

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Novel

Chapter 731 As If You Belong There! Sitting to the side, Nikki felt a surge of resentment building inside her. She clenched her small fists. Finally unable to contain herself, her face flushed bright red, she looked up and shouted in protest, "That's not true! The Duke and Duchess are wonderful people, and His Majesty definitely loves them! He's going to miss them terribly while they're away in Nordia! And we aren't trying to keep our distance at all! We still live at Duskmoor Manor! Her Grace even said she was coming to talk with us tonight!

Besides, the Silverloom Exchange is never going to close! Scarlet is the best, and if you keep talking like that, I'll tell Draven, the Commander of the Imperial Guard, and have him come beat you up!" The moment the words left her mouth, several men in the diner burst into laughter. Doug felt his face grow hot. It was embarrassing to be publicly defied and lectured by a mere slip of a girl. He couldn't afford to provoke someone like Draven, but he certainly wasn't going to take this from a child. He let out a mocking sneer. "Talk with you?

Her Grace is probably telling you to pack your bags and get out. They're leaving the city; do you really think they're going to let you stay there forever? Take a look at yourselves. You're dirt poor, yet you have the nerve to shamelessly cling to Duskmoor Manor. As if you belong there!" By the time Josh finished up his duties and walked out of the Royal Scholarium, twilight had deepened into night. Most of the shops along the street were already closed, with only a few eateries still showing signs of life.

The small diner sat lonely on the corner, its warm, dim light spilling through the doorway and illuminating the front steps. There, huddled together on the steps, sat his mother and sister. Josh's heart softened, and his stride naturally quickened. As he drew closer, he caught the low, soothing murmur of his mother's voice. "...Just don't tell Josh. It's no big deal, and there's no need to worry him. His work keeps him exhausted enough every day.

Since we can't help him out, the least we can do is stay out of his hair." Nikki kept her head down, her little hands tightly clutching the hem of her dress, her lips pressed into a firm line. Josh paused for a fraction of a second before stepping forward as if nothing were amiss, "Tell me what, Mom?" he asked with a warm smile. Marissa froze for a moment, but quickly forced a cheerful smile and stood up, keeping her tone light. "Oh, it's nothing. We just got here a bit early and ended up waiting over an hour. But your work comes first, of course.

Nikki complained about being exhausted and wanted to whine to you so you'd buy her some treats, but I told her not to bother you with it. It's hardly worth mentioning." As she spoke, she gave Nikki's fingers a subtle squeeze. Josh looked over at his sister. Nikki

glanced up at their mother, her eyes rimmed with red. She looked as though she wanted to say something, but she swallowed her words, bowing her head and pouting in a silent, miserable pout. Seeing his sister looking so pitiful, Josh knew immediately that there was more to the story.

But since his Finish mother was determined to keep it from him, he chose not to push. Instead, he just smiled and said, "Come on, let's go get you something good to eat." Nikki looked up, a faint spark appearing in her eyes, but it vanished just as quickly. She shook her head. "That's okay, Josh. I'm not hungry." Josh didn't press the matter. Taking her by the hand, he led his family away from the diner and into the night. They hadn't gone far before Josh stopped at a candy stall. The vendor, an elderly man, was skillfully drizzling liquid sugar onto a marble slab.

With a deft flick of his wrist, a lifelike golden butterfly appeared on the stone, shimmering beautifully in the candlelight. Josh handed over some coins for the sugar butterfly and passed it to Nikki. She took it, staring at the golden wings for a moment before taking a gentle lick. It melted on her tongue, sweet and comforting, and a smile finally broke across her face. "Is it good, Nikki?" Josh asked. Nikki nodded vigorously. "It's delicious!" she chirped. "Will you buy me more in the future, Josh?" Josh smiled. "I will.

As long as you're good, I'll buy you whatever you want." Nikki cheered happily, but Marissa frowned slightly. "You shouldn't spoil her," she said. "You've only just started your post at the Royal Scholarium, and your monthly stipend isn't much. You need to save your money, not waste it. You're getting to that age, after all, and you'll need enough to marry someday." "Don't worry, Mom," Josh said with a chuckle. "The pay at the Royal Scholarium might be modest, but I barely have anything to spend it on.

We're staying at Duskmoor Manor, and I eat all my meals either there or at work, so my daily expenses are practically zero. As for clothes, the suits I had made before are high quality and still look brand new, so there's no need to replace them. When I'm on duty, I wear my official uniform. His Majesty is generous enough that the palace covers the cost of both winter and summer uniforms for court officials, so it doesn't come out of my pocket. Because of that, I've been able to save almost everything I earn.

Besides, Her Grace was kind enough to give us a generous allowance before, and I haven't touched a bit of it. It's more than enough for me to get married and settle down. Buying Nikki a few treats isn't going to break the bank." Γ 15.9K B

FHN Chapter 732 She Could Live with That By this point, Josh had completely reassured his mother. Sensing her ease, he deftly changed the subject. "By the way, Mom, was there a specific reason you and Nikki came all the way out here to wait for me today?" Marissa nodded, her expression growing earnest and slightly anxious. "Her Grace mentioned that she wants to speak with the three of us tonight. It sounded

important, so I wanted to make sure we caught right after work. That way, we can go see her together as soon as we get back." "I see," Josh said, understanding perfectly.

Marissa couldn't help but add a gentle reminder. "Speaking of Her Grace, our family owes her immens The kindness she has shown us is truly beyond measure, and you would never have secured your positi at court without her help. You must give your absolute best to your duties and ensure you never disappoint her." "I always keep that in mind, Mom," Josh replied dutifully. Without a carriage, the three of them made their way back on foot. Fortunately, the Royal Scholarium wasn't too far from Duskmoor Manor-just a walk through two main streets and down a long alleyway.

By the time they reached the manor gates, Nikki had finished almost all of her candy. She licked her lips wishing for just a little more, but as the sweetness faded, the words from the man in the diner came rushing back to plague her mind. "Her Grace is probably telling you to pack your bags and get out. They're leaving the city; do you really think they're going to let you stay there forever?" An uncomfortable weight settled in her chest. She couldn't shake the feeling that since Her Grace was leaving, the man was probably right-they were going to be sent back to their old home.

In truth, Nikki didn't think going home was the worst thing in the world. Their old house had a squaller yard and smaller beds, but she could live with that. The only part that truly upset her was what it would mean for Josh. Once they moved back, his daily commute to the Royal Scholarium would take forever H would have to cross nearly the entire city of Vanelle, waking up long before dawn and hot returning until the dead of night. Thinking about how exhausting that would be for her brother made Nikki's heart ache Inside Stillwater Court, the lights blued bright and warm.

Nikki, following her mother and brother, was led into the room by Mira to find Elowen sitting in the main seat, cradling Emily in her lap while playing ring toss with Emily in her lap. With an easy flick of her wrist, Elowen sent a wooden ring sailing neatly onto peg every time. Emily watched with fascination. Reaching out with both hands, she eagerly tried to grab one of the rings herself. Amused, Elowen handed her one. Emily chucked it tightly and attempted a throw. but she was still too little.

The ring slipped from her fingers and bounced harmlessly across the floor Rather than getting upset, Emily burst into giggles and immediately reached for another ring. Cassian lounged nearby, a book propped lazily in his hand, though his attention was clearly elsewhere, watching the mother and daughter with fond amusement. Beside him on the daybed. Catus was fast Finishe asleep, his hitle fists curled up by his head. "Greetings, Your Graces, Nikki chimed in, bowing alongside her mother and brother.

Elowen looked up, gently taking the stick from Emily's hands to set it aside as she smiled at the three of them. "I was actually planning to head over to your quarters to look for you, but you beat me to it." With a gracious wave of her hand, she added, "No

need for formalities, please sit." Marissa, looking a bit constrained, offered her thanks repeatedly before guiding her children to their seats. Cora arrived promptly to serve coffee. In Elowen's lap, Emily was still squirming, completely fixated on the game and leaning heavily to the side to reach for the sticks again.

Pulling the restless toddler back, Elowen turned her attention to Josh. "How have things been at the Royal Scholarium? Is everything going smoothly? Have you run into any difficult people or situations?" Josh stood up immediately, answering with utmost respect. "Everything is going very well, Your Grace. My seniors at the Scholarium are incredibly kind and generous with their guidance. Right now, I'm mainly handling editing and proofreading. It's meticulous work, but I'm learning a great deal.

His Majesty is exceptionally benevolent, and the officials are well taken care of—our uniforms and stipends are always issued on time without exception." He paused, his voice softening with emotion. "I know I only have this opportunity because of your sponsorship, Your Grace. I am deeply grateful, and I will never forget your kindness." Elowen gestured for him to relax. "We're just catching up tonight, Josh. There's no need to be so tense. Sit down, please." Once he complied, she continued, "And you don't need to thank me. You earned your place through your own talent.

I merely gave you a starting push by passing along a word; where you go from here depends entirely on your own hard work." Josh nodded earnestly. "I won't let you down, Your Grace. I will do my absolute best to repay your kindness." Having failed to reach her toy, Emily quieted down for a split second before inhaling deeply and starting a fuss in earnest. Realizing she couldn't carry on a proper conversation like this, Elowen paused and looked down at her daughter, though Emily's mind was completely elsewhere.

Awakening Chapter 733 Your Family Would Stay on Here Uncle. Taking in the scene with a silent chuckle, Cassian set his book aside, walked over, and reached out with gentle, "Let me take Poppy." Elowen offered a grateful nod and handed her over. Cassian scooped Emily into his arms and carried her away. Turning her attention back to Marissa and her two children, Elowen said, "There are a few important matters I'd like to discuss with you today." Marissa's heart leaped into her throat, her fingers instinctively tightening around her sleeves.

Nikki grew tense as well, looking up to stare wide-eyed at Elowen without so much as blinking. Her heart was hammering wildly against her ribs, refusing to calm down. Here it comes. Her Grace is going to say it. She was certain Her Grace was about to kick them out, just like that man in the restaurant had predicted. Instead, Elowen smiled. "You've probably heard by now that Cassian and I will be leaving Vanelle soon. It wouldn't do to leave a place as massive as Duskmoor Manor completely empty; a house needs people to keep it alive.

So, I was hoping your family would stay on here at the manor." Nikki's shoulders slumped in utter despair. I knew it. Her Grace really is... Wait. The realization hit her a second late, and her head snapped up. Her Grace hadn't told them to leave. She had said, "Stay on here at the manor." Nikki's eyes instantly lit up. She stared blankly at Elowen, her mind racing yet completely empty all at once, as Her Grace's words echoed in her head, They weren't being evicted. They were staying. They got to stay! ¶ Marissa was just as stunned, stammering in disbelief, "Stay here at Duskmoor Manor?"

But... but surely that goes against propriety..." Elowen smiled. "I am the Duchess, and the rules of Duskmoor Manor are mine to make. My word is the rule here. If I ask you to stay, then there is nothing improper about it." Josh looked even more incredulous. It took him a long moment to snap out of his shock. He stood up, bowing formally, his voice tight with emotion. "Your Grace, this... how can we possibly accept? Duskmoor Manor belongs to His Grace..." Elowen waved off his concerns. "There is no need to refuse.

Your daily commute to the Royal Scholarium pause ↑ shift 1 end 2 35 enter alt 9:55 am P P PO Chapter 738 Your Family Would Stay on Here is much shorter from Duskmoor Manor than from your current home. You'll gain an extra two hours of sleep every day. Besides, Nikki is still young-if she lives at Duskmoor Manor, you won't have to worry about her safety A faint smile touched Elowen's lips.

"As I've said before, the best way you can repay me is by applying your talents in court, working hard to rise through the ranks, and ensuring that one day you can speak on our behalf-and do real good for the people. Josh's lips trembled, completely at a loss for words. Elowen then turned her gaze to Nikki, her expression softening even further. "As for Nikki, I've already given it some thought. At her age, she should be studying under a tutor, learning to read and write, and understanding the world. Coincidentally, when Duchess Yvonne visited today, she mentioned her brother, Censor Gareth.

Gareth has a young daughter and is currently planning to hire a tutor to educate her at home. Yvonne said Gareth worries his daughter is too introverted and quiet, and that studying alone might be too dull for her. He wants to find a few girls of a similar age to study alongside her and keep her company. I thought it would be 3 Wonderful to send Nikki there to join them." Marissa was stunned. "But... those are all noble families. Nikki is just an ordinary girl. How could she possibly..." was "You are only an ordinary family because Patrick taken from us too soon," Elowen said gently.

"Had he not sacrificed his life, he would be a high-ranking military officer by now." She offered a reassuring smile. "I've already raised the matter with Yvonne and sent a formal note to the Leofric estate. Gareth is not the type to look down on people, and Yvonne has a lovely disposition. She sent word back at dinnertime saying she would be delighted to have Nikki. In fact, Nikki can even board with them. While women cannot sit

for the imperial examinations, Avenlor does have female officials. If Nikki wishes to pursue that path in the future, it would bring immense honor to your family.

And even if she doesn't, an education will broaden her horizons/so she doesn't have to live her life in ignorance." Overwhelmed with awe and gratitude, Marissa felt her eyes grow hot with tears. She stared at Elowen, unable to find her voice for a long time. Elowen looked back at Nikki with a twinkle in her eye. "Nikki, playing and having fun every day is easy, but once you start your studies, things won't be quite so carefree." Nikki balled her hands into tight fists, her face full of solemn determination. "Don't worry, Your Grace. I promise I will study hard.

I won't let you, my mother, or my brother down." "Splendid," Elowen said warmly. "Then I can leave for Nordia with a clear conscience." As Marissa watched them, her tears finally spilled over, streaming down her face. Back when her husband was still alive, the Mercer family hadn't been this desolate and lonely. In fact, they had lived a rather comfortable life. Everyone said her husband had laid down his life for the country, that he was a great hero of Avenlor, yet their lives had only grown bleaker and poorer after his passing.

15.9K 9:55 am P p p • Awakening the Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 734 A Second Elowen At first, Marissa had felt nothing but grief and resentment. Eventually, when there was nothing left to be done, she simply resigned herself to her fate. Until Elowen stepped into their lives. It was as if a brilliant, radiant light had suddenly pierced through an endless night.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Marissa rose to her feet through her tears, fell to her knees before Elowen, and choked out, "Your Grace, I don't know how I will ever repay you for your immense kindness in this lifetime..." After pouring out their endless gratitude, the Mercer family finally took their leave. But as they reached the door, Nikki suddenly looked back. Her eyes were full of thankfulness and a lingering reluctance to part. "Your Grace, even after you go to Nordia... please remember to come back soon!

I'll be waiting in Vanelle for you to check my schoolwork!" Her cheeks flushed crimson by the time she finished the sentence. Elowen's heart softened, and she replied with a smile, "Alright, I promise I'll come back. Once the three of them left, a quiet stillness settled over the room. The candlelight flickered gently, casting Elowen's shadow against the wall in a shifting dance of light and dark. She leaned back against her chair and let out a long, weary sigh. Then came the sound of footsteps-measured, steady, and familiar. It was Cassian.

Elowen looked up just as he walked in, cradling Emily in his arms. The little girl had already drifted off to sleep, her small face buried in the crook of his shoulder and her tiny hand tightly gripping his collar. Her breathing was soft and even, her little body

swaying gently with every step he took. Cassian walked over to Elowen and carefully sat down, shifting Emily so she rested more comfortably in the crook of his arm. Emily stirred slightly, her little hand clawing at the air once or twice before she sank back into a deep sleep.

Watching how naturally Cassian held the child, and how peacefully Emily slept in his arms, Elowen couldn't help but find it amusing. "I had no idea Poppy would be so well-behaved with you." Cassian looked down at the soft, sweet little bundle in his arms, a warm smile spreading across his face. "Perhaps she's moved by the sheer depth of my paternal love?" Elowen blinked in surprise, then burst out laughing. Cassian glanced at her. "So, Ella, is everything settled with the Mercers?" Elowen nodded. "It's all sorted. I've asked them to keep living at Duskmoor Manor.

Nikki will be sent to the Leofric estate for her schooling, and Josh can focus on his official duties." Cassian grew thoughtful. "I had the exact same good intentions when I handed the management of the manor over to Marwen." 9:55 am P p p shift end enter Chapter 734 Second Clown Elowen tilted her head. "Well, if history ever repeats itself, I'm sure a second Elowen will come along to rescue Duskmoor Manor from the brink of ruin" Cassian's eyes gleamed as he looked at her.

"In that case," he said, his voice softening even further, "should we visit the General's manor and Isobel tomorrow?" Elowen nodded. "Yes. We'll head to Hale Manor first to pay our respects to the Hale ancestors and let them know I'm leaving for Nordia. After that, we'll stop by Isobel's tavern to say our goodbyes." "Alright." The next morning broke clear and bright. Elowen rose early and dressed in simple, understated clothes, wearing nothing in her hair but a single white hairpin. Cassian had also changed into a plain, moon-white robe.

Together with Caius and Emily, the family boarded their carriage and left Duskmoor Manor, setting off for Hale Manor. When they arrived, it was the butler, Regan, who came out to greet them just as he always did. "Ms. Hale! You're back! And Mr. Valebourne... and Emily, Caius..." Elowen listened patiently before nodding with a smile. "Yes, we've all come back to visit. Is everything well at the manor? Please, Regan, there's no need for such formality." Regan nodded vigorously, wiping the corner of his eye with his sleeve. "Yes... Yes... everyone is well.

Everything is perfect." Elowen looked past him and noticed the yellow dog standing at his side. It was Emberfang. He had grown into a magnificent hound, his coat sleek and glossy, his bright, dark eyes full of life. He trotted forward, wagging his tail as he circled Elowen's legs, letting out soft, whining whimpers as if pampering her or trying to tell her a story. Amused, Elowen knelt down and patted his head. "Emberfang, you still remember me?" Emberfang whined happily, leaning in to lick the back of her hand.

Behind Elowen stood Cassian and the two nannies, who were cradling Emily and Caius. Resting in the nannies' arms, both babies stared wide-eyed at Emberfang. The hound tilted his head, looking from Emily to Caius and back again, clearly baffled by what these two tiny creatures could be. Elowen stood back up and turned to the butler. "Regan, I'd like to visit the ancestral hall to pay my respects. I'll be leaving Vanelle soon, and I'm not sure when I'll be able to return." "Of course... that-that is only right..." Regan stammered, quickly stepping ahead to lead the way for Elowen and Cassian.

Regan had kept the Hale family ancestral hall spotlessly clean. The altar was neatly arranged with an incense burner, candlesticks, and plates of offerings, and every single spirit tablet had been wiped free of dust. † shift end 9:55 am P P P Awakening the: Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 735 If Fate Allows It was clear that Regan had poured his heart into looking after the estate. Taking three lit incense sticks from Regan, Elowen bowed deeply three times before the Hale ancestors. She rose, placed the incense into the burner, and spoke softly. "Father, Mother, Julian, uncles... I am leaving. I'm going to Nordia with Cassian. I never wanted to trove so far from home, but in this matter, my hands are tied." Though her mother's tablet was already pristine, Elowen took out a handkerchief and gently wiped it anyway.

As she did, she murmured softly, "Mother, when I brought Poppy and Phoenix here last time. I told you that I had discovered the truth of my birth, and that I am the current Oracle of Nordia. I've decided to go there now. You spent your childhood with Grandfather in Falkriver, and then you came to Vanelle with Father, so you never got to see what Nordia is like. I'm going to see it for you." After speaking with her mother, Elowen turned to her brother Julian's tablet. "Julian, I'm off. Next time I'm back.

I'll bring you some Nordin wine." By the time they left Hale Manor, the sun was already high in the sky. Regan escorted them to the door. "Rest assured, Ms. Hale... with me here, nothing will go wrong at the manor." Emberfang sat on his haunches beside him, wagging his tail and letting out a couple of barks as if in agreement. A warm smile touched Elowen's eyes. "Thank you. Well... if fate allows, I'll see you next time." She stepped into the carriage and lifted the curtain, taking one last look at Hale Manor, the place where she had grown up.

Seeing the white-haired old man and the big yellow dog standing by the entrance filled her heart with a bittersweet mixture of comfort and sorrow. Letting the curtain fall, she leaned against Cassian's shoulder in silence. The carriage rumbled forward, rolling through the alleys and bustling marketplaces as it headed toward the southern part of the city. Elowen rarely visited Isobel's tavern, but looking at it today, it was packed with

guests and doing a roaring trade. When Elowen stepped down from the carriage at the side door, Isobel hurried over to greet her the moment she heard the news.

"It's so crowded today," Elowen said with a smile. "I'm afraid there won't be a private room left for us." "How could that be?" Isobel replied, her eyes crinkling with warmth. "Whenever my Ella comes, there's always a room waiting. I keep it reserved for you constantly." A clever young maid trailing behind them chimed in with a grin, "Your Grace, you have no idea. Isobel keeps the corner room on the second floor specifically for you. No matter how many guests turn up, it's never opened to the public.

Whether Your Grace comes or not, it's always kept vacant, just because Isobel worries you might drop by unexpectedly and have nowhere to sit." alt 9:55 am P p p

9:54 am p pp Chapter 736 Fate Allows end enter Elowen blinked in surprise, deeply inoved. "Isobel, you spoil me entirely too much..." Isobel laughed. "My dear Ella, no amount of spoiling you is ever too much." Standing beside them, Cassian nodded in thorough agreement. "Isobel speaks the absolute truth." Having found common ground, the two exchanged a knowing look. Elowen couldn't help but chuckle. "Alright, let's head upstairs and sit down," Isobel ushered, leading the group up to the private room on the second floor.

As coffee and pastries were brought out in steady succession, Isobel couldn't take her eyes off Emily and Caius. "Emily is simply gorgeous! She looks just like you did when you were little. And Caius is such a handsome boy-I'm afraid he's going to be the heartthrob of many girls when he grows up." Caius looked up at Isobel with his big eyes, suddenly bursting into a wide grin. Isobel's heart melted completely at the sight. "Oh, this child is definitely blessed," she cooed. Seeming a bit indignant at being left out, Emily reached out her little hands and let out a couple of soft whimpers.

"Poppy wants you to hold her," Elowen told Isobel. Isobel felt even more flattered. "Oh, alright, let me try..." They cradled the children for a while, sharing amusing stories from the past. Among the pastries today was a new item. Elowen took a bite and found it delicious. Taking note of this Cassian asked Isobel for the recipe. Isobel explained the process in detail, and Cassian committed every word to memory. Finally, Elowen took a sip of her coffee and got down to business. "I actually came by today to say goodbye, Isobel." Isobel sighed.

"Duskmoor Manor is always at the center of everything, so I've already heard the rumors. I know your whole family is about to depart for Nordia." Elowen looked at her warmly. "Take good care of yourself while I'm away from Vanelle, Isobel." "Oh, you silly child," Isobel teased with a laugh. "I've been taking care of myself for decades. Do you really think I need you worrying about me? Go on and don't give it a second thought. Besides, if I ever run into real trouble, I can always go to Falconcrest Manor and find Josh. Now that he's an official, he's got the ability and the drive to succeed.

I'm sure he'll remember past kindnesses and look out for me." Elowen smiled. "He certainly will." Isobel suddenly remembered something. "By the way, Ella, have you been reading any stories lately! 055 am P PP Tve heard it them Tyreventral of The Last Wayfarer snook exceptionally well writmu. Isobel's smile widened as she leaned in closer her voire dropping to a mysterious whisper. "Would you to the am 15.9K 9:55 am P p p Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 736 Someone Who Had Lost Everything Elowen blinked in surprise. "Is that event possible?" Isobel nodded with a grin.

"As luck would have it, The Last Wayfarer happens to be here today." Elowen was stunned yet again. "I really struck gold," Isobel said wistfully. "Back when your stories were the talk of the town, I decided to get into the business too. But then you got busy and didn't have time to write anything new, so the story business here at the tavern started to fizzle out. I was worried I wouldn't be able to compete with your Silverloom Exchange, but then, by some stroke of luck, I crossed paths with The Last Wayfarer.

She's a lovely girl and very easy to get along with, so we became fast friends over time. Now, whenever she finishes a new volume, she brings it to me first." Elowen's brow twitched, and an incredulous note crept into her voice. "The Last Wayfarer is a young girl?" "Yes," Isobel nodded casually. "She looks quite young, probably even younger than you." Elowen's fingers tightened slightly. It felt as if a string had been plucked deep inside her heart, vibrating with a faint hum that only she could hear.

Reading those stories, she had always found the writing style oddly familiar, giving her the distinct impression that it was someone she knew. However, the pen name 'The Last Wayfarer' sounded much more like an older gentleman, which had left Elowen entirely without clues for the longest time. But now, Isobel was saying the author was a young girl, Suddenly, Elowen caught hold of that elusive thread/again. "Isobel... how old is she?" Isobel thought back for a moment.

"Her eyes look young, but she always keeps her face covered, so I've never seen her features clearly." Elowen's heart skipped a beat as a faint suspicion began to form in her mind. Gripping her fingers tighter, she pressed, "Isobel, did you say she's here right now?" r "Yes, she's back in the courtyard," Isobel nodded. "Let me go fetch her for you. Whenever we talked about you in the past, she always mentioned that she's read all of your work and that you've been a huge influence on her." "No, don't fetch her," Elowen said, shaking her head.

"I'll go see her myself." If the girl found out Elowen was here, she would undoubtedly turn around and flee instantly. Though Isobel found the reaction strange, she agreed. Elowen turned to Cassian. "I'm going to take a quick look. I'll be right back." Cassian gave her an understanding nod. 0.55 am ppp one Who Had Lost Everything and Center Finished Elowen followed Isobel through the back door and into the courtyard, A stone

table and a few matching stools sat beneath a large tree, where the sunlight filtered through the leaves, casting a mottled pattern of light and shadow across the ground.

A slender figure sat on one of the stools, her back turned to them as she spoke with someone. Elowen quieted her footsteps. Through the shifting shadows of the trees, a familiar voice drifted over to her. "Then it's settled for this volume. Once I finish the final installment in a few days, I'll bring it over" Elowen paused for a fraction of a second, then took a step forward. As she entered the courtyard, she finally got a clear look at the girl's eyes. Isobel had never met her before and couldn't place her, but Elowen recognized them instantly. It was the Fifth Princess, Maerwyn.

Surprisingly, Elowen didn't feel shocked. The Last Wayfarer-someone who had lost everything. Maerwyn had lost her mother, her brother, and the glamorous royal life she once knew. Even though the Emperor had allowed her to keep her title as the Fifth Princess, how could she be anything but a lonely wayfarer now? No wonder the stories had felt so strangely familiar. She really should have guessed it sooner. Elowen knew all too well that pain and adversity were often the greatest catalysts for creativity.

All those displaced emotions, the buried grievances, and the lingering resentment had clearly found an outlet, flowing piece by piece into the words on her pages. Standing just behind her, Isobel noticed Elowen had frozen. "What's wrong, Ella?" she whispered, confused. "Go on in and have a chat." Elowen hesitated for a moment, then shook her head. She didn't know how to face Maerwyn. The history between them was far too complicated-a tangled knot that could neither be unraveled nor cleanly cut. Elowen turned around, preparing to leave.

"Aunt Elowen?" A tentative voice called out from behind her. Elowen froze in her tracks. Taking a deep breath, she turned back around. Maerwyn had already stood up, her gaze fixed entirely on her. A veil covered her face, leaving only her eyes visible. She stared at Elowen for a long moment, her lips parting slightly as if she wanted to speak, but she didn't seem to know where to begin. Standing to the side, Isobel heard the words "Aunt Elowen" and finally realized something was amiss. The only people who could call Elowen that were the children of the imperial family.

And how many royal princesses could there possibly be? 9:55 am P p p enter Chapter 726 Someone Who Had Lost Everything Y and enter "Is... is this...?" Isobel's voice trembled slightly. Elowen offered a gentle smile. "It's alright, Isobel. Go ahead and tend to your business. I'll stay here and talk with Maerwyn for a bit." Meeting Elowen's reassuring gaze, Isobel nodded and quickly hurried away. The courtyard fell quiet, saved only by the rustling of leaves in the wind and the faint, distant chatter drifting over from the tavern.

For a long moment, Elowen and Maerwyn simply looked at each other, neither of them knowing who should speak first. f

Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess Chapter 737 Neither Hatred Nor Love
Elowen couldn't help but remember her past life. Back then, Maerwyn had despised her entirely, greeting her with nothing but biting sarcasm and angry outbursts whenever they met. In this life, however, everything had changed the moment the princess discovered Elowen was actually Azure. She had thrown her usual malice out the window, happily calling her "Aunt Elowen" and even turning against her own mother and brother to protect her. Elowen felt neither hatred nor love for Maerwyn now.

Instead, her emotions were a tangled, indefinable knot of guilt, heartache, and sheer helplessness. Maerwyn felt much the same way about Elowen. She used to look down on her, thinking she was a boring woman who was completely beneath her brother. But then she discovered that Elowen was the mind behind her absolute favorite stories. Overcome with regret for how she had treated her, Maerwyn had tried to make amends by showering her with affection and giving her unconditional trust.

Then came the bitter realization that this aunt she so deeply revered had driven the downfall of everything she held dear-her mother, her brother, and her own happiness. Yet, she found she couldn't bring herself to hate her. Instead, inspired by her aunt's work, she had picked up a pen and started writing stories of her own. Breaking the long silence, Elowen spoke first. "I've read your stories. They're wonderful." Maerwyn's eyelashes fluttered, and a sudden spark lit up her eyes. She looked down, unable to hide her sudden shyness.

"Did you really read them, Aunt Elowen?" "I did," Elowen replied with a nod. "Right up to the latest chapter." Maerwyn's eyes grew glassy. She blinked rapidly, forcing down the sudden rush of emotion. "I... I was inspired by you. But I'm still nowhere near your level." Elowen shook her head. "You're far too modest." With that, they lapsed into silence once more. After what felt like an eternity, Maerwyn looked up. "Aunt Elowen... I heard you're leaving for Nordi off?" aye, she spoke with genuine sincerity.

"Then I wish you a safe Please take care of yourself." 1/3 Chapter 737 Neither Hatred Nor Love
Elowen looked at her and softened. "Thank you. I will." Turning away, Elowen took a couple of steps toward the courtyard exit. "You know..." Maerwyn's voice rang out from behind her. It wasn't loud, but it was perfectly clear. "I don't hate you." Elowen froze in her tracks. By the time she turned back around, the space beneath the tree was empty. Maerwyn had already slipped away. Left alone in the quiet courtyard, Elowen let out a quiet sigh.

When Elowen returned to the private room, Isobel was still pacing restlessly. "Ella, was that really Princess Maerwyn? I'm such a fool-how could I not recognize a princess of the realm? Will she blame me? Do you think she thought I was slighting her? Should I go back down and apologize?" Elowen patted Isobel's hand, offering a reassuring smile. "Don't worry, Isobel. She's much more gentle these days. It doesn't matter that you

didn't recognize her; it's best to just act as if you still don't know. She won't hold it against you." Only then did Isobel finally breathe a sigh of relief.

"Well, that's a comfort." After chatting for a few more minutes, Elowen rose to take her leave. Isobel walked her to the side door, holding her hand tightly. Her eyes were red with unshed tears as she struggled to say goodbye. "Stay safe on the road, Ella. Send word to me as soon as you reach Nordia." Elowen nodded warmly and stepped up into the carriage. The carriage rumbled forward, leaving the bustling marketplace behind as it made its way toward Duskmoor Manor. Way back leaning against Cassian's shoulder, Elowen watched the shops and pedestrians blur past the window.

After a long silence, she spoke up softly. "Cassian, The Last Wayfarer... the person I just saw in the courtyard was Maerwyn." Cassian turned his head slightly toward her. Elowen looked up, her expression clouded with distress. "We talked for a little bit. She told me she doesn't actually hate me. I... I can't help but feel a little guilty." Cassian's fingers gently rubbed her shoulder. "Guilt about what? Alaric and Delphine would have fallen even without you. Was a single one of the things they did fabricated or unjustified?"

2/3 16:27 Thu, Jul 2 Chapter 737 Neither Hatred Nor Love Maerwyn losing her old life wasn't your doing." 59 Elowen didn't answer, choosing instead to bury her face deeper into his coat. "Besides," Cassian added, "without you, Maerwyn would never have become a writer. Without Azure, there would be no Last Wayfarer. For all we know, she might still be hiding away in some corner of the palace crying her eyes out." Elowen pulled back from his chest, a small smile finally breaking through.

"When you put it that way, I do feel a lot better." Cassian pressed a tent Elowen leaned back hadn't met you A warm, gentle hold onto his forehead, his voice laced with affection. "Good." He embraced and wrapped her arms around his waist. "Cassian, if I knew, I really don't know what I would have done." He closed Cassian's eyes. "What else could you do, Ella? You'll just have to live." 16.1K 159 Awakening Love: Reborn to Be His Duchess

Chapter 738 Rescue Her from the Ashes The carriage rolled into Duskmoor Manor and came to a smooth halt. Finished stepping outside, Elowen spotted three figures waiting by the entrance. James Wrenner stood at the front, dressed in a well-worn set of practical clothes, his belly looking rounder than it had during their last meeting. Beside him stood his wife, Dorothy, wearing a pale lavender robe. She looked in much better health than before, her complexion radiant and her expression relaxed. Elara was nowhere to be seen.

As soon as they noticed Elowen and Cassian, James and Dorothy stepped forward to bow. "Greetings, Your Graces." Emily poked her head up from the nanny's arms to peek at the newcomers, prompting James to bow once more. "And greetings to you, little

Lady Emily." Whether she actually understood him or not, Emily tilted her head and offered a wide, gummy smile. Watching her daughter's antics warmed Elowen's heart completely. Turning to Dorothy, she asked, "By the way, where is Elara? Didn't she come today?" Dorothy gave a helpless smile.

"She did come, Your Grace, but she's tucked away somewhere reading a story. I was just about to send someone to fetch her, but you arrived before I had the chance."

"Where is she reading?" Elowen asked. "I'll go find her." Following the direction of Dorothy's nod, Elowen started walking across the grounds. Elara, dressed in a bright yellow robe, was tucked away behind a wall in the rock garden, utterly engrossed in her book. She was so absorbed that she was completely oblivious to her surroundings, not even noticing when Elowen approached. Elowen glanced at the pages.

"Are you reading *The Last Wayfarer*, too?" "Yes!" Elara chimed in enthusiastically, without even recognizing Elowen's voice. "The *Last Wayfarer*'s writing is just incredible! Honestly, I think it's way better than Her Grace's." Elowen raised an eyebrow. Standing nearby, Mira couldn't help but snort, quickly clapping a hand over her mouth. 1/3 :0 Chapter 738 Rescue Her from the Ashes Finished Completely oblivious, Elara rambled on, "I used to love Her Grace's stories the most-I thought no one in the world could write better than her.

But ever since I started reading *The Last Wayfarer*, I feel like Her Grace is just ordinary in comparison..." Elowen nodded with a smile, offering no defense. Instead, she casually murmured, "What a pity. I was actually planning on taking you to meet the princess on our trip to Nordia." Elara froze mid-sentence. She snapped her head around, her eyes widening in horror as she saw Elowen, nearly dropping her book to the ground. "Y-Y-Your Grace!" Elowen remained perfectly composed. "The very same.

What's the matter?" A beat later, the reality of what she had just said caught up to Elara, and her face instantly flushed bright red. "Your Grace, everything I just said... did you...?" Elowen nodded, her eyes crinkling with amusement. "Oh yes, I heard all of it. 'Just ordinary,' wasn't it?" The colors that washed over Elara's face were a sight to behold-turning from red to white, white to red, and finally settling on a completely unidentifiable shade. Grabby hands instantly clutching Elowen's sleeve, she panicked. "No, no, no! Your Grace, I was wrong! I misspoke!

You are the absolute greatest writer in the whole wide world! Who even is *The Last Wayfarer*? They aren't fit to hold a candle to you! You're still the best, Your Grace! I love you the most!" Amused by the desperate display, Elowen let out a laugh and gave Elara's forehead a gentle flick. "My, you certainly know how to turn with the wind." Elara rubbed her forehead and grinned sheepishly. It didn't even hurt. She sidled closer and hooked her arm through Elowen's. "Your Grace, you still have to take me to meet the princess, right?" "Alright," Elowen promised with a smile.

After a brief pause, she added a reminder, "Though if I remember correctly, the princess is already betrothed." Elara scoffed. "There are so many terrible men in this world, who's to say the princess won't have her heart broken by one of them? If that happens, I'll be right there to rescue her from the ashes!" Elowen couldn't help but chuckle, thinking that Elara really ought to try writing stories herself -and a highly unconventional genre at that. 1 By late October, everything at Duskmoor Manor was packed and ready to go.

2/3 16:27 Thu, Jul 2 Chapter 738 Rescue Her from the Ashes 59 Finished It was a massive convoy. With five carriages, over twenty trunks of luggage, and thirty guards-not to mention James's family of three, Mira, Cora, Gerda, and Edith-the procession stretched all the way from the manor's front doors down to the end of the lane. Elowen took one last look at the estate. The "Duskmoor Manor" plaque hanging over the entrance had been personally inscribed by the Emperor himself, and it still looked brand new.

When she had first married into the family and moved in, her heart had been full of anxiety, dreading an uncertain future. Now, she was filled with a deep, aching reluctance to leave. She had named every single courtyard on the grounds. She and Cassian had personally watched over the clearing of the vegetable plots, planting the seeds and watering the soil with their own hands. They had eaten the greens and radishes they grew, and shared the bounty with their friends. Right now, a few rows of seedlings were still nestled in the dirt, thriving beautifully.

Looking at them, a wave of emotion washed over Elowen. "Ella, it's time to go." Cassian stood right behind her, his voice firm yet gentle.

16:11 Fri, Jul 3 Chapter 739 A Whole Lot of Trouble Elowen nodded and stepped into the carriage. Behind them, Caius and Emily sat in the next carriage, cradled by their wet nurse and nanny. The toddlers had no idea they were embarking on a long journey; thinking it was just a fun day trip, they were clapping and kicking their feet in pure excitement. At the very front of the procession rode James on a tall, imposing horse. With a sword strapped to his waist, he looked exceptionally commanding.

Dorothy and Elara followed in a carriage behind him, with Elara poking her head out the window, looking around in wide-eyed wonder. The convoy slowly made its way out of the lane and merged onto the main street of Vanelle. Onlookers along the roadside stopped in their tracks, whispering among themselves. "Whose convoy is that? What a grand turnout!" "It's from Duskmoor Manor!"

The Duke and Duchess are setting off as envoys to Nordia!" "Now that the Duke and Duchess are leaving, who knows when they'll be back..." As the chatter gradually faded into the distance, the carriages passed through the city gates and embarked on the great highway leading to Nordia. The autumn countryside stretched endlessly to the

horizon, its golden rice fields undulating in the breeze like a vast, shimmering sea. Riding alongside Elowen's carriage, James called out cheerfully through the window curtain, "Your Grace, it's going to be a bumpy ride, so please take care.

If you start feeling cooped up, just look out at the scenery. Otherwise, the motion might get to you, and you won't be able to years keep anything down. Now, someone like me is a different story. I'm built tough, and after of riding into battle, nothing phases me." Elowen parted the curtain and replied with a smile, "Thank you for the advice, James. I'll keep that in mind." The convoy traveled for most of the day. As the sun began to sink in the west, Cassian ordered the group to make camp for the night near a small grove of trees by the roadside.

The guards immediately set to work pitching tents and building campfires to cook dinner. Mira and Cora busied themselves arranging cushions and setting out refreshments, while Gerda and Edith carried the two children out of the carriage to get some fresh air. Just as Elowen stepped down from her carriage, the sound of dry heaving caught her attention from a short distance away. 1/ 16:11 Fri, Jul 3 Chapter 230 A Whole Lot Trouble 75 She followed the sound and found James crouching beneath a large tree. He was pale, clutching his stomach, and losing his lunch completely.

Elowen stared in utter disbelief. Dorothy stood beside him, rubbing his back as she chided, "That's what you get for showing off! Riding for hours and insisting you weren't tired. Look at you now." James looked up, forcing a weak smile onto his sickly pale face that looked more like a grimace. "I'm fine... really... just a bit... carsick..." Before he could finish, his stomach violently churned again, and he quickly turned back to the tree to continue retching. Standing nearby, Elara laughed out loud without a shred of sympathy.

"Dad, didn't you say you used to ride from sunrise to sunset on the frontier without even breaking a sweat? You barely lasted half a day!" James shot her a glare, wanting to snap back, but he couldn't form the words and could only go back to dry heaving. Watching the scene unfold from the side of her carriage, Elowen couldn't help but burst into laughter. Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in the heart of Nordia. Inside a dimly lit tent, a tall man sat on a daybed. His face was masked in shadow, revealing only a sharply defined jawline and narrow, upturned eyes.

A subordinate knelt on the ground, reporting respectfully with a bowed head. "...The convoy of Duke Cassian and Duchess Elowen of Avenlor has already passed through Goose Pass. They are expected to cross into Nordish territory in about two weeks." "Oh?" The man's voice trailed upward. "There is no Duke Cassian and Duchess Elowen here. Just the Nordish Oracle and her boy toy." Stunned, the subordinate looked up, his face filled with shock. "The Oracle?!" The Oracle had been gone before he was even born. He had only ever heard his elders speak of the glorious era when Nordia still had one.

His voice shook slightly. "Master... do you mean... this Lady Elowen from Avenlor is actually..." "Why look so innocent and utterly lost?" 16:11 Fri, Jul 3 Whole Lofot 75 Resting his chin on his hand, the man flashed a playful, mocking smile. "Get back to work. The Oracle is coming, and we need to give her a proper welcome. For instance, by making a bit of trouble for her." The subordinate quickly acknowledged the order and turned to leave. "Wait." The man called him back. The subordinate thought his master might have had a change of heart and was abandoning his wicked scheme.

Instead, the man's lips curled into a slight smirk. "I was wrong just now. Not a bit of trouble-a whole lot of trouble." The subordinate stiffened for a brief moment. "Go on." With that, the man leaned back against the daybed. The subordinate gave his assent and hurried out of the tent. The smirk on the man's face widened. He was genuinely eager to see just what this highborn, sheltered Oracle from Avenlor was truly capable of. his When the convoy was ready to head out again, James had learned his lesson.

He gave up horse and slinks quietly into a carriage, earning himself another round of merciless teasing from Elara. The carriages pressed on, rolling across vast plains and over rolling hills as they followed the main highway north. By the seventh day, however, things took a turn for the worse. 16.1K 16:12 Fri,

Chapter 740 You Came for Me! They were setting up camp in a river valley one evening when a band of twenty to thiny riders suddenly charged down from the hillside, barreling straight toward the convoy. The guards reacted instantly, quickly forming a defensive line to meet the attack. The air was filled with the clash of steel and deafening battle cries. Inside her carriage. Elowen pushed the door open. Cassian sat right beside her, his sword resting close at hand. Though the attackers seemed fierce, they lacked discipline and fought like a disorganized rabble.

There was no need for Cassian to step in; the guards successfully drove them off on their own, leaving behind a few bodies and several wounded horses. But that was only the beginning. Over the next few days, the convoy was ambushed every day or two. The attacks came at all hours-sometimes in broad daylight, sometimes under the cover of night. The enemy numbers fluctuated too, ranging from small groups of twenty to larger bands of fifty or sixty. With each ambush, the raiders grew better equipped and far more organized.

While the guards managed to fend them off every time, the constant, relentless fighting was starting to take a toll, and exhaustion was setting in. Cassian's expression grew grimmer by the day. He ordered everyone to stay on high alert, doubled the night patrols, and slowed their traveling pace to ensure they rarely moved after dark. Yet the attacks didn't stop. Instead, they became more frequent and increasingly difficult to handle. "These aren't ordinary bandits," Cassian told Elowen privately, his face heavy with concern. "Someone is pulling the strings.

They aren't trying to rob us-they're trying to delay us and wear us down." Elowen nodded in agreement. The secret was out; someone knew she was the Oracle of Nordia. And someone out there was desperate to keep her from reaching her destination. On their third night in Nordia, things finally spun entirely out of control. The convoy had camped near a river in a low, rolling hill district. A bright moon cast a silver glow across the landscape, providing excellent visibility. The guards had just finished a sweep of the perimeter and found nothing unusual.

1/3 16:12 Fri, Jul 3 Awakening Love Rebom to Be Dia D Chapter 740 You Came for Me! They were setting up camp in a river valley one evening when a band of twenty to thirty riders suddenly charged down from the hillside, barreling straight toward the convoy. The guards reacted instantly, quickly forming a defensive line to meet the attack. The air was filled with the clash of steel and deafening battle cries. Her carriage, Elowen pushed the door open. Cassian sat right beside her, his sword loose at hand. When the attackers seemed fierce, they lacked discipline and fought like a disorganized mob.

There was no need for Cassian to step in; the guards successfully drove them off on their own, leaving behind a few bodies and several wounded horses. But that was only the beginning. Over the next few days, the attacks continued in broad numbers fluctuated too, for with each ambush, the while the guards began starting to take a toll. Cassian's exhaustion doubled in the dark. Attacks came every day or two. The attacks came at all times under the cover of night. The enemy all groups of twenty to larger bands of fifty or sixty. Better equipped and far more organized.

Every time they were driven off, the constant, relentless fighting was on was setting in. Every day. He ordered everyone to stay on high alert, slowed their traveling pace to ensure they rarely moved after. Yet instead, they became more frequent and increasingly difficult to resist. "They aren't trying to rob us-they're trying to delay us and wear us down," Cassian told Elowen privately, his face heavy with concern. "Someone knew she was the Oracle of Nordia. And someone out there was desperate to keep her from reaching her destination."

On their third night in Nordia, things finally spun entirely out of control. The convoy had camped across the landscape in a low hill district. A bright moon cast a silver glow. The guards had just finished a sweep of the perimeter and found nothing unusual. 1/3 16:12 Fri, Jul 3 Chapter 740 You Came for Me! 75 Finished Elowen had only just gotten Caius and Emily to sleep and was settling down to rest when a sharp, piercing whistle cut through the night. It was the alarm for an ambush. Bolting upright, Elowen threw open her tent flap to see a dark mass of people surging in from all directions. This time, there were at least two hundred attackers.

Brandishing torches and scimitars, they charged the camp like a tidal wave. Though the guards fought back fiercely, they were completely overwhelmed. Cassian took in the situation with a quick glance and squeezed Elowen's hand. "Ella, I'll be right back." Elowen nodded obediently. Cassian drew his sword, its blade gleaming coldly in the

moonlight. Standing at the entrance of her tent, Elowen was bombarded by a chaos of agonizing screams, the sharp clash of steel, the frantic braying of horses, and the crackle of burning canvas as torches caught the tents.

Amidst the din, she suddenly caught the sound of Elara crying. "Mom! Dad!" Elowen looked toward the sound. A short distance away, Elara was leaning halfway out of a carriage, her face deathly pale and her entire body shaking. Their carriage was under attack, and the panicked horses bolted, tearing wildly through the camp. James was tied down, hacking through enemies with his sword, while Dorothy had gone earlier to check on the toddlers and wasn't in the carriage. Elara was entirely alone. "It's Elara..." Mira whispered, wringing her hands in terror.

"I'm going to her," Elowen said, stepping forward. "Your Grace!" Mira cried, grabbing her arm. "It's too dangerous out there!" Elowen shook her head. "The raiders don't know what their target looks like. Cassian is fighting so hard that he's drawing all their fire. Over there, the horses are out of control, and the raiders are ignoring them, so it's up to us. I know how to handle horses, and Elara trusts me. I'm the only one who can do this." Before Mira could protest further, Elowen bolted into the fray.

"Your Grace!" 2/3 16:12 Fri, Jul 3 Chapter 740 You Came for Met 75 Elara was paralyzed with fear, but the moment she saw Elowen, it was like looking at a savior descended from heaven. Tears flooded down her face. "Shh." Elowen signaled for her to keep quiet as she tried to grab the reins. But the leather closest to her had snapped at some point. She had no choice but to run alongside the accelerating carriage, calling out gently, "Elara, don't be afraid! Come on, jump toward me, I'll catch you!" Elara looked from Elowen to the rushing ground, her face white. "I...

I'm scared..." Elowen hesitated, but she couldn't blame her. She was just a young girl. Scanning the vehicle, Elowen grabbed the edge of the carriage, hauled herself up with a burst of adrenaline, and climbed aboard. Elara immediately threw herself into Elowen's arms, sobbing uncontrollably. "Your Grace... You came for me!" Elowen stroked her hair to comfort her, but before she could speak, a sharp, terrified neigh echoed through the dark. Looking ahead, Elowen saw the carriage barreling straight toward the river. The current was rushing wildly; plunging into it would be fatal.

Elowen instantly grabbed the single remaining rein and yanked back, shouting for the horse to stop. The horse skidded to a halt, but the momentum carried the heavy carriage forward. In that split second, Elowen used all her strength to shove Elara clear of the vehicle. But there was no time left for her. Before she could jump, Elowen went down with the carriage, plunging straight into the raging rapids below.