoor Manor, so Her Grace won’t be able to make it today. She said we should handle the opening ourselves.”

Finn immediately rubbed his hands together nervously.

“Well... now I’m starting to feel nervous too.”

After glancing around again, he lowered his voice.

“Actually, Commander Hall isn’t here either.”

Since the bookshop was being moved into Silverloom Exchange as well, Finn had been coming here frequently these past few days.

And almost every evening without fail, once Scarlet finished working, a carriage would already be waiting outside for her.

Finn was naturally friendly, and Draven had never once bothered hiding the fact that he wanted to marry Scarlet, so after enough encounters, Finn had more or less pieced together the situation between them.

That was exactly why Draven's absence today felt unusual.

Scarlet remained calm.

"Today's the day Avenlor formally signs the peace accord with Nordia," she said. "Commander Hall oversees the King's Guard, so naturally he has duties at court. Compared to matters like that, the opening of Silverloom Exchange isn't important. Whether he comes or not doesn't really matter."

Finn nodded immediately.

"Yeah. I guess that makes sense"

Chapter 695 Uneasy Signs

Flashed

Scarlet smiled faintly.

"Alright, the timing should be right now. Go light the celebration charges. We should at least make the opening feel lively."

Finn answered happily before hurrying outside.

Moments later, sharp crackling bursts echoed through the street.

Scarlet looked toward the entrance and saw scarlet paper fragments scattering across the cobblestones while nearby townsfolk covered their ears and laughing children darted excitedly through the crowd.

Looking at the bustling scene, Scarlet found herself thinking that Elowen probably would have smiled if she had seen it herself.

Then suddenly, a scream ripped through the crowd.

“My eye! Gods, my eye!”

The surrounding people immediately turned toward the noise.

Scarlet’s expression shifted at once.

Something was wrong.

Frowning slightly, she strode toward the commotion and quickly spotted a man in rough gray work clothes rolling across the street while clutching his face dramatically.

“My eye’s been ruined!” he howled. “Silverloom Exchange nearly blinded me! Is nobody going to do anything about this?!”

Finn stared at him in disbelief.

“You can’t be serious,” he shot back immediately. “I warned everyone before lighting them. I told people to stay back, and you were the one who kept moving closer. If anyone got hit, whose fault is that supposed to be?”

The man ignored him completely and continued writhing across the ground while clutching one eye tightly.

Blood appeared to seep faintly between his fingers.

More and more people began gathering around them.

“What happened? Did the celebration charges hit his eye?”

“Silverloom Exchange only just opened and already someone’s injured? That’s terrible luck.

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 686 Scarlet

“Exactly,” someone else muttered from the crowd. “Grand opening day and already there’s bloodshed. That’s a bad luck if I’ve ever seen one.”

Among the growing crowd stood a middle-aged couple quietly observing everything.

The man was tall and broad-shouldered. Though age had touched his hair, his posture remained straight and imposing, with the stern expression of someone long accustomed to command.

Beside him stood a woman dressed in a dark blue gown with her hair pinned flawlessly into place.

Both wore deep frowns as their eyes moved between the injured man on the ground and Scarlet herself.

They were Draven's parents.

For more than twenty years, their infuriating son had refused every marriage arrangement placed before him. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, he had become utterly obsessed with a former entertainer and nearly turned the household upside down over her.

2

Someone had informed them that Silverloom Exchange would open today and that the woman who had apparently stolen their son's heart would be here.

So they had come to see for themselves exactly what

Scarlet, meanwhile, remained completely man causing trouble.

Finn tried pulling the man's hair

continuing to howl.

of woman she was.

aware of their presence. All her attention stayed fixed on the

from his face, but the man clutched at it stubbornly while

"Don't touch me! It hurts! Silverloom Exchange injured me, so you'd better give me an explanation!"

Scarlet studied him carefully.

There was blood on his face, trailing down from near the corner of his eye, and at first glance it looked alarming.

But Scarlet had seen real firework injuries before.

Back when she worked at Stargazer Pavilion, one frightened girl had once tried running through a crowded Midwinter celebration after fireworks were lit too close to the street. The explosion had torn open her hand so badly the flesh was nearly unrecognizable.

That kind of wound looked nothing like this.

The cut on this man's face was thin and shallow, more like something made by a sharp cilge their n explosive burst. There wasn't nearly enough blood either.

And if a firework had truly struck someone's ey

the damage

uld never look this momen

Scarlet immediately understood what was happening.

Chapter 686 Searlet

But outwardly, she remained perfectly calm

She turned toward the surrounding crowd and raised her voice clearly

"Please don't panic. This gentleman is injured, and someone has already gone to fetch a physician. Once the physician arrives, he'll examine the wound properly. If Silverloom Exchange is truly responsible, we won't avoid accountability."

The man instantly cried even louder after hearing that.

"A physician? By the time a physician gets here, I'll already be blind!" he shouted dramatically. "Silverloom Exchange thinks it can bully ordinary people just because it's backed by Duskmoor Manor! I'm telling you right now, if I don't get an explanation today, I'm not leaving!"

As he spoke, he started rolling around across the ground again as though fully determined to cause a

scene.

Several voices within the crowd immediately joined in.

上

“He’s right. If someone’s eye was injured, there should at least be compensation.”

“So what if Silverloom Exchange belongs to Duskmoor Manor? Does that mean they can bully people openly now?”

Right at that moment, another rough male voice suddenly rang out from the crowd.

“Hold on... doesn’t this woman look familiar?” the man said loudly. “Wasn’t she working at Stargazer Pavilion before? One of those entertainers who drank with guests and played music all night? Scarlet. wasn’t it? Yeah, that was definitely her.”

The voice was not especially loud, but everyone nearby heard it clearly.

Draven’s parents frowned even more deeply.

The way the crowd looked at Scarlet changed immediately as well. But Scarlet stood there with her back perfectly straight.

She even turned calmly toward the man who had spoken.

“That gentleman is correct,” she said evenly. “I did once work at Stargazer Pavilion.”

The crowd erupted into whispers instantly.

Draven’s parents looked even more displeased.

The man who had spoken earlier gave a mocking laugh.

“Well, look at that. A former entertainer somehow climbed high enough to manage Silverloom Exchan for the Duchess of Duskmoor herself. The world really is changing Though honestly, who kno

kind of sickness someone from a place like that night carry? she’s handling fabrics here, maybe customers ought to think twice before buying anything

35.32 am

Chapter 686 Scarlet

More whispers spread through the crowd.

Scarlet, however, did not become angry.

Instead, she smiled gently.

“I was born into difficult circumstances and had little choice but to earn a living performing music at Stargazer Pavilion,” she said calmly. “That part of my life wasn’t something I chose freely, but it is still part of my past, and I’ve never denied it.”

Her voice remained soft and composed.

“Her Grace, Lady of Grace and Virtue, took pity on me and brought me into Duskmoor Manor as her personal attendant. If I truly carried some terrible illness capable of spreading through cloth, wouldn’t Her Grace have fallen ill long ago? Yet Her Grace remains perfectly healthy, which should answer that concern.”

The man visibly choked on his own words and tried to speak again.

Scarlet did not give him the chance.

“And as for Silverloom Exchange,” she continued clearly enough for the surrounding crowd to hear. “Her Grace trusted me enough to place this responsibility in my hands. So if someone believes I’m unworthy of standing here, then they’re questioning Her Grace’s judgment.”

Her expression remained calm, but every word landed cleanly.

“And if I remember correctly, Silverloom Exchange was approved personally by His Majesty. So tell me, is your issue with Her Grace... or with His Majesty himself?”

The moment those words left her mouth, the man’s face turned pale.

He instantly lost the courage to keep talking.

After all, throughout all of Vanelle, who dared openly offend the Duchess of Duskmoor?

12.9K

687

Chapter 687 Trouble at Silverloom Exchange

Finished

And with Theodric backing Silverloom Exchange personally, nobody in Vanelle would dare speak too recklessly about Scarlet anymore.

The crowd quieted for a brief moment before someone muttered softly, “Exactly. She serves the Duchess of Duskmoor now. Who’d dare run their mouth carelessly?”

Another woman sighed. “She’s just trying to survive. What choice did she really have?”

“And honestly,” someone else scoffed from nearby, “aren’t men like this the real embarrassment? They spend their nights chasing pretty girls through taverns, then turn around and call those same women filthy. Shameless.”

Roger and Maud stood among the crowd watching Scarlet carefully.

The young woman stood tall and composed beneath everyone’s stares, her shoulders straight, her gaze calm and steady without the slightest trace of panic or humiliation. There was something poised and dignified about her that made it difficult to associate her with the sort of place those people had been whispering about.

The couple exchanged a glance.

Both of them clearly noticed the same thing.

Meanwhile, the man making trouble was still rolling around on the ground. Seeing everyone’s attention drifting elsewhere, he immediately began crying out even louder.

“My eye!” he wailed dramatically. “Are you people seriously just standing there talking while I go blind?”

At the end of the day, an injured man naturally drew everyone’s attention back again.

Scarlet looked toward him and let out a faint sigh.

“Hey,” she said patiently, “you claimed your injury came from the fireworks, so let me ask you this. Where exactly were you standing when they were lit? Finn warned everyone several times to move back. Why didn’t you?”

The man immediately shouted back, “I was standing nearby watching the celebration! How was I supposed to know those fireworks would burst toward me?”

Then he pointed angrily toward Scarlet.

“You people are unbelievable! I’m the one who got hurt, and somehow now this is my fault? What, your think I injured myself on purpose?”

Scarlet’s expression remained calm.

“Silverloom Exchange opened today hoping for a smooth beginning, so naturally nime of us wanted something like this to happen.” Her voice stayed gentle and steady. “But since you were injured here, we won’t avoid responsibility. Please sit and rest for a moment. A physician is already on the way, and once he arrives, every expense for medicine and treatment will be covered by Silverloom Exchange

NICK FESTUTT Exchange

Her handling of the matter was perfectly reasonable.

Which immediately became a problem for the man.

The noble who hired him had repeatedly instructed him to make the situation as chaotic as possible.

Grinding his teeth, he stiffened stubbornly. “The injury’s on my face! My life’s going to be affected from now on, and it’s all this Silverloom Exchange’s fault!”

Scarlet looked at him calmly. “And what exactly are we at fault for?” she asked evenly. “For opening today? For celebrating outside the shop?”

Without waiting for him to answer, she continued.

“Shops across Vanelle celebrate their openings this way every day. The moment people hear the fireworks, crowds naturally gather to watch. You came here on your own too, didn’t you?” Her gaze stayed steady on him. “And before the fireworks were lit, we repeatedly asked everyone to move farther back. I’ve already said we’re willing to cover your treatment costs, so now I’m honestly confused.” Her voice softened slightly. “What exactly is it that you want? Are you trying to force Silverloom Exchange to close?”

Sweat immediately appeared across the man’s forehead.

Someone in the crowd suddenly laughed mockingly.

“Sounds more like he came here on purpose to cause trouble for Her Grace.”

The mood of the crowd shifted instantly.

“Now that you mention it, he did look suspicious earlier.”

“Everyone else backed away when the fireworks started, but he kept sneaking closer.”

“Imagine picking a fight with Silverloom Exchange. That takes guts.”

“Somebody definitely sent him.”

The man’s face changed several times in quick succession.

Scarlet’s gaze brushed lightly across his expression before she glanced toward the far end of the street

“The physician’s arrived,” she said calmly.

The physician had indeed been rushed over as quickly as possible, but because the street outside Silverloom Exchange was packed with curious townspeople, he was still trapped near the outer edge of the crowd trying to see what was happening.

Finn immediately understood the situation and hurried forward

*Excuse us! Make some room, please!”

He squeezed through the crowd and escorted the physician over while loudly one of the finest physicians in the city when it comes to treati

aming. This is End Hes

2 LAVIGNye

Scarlet turned back toward the troublemaker.

“Sir,” she said patiently, whatever your intentions may be, you were still hurt here, and the injury is on your face. You should let the doctor examine it properly before it leaves a scar.”

Then, in full view of the crowd, she turned toward the physician and lowered her head respectfully.

“Eric, I ask that you please do everything you can to help him. Silverloom Exchange will cover every expense.”

“Of course,” the physician replied immediately before stepping forward.

The troublemaker suddenly panicked.

He knew perfectly well that he was about to fail the task he had been given.

Wasn't Scarlet supposed to be nothing more than a tavern hostess?

Where had she learned to handle situations like this?

She had completely overturned everything he prepared for.

Fine.

If he could not complete the job and collect his reward, then at the very least he would squeeze some money out of Silverloom Exchange before leaving.

Just as Eric stepped closer to examine the injury, the man suddenly jerked backward.

“Don't touch me!” he shouted. “I'm not letting him examine me!”

Scarlet blinked. “Why not?”

立

12.9K

688

Chapter 688 Draven Steps In

The man's eyes darted around before he suddenly raised his voice again.

"That physician came from Silverloom Exchange! How do I know he isn't working with you?" he shouted angrily. "People like him are terrified of the Duke of Duskmoor's authority. He'd say anything to protect you! I don't trust him!" He pointed toward Scarlet. "Forget the physician. Just pay me compensation, and I'll find my own doctor."

Scarlet remained perfectly calm.

"And how much compensation are you asking for?"

The man immediately raised one hand and spread all five fingers wide.

"Fifty dollars," he declared confidently. "Not one coin less."

The crowd erupted at once.

"Fifty? That's insane."

"It's just a cut on his face!"

"A minute ago he claimed fireworks injured him, but now he won't even let a doctor look at it. Obviously he's lying."

"Silverloom Exchange opens for one day and already runs into someone like this. What rotten luck."

Roger frowned slightly from within the crowd.

"This man was definitely sent here to cause trouble," he muttered quietly.

Maud nodded, though her attention remained fixed on Scarlet.

"That girl's handled this entire situation beautifully," she said thoughtfully. "Not once has she panicked."

Meanwhile, the troublemaker had grown increasingly desperate.\

“You people don’t understand anything!” he shouted furiously. “The injury’s on my face! What if it scars? How am I supposed to show myself afterward? Fifty is already cheap!”.

At that exact moment, the sound of horses echoed through the street.

Everyone instinctively turned toward the noise.

A squad of King’s Guard cavalry emerged from around the corner, polished armor flashing beneath the afternoon sunlight. At the front rode a tall, broad-shouldered man in official black uniform with a swon! hanging at his waist and an expression cold enough to freeze the air around him

Draven.

The crowd immediately moved aside to clear a path.

Draven guided his horse slowly forward until he stopped outside Silverloom Exchange.

Only after confirming Scarlet was unharmed did his gaze finally settle on the man sprawled across the ground.

Looking down from horseback, Draven said coolly, “If your injury’s really that serious, fifty hardly sounds like enough.”

The man froze before looking up cautiously. Draven’s official uniform and imposing presence immediately crushed most of his confidence.

“W... who are you?” he asked weakly.

Draven ignored the question completely.

“If the injury scars badly enough that you can’t show your face in public anymore,” he continued calmly, “then I’d say one hundred would make more sense.”

The man’s eyes lit up instantly.

“Yes! One hundred works too!” he blurted eagerly. “This lord understands fairness!”

The moment those words left his mouth, the faint smile on Draven's face vanished.

"Seize him."

Several King's Guard soldiers rushed forward immediately.

Before the man could react, his arms were twisted behind his back and he was forced down hard onto the

stone street.

"What are you doing?!" he screamed. "Why are you arresting me? I'm the injured one!"

Draven dismounted smoothly before crouching beside him. Using the handle of his riding crop, he tilted the man's face upward and examined the wound carefully.

Then his expression turned cold.

"The injured party?" His voice sharpened. "That cut on your face was self-inflicted."

The man's face went pale instantly.

"I've spent years serving in the King's Guard," Draven continued evenly. "I've seen every kind of wound imaginable. Cuts from blades and burns from fireworks look completely different."

His eyes darkened. "You refused treatment and immediately demanded silver instead. If this isn't extortion, then what exactly would you call it?"

The man looked like all the blood had drained from his body.

Draven straightened before briefly sweeping his gaze across the gathered crowd.

Chapter 88 Draven Steps In

Roger and Maud instinctively thought he had finally noticed them and were just about to step

Instead, Draven looked straight past them entirely.

His voice rang clearly across the street.

forward.

“Silverloom Exchange was established under the direction of Her Grace, Lady of Grace and Virtue, with direct approval from His Majesty himself. This man deliberately caused a disturbance and attempted extortion. In doing so, he insulted Her Grace and defied the authority of the Crown.”

His expression remained icy.

“Thirty lashes. Five days in the city gaol.”

Then he raised one hand. “Take him away.”

The guards immediately dragged the man toward the street.

Only then did real fear finally hit him.

“My lord, please spare me!” he cried desperately. “I’ll never do it again! Someone told me to...”

Draven stopped walking and turned back slowly.

“Someone told you to what?” His gaze sharpened dangerously. “Are you saying someone ordered you to come here?”

The man opened his mouth.

But after only a second, something clearly frightened him badly enough that his entire body trembled.

He snapped his mouth shut immediately and lowered his head without daring to say another word.

Draven gave a dismissive wave.

The guards dragged the man away.

Cheers immediately erupted throughout the crowd.

After handling the matter at astonishing speed, Draven wasted no time heading straight toward Scarlet,

Roger and Maud exchanged another glance.

Roger fell briefly silent.

“So... he wasn’t ignoring us earlier,” he muttered. “He genuinely didn’t notice us?”

Maud rolled her eyes.

“Acting all intimidating in front of troublemakers, she scoffed, then uning into some ikiculous oversized puppy the second he gets near that girl Honestly, how did I raise a son like this?”

Roger cautiously cleared his throat.

Chapter 688 Draven Steps In

“If you’re upset, I can drag that useless boy home immediately.”

Maud snorted. “Forget i Can’t you see the way they’re looking at each other? We’ll go home first and deal with him tonight.”

Roger nodded instantly.

“Whatever you say.”

Then he quickly added, “Careful walking through the crowd. Don’t let anyone bump into you.”

Over on the other side, Draven had already reached Scarlet and was smiling at her with obvious concern.

“Sorry I got here late,” he said warmly. “You’re alright, aren’t you?”

Scarlet shook her head softly.

“I’m fine.”

1

12.9K

目 2

mevom TO BE MIS Duchess

Finished

689

Chapter 689 Beneath the Calm

“And everything at the palace went well?” Scarlet asked.

Draven nodded, leaning one arm against the counter inside Silverloom Exchange while watching her with unconcealed warmth.

“Smoothly enough. The Nordian envoys look like the kind of people who’d argue with a stone wall for sport, but they’ve actually been cooperating with His Grace the whole time. His Majesty’s in a good mood because of it and sent another round of rewards over to Duskmoor Manor.”

Then he remembered something and stepped a little closer, lowering his voice.

“And apparently His Majesty’s pleased with my work lately too, so got rewarded as well.” His eyes brightened faintly. “There was a bolt of cloth among the gifts, really fine quality, this deep sea-green color. You’ve got fair skin, so it’d suit you beautifully. I’ll have it tailored into a gown and bring it to you when it’s

finished.”

Scarlet smiled softly.

“You really don’t need to trouble yourself like that.”

Draven found that smile so lovely it made his chest tighten unexpectedly.

“Forget gowns,” he blurted out before he could stop himself. “One day I’ll buy you a proper estate too, and a carriage, and anything else you want.”

Scarlet looked up at him.

“We can worry about all that later.” Her expression gradually turned serious again. “Something happened at the manor today, and Her Grace wasn’t able to come here herself. Then right afterward, that man suddenly showed up here causing trouble.” She paused slightly. “Maybe I’m overthinking things, but it all feels a little too deliberate.”

She glanced toward the busy showroom floor.

“I can’t leave right now, so could you go back to Duskmoor Manor for me and tell Her Grace what happened here today?”

At Duskmoor Manor, inside Stillwater Court, Cora returned to find Elowen still sitting beside Caius’s bed.

Elowen leaned forward slightly and pressed the back of her hand against the little boy’s forehead before checking her own,

The lever had gone down somewhat

Even the angry flush on Caius’s cheeks had faded compared to earlier

Only then did Elowen finally let out a quiet breath.

Cora approached calmly and her... voice

Chapter Day beneath the Calm

Finished

Your Grace

Elowen turned toward her

“Did everything get handled?”

Cora nodded.

“The money’s been delivered. Nelly refused to accept it at first and kept saying she’d failed you and had no right to take anything from the manor.” Her tone remained gentle and steady. “I told her it was your decision personally, and only then did she finally agree. She cried for quite a while afterward and said you’d saved her life.”

Elowen gave a small nod.

Then Cora continued carefully.

“I also followed your instructions and asked her to think back over everything she’d eaten and done these past few days. She said she’d been staying and dining

with the other nurses as usual and hadn't seen any strangers or eaten anything unusual." Cora hesitated briefly. "Except for one thing."

Elowen immediately looked up.

"Yesterday Rosaline came back from town carrying a box of honey cakes." Cora pressed her lips together slightly. "She said a new bakery had opened in the eastern district and insisted they were excellent, so she shared one with Nelly."

Elowen froze.

"Rosaline?"

Cora's expression turned grave.

"That's exactly what Nelly said." She lowered her voice further. "I didn't want to take chances, so I questioned the gate servants afterward. One of the footmen confirmed Rosaline did leave the manga yesterday, and when she came back, she was carrying something with her."

Cora paused.

"The servant joked and asked what she'd bought. Rosaline told him it was cosmetics for Scarlet Her eyes darkened slightly. "But he remembered smelling something sweet at the time. He said it smelled more like fresh pastries than perfume."

Elowen's gaze slowly cooled.

Rosaline had been seat into the manor by Elira.

Back when klowen and Elira had worked together against the Crown Prince's Wing and Ila, Rosaline had carried messages between them and handled countless sensitive matters behind the scenes.

Elowen bad trusted her.

Not blindly, perhaps, but enough to place important tasks in her bands..

En-bed

And now Rosaline had brought pastries back to the manor.

Shared them with Nelly

Then Phoenix suddenly developed a dangerous fever.

There were no coincidences that precise.

Elowen slowly tightened her fingers together.

“Cora, you cannot repeat this to anyone else.”

Cora nodded immediately.

“I already warned Nelly the same way and told her to bury the matter completely. She promised she understood and said she’d never cause trouble for Your Grace.”

Elowen nodded once.

“You can go now. I’d like to sit quietly for a while.”

Cora bowed her head respectfully before withdrawing from the room and carefully shutting the door behind her.

Silence settled over the chamber again.

Elowen sat beside Caius’s bed, staring at the child’s sleeping face while tension slowly tightened inside her chest.

Rosaline belonged to Elira.

Which meant if Rosaline had acted, then Elira had acted too.

But why?

Because of Barrett?

No.

A man like Barrett was nowhere near important enough for Elira and the Jones family to risk provoking Duskmoor Manor directly, especially not by targeting the Duke of Duskmoor’s infant son.

If they were discovered, there would be no repairing the damage afterward.

The Jones family was far too calculating to risk something that reckless over a minor dispute.

Which left only one explanation.

The succCSSIC

Now that Alaric was dead, the position beside Theodric stood open once agai

Chapter 689 Gencath the Calm

The Jones family intended to place Caelan there.

And anyone standing in kis way would naturally become their enemy.

The weight of that realization settled heavily in Elowen's chest.

Just then, footsteps sounded beyond the door.

A rhythm she would recognize anywhere.

Cassian.

5

Finished

Elowen turned at once as the door opened and Cassian strode into the room still dressed in court attire. clearly having come straight back without even stopping to change.

He crossed the room immediately and sat down beside her at the edge of the bed.

12.9K

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

690

Chapter 690 If You Wanted the Throne

The moment Cassian sat beside her, Elowen caught the familiar scent of cold air and sun-warmed wool clinging to him from outside.

The tightness wound through her chest all afternoon finally loosened.

Even her eyes began to sting slightly.

“Cassian...”

“I’m here.” His hand settled gently against her back. “The moment I heard Phoenix had a fever, I left the palace and came straight home.”

His voice softened further as he rubbed slow circles between her shoulders.

“Don’t frighten yourself, Ella. You know Hugh’s skill better than anyone. If he says the fever will break, then it will.”

Elowen drew in a slow breath.

“But this isn’t only about the fever.”

Cassian turned toward her immediately.

“What happened?”

So Elowen told him everything Cora had discovered, carefully recounting every detail from beginning to end.

The longer Cassian listened, the darker his expression became.

By the time she finished, his fingers were tapping lightly against his knee.

“Ella,” he said quietly, “while you stayed here with Phoenix, someone also caused trouble at Silverloom Exchange today.”

Elowen looked startled.

“At the exchange too?”

Cassian nodded once.

“Scarlet handled it well, which is why word wasn’t immediately sent back to the manor

Elowen’s brows pulled together tightly.

Trouble at Silverloom Exchange on its opening day.

Phoenix suddenly poisoned at the same time

This was no coincidence. Someone had deliberately struck both places

gorapter by You Wanted the Throne

Cassian continued evenly.

“The Minister of the King’s Works is Elira’s younger brother, and the Royal Weaving Bureau has been one of the Jones family’s biggest sources of profit for years.” His gaze settled on her calmly. “Now that you’ve opened Silverloom Exchange, if your fabrics start making their way into the royal court, it cuts directly into the Jones family’s business.”

A faint edge entered his voice.

“You and I both know how much wealth they’ve pulled from that arrangement over the years. The moment you threatened their profits, retaliation became inevitable.”

Then he continued.

“And there’s also Nordia.”

He leaned back slightly.

“From the court’s perspective, the Nordan envoys are cooperating because of me. In reality, they’re cooperating because of you and your status as their Oracle.” His tone remained calm. “But nobody else knows that. All they see is Nordia treating the Duke of Duskmoor carefully, so naturally they assume it’s my reputation keeping them in line.”

His gaze darkened faintly.

“Now that Alaric’s gone, the succession is open again. The strongest candidates are Caelan and me.” He spoke as calmly as though discussing the weather. “The Jones family intends to support their grandson, which means they’ll naturally see me as a threat. And once they find an opportunity, they’ll move against me.”

The more Elowen listened, the angrier she became.

Her anger was not directed at Cassian himself, but at the endless schemes crashing into their lives one after another, and even more at a court consumed by constant political warfare where peace never seemed to last.

She had gone after Alaric because he had caused Ember's death, and she would never how that debt to go unpaid.

But what grievance did the Jones family truly have against them?

Cassian had never fought to seize power for himself

And if anyone cared to trace family ties closely enough, Elowen's own sister-in-law was born into the Jones family as well, which meant she and the Jones family were connected by marriage.

Yet despite all that, they had still chosen to target an infant barely out of the cradle.

The struggle for influence and authority had become so ruthless that it no longer carried even a shred of humanity.

"Cassian," she asked quietly, "do you want to become emperor

we π You Wanted the Throne

Cassian blinked once, visibly surprised by the question.

Elowen held his gaze steadily.

"Because if you do," she said slowly, "it's not like we couldn't take the throne ourselves."

Cassian fell silent for a moment.

Then his fingers slowly rubbed together against his knee, thumb brushing absently against forefinger.

It was one of Elowen's habits whenever she was deep in thought, and after spending so many years together, he had unconsciously started doing it too.

As he considered the idea seriously, he finally spoke.

"Well..." His tone remained thoughtful. "It's not impossible."

Elowen stared at him.

上

Cassian's expression turned unexpectedly serious.

"You know, Ella, if someone wants power, the first thing they need is military support." He sounded entirely sincere discussing treason beside their sleeping child. "I've spent enough years in the army that people still listen to me, and fortunately I'm reasonably good at war."

A trace of amusement flickered through his eyes.

"Take Draven, for example. That man's hopelessly in love with Scarlet now. Scarlet adores you because you saved her and gave her a home, which means Draven would naturally side with Duskmoor Manor too."

He continued with complete composure.

"If we told him we planned to seize the throne, he'd probably wrestle with the idea for half a minute before helping us anyway."

Elowen finally burst out laughing.

Most of the anger twisting inside her vanished instantly because of him.

"You're actually thinking this through?"

Cassian nodded solemnly.

"And as for the civil officials, the Duke of Falconcrest's family already married Sylvia into the household. Sylvia admires you, and Piers worships his wife." His brows lifted slightly. "The moment Sylvia says the word, he'll drag both his father and uncle over to our side too."

He looked at her thoughtfully

"So if you think about it, we already have support from both the military and the court

Then he turned toward her with a grin.

Chapter 690 ft You Wanted the Throne

Finished

“Now then, Ella, if you’re planning to make me emperor, you should probably start thinking of a proper reign title for me.” His eyes gleamed with amusement.
“Something impressive, but not ridiculous.”

Elowen laughed so hard her eyes watered again.

But beneath the laughter, something soft and aching rose quietly inside her chest.

What she had said earlier had only come from anger.

If everyone already feared they might seize power, then perhaps they should simply take it for real.

But Cassian remained exactly as he had always been.

Whatever she wanted, he would immediately begin figuring out how to place it in her hands.

12.9K