

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

We Had Something Real But Didn't Handle It Right

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Elowen took a slow breath, her tone remained so calm that it almost surprised Anson.

“Alright. I understand.”

Madkhed

Anson still did not leave. He lingered awkwardly near the doorway for a moment as though debating whether he ought to continue, and Elowen noticed immediately.

“What else did Draven say?”

Anson sighed. “Commander Hall said... since he helped Your Grace this time, he may need a favor in return someday.”

That man really was more calculating than people gave him credit for.

A quiet laugh escaped Elowen before she leaned back slightly in her chair. “Tell him I got the message.”

Once Anson withdrew, she turned toward Mira. “Go bring Rosaline here.”

Mira answered quickly and hurried from the room, and before long Rosaline appeared at the doorway and stepped inside with her usual composed manner.

After stopping several paces away, she lowered herself into a respectful curtsy. "Rosaline greets Your Grace."

Elowen did not look up right away. She continued eating slowly from the bowl of warm oat cream resting beside her while the silver spoon brushed softly against the ceramic dish in the otherwise quiet room.

Rosaline understood immediately.

The Duchess knew.

She knew Rosaline had manipulated events behind the scenes until the young heir's fever had finally spiraled out of control.

But Elowen neither questioned her nor punished her.

That silence was far worse.

It felt like standing beneath a blade that never quite fell, the fear stretching longer and longer until it became impossible to breathe normally.

Rosaline curled her fingers tightly inside her sleeves while a thin sheen of sweat gathered at her temples. After several long moments, Elowen finally set the spoon down before lifting her eyes toward her "Rosaline, Elira sent you here to serve at Duskmoor Manor quite a while ago now, didn't she?"

Rosaline lowered her gaze. "Yes, Your Grace.

"I've always thought you were reliable, Elowen continued evenly. "You're careful, smart, and capable

enough that I've trusted you with quite a few important things."

"You give me too much credit, Your Grace. I've only been doing my duty."

Finished

Elowen gave a faint nod. "You already know Caius developed a dangerous fever yesterday. A child that young can lose his life frighteningly fast if the people caring for him make the wrong call at the wrong moment, so I spent a long time thinking about where things went wrong afterward. Cora is steady enough, but she struggles when situations suddenly change. Mira's still young and gets flustered too easily for certain responsibilities. Gerda and Edith simply don't have the strength they used to, and caring for two infants at once is exhausting work."

She paused then and let her gaze settle fully on Rosaline's face.

"After thinking it through, I realized you're the best choice."

Rosaline blinked in surprise.

Elowen's voice remained perfectly mild as she continued. "I want you overseeing the children from now

on."

Rosaline instinctively stiffened. "Your Grace, I'm afraid I'm not capable enough for something that important."

"I'm placing the responsibility in your hands because I think you are capable," Elowen replied calmly. "Because I trust you. But if you truly can't manage it..."

She paused deliberately before smiling softly.

"Then I suppose I'll have no choice but to send you back to Elira."

Rosaline froze completely.

And suddenly she understood exactly what Elowen intended.

Elira had placed several attendants inside Duskmoor Manor, but Rosaline was by far the most trusted and useful among them.

Now Elowen was intentionally placing her directly in charge of the children where everyone could see it. If Elira later ordered Rosaline to interfere again, what then?

If she refused, Elira would be displeased.

But if she obeyed and something happened to the children, Rosaline herself would become the first person blamed, and Elowen would then have every reason to send her straight back to the palace.

Rosaline's fingers tightened harder until her nails bit painfully into her palms.

The worst part was that she could not refuse.

A bitter smile almost surfaced inside her chest.

She had known from the beginning that a woman capable of becoming the Lady of Corate and Virtue was

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never going to be simple.

After forcing down the turmoil in her thoughts, Rosaline lowered her head once more. “Thank you for trusting me, Your Grace I’ll take care of them properly”

Elowen smiled faintly. “Good. Then I’ll leave the children in your hands.”

Rosaline curtsied again before quietly leaving the room.

Only after stepping outside did she realize her legs had gone weak beneath her.

She steadied herself against one of the stone columns lining the gallery and remained there for a while before finally regaining control over herself.

Closing her eyes briefly, she forced the guilt rising inside her back down before turning and walking slowly into the courtyard.

Later that evening, Cassian finally returned home.

Elowen was seated beside the children’s cradle when he entered the room, watching Caius and Emily sleeping side by side beneath soft wool blankets.

Since his fever had broken, Caius cried far less than before and spent most of the day sleeping peacefully.

Emily, meanwhile, remained endlessly energetic, kicking restlessly beneath her blankets while staring around the room with wide dark eyes until half the bedding had come loose around her again.

Elowen leaned forward to wrap the blankets securely back around her before lightly touching Caius’s forehead once more, still instinctively checking whether the fever had returned.

When Cassian pushed open the door, the lingering warmth of the afternoon sun clung faintly to his cloak as he crossed the room toward her.