

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

ove, Redom to Be His Duchess Chapter 721 Crown Princess Shortly after, another major announcement rippled through the imperial court. Caelan had handled a highly important matter flawlessly. Delighted by his success, the Emperor issued an official decree naming him the Crown Prince. When the news arrived, Elowen and Cassian were out in the courtyard watching their two children try to walk. Emily was already managing to stand against the wall for brief moments; her tiny legs wobbled precariously as if she might tumble at any second, but she stubbornly refused to give up.

Caius, on the other hand, sat quietly on his mat, showing absolutely no interest in his sister's grand endeavors. After listening to Bran's report, Cassian merely gave a slight, calm nod without offering any comment. Elowen wasn't surprised either. Both of them knew this day was bound to come sooner or later. Alaric was dead, and the empire could not leave the position of heir vacant for long. Caelan was simply the best candidate available. Still, Elowen remained in good spirits and even smiled.

"Well, that means Iris is the Crown Princess now." Iris would soon return to the Crown Prince's Wing. But she would no longer be the desperate, mistreated woman of the past; she was returning as a deeply loved and deeply respected Crown Princess. For Elowen and Cassian, however, this development changed the stakes entirely. That night, the lamps inside Stillwater Court burned until the early hours of the morning. By the time Lydia arrived, the night was already spent. Looking up at the announcement, Elowen saw the heavy frown and grim expression on Lydia's face.

Noticeably, she hadn't brought Lirien along. Elowen knew instantly that something was weighing on her mind and that tonight's visit was strictly business. With a slight sinking feeling, Elowen rose to greet her. "Lydia, what brings you here so late?" Beside her, Cassian stopped playing with Caius and stood up as well. Lydia looked from Elowen to Cassian, cutting straight to the chase. "Now that Caetan is Crown Prince. Vanelle is no longer a safe place for you. You two pull too much focus, which makes you a latent threat.

Even if you have no ulterior motives, no one will believe it-least of all the Crown Prince." Elowen said nothing, and Cassian remained silent. "You both know I bought a property for you in Rivenshire," Lydia continued. "The estate is spacious, the and give scenery is beautiful, and it's just the right distance from the hustle and bustle of town. If you're willing. come back to Rivenshire with me for a while. Lay low, let the Crown Prince secure his position, the Emperor peace of mind. Once the storm blows over, you can return if you want to.

And if you don't, you can make a permanent home for yourselves in Rivenshire." Elowen and Cassian exchanged a look. Deep down, they both knew she was right; the time had indeed come to leave. Yet, Elowen felt a heavy Chapter 721 Crown Princess suffocating weight press down on her chest. She wasn't ready to let go. There was Duskmoor Manor, the Silverloom Exchange, and both Iris and Scarlet, who now carried her family name. After a long pause, Elowen let out a soft sigh. "We should leave, yes. But I want to wait until after Scarlet's wedding."

It's set for the eighth day of the ninth month, which isn't far off. I want to see her married with my own eyes and manage this one last thing for her. Only then can I leave with a clear conscience." Understanding just how much Scarlet meant to Elowen, Lydia didn't press the matter further. She nodded. "Alright. We'll wait until the wedding is over." The two of them spent a little more time chatting with Lydia about lighter, family matters. Once she had gone, Elowen and Cassian huddled close to talk things through. Elowen couldn't help but feel torn.

"Once Scarlet and Draven's wedding is over, should we go to Rivenshire or Nordia?" Cassian thought it over for a moment. "Lydia already extended the invitation, so we should naturally head to Rivenshire first. We can stay there for a while and then move on to Nordia. After all, Nordia isn't going anywhere." Satisfied with the arrangement, Elowen smiled and teased, "My husband truly is the cleverest man alive." Cassian let out a low, soft chuckle. By September, a cool autumn breeze had begun to blow.

Scarlet and Draven's wedding was set for the eighth of the month, an auspicious date for marriage. Duskmoor Manor had been a whirlwind of activity since the start of the month. The entire estate was buzzing, with everyone working nonstop to hang decorations and slaughter pigs and sheep for the feast. Elowen personally oversaw every detail of Scarlet's wedding, from the dowry and banquet to the guest list and bridal gown. She had prepared a lavish dowry for Scarlet, adding even more to the list she had previously shown Maud.

It was grand and proper in every way, complete with fine fabrics, gold and silver jewelry, furniture, and a substantial sum of personal savings to ensure her financial security in the future. Looking over the gift list, Scarlet's eyes stayed red with tears for days. Whenever she tried to decline, saying it was too much and that she didn't deserve it, Elowen would give her a playful scold, telling her it was exactly what she deserved and forbidding her from refusing.

Scarlet didn't dare argue further, but she privately confessed to Mira that she didn't think she could ever repay Elowen's kindness in this lifetime. On the morning of the eighth, Duskmoor Manor came alive well before dawn. Scarlet sat before the vanity as Gerda and Edith stood on either side, helping her do her hair and makeup. She wore a vibrant red bridal gown, crafted by the finest seamstresses at the Silverloom Exchange; its embroidered pattern of swans playing in the water looked vividly alive, the gold thread shimmering in the candlelight.

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Chapter 722 I Will Never Fail Scarlet Her hair was swept up into a high bun, adorned with a pure gold phoenix crown inset with pearls, velvet flowers tucked into her hairy and ruby drops dangling from her earlobes Radiant and stunning, she looked like a completely different person from her usual understated self. Standing nearby, Elowen watched Scarlet in the mirror. She remembered their very first meeting at Stargazer Pavilion, when Scarlet had been in such a wretched state but had still stubbornly tried to protect Nikki, even though she was helpless herself.

Later, when she first came to Duskmoor Manor, she had always kept her head bowed, timid and submissive. Now, she sat there with relaxed features and a gentle smile, exuding a quiet poise and confidence. Nikki and Lirien walked in arm-in-arm to see the bride, their eyes wide with awe. Elowen smiled and asked, "Isn't the bride beautiful?" The two girls nodded vigorously.

"She's so beautiful!" "Scarlet is the prettiest bride in the whole world!" When the auspicious hour arrived, Draven rode up to the gates of Duskmoor Manor on a grand horse, leading a carriage amid the joyous clash of traditional music. Clad in a brilliant red wedding robe with his hair neatly styled, he looked exceptionally sharp. Try as he might, he couldn't hide the sheer joy and nervousness gleaming in his eyes. Elowen personally escorted Scarlet out.

Holding Scarlet's hand, she walked her step by step through the inner gate, along the covered corridors, and past the side door Scarlet had used countless times. Bright, blinding autumn sunlight flooded through the open doorway, making them squint. At the threshold, Scarlet stopped and turned to face Elowen. "Your Grace, I'm leaving now." Elowen wanted to say so much, but all that came out was a single name. "Draven" Draven stepped forward quickly to stand beside Scarlet, suddenly looking as awkward and anxious as a young boy. Elowen looked at him, her voice deliberate.

"I am trusting you with Scarlet. If you ever mistreat her. I will not let it slide." Cassian stood beside Elowen like an imposing mountain. He didn't need to say a word, his silent presence carried an undeniable weight. Draven nodded solemnly. "Please rest assured, Your Graces. I swear I will never fail Scarlet as long as I live, Elowen finally let go of Scarlet's hand. She took a step back and waved her off. "Go on then. Wishing you both a lifetime of happiness.

Chapter 722 Will Never Fail Scarlet Finish Draven helped Scarlet into the carriage, the curtain fell, and the vibrant blare of the suona horns started up. The carriage slowly led away amidst a lively roar of firecrackers. Red silk ribbons fluttered, and confetti filled the air, the festive red glowing brilliantly in the autumn sun. It was such a grand wedding

that it put many noble marriages among the Vanelle official families to shame. The gathering crowd of onlookers couldn't help but gossip. Up in a nearby tavern, one spectator sighed, "You really can't predict a person's luck!

Take Scarlet, for instance. This time last year, she was still a hostess at Stargazer Pavilion, forcing a smile to entertain men over drinks. Who would have thought that in such a short time, she'd not only become Lady Elowen's favorite and manager of the massive Silverloom Exchange, but also marry Draven, the Commander of the Imperial Guard, in such grand style? Ordinary folks like us could only dream of that kind of luck!" "What do you mean, luck?" A dark, sullen male voice cut through the air. The crowd turned to look, but no one really recognized him.

Leander wasn't wearing his official robes today, and he smelled faintly of alcohol. Frowning with displeasure, he shot back, "If Scarlet were truly lucky, she wouldn't have spent years suffering in a tavern! The hardships she endured are beyond what any of you ordinary people could ever imagine. Her favor with Lady Elowen has nothing to do with luck. She earned it through her own capability, her sharp memory, and her flawless execution.

Otherwise, out of all the people at Duskmoor Manor, why would Lady Elowen place such exclusive trust in her?" He gritted his teeth, pronouncing each word with heavy emphasis. "Scarlet is the finest woman in the world! If anything, Draven is the one marrying up!" His words rang out with fierce conviction. As he spoke, Draven happened to ride past the tavern on his grand horse. He was beaming with absolute joy, his smile bright and triumphant. Leander had seen him plenty of times before, but this was the first time he had ever seen the man smile like this. It looked... incredibly foolish.

Leander stared at him for a moment before his gaze involuntarily drifted to the bridal carriage behind. With the curtains drawn, he couldn't see a thing except the swaying red silk. An overwhelming sense of loss, regret, and bitter agony washed over him. Unable to help himself, he lifted his flask and took another heavy swig of wine. ***** Meanwhile, back at Duskmoor Manor, Elowen stood watching until Scarlet's carriage completely disappeared from sight. A sudden, unexpected wave of emotion hit her, making her nose tingle as tears welled in her eyes.

If just seeing Scarlet get married moved her this much, she couldn't imagine the state she would be in when it was Emily's turn to wed. She would probably cry herself a river. "If you miss her that much, I can head out right now and bring her back," Cassian said, his deep voice laced with amusement. 10:33 am M MM. Chapter 722* Will Never Fail Scarlet Finished Elowen let out a soft laugh. He offered her a lilac handkerchief, which she took with a smile, dabbing away the tears at the corners of her eyes. "Oh, please.

If you go do that, Draven will fight you to the death." 13.8K 2 Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 723 His Majesty Summoned

Cassian gave a low chuckle. "Let him try. The boy can't beat me anyway." Elowen looked up at him playfully. "Oh? So you're completely invincible, Cassian?" He nodded with a quiet, confident grunt. Finished That finally broke her lingering melancholy, and she laughed. Seeing that her tears had stopped, Cassian reached over, took the handkerchief from her hand, and tucked it back into his robes. Elowen took one last look down the street. "Those few tears were actually out of joy."

"I just want Scarlet to be happy forever." The two shared a warm smile and turned back inside, walking side by side into the manor. The night sky was clear and bright. After having dinner, the two went out to sit on the stone benches in the courtyard. The silver moonlight washed over the grounds as autumn insects chirped softly in the grass. Elowen leaned her head against Cassian's shoulder, looking up at the bright moon. Her mind felt completely at peace, as if all the noise and chaos of the world had melted away, leaving only the warmth of the two of them holding each other close.

"Cassian..." "Hmm?" he murmured, looking down at her. Still gazing at the moon, Elowen said softly, "I think life is truly wonderful just like this." Cassian looked at her face, softly illuminated by the moonlight, and a wave of tenderness washed over him. "I think so too," he replied gently. He pulled her a little closer, resting his chin on the crown of her head. Suddenly, a flurry of footsteps echoed from outside the courtyard. The heavy, hurried thuds cut sharply through the quiet night. Elowen and Cassian both looked up as Bran came rushing in, his face grim and his brow furrowed.

Elowen's heart sank slightly, and she sat up straight. Bran approached and bowed, keeping his voice low. "Your Graces, a messenger has arrived from the palace. The Emperor has summoned His Grace for an immediate late-night audience." Cassian's brow knitted slightly, and his grip on Elowen's shoulder tightened for a fraction of a second. Yet when he spoke, his voice remained perfectly steady. "Understood. I will head out now. He turned to look down at Elowen. "Ella, I need to go to the palace. Go to sleep and don't wait up."

"I'll be back as soon as I'm finished." Elowen gripped his sleeve, her brow tightly furrowed. "It's far too late. Under normal circumstances, His Majesty wouldn't summon you at this hour" Chapter 723 His Majesty Summoned Finish Something had to be wrong. Cassian took her hand, his thumb gently rubbing the back of her hand twice. "We don't know what happened yet. His Majesty might just have urgent business to discuss-border military affairs, or perhaps something within the court. Don't worry, Ella. I'll be right back." Still, Elowen couldn't shake her growing unease. She bit her lip. "Maybe..."

maybe I should go with you." Cassian shook his head. "No need. Stay home and rest, and wait for me to return. If we go into the palace together, it will only make it look like

we have something to hide. Don't worry, nothing will happen." Elowen opened her mouth to say more, but swallowed her words at the last second. Taking a deep breath to suppress her anxiety, she gave a compliant nod. "Alright. Please come back quickly." Cassian leaned down, pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead, and turned to stride away.

Elowen remained seated on the stone bench, staring in the direction he had gone, frozen there for a long, quiet time. Mira quietly stepped up, draped a cloak over Elowen's shoulders, and whispered, "Your Grace, what's wrong? You look so pale." Elowen simply shook her head without a word, her knuckles turning white as she gripped the edge of the fabric. Not long after Cassian left, Lydia hurried over. She was wearing a simple house robe, her hair tossed into a messy bun, looking as though she had been jolted awake from bed. The moment she stepped into the courtyard, she took Elowen's hands.

"Ella, I heard His Majesty summoned Cassian to the palace?" Elowen pulled Lydia down to sit on the stone benches and quickly explained what had happened. Lydia listened, her brow furrowing deeper by the second. After a long silence, she murmured, "An audience at this hour is rarely good news." Elowen nodded, staring ahead blankly. Lydia squeezed her hand reassuringly. "But try not to panic. Cassian isn't some recklessboy: he's spent years in the capital and seen his share of storms. His Majesty is his older brother, after all.

Whatever this is about, he wouldn't truly harm him." Elowen offered a weak nod, but her heart was hammering against her ribs, completely unsoothed. Suddenly, a realization struck her, and her grip tightened painfully around Lydia's fingers. "Lydia, I just remembered-Rosaline left Duskmoor Manor a couple of days ago." Lydia blinked in surprise. "Rosaline? The maid Elira sent over?" "Yes," Elowen said. "She claimed she was going to visit her mother. She was back after just a brief conversation. I even sent Cora to accompany her and had the shadow guards keep watch.

When I questioned Cora afterward, she said nothing seemed amiss it just looked like a normal chat between mother and daughter." 10:33 am M MM. Chapter 723His Majesty Summoned Lydia grew thoughtful. "You think... she was passing information?" Finished It was the only thing that made sense. Aside from that visit, nothing out of the ordinary had happened at Duskmoor Manor recently. Rosaline was the sole variable. Yet Elowen couldn't fathom how the girl had managed to smuggle a message out right under their noses- and worse, she had no idea what information had been leaked.

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L Chapter 724 What Are You Hiding frotn Me? For His Majesty to summon Cassian in the middle of the night, the intelligence had to be monumental. As Elowen raced through the possibilities, a terrifying thought flashed through her mind. The Oracle of Nordia. Her ties to Nordia were her best-kept, most lethal secret. If Elira had uncovered

the truth and passed it to His Majesty... Elowen's face drained of what little color it had left. Lydia noticed her distress and squeezed her hand. "Ella, stop torturing yourself. We don't know the facts yet, so you need to stay calm. Cassian isn't alone.

He has Duskmoor Manor, he has you, and he has the two children. No matter how angry the Emperor might be, he can't just ignore all of that." Elowen took a deep breath, forcing down the panic threatening to overwhelm her. Meanwhile, in the Emperor's study at the palace. The moment Cassian stepped inside, he sensed the shift in the air. Usually, Quin would greet him with a warm smile and a polite, "Your Grace, His Majesty is expecting you." Tonight, however, the attendant stood by the door, entirely pale. He merely muttered, "His Majesty is inside, Your Grace," before quickly stepping aside.

Cassian's heart sank a fraction, though his face remained a mask of calm as he walked in.. The study was dimly lit, illuminated only by a single lamp on the imperial desk. Its amber glow cast harsh shadows across the Emperor's face. Theodric sat behind the desk, clutching a document so tightly his knuckles were white, his expression completely livid. One look told Cassian that the Emperor was furious. He approached the desk and bowed respectfully. "Greetings, Your Majesty." Theodric said nothing. Cassian remained still.

The study fell into a heavy, suffocating silence, broken only by the occasional crackle of the candle flame. After what felt like an eternity, Theodric finally spoke. His voice wasn't loud, but it was laced with ice. "Cassian, what are you hiding from me?" Cassian straightened up to meet Theodric's gaze, his voice smooth and unhurried. "I hide many things from Your Majesty. Which particular matter are you referring to?" The Emperor slammed his hand onto the desk, sending the cups rauling violently. "Your wife, of course!" his voice erupted. Chapter 724 What Are You Hiding from Me?

Cassian paused. On his way over, he had already weighed the possible reasons for this midnight summons. Court politics, border security, his hand in Alaric's death, and the covert decapitation-or Ella. Especially the last one. Ella's true identity was highly dangerous. Although he and Nordia had gone to great lengths to bury the truth, it was bound to reach Theodric's ears eventually. It was always just a matter of time. Cassian had long prepared himself for this moment, so hearing Theodric bring it up didn't unnerve him in the slightest.

Matching the Emperor's tense tone, he replied, "Your Majesty is referring to Ella's ties to Nordia?" Theodric's eyes went wide, his voice shaking with a mixture of shock and fury. "By the looks of it, you've known all along! You knew, and you didn't think to tell me? You kept this from me on purpose, and god knows for how long... Cassian, you clearly don't see me as your brother, let alone your Emperor!" Theodric bolted out of his chair, wild with rage. "No wonder no one else could negotiate with Nordia except you!

And here I thought it was because they feared and respected you, but it was just because your wife is their Oracle! They were doing it for her! Yet the two of you kept me completely in the dark, breathing a word to no one! You have some nerve, Cassian!" The Emperor's thunderous voice echoed through the walls of the study. Fortunately, Theodric had already ordered the servants to clear the area before Cassian arrived, leaving only a few imperial guards and Quin stationed outside. Standing by the door, Quin felt his knees shake as the shouting washed over him.

He had truly never seen the Emperor this furious. Fragrant incense smoke curled through Elira's chambers. Elira knelt before the altar, eyes closed and lips moving in a silent, low prayer as she slid a strand of ivory rose beads through her fingers. The candlelight caught her profile, softening her features and lending her an air of serene piety, much like a sacred icon. Yet, the faint curve of her lips held an inexplicable, chilling coldness. Matilda hurried in, her steps light and her face bright with an excitement she could barely contain.

Stepping up behind Elira, she leaned down and whispered, "Your Highness, Duke Cassian entered the palace in the middle of the night!" Elira didn't open her eyes. Her fingers continued their steady, unhurried pace along the beads as she murmured a soft, "Amen." Only after a long silence did she finally speak. "I see." "We really have Rosaline to thank for this, Your Highness," Matilda sighed. "The time spent training her as a spy paid off. She knew the secret ciphers well enough to pass back this critical information. Otherwise, we'd still be completely in the dark!"

Now that this has come to light, His Majesty will undoubtedly be even more suspicious of the Duke and Duchess. Duke Cassian won't find it quite so easy to challenge Prince Carlan from now on." 10:33 am M MM. Chapter 724 What Are You Hiding from Me? Finished Elira's fingers paused for a fraction of a second. She opened her eyes to look at the holy image before her. her gaze heavy and conflicted. 4

4:36 pm Pp. Awakening 4ee Reborn to Be His Duchess Finished Chapter 725 Explain Yourself After a brief silence she levout a soft sighs "I never wanted it to come to this. Cassian is undeniably talented, and Elowen commands immense respect among the people. Khad hoped we could coexist peacefully, so they might one day help Caelan ascend the throne. But Elowen's ties to Nordia pose far too great a threat to Caclan. I have to look out for my son." "Your Highness sees the bigger picture," Matilds agreed quickly, nodding along.

"After all, Nordia is famous for its devotion to the Oracle, obeying its every command. If Elowen truly is Nordia's Oracle, it wouldn't be difficult for a growing Nordia to back Cassian-or even his son-in the future. Prince Caelan's path to the throne would be threatened all over again." Elira glanced sideways. "Was His Majesty furious?" Matilda's expression turned grave. "That, I cannot say. His Majesty dismissed everyone from his presence, keeping only a few of his most trusted personal guards and Quin.

Quin is loyal only to His Majesty; no one can ever pry a word from his lips." Matilda paused to reflect before adding, "Still, His Majesty must be enraged. Cassian kept a matter of this magnitude entirely to himself. Even taking their brotherly bond into account, he might escape execution, but he won't escape punishment. I doubt the Duke and Duchess will enjoy the same favor they once did." Elira shook her head, her gaze sharp and certain. "Don't be so sure." Matilda blinked, caught off guard.

"The bond between His Majesty and Cassian is deeper than you or I can comprehend," Elira said slowly. "They are brothers. They grew up together, fought in wars together, and weathered crises side by side. His Majesty's trust in Cassian was forged in blood; it won't be shattered by a single incident. Punishment is by no means a certainty. Besides, Cassian understands His Majesty's temperament better than anyone. There are times when I am utterly at a loss, yet Cassian can sway His Majesty with just a few choice words.

Urgent as this situation is, it isn't necessarily a dead end for them." She paused and closed her eyes again. When she spoke, her voice was barely a whisper, sounding part like a prayer and part like she was convincing herself. "I don't need them dead. I only need them to stay out of Caelan's way." A heavy silence filled the study, broken only by the ragged rise and fall of Theodric's chest. Faced with his brother's fury, Cassian made no attempt to argue or rush into an explanation. Instead, he gathered the hem of his robe and knelt directly on the floor.

It was a clear admission of fault, a deliberate show of submission. Theodric froze at the sight. Given the unique bond they shared as brothers, he rarely required Cassian to kneel before him. In fact, Cassian hadn't done so since Theodric's coronation. Tonight was a jarring exception. Seeing his own younger brother kneeling on the floor, back straight but head humbly bowed, struck a chord deep within the Emperor. By lowering his posture so completely, Cassian effectively disarmed him. The worst of Theodric's anger began to dissipate. 4:36 pm Pp.

Chapter 2hxplam Youzelf Finnched Exhaling a heavy, ragged breath. Theodric slowly sank back into his chair. He took a deep breath and rubbed the bridge of his nose, looking suddenly exhausted. "Fine," he said, his voice raspy "Explain yourself. And it had better be good. If I find your explanation lacking. I will punish you severely won't be lenient." He paused for a beat, then forced a stiff order from his throat: "Stand up and speak." Cassian looked up at him, then slowly rose to his feet.

"Your Majesty, you have always known that I have never harbored the slightest desire for the throne." Theodric's brow twitched, but he remained silent. "All these years, I have fought your wars, carried out your orders, and guarded this empire for you. I have never coveted that seat. Not in the past, not now, and not in the future. My ambitions have never lain within the imperial court. All I want is to live freely with my wife and children

by my side. Ella feels the exact same way. She has never cared for power or political maneuvering.

She established the Silverloom Exchange to give helpless women a chance to survive, not to win people's loyalty. Everything she and Scarlet have done together came from the heart, free of calculation or conspiracy." He met Theodric's gaze, his eyes open and entirely sincere. "I kept this from Your Majesty, first and foremost, because I didn't want it to jeopardize the bond between us. I didn't want you to think I had ulterior motives in marrying a woman tied to Nordia." Theodric leaned back against his chair, his fingers idly tapping the armrest. "That's one," he said flatly.

"What's the second reason?" Instead of answering right away, Cassian dropped back to his knees. The Emperor frowned. "Didn't I tell you to stand? Constantly dropping to your knees-what is this look?" Cassian didn't get up. Remaining on the floor, he spoke softly. "Second... Ella and I have already made plans to leave Vanelle." Theodric froze, his brow furrowing deeper as he stared down at the kneeling Cassian. "Leave? Where would you go?" 15.7K 4:36 pm Pp.

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Chapter 726 Safe Travels Finished Cassian straightened his back meeting Theodric's gaze. "I know my presence has caused you a great deal of trouble. Your Majesty. Tommand the military, I have allies in court, and I hold the respect of the people. Even if I do absolutely nothing, simply standing here makes people uneasy. It makes you uneasy, it makes the Crown Prince uneasy, and it makes the ministers uneasy. As long as I remain in Vanelle, you will never be able to govern in peace, and the Crown Prince will never feel secure in his position.

I don't want to be a source of anxiety for you, nor do I want to hold the Prince back. That's why Ella and I decided to leave a long time ago. She is just too kind-hearted, she wanted to make sure everyone around her was taken care of first. But now that Scarlet and Draven are married and the Silverloom Exchange is up and running, her mind is finally at ease. I can finally take her and the children away from Vanelle." The Emperor sat in silence, looking at his brother with a conflicted gaze. His throat tightened, and when he spoke, his voice was thick.

"Where?" "We plan on going to Nordia," Cassian replied. Theodric's eyes widened slightly. "Nordia?" Cassian nodded. "Ella's grandmother is there. She's never met her, and she wants to visit. I also want to take her horse riding on the plains." Hearing this, a sudden wave of bitterness and sorrow washed over the Emperor. He stared at the unmistakable tenderness on Cassian's face, remaining quiet for a long moment before speaking in a low voice. "Poppy and Phoenix are still so young. A journey that long won't be easy on them." Cassian smiled gently. "I'll take good care of them. So will Ella.

You don't need to worry, Your Majesty. If you ever miss me-or more importantly, if you miss the children-I'll bring them back to visit regularly." Theodric knew perfectly well that once Cassian left, there was no telling when he might return. Yet he also knew that Cassian had no choice but to go. In fact, if Cassian hadn't brought it up himself, Theodric would have eventually had to order them to leave Vanelle. Caelan was now the officially named Crown Prince, and the court demanded stability. Cassian simply commanded too much influence and power; keeping him here served no one.

Still, there was a world of difference between him enforcing the exile and Cassian volunteering to go. If the order came from the throne, it would be a banishment born of suspicion, a bitter fracture between brothers. But with Cassian suggesting it, it became an act of understanding, a sacrifice made for the greater good. Theodric thought back to his own words just moments ago-the interrogation, the shouting, the accusations that Cassian didn't view him as a true brother. Suddenly, he felt entirely unworthy of being an older brother. "Your Majesty?" Cassian spoke up again, his tone cautious.

"Is there anything else you wish to know? If not, I should head back. Your sudden summons tonight caught me completely off guard, and I rushed right out. Ella is still at the estate, and she won't be able to sleep peacefully until I return." Theodric stared at him for a moment without replying, then finally stood up. 4:36 pm Pp. Chapter 726 Safe Travels Finished He walked over to Cassian and reached out, pulling his younger brother up from the floor. "Cassian... I could never have reached where I am today without your help. You are a great hero of Avenlor, and you are my flesh and blood.

Every bit of favor and every reward I've given you over the years was entirely earned. If anything, I always felt it wasn't enough." Cassian's smile was bright and genuine. The best reward you ever gave me wasn't an estate, a title, or piles of gold and silver, Your Majesty. The greatest gift you gave me was marrying Ella to me." Theodric raised an eyebrow slightly. Cassian's smile widened. "If you hadn't decreed our marriage, I never would have been able to call Ella my wife.

Your Majesty, I would gladly lay down my life for you." He paused, then added with a soft chuckle, "Though I'd prefer to stay alive. If I died, it would break Ella's heart, and the last thing I ever want to do is cause her sorrow." Theodric blinked in surprise, then let out a laugh. He felt a profound sense of relief, mixed with a faint, quiet envy. "Why would I ever ask you to die?" Theodric squeezed Cassian's hand tightly. "You're the only brother I have left. Beyond our roles as sovereign and subject, we are brothers first. I was just..." I was just afraid.

Afraid that your achievements would eclipse the throne, afraid that you would one day threaten Caelan. He wasn't just a brother; he was the ruler of an entire empire. He had no choice. But he couldn't bring himself to say it. Swallowing the words that sat on the tip of his tongue, he tightened his grip on Cassian's hand and offered a different request instead. "Just come back to visit Vanelle often." Cassian nodded with a smile. "I will. I

promise." Theodric let go of his hand, turned around, and dismissed him with a wave of his back. "Go on, then. Get back home.

Your Ella is waiting for you." Cassian stared at his brother's back, his lips parting slightly. "Thank you, Your Majesty." Even though the Emperor couldn't see him, Cassian offered a deep, respectful bow before turning and stepping out of the study. Quin was still standing by the door, his legs visibly trembling. Seeing Cassian emerge, he hastily bowed his head, his voice high and shaky. "Safe travels, Your Grace." Cassian gave him a brief nod without a word, then strode out into the night.

Chapter 727 The Oracle of Nordia Theodric sat alone in his study for a long time . Fished The candles gradually burned low , their wicks growing long and charred . The flickering flames cast his shadow against the wall , making it dance in the shifting light . He remained perfectly still , frozen like a stone statue . Only after what felt like hours did he finally speak , his voice raspy and exhausted . " Quin ." Quin quickly pushed the door open and stepped inside . " Your Majesty " . The emperor rubbed the bridge of his nose . " Come . We are going to Elira's .

" With a quick nod , Quin hurried out to prepare the carriage . Over in Elira's palace , most of the candles had already been extinguished . Elira had removed her hairpins and jewelry , changing into a simple , plain nightgown . She sat before her vanity as a maid gently combed out her hair . The bronze mirror reflected a well - kept face , her features as delicate as ever , yet nothing could hide the faint trace of exhaustion beneath her eyes . Matilda stepped inside from the outer hall . " Your Highness , His Majesty is on his way over . " ve Elira paused slightly .

Lowering her voice , Matilda added , " I expect His Majesty and Duke Cassian have finished their discussion . I heard the Duke has already left the palace ." Elira sighed . " I wonder how it went . " Matilda offered a small smile . " This is a matter of grave importance . Even for Duke Cassian , escaping unscathed would be impossible . He will have to pay a heavy price ." Elira tilted her head slightly . " And yet , I haven't heard of any official decree being issued . " " It's late , " Matilda explained .

" Even if an order was given , it won't be formally announced until tomorrow morning ." Elira fell silent , glancing at her reflection in the mirror one last time . Judging by the time , he would be here any moment . She stood up , smoothed down her gown , and walked to the palace doors to greet him . Just as she took her place , Theodric strode in . His expression was cold and grim , his gaze sharp as a knife . Elira's heart sank slightly , but she maintained a flawless , graceful smile as she curtsied . " Welcome , Your Majesty . " Theodric didn't look at her .

He marched past her straight to the head of the room and sat down . " Everyone out . Leave me alone with Elira . " Chapter 27 Oracle of Nordia he Finished At his command , the maids and attendants flooded out of the hall . The heavy doors clicked shut , leaving only the emperor and Elira in the vast , quiet palace room . Elira wore a gentle , dutiful smile as she stepped forward to help Theodric out of his coat . The emperor raised a hand to stop her , his voice cool . " No need .

I won't be staying long " Elira's hands froze midair for a fraction of a second before she slowly drew them back . Standing before him , an inexplicable panic began to stir in her chest . Theodric's gaze drifted over to her , and he spoke abruptly . " So. Your people smuggled the news out of Duskmoor Manor , and you were the one who had it passed to me . " It wasn't a question , but a flat statement of fact . Neither of them specified what " it " was , but they both knew exactly what he meant . Elira's fingers tightened against her sleeves . She neither denied it nor admitted to it .

Theodric kept his eyes fixed on her , his tone dropping a few degrees colder . " I used to think you were kinder and gentler than Delphine . But it seems you are no different . Just as calculating , and just as willing to use any means necessary to get what you want . " His words were like a poisoned blade , cutting deep into Elira's chest . Her eyes immediately rimmed with red . She looked at him , her gaze a mix of fierce defiance and deep hurt . " Your Majesty , I did find out , and I did have the word passed to you . But I do not believe I did anything wrong .

Elowen is the Oracle of Nordia . Shouldn't Your Majesty be informed of something so significant ? You call me calculating , but have I ever harmed a single woman in this palace over all these years ? Never . In fact , whenever any of them faced difficulties , I was always the first to offer my full support . Your Majesty knows this well . Everything I have done recently was for Caelan , and above all , for you . My devotion to my son and to you is absolute , yet you accuse me of using any means necessary .

To hear you say such things truly breaks my heart ." As she spoke , tears began to fall , tracing dark , wet patterns onto her bodice . Watching her weep , Theodric did not soften or relent . He simply looked at her with a flat , calm expression that held a trace of pity . " Cassian and his wife are leaving Vanelle now . Tell me , Elira - does that absolute devotion of yours feel any better ? " Elira froze . Her mind went entirely blank , his words echoing repeatedly in her ears . Cassian and his wife are leaving Vanelle . Leaving ? Actually leaving ?

Not banished , not imprisoned , but simply leaving ? Yet the emperor's demeanor spoke entirely of reluctance and guilt . 11:36 am PPO Chapter 223 The Oracle of Nadia Elira desperately wanted to say something , to offer some kind of defense . But before she could open her mouth , Theodric had already stood up and was striding toward the exit . She stood frozen , watching his retreating figure vanish past the palace doors . Her legs gave out and she sank heavily into a chair . Matilda rushed in from outside .

Seeing Elira sitting there , pale as death , she gasped and hurried over to support her . " Your Highness ! Your Highness , what is wrong ? " 15.7K

Awakening tore : Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 728 She Wasn't Ready to Let Go
Elira's fingers trembled , and for a long time , she couldn't find her voice . Outside the palace , Theodric's carriage rumbled into the distance . Quin followed closely behind , head bowed , barely daring to breathe . A night breeze swept past , carrying the sweet scent of sweet osmanthus , but it felt as though a bitter undertone lingered in the fragrance . Theodric closed his eyes . His mind was entirely consumed by the image of Cassian kneeling before him- humble , yet completely at peace .

I have never had any desire for the throne , Cassian had said . All I want is my wife and child by my side , and to live freely . I would gladly die for Your Majesty if it came to that .
Theodric felt a sudden sting behind his eyes . He opened them to look up at the sinking moon , a hollow emptiness opening in his chest that nothing could fill . His mind drifted back to the years when he was merely a prince , locked in a brutal , life - or - death struggle for the throne with his brother . Cassian hadn't hesitated for a second . He had gathered his troops and prepared to march out .

Before leaving , Cassian had looked back at him with a brilliant laugh . " Rest easy , Your Highness ! I'll bring his head back and present it to you as a birthday gift ! " And on the eve of Theodric's birthday , he had done exactly that . Cassian had returned covered in blood , his armor shattered , but his eyes had been brighter than ever . I wish you a long life , Your Highness . May you rule the world and prosper for eternity ! They had been so young then , believing the future was theirs to conquer .

They had been brothers in the truest sense - free of suspicion , wariness , and the labyrinth of political schemes that defined them now . The emperor closed his eyes again , forcing down the emotions churning within him . " Quin , " he murmured , his voice muffled , as if speaking to the guard but really to himself . " Did I make a mistake ? " Quin caught his breath , quickly replying , " Why would Your Majesty say such a thing ? You are a wise ruler . Everything you do is for the good of the empire . How could you be wrong ? " Theodric didn't answer .

He leaned back against the carriage frame and looked up at the moon for a long , long the sprawling palace paths , casting a long , stretched shadow in the moonlight . his own dignity , he traveled on , utterly alone on a road that seemed to have no end their departure from Vanelle for mid - October . s true identity as the Oracle of Nordia was kept strictly secret . Because their journey be hidden from the public , the official story was that they were traveling to Nordia as voys . With the peace treaty recently signed , a representative was needed to foster relations two nations .

As the primary architect of the peace talks , Cassian was the perfect choice for the 11.36 amp pa Chapter 728 She Wasn't Ready to Let Do Anul since their children were still so young , it was only natural that they would bring them along That was the cover story everyone agreed upon . When the news broke , Yvome , the Duchess of Falconcrest , immediately paid them a visit with Sylvia . The two of them sat in the Great Hall with Flowen and Lydia , sipping coffee and talking . Yvonne was incredibly reluctant to see them go . " Why must you leave in such a hurry ?

The new year is only two months away . You could at least stay until after the holidays . Elowen smiled . " Please forgive us , Your Grace , but we really have no choice . If we delay any longer , the weather will turn too cold for the babies to handle . October is mild - perfect for traveling . Besides , with two infants , we can't rush ; we'll have to take our time . A journey that normally takes two weeks will probably take us a month .

Even though winter will have begun by the time we reach Nordia , it isn't quite as harsh as Vanelle , and we should be able to settle in before the heavy snow blocks the roads . " Ȫ Sylvia's eyes rimmed with red . " Elowen , I'm going to miss you so much . " Seeing her on the verge of tears , Elowen's heart softened . " It's not a final goodbye . Once we're settled , you and Piers must come visit us in Nordia . Who knows , by then your own children might be running around .

" Sylvia sniffled , trying to blink back her tears , but they slipped down her cheeks anyway , Elowen quickly handed her a handkerchief . " Sylvia , you're eating for two now . You shouldn't cry like this . " Sylvia took the cloth and wiped her face , choking out , " I know ... I just ... I really don't want you to leave . " Barring a miracle , this would be the last time they would all sit together like this . Because of that , the conversation flowed freely as they shared a great deal tales of the amusing , the shocking , and the bizarre .

Elowen listened to all sorts of gossip from around Vanelle , thinking that if she wrote them into a novel , it would surely be another bestseller . Two days later , Lydia brought Lirien over to say her goodbyes . " Lirien and I only came to Vanelle to keep you company , " Lydia said . " Now that you're leaving , there's no reason for me to stay . Besides , I really should head back to Rivenshire to check on my estate and businesses .

Lirien always said she wanted to be a female general , and at her age , she needs to focus on her studies if she ever hopes to make that dream a reality . " On the day Lydia left Vanelle , Elowen and Cassian went to see her off . Ȥ The carriages were already prepared , with several large wagons fully loaded and servants bustling about , moving the remaining luggage . Standing by the carriage , Lirien wore a soft yellow robe , her hair tied up in twin buns . Her eyes were red and terribly swollen , making it obvious she had cried herself to sleep the night before .

Finished Chapter 729 You'll See Each Other Again She simply wasn't ready to let go. Just then, the sound of approaching hooves echoed from down the road. Elowen looked over and saw someone leading a chestnut stallion toward them. The horse was powerfully built, with a sleek, glossy coat and long, slender legs. As it trotted forward, its mane whipped through the air like a streak of wildfire. Elowen recognized him instantly. It was Chestnut-Lirien's horse. Chestnut trotted up to them, seemingly sensing his owner's distress, and lowered his head to nudge her gently.

Lirien threw her arms around his neck, burying her face in his mane to dry her tears. Watching them, Elowen felt a wave of bittersweet melancholy. It made her think of her own horse, Ember. A sudden warmth pressed against her side as Cassian stepped closer. "Ella," he murmured softly in her ear, 'once we get to Nordia, shall we go riding and archery together?" Elowen looked up at him, a small smile gracing her lips as she nodded. Marissa and Nikki were also standing nearby. During her stay at Duskmoor Manor, Marissa had frequently spent her days talking and going out with Lydia.

Now that Lydia was leaving, Marissa found it incredibly hard to say goodbye. She held Lydia's hands tightly, pouring her heart into wishes for a safe and smooth ourney. Lydia sighed softly, squeezing her hand. "You take care of yourself, too. Try to look on the bright side and don't keep everything bottled up inside. Honestly, if you ask me, you should just stop worrying about your son-he's already passed his exams and become an official anyway. Why don't you just take your daughter and come with me to Rivenshire?" Marissa smiled and shook her head, gently declining the offer.

Meanwhile, Lirien pulled a few small items-handkerchiefs, sachets, and the like-from the saddlebags on Chestnut to give to Nikki as keepsakes. Nikki, in turn, pulled out some local folk toys she had brought for Lirien. Both girls had red-rimmed eyes as they shared one last, tight hug. Mrs. Ashcroft, Ms. Ashcroft, it's time to head out," a nursemaid stepped forward to remind them. Lydia nodded. "Right, then. I'm off. Come along, Nina." Lirien obediently handed Chestnut's reins over to a servant and climbed into the carriage.

Peeking her head out, she waved to Nikki, her voice ringing out clear and bright. "Nikki, wait for me to come back! And you have to come visit me in Rivenshire!" Nikki nodded vigorously, finally unable to hold back her tears as they began to stream down her face. She waved back through her tears, her voice cracking with emotion. "Safe travels, Nina! Write to me as soon as you arrive!" The carriage slowly pulled away, its wheels making a dull rumble as they rolled over the cobblestones.

Lirien leaned halfway out the window, waving continuously until the carriage rounded the corner of the alleyway and vanished from sight. Chapter 729 You'll See Each Other Again Nikki stood in place, sobbing softly as she wiped her eyes, Finished Mira walked over and handed her a handkerchief, offering a quiet word of comfort. "Don't cry, Nikki.

Nina is just going back to her own home, not off to suffer. You'll see each other again." Nikki took the cloth to dry her face and sniffled, her voice muffled. "I know.

I just miss her already." Standing nearby, Elowen took in Nikki's pitiful little display. She knew exactly how heartbroken the girl must be. It reminded her of the days when so many from Hale Manor had fallen in battle, and the surviving women had been scattered one by one. Back then, Alaric-the only person Elowen thought she could trust-had grown distant as well. Elowen had been just a young girl herself, completely unable to stop the tears. Nikki was going through the exact same thing now. Nikki used to be close with Scarlet.

But Scarlet was now fully occupied with her duties at the Silverloom Exchange, not to mention her marriage into the Hall family, where Draven kept her tightly at his side. While staying at Duskmoor Manor, Nikki had found a true confidante in Lirien; the two had been inseparable, sharing secrets and occasionally blowing things up in the courtyard together. Now, Lirien was gone too. Her brother Josh was busy with his new government position, leaving early and returning late, completely unable to keep her company.

And while her mother, Marissa, was still around, she didn't quite understand the inner world of a young girl. Elowen, however, already had a plan in mind for Nikki. In fact, it wasn't just Nikki. With her departure from Vanelle looming, Elowen knew she couldn't leave in peace without making sure all the old friends she worried about were properly settled. Stepping forward, Elowen gently patted Nikki on the shoulder and said softly, "Don't cry, Nikki. Once your brother gets home this evening, send someone to my courtyard to let me know.

I have something to discuss with you both." Nikki looked up through tear-blurred eyes and gave a compliant nod. Marissa, on the other hand, felt a wave of anxiety. She had no idea what Elowen wanted to talk about, and her heart raced with questions she didn't dare ask. As Elowen and Cassian headed back to their quarters. Marissa walked back with Nikki, her mind racing the entire way. By late afternoon, Marissa simply couldn't sit still any longer. She decided to take Nikki to the government office where Josh worked so they could pick him up.

Josh was currently a compiler at the Royal Scholarium. Though it was a low-ranking position, the Scholarium was a prestigious and noble institution, promising a bright future. When Marissa reached the gates, she didn't dare step inside. A scholar who was coming out recognized the mother and daughter and greeted them with a warm smile. "Are you here for Josh? Come, let me take you inside." 15.9K

Chapter 730 Could You Mention Her Name Marissa quickly waved her hands. "No, no, thank you. This is a government office, and we are just common women; it wouldn't be right for us to enter. If it's not too much trouble, could you just tell Josh we're out here

waiting for him?" She quickly added, "Please only tell him after he finishes his work. We wouldn't want to disrupt anything important. The scholar smiled and agreed. "Very well." With that, he turned and went back inside. He didn't return for quite some time, and there was still no sign of Josh.

As the sun began to set, Marissa realized that standing outside the gates of the Royal Scholarium with a young girl made them stick out like a sore thumb. She didn't want people thinking they were involved in some sort of legal trouble, so she led Nikki to a small diner just down the street. It was a good place to wait for Josh and grab some warm soup to take the chill off. The mother and daughter had just sat down and ordered a bowl of chicken soup and two roasted rolls when a man and a woman walked through the door. The man was middle-aged, with a plump, oily face and a silk robe.

The woman, who looked to be in her forties, was draped in fine silks and adorned with solid gold hairpieces and flashy jewelry, exuding an air of newfound wealth. The moment the woman stepped inside, her eyes locked onto Marissa. Her face lit up, and she hurried over, her voice sharp and piercing. "Well, if it isn't Mrs. Mercer! It's been ages. How have you been?" Marissa looked up, blinking in confusion for a moment before recognizing her. It was Tammy Parker, a woman from her old village.

Her husband, Gary Parker, ran a small business that had eventually taken off; allowing them to move to Vaneile. Though they hadn't lived far apart, the two families had never really associated with each other. Marissa stood up and offered a polite smile. "Mrs. Parker, it has been a long time. Are you here for some Soup as well?" Tammy sat down across from Marissa and eyed her from head to toe. Her gaze lingered for a second on Marissa's faded, overwashed dress, and her lips twitched in a subtle grimace of disdain.

But whatever thought crossed her mind next quickly smoothed over her expression, and she forced a warm, overly familiar smile. "Mrs. Mercer, I heard you're staying at Duskmoor Manor these days. Why are you still dressing so plainly? You're bound to make a laughingstock of yourself out in public like this." ¶ Marissa remained perfectly composed. "I am merely a guest at Duskmoor Manor for a few days," she replied, neither proud nor humbled. "It is not as if we have suddenly become the Duke and Duchess.

We dress according to who we are, and there is nothing shameful about that." "Yes, of course, you always did have a way with words, Mrs. Mercer," Tammy said with a nod. "No wonder you managed to raise such a brilliant scholar. Tell me, I heard you and Lady Elowen are quite close?" Marissa felt a prickle of discomfort but kept her face neutral, offering only a faint smile. "I wouldn't say we are close. Her Grace is simply kindhearted and allowed my children and me to stay for a short while." Mrs. Parker's smile widened. She leaned forward and lowered her voice.

"But surely you have Her Grace's ear? I have a niece who just turned sixteen-a beautiful girl, very bright. She's looking for work, and I heard the Silverloom Exchange is hiring. Could you perhaps mention her name to Her Grace?" Chapter Marissa shook her head. "I have no influence with Her Grace. In fact, I rarely even see her on a regular day. Mrs. Parker, if you are truly interested, it would be best to go to the Silverloom Exchange and inquire yourself." Tammy's smile froze for a fraction of a second.

Just as she was about to press further, a middle-aged man named Doug, who was eating chicken soup at the next table, looked up and interjected. "There's no point in going to the Silverloom Exchange to ask right now anyway," Doug said. "Haven't you heard? The Duke and Duchess are leaving Vanell Who knows what'll happen to the Exchange after that? Normal people are keeping their distance, yet here you are trying to force your way in." Tammy blinked in surprise and turned back to Marissa, her eyes filled with scrutiny. "Mrs.

Mercer, are the Duke and Duchess really leaving?" Before Marissa could answer, Doug chimed in again. "Is there anyone in Vanelle who doesn't know they're leaving? Sure, the official story is that His Majesty is sending Duke Cassian to Nordia as an envoy, but it's incredibly sudden. Word on the street is that now that Caelan has been made Crown Prince, His Majesty is driving Cassian out to clear the path for his own son!" He let out a soft snort. "Think back to how powerful Duke Cassian used to be. Most of the world thought he'd inherit the throne, but then Caelan appeared out of nowhere.

Now that Caelan is the man of the hour, Cassian is finished. Half the city can't distance itself from Duskmoor Manor fast enough. You're a foolish woman to go looking for favors there right now; aren't you afraid of bringing trouble down on your own head? And as for that Silverloom Exchange-it's just a bunch of women running around with a woman in charge. What kind of future could it possibly have? Once Her Grace leaves, it'll end up shutting down sooner or later." The expression on Tammy's face shifted dramatically every ounce of her previous warmth instantly evaporating.

Just moments ago, she had been enthusiastically holding Marissa's hand and showering her with compliments. Now, she backed away as if Marissa were a plague victim, acting as though even touching the mother and daughter would ruin her. 15.9K
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