

Awakening Love Reborn to Be His Duchess (Elowen Hale)

Chapter 836

The whisper came soft and low, no longer a distant, dutiful address of “Your Highness,” but the intimate name they had once promised each other.

Flowira’s frame trembled violently.

Fresh blood surged past Ronan’s lips continuously; he strained to lift a hand to brush her cheek, only to find all strength drained from his body, leaving his fingers to drop silently.

“I’m sorry...” Ronan stammered, staring up at her with eyes drowning in belated remorse. “If only...”

If only he hadn’t chosen Malkor in the first place.

If only he hadn’t feigned amnesia.

If only he hadn’t locked her away in the Crimson Lantern just to secure the seat of the Heir.

If only they were still standing outside the royal gates, where he was nothing more than a humble guard.

Would everything have turned out differently? Could they truly have wed, and journeyed together to see the snow-capped peaks at the edge of the plains?

Yet the world offered no second chances.

Ronan’s lips twitched faintly, unable to force out the remaining words as the final spark of light faded from his eyes.

“Ronan?” Flowira called softly, but received no reply.

He was dead.

Flowira remained motionless, cradling him as his body slowly lost its warmth while raging flames roared around them and clashing steel shook the mountain, yet she felt secluded in a world of her own, hearing only her ragged, hurried breaths.

Looking down at that familiar face, she recalled how Ronan had waited for her countless times at the gates -leading her horse in spring, bringing her warm roasted chestnuts in winter-and how deeply she had loved him, dreaming of marriage, leaving court, and a long life together, before he faked amnesia, abandoned her for Malkor's heirship, and locked her in the brothel.

She had believed nothing remained for him but bitter hatred, yet holding his breathless body now, she realized the old love she had forcibly buried had never truly vanished-it had simply rotted away in the past.

Flowira's tears dripped onto Ronan's face one by one as she gently closed his eyes, her fingertips trembling slightly when they brushed his lashes.

"Ronan," she whispered his name-not the grand title of House Harrow, but the humble guard who used to wait under the palace gate. "This time, it is truly over."

Shields held firm against the raining arrows as a guard barked urgently, "Your Highness, this spot is too dangerous!"

Flowira shut her eyes tight, and upon opening them, tears still lingered in her gaze, yet composure returned to her features as she handed Rorian over to a nearby guard, "Move his body behind the stone gallery first

The guard froze, "Your Highness..."

"Go," Flowira rasped, her tone leaving no room for dispute.

Taking Ronan's body, the guard complied as Flowira slowly rose, her sleeves, hands, and face splattered with his blood which she left unbrushed, turning her cold gaze onto Malkor below the mountain trail.

Malkor witnessed Ronan's fall as well, his expression faltering for a fraction of a second over the son he had sought for years and his sole bloodline before Thomas appeared, yet ambition and bloodlust quickly 'crushed that flicker of hesitation.

He realized that unless House Borealis and Elowen perished, he would lose everything, and with Rorian past saving, he could not let Thomas slip away too.

Flowira suddenly called out, "Thomas."

Thomas turned his head.

Flowira extended her hand toward him, "Lend me your presence."

Glancing at the dagger in her hand, Thomas caught her drift instantly and stepped straight toward her without a moment's hesitation.

Reversing her grip on his shoulder, Flowira pressed the blood-stained dagger tightly against his neck, the cold blade hugging his skin as she lifted her chin toward Malkor.

“Your b*stard is dead! Malkor, you are left with this single son! Order your forces to withdraw, or I will end House Harrow’s bloodline forever!”

Thomas remained stone-faced, knowing Flowira would never strike him, a secret Malkor could not be sure of-nor would the Archduke dare gamble his final bloodline on a hunch.

Sure enough, Malkor’s grip on his hilt tightened visibly, his eyes locking onto the blood mark on Thomas’s neck-with Ronan gone, Aguna’s legitimate son was House Harrow’s sole rightful heir, a life he could not afford to lose.

Yet seconds later, hesitation in Malkor’s eyes morphed into deeper madness as he leveled his blade at Elowen.

“Archers, suppress the altar! The rest of you, charge! Elowen must die, and Thomas brought back alive!”

A general urged frantically, “But the Heir is still in their hands!”

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Malkor shouted with bloodshot eyes, “Then bypass his vital organs! As long as he breathes, I can nurse har back to life!”

Hearing this, Thomas knitted his brows as Flowira realized the man was blinded by bloodlust, meaning holding Thomas hostage offered only temporary pause, unable to halt House Harrow’s charge up the altar

Fresh volleys rested on bowstrings while fire flared brighter on the eastern altar, pinning Elowen’s party against a wall of flame with Harrow assassins closing in.

Glancing at Elowen and the shattered wall behind her-where a narrow path led into the mountain vally- Flowira knew someone staying to hold the line would grant Elowen a chance to evacuate the blind women down the path.

Releasing Thomas, Flowira hurried to Elowen, calling softly, “Oracle.”

Wiping soot from the face of a coughing blind woman, Elowen looked up.

wira spoke rapidly, "A narrow trail behind the shrine leads to the eastern valley; Thomas and I will stay the altar-Malkor won't dare execute him outright, allowing me to delay the pursuers while you lead mantha and the others out from the rear before I ignite the remaining lamp oil."

owen's face darkened completely.

Flowira offered a gentle smile, eyes red yet filled with calm resolve, "Once the fire spreads, Harrow troops cannot reach you; Thomas is Malkor's sole heir so I will release him first since Malkor won't shoot toward him, whereas I... have already died once before."

Elowen gasped slightly.

Flowira referred to the night she fled the brothel, knowing she would have been recaptured without Samantha, adding firmly, "Surviving until today to see the brothel exposed is a gift; Oracle, you must live as Ulana Ogu's bloodline and Nordia's new Oracle, needed by my father and aunt, for as long as you breathe, Malkor cannot win."

Taking a deep breath as though making her final choice, Flowira added, "If I don't return, tell my aunt not to avenge me or blame herself, tell my father his daughter fails to stay by his side, and tell Zachary that without me disguising as him, he must face every formal event alone."

Glancing toward the stone gallery where Ronan lay dead, Flowira softened her voice, "As for Ronan... bury him outside the royal gate he once guarded, where he waited for me so many times."

Tears fell once more at her last words, yet she brushed them away quickly, looking back at Elowen, "Go, Oracle, before it is too late."

Elowen suddenly grabbed her wrist.

ewells," Elowen stated calmly.

But Harrow troops will soon..."

"We won't die," Elowen cut her off as firelight illuminated her face, remaining serene despite approaching blades and roaring flames, offering a light smile, "You won't die, nor will I everyone standing here today will walk down Oracle Peak alive."

Flowira stared blankly at her, "Why?"

Raising her eyes toward the end of the mountain path, Elowen's hair fluttered in the fiery wind, her lip curving with a conviction Flowira had never witnessed, "Malkor has played his very last card, but the greatest card of my life has yet to make his entrance."

Flowira followed her gaze, seeing only clashing crowds, burning banners, and thick smoke, asking in confusion, "Your... card?"

Elowen maintained a smile.

Flowira paused before suddenly grasping who Elowen meant.

Losing his final thread of patience and assuming Elowen and Flowira were plotting an escape, Malkor barked the order, "Loose arrows!"

Bowstrings twanged as a blanket of arrows rained onto the altar while shields blocked the assault and several Harrow assassins bypassed the fire wall to charge Elowen with drawn blades, pinning down Zachary and Anson while Thomas parried one foe only to be forced back by two more.

An assassin leaped onto the altar, driving his blade toward Elowen's chest, "Die!"

Flowira raised her blade to step between them, yet before taking half a step, a crisp, ringing sword chime echoed across the mountain peak, piercing through roaring flames, clashing weapons, and war cries like a cold thunderbolt to slice the chaos in two.

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The assassin's blade froze in midair as a long sword driven straight through his back jutted out from his chest, blood dripping along the steel before he collapsed with a heavy crash without even looking back.

Flowira's pupils shrank subtly.

Beyond the wall of flames, a figure stepped onto the blood-stained stone stairs, ascending the altar step by step with black robes sweeping past rolling fire and a sword gleaming cold like snow in his hand.

Cassian's face was translucent pale with bloodless lips, his old wounds clearly unhealed, yet his sword held steady without a tremor while Harrow guards lay felled behind him,

followed closely by Bran and Avenlor troops tearing a bloody trail through the enemy ranks.

Malkor's expression shifted violently, "Cassian?"

The Duke of Duskmoor, rumored to have suffered a relapse and lost consciousness near death, stood before the sea of fire.

Ignoring Malkor, Cassian stepped over the assassin's corpse directly to Elowen, inspecting her face, shoulders, arms, and robes, releasing the dense murderous aura in his eyes only after confirming no blow touched her.

Elowen gazed at him as well-he arrived slightly later than she anticipated with wounds heavier than she imagined, yet he had arrived nonetheless.

Cassian spoke in a raspy voice, "We encountered the Archduke's forces at the mountain base; their numbers were large, taking time to clear."

Elowen shook her head with a crinkling smile, "It's fine," patting his shoulder before glancing at Flowira, "The ultimate card has arrived."

Flowira glanced between Elowen and Cassian, letting out a long sigh of relief.

"Cassian!" Malkor roared, glaring with burning hatred, "You feigned illness all along?"

Cassian finally raised his eyes, "My wounds are real, yet killing you requires little effort."

Furious and embarrassed, Malkor bellowed, "Kill him!"

Surrounding Harrow assassins surged forward, met by Cassian raising his sword-slashing the throat of the first before his curved blade fully lifted, thrusting backward into the ribs of the second, and kicking the third off the altar to crash into the Harrow ranks.

Wherever Cassian's sword swept, no one could draw near though these assassins were elite warriors selected from the army, before Cassian they differed little from ordinary soldiers, not because they were weak, but because Cassian's sword technique forged in countless wars claimed lives with ruthless precision.

Harrow troops attempting to overwhelm the altar hesitated as elite assassins fell in rapid succession, someone crying out in fear, "Isn't he supposed to be dying?"

Cassian snapped a curved blade in two, the shattered steel grazing the attacker's cheek and sending shrieks of horror rippling through the terrified ranks.

Below the mountain trail, the Royal Guard completed their encirclement following Thomas's precise deployment orders, cutting Harrow forces into isolated segments while

Valessa intercepted rear ambushes and the court seized both the brothel and House Harrow, leaving Malkor trapped without escape.

Gripping his blade tightly, madness flared in Malkor's eyes, "Retreat to the rear mountain!"

Yet Thomas had locked the rear entrance, forcing Malkor's surviving guards back twice, and with over half his army fallen and Cassian tearing through their lines like a demon, the remaining Harrow soldiers dropped their arms in surrender.

Left with only dozens of loyalists, Malkor glared at Elowen standing behind Cassian with tangible hatred, "Elowen! It was you... all you!"

Had Elowen not arrived in Nordia, Flowira wouldn't be saved, the brothel wouldn't be exposed, and House Harrow's decades of labor wouldn't crumble within days, yet standing beside Cassian, Elowen left Malkor grinding his teeth in helpless fury.

At that exact moment, Elowen tilted her head playfully, "Blaming me again? What next? Kill me?"

Seeing her act, Cassian found it utterly endearing, whereas to Malkor it was maximum humiliation, prompting the Archduke to charge forward himself with no men left to dispatch.

Cassian stepped half a pace forward to intercept the strike, the heavy collision shattering the skin on Malkor's hand before Cassian twisted his wrist, dragging his sword along the curved blade to slice open Malkor's shoulder, sending blood flying as the veteran commander stumbled back, his cracked blade failing to match Cassian's overwhelming prowess.

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Malkor crashing onto the stone floor while vomiting a large spray of blood.

The Royal Guard surged forward in unison, encircling him tightly.

Stepping down slowly from the altar, the Khan declared, "Malkor, you have lost."

Propping himself up, Malkor raised his head to glance around-his forces defeated, Ronan dead, and Thomas having betrayed him-watching decades of ruthless ambition vanish into dust.

Malkor suddenly let out a raspy, mad laugh, “Lost? Even in defeat, I won’t grant you a peaceful victory!”

With Cassian standing beside Elowen, Malkor knew he couldn’t kill her, so his gaze shifted rapidly to settle on Flowira, who stood alone nearby crouching to speak with a rescued courtesan, blaming her in his heart for corrupting Ronan and causing his defiance, secret refuge, and fatal shield.

He was defeated, yet dragging a princess to the grave beside him was more than enough satisfaction!

The final thread of sanity vanished from Malkor’s eyes as he reached secretly into his sleeve, aiming a hidden crossbow directly at Flowira, “Die!”

The silver bolt left the string the moment Flowira turned her head-so fast she had no time to dodge.

“Flowira!” Valessa screamed in horror.

The bolt drove straight through her chest, making Flowira shudder violently as blood rapidly bloomed across her robes, causing her to stumble into Valessa’s rushing arms.

“Flowira!” Elowen’s color shifted drastically as she dashed over to kneel beside her, pressing her palms onto the wound in desperation, yet warm blood gushed through her fingers relentlessly from the pierced heart.

“Grandfather!”

Hearing the commotion, Noah rushed over, his face darkening the instant he laid eyes on the wound.

Pressing the wound repeatedly, Elowen urged, “Grandfather stop the bleeding, stop the blood first.”

Noah stayed silent, knowing such a wound was beyond even divine medicine.

Eyes open with fading breath, Flowira looked up as Valessa held her tightly, voice trembling violently, “Don’t sleep, look at me! You can’t close your eyes!”

Struggling to lift her eyelids, Flowira offered Valessa a comforting smile before forcing her gaze onto Elowen, her fingers lightly catching Elowen’s sleeve, “Oracle...”

Grasping her hand, Elowen replied, "I'm here."

"Samantha..."

"She is saved," Elowen's eyes turned red, "Every woman at the brothel will be saved, I promise you

Dainung "

ten years older in a single instant.

Cassian's sword came down, driving straight through Malkor's heart as the Archduke twitched, still sneering "Even in death, I will make you remember..."

Cassian yanked out the blade, and Malkor collapsed into a pool of blood, breathless.

Gazing at Flowira's pale, bloodless face, Elowen recalled their first meeting and shared days, knowing she shouldn't have died—at least not to Malkor's parting vengeance.

Just then, a burning agony flared across Elowen's chest, prompting her to reach into her robes and touch hard object—the golden seal of the Oracle she carried before setting out, handed to her by Flowira who called it an artifact from beyond the heavens.

Elowen drew out the seal, its surface burning hot against her palm as dark gold light flowed beneath the metal layer, filling her vision as she heard Cassian calling her name from afar.

"Ella!"

Yet the voice receded into the distance as an invisible force pulled her body away, driving the firelight, corpses, weeping, and Oracle Peak into the glowing gold radiance.

Opening her eyes again, Elowen found herself standing within a boundless galaxy with no solid earth beneath her feet, stars drifting slowly in a transparent river as the golden seal hovered before her, its carved patterns lighting up to reflect shattered memories.

She saw her past life spent neglected in the Crown Prince's Wing, hiding in the shadows as Alaric spat in heartless disgust, "She simply nauseates me."

In a flash, the scene shifted to the day she reborn at the engagement banquet, bowing reverently before the Emperor, "Your servant has long held affection for the Duke of Duskmoor, and becoming his wife leaves me with no regrets in this life."

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She saw her wedding day, Cassian lying upon the marriage bed with closed eyes, striking and handson until only Flowira collapsing under the arrow remained, repeating over and over in the cosmic river.

Her breath tightening, Elowen reached out to touch the stream, only for a gentle voice to sound from behind, "Ella."

Though Elowen had never heard that voice, a natural sense of warmth filled her heart; turning around, spotted an intact Oracle shrine at the edge of the galaxy, its white stone steps immaculate, golden bells humming under the eaves in the wind, and a woman in Oracle vestments standing atop the stairs with cascading dark hair and gentle eyes.

Though Elowen had never met her, she knew her identity in an instant.

"Grandmother," Elowen called out, her eyes rimmed red the moment the word left her lips.

Ulana Ogu offered a warm smile, "It's me," opening her arms, "Ella, come here and let your grandmothe look at you."

Elowen ascended the stone steps step by step, slowly at first before quickening her pace until she threw herself into Ulana Ogu's embrace.

Gently holding her, Ulana Ogu stroked her hair, "You've suffered over these years, child."

Elowen shook her head softly, "I haven't suffered, Grandmother; Cassian has treated me wonderfully through these years," lifting her head from her embrace, "Grandmother, you know who Cassian is, right?! is my husband, the Duke of Duskmoor."

Ulana Ogu's expression softened, "I know, Ella."

Recalling the galaxy she witnessed earlier, Elowen realized her grandmother had probably seen their enti past from this realm, pausing before asking a key question, "Grandmother, why are you here?"

Ulana Ogu smiled gently, "Because I passed away long ago."

Elowen froze, wanting to ask how that could be when the touch felt so real.

Reading her thoughts, Ulana Ogu smiled, “What remains here is merely a fragment of my soul preserved within the golden seal; I cannot leave this place, nor return to the mortal realm.”

Staring at her blankly, realization dawned on Elowen, “So.... Grandmother, you were the one who granted mne rebirth?”

Ulana Ogu gave a nod, her eyes filled with praise, “Ella, you are sharp, just like your mother.”

Elowen gave a bashful smile, then looked back at the river thinking of Flowira, “Grandmother, grant me one more rebirth; I can save Flowira, or even go further back to save my father, mother, and brother.”

Ulana Ogu shook her head. “That isn’t how it works.”

Confusion touched Elowen’s face.

Pointing at the floating golden seal nearby, Ulana Ogu explained, “This golden seal is an artifact from / beyond the heavens possessing mystical power, transporting a soul to this space when touched by Oracle blood or driven by a descendant’s deepest wish; I bled upon the seal while saving Valessa, leaving a soul fragment that took decades to solidify into consciousness, and by the time I awoke, you had suffered two years of neglect in the Crown Prince’s Wing, so while I originally sought a second chance for myself, seei you facing a short, lonely life with the wrong man prompted me to grant you rebirth instead.”

“Grandmother...” a knot formed in Elowen’s throat.

Stroking her hair with gentle affection, Ulana Ogu smiled, “I lived a full life with love and a daughter, and though the end fell short of perfection, my days were not purely bitter; but you were too young, never meant to stay trapped beside an unworthy man or die alone without ever knowing what it means to be r cherished.”

Elowen’s eyes turned red bit by bit as she recalled her past life, lying ill with fading consciousness while servants hurried past without a soul caring if she survived, and Alaric never came for a final visit, unul she opened her eyes at the engagement banquet, kneeling in the hall to declare her love for Cassian, choosing him and reclaiming her destiny.

Elowen whispered, “Thank you, Grandmother.”

Ulana Ogu shook her head, “You forged your own path; I merely opened a door, while the one who broke free from the snare was always you.”

Falling silent for a beat, Elowen turned back toward the galaxy, where figures of her father, mother, and brother flickered through the river, seeing her younger self sitting on

her father's lap while he combed her long hair with an emerald comb as soft spring rain fell outside the window.