Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 131

Chapter 131 Peeling Lily Seeds

“No wonder His Highness is set to marry her.”

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“I heard Lady Daphne used to follow the Duchess of Duskmoor around. Now it seems the Duchess can’t quite compare, lacking any notable talents of her own.”

Another quickly covered her friend’s mouth. “Hush! She’s a Duchess! We don’t get to gossip about her. You trying to tick off the Duke of Duskmoor?”

Daphne set down her wine jug and turned towards them. “Exactly. The Duke is fiercely protective of his Duchess. I’ve faced his reprimand several times myself.”

The noble ladies didn’t reply, merely offering polite smiles.

Daphne sighed again, “You all know how it is. Some in this world are simply skilled at charming their lords. With a powerful lord’s favor, they gain protection. Others, less eloquent, less adept at sweet words, have to endure their grievances in silence.”

The ladies exchanged glances.

It was clear she was referring to the Duchess of Duskmoor.

So that’s her big skill-keeping a man happy and throwing her weight around.

With this understanding, their eyes when they next glanced at Elowen changed, tinged with newfound disdain.

Daphne observed this shift, a satisfied curve touching her lips.

“You mentioned a tale,” Alaric said slowly.

He didn’t much like Daphne, but he had to admit Tales of Luminara was a rare masterpiece. He greatly admired the writer known as Azure.

Because Daphne was Azure, he could afford her a bit more patience.

Hearing she planned to write another, he softened his tone. “What do you want to write?”

Daphne shook her head gently. “I haven’t decided yet.”

She tilted her face to him. “Your Highness, any ideas?”

Alaric replied indifferently, “Write what you want. No need to ask me.”

Daphne looked at him, her voice sweetly coaxing. “I haven’t settled on a theme yet. But... if

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you were to spend more time with me in the future, perhaps inspiration would strike.”

Alaric paused. “You are my betrothed. I will naturally spend time with you.”

A blush touched Daphne’s cheeks. She pushed the filled wine cup toward him. “Your Highness, your wine.”

Alaric gave a short hum, picked up the cup, and took a small sip.

Meanwhile, Cassian and Elowen had taken seats in a nearby pavilion.

They were close enough for Daphne to see clearly with a glance.

She watched, stunned, as Cassian picked up the wine jug and poured a cup for Elowen.

Shouldn’t she be serving him?

Over there, Elowen looked at the wine cup, tilted her head, and said something to Cassian. Reading her lips, it was clearly a refusal of the wine.

Daphne sneered inwardly. So ungrateful. Refusing wine poured by the Duke himself. Just wait for his displeasure and coldness.

Thinking this, Daphne elegantly began peeling lily seeds for Alaric.

When she looked up again, Cassian showed no trace of annoyance. Instead, he looked perfectly content, peeling lily seeds himself. After peeling one, he meticulously removed the bitter core and placed it on the small plate before Elowen.

Daphne looked at her own hands, then at Elowen. A sudden wave of imbalance and resentment washed over her.

“You have to admit, the Duke treats his Duchess really well.”

“I’ve never seen a Prince be so attentive.”

“His Highness doesn’t treat Lady Daphne like-1

The noble ladies began whispering again, this time mentioning Alaric before abruptly cutting off, though not before Daphne heard.

She gritted her teeth in silent fury, her hatred for Elowen intensifying.

But then another thought struck her. She was about to write a new tale.

She could time its release perfectly with her marriage into the Crown Prince’s Wing. Then, everyone in the kingdom would be focused on her, envying her.

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Chapter 131 Peeling Lily Seeds

Elowen would forever live in her shadow!

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Elsewhere, Elowen had eaten four or five lily seeds Cassian had peeled for her, a smile gracing her features. “Freshly picked lily seeds are so fragrant and sweet. Delicious.”

She ate another. “Could we take some home?”

Cassian continued peeling patiently, head bowed. “If you like them, we can have the entire pond’s lily pods picked for you.”

Elowen blushed. “That would be too much. And I couldn’t possibly eat them all.”

After a few more, she was full. She looked at Cassian. “My lord, I’m done.”

She reached for the half-peeled pod in his hand. “Let me peel some for you! You should have

some too.”

But Cassian moved his hand away. “No need.”

Elowen tilted her head. “Should I wash my hands first?”

Cassian smiled faintly, “It’s not that your hands are dirty. Peeling these is rough on your fingers.”

Elowen was taken aback. She looked down at her own fingers.

In her past life, her existence in the Crown Prince’s Wing had been bleak, and her hands had become worn and weathered by the end.

But now, only the faintest of calluses marked her palms.

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Chapter 132 He’s Standing?!

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In the past, she loved riding, constantly pulling on the reins, her palms often chafed and raw. That’s how those calluses had formed.

After her knee injury, Elowen had avoided the riding grounds for a long time, and the calluses had faded considerably, leaving only a faint trace.

“Did you get a proper look at the water lilies earlier?” Cassian asked casually as he peeled and ate a seed himself.

Elowen curled her fingers slightly. “I did.”

“Pretty?”

“Hmm...” Distracted, she replied offhandedly, “They were quite pretty.”

Cassian, however, took her words to heart.

She said they were pretty.

We’ll have a pond built at Duskmoor Manor.

Unaware of his thoughts, Elowen looked at her palm, a sudden flash of inspiration striking her.

She knew what to write for her second tale now

But the pen name “Azure” could no longer be used. What new name should she choose?

When it was time for Cassian and Elowen to depart, the Duke of Falconcrest himself came to see them off. Servants presented an array of rare treasures.

“These humble gifts are for Your Grace,” the Duke said with an ingratiating smile.

Cassian glanced over them dismissively. “Few are truly valuable.”

He turned to Elowen. “Is there anything you like!”

Elowen was poor at judging the worth of such items. She shook her head shyly. “No...”

Cassian nodded to the Duke. “Keep your treasures. Send some freshly picked lily pods instead. My wife enjoys them.”

The Duke assented eagerly, ordering servants to harvest them immediately.

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Chapter 132 He’s Standing?!

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The pods would be delivered to Duskmoor Manor later. Cassian and Elowen departed first.

As soon as they climbed into the carriage and sat together, a wild image crashed into Elowen’s head-her on his lap, kissing him. Her face went hot, burning in waves.

“Too warm?” Cassian’s voice was unhurried.

Elowen blinked and looked at him.

Cassian’s thumb brushed her cheek. “You’re flushed.”

Mortified, Elowen said, “It is a bit warm.”

Cassian gave her a deep look. “I thought you wanted something else.”

Elowen’s heart jumped. “I wasn’t…”

“Weren’t you?” Cassian arched a brow, leaning closer.

Suddenly, his gaze turned icy, his brow furrowing.

Elowen sensed the change. “What—”

Before she could finish, Cassian pulled her firmly into his arms.

At the same moment, the horses outside whinnied in fright, and the carriage lurched violently.

But cushioned against Cassian, Elowen was unharmed, only her hair ornament knocked slightly askew.

Elowen paled, gripping his arm. “Is it…?”

An assassination.

The words hadn’t left her lips.

The clang of steel meeting steel rang out from beneath and around the carriage.

“Yes,” Cassian said, answering her unspoken question.

He reached up and straightened her hair ornament. “Don’t stress. Just riffraff.”

His voice was calm and steady, instilling a sense of security.

Elowen let out a slow breath, her fingers gradually loosening their grip on his arm.

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Chapter 132 He’s Standing?!

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Suddenly, the whistle of a blade cutting through the air. The carriage door was hacked open, and a black-clad assassin stood before them.

“Be careful!” Elowen acted without thought, throwing herself in front of Cassian.

The assassin sneered, his blade swinging down.

Terror was inevitable; Elowen’s fingers trembled. Yet she did not flinch.

She felt the blade’s deadly approach, a foul wind preceding it against her face. In her fear, she squeezed her eyes shut.

But the expected pain did not come. Instead, a sharp clang rang in her ears.

Elowen slowly opened her eyes, astonished to see Cassian’s back before her.

Tall. Upright.

Holding a sword in one hand, he had parried the deadly strike.

Elowen’s pupils dilated. She looked at Cassian, then at the wheelchair behind him.

She looked at the wheelchair, then back at Cassian.

He... he...

He’s standing?!

The assassin, seeing him rise, also showed clear shock and disbelief.

Cassian said nothing. A flick of his wrist deflected the blade. With blinding speed, he closed the distance. A flash of steel, and the assassin's throat was slit.

"Your Grace!"

The other guards, seeing Cassian on his feet, their eyes alight as if beholding a beacon of hope.

Cassian's expression remained cold. "Finish this Swiftly."

"Yes, Your Grace!" The guards' response was a thunderous roar.

Cassian stood there, composed, the tip of his sword resting on the ground, his robes stirring slightly in the breeze.

In that moment, Elowen realized-this was the true Cassian.

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Chapter 132 He's Standing?!

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+30 Free Coins

The Cassian she had seen was either unconscious or confined to a wheelchair, seeming pale and fragile.

But the true Cassian was not like that.

He was of the highest nobility, wielded immense power, possessed breathtakingly handsome features, and was a peerless warrior, a force that could match an army. He was, infuriatingly, almost without flaw.

Elowen had heard countless discussions about Cassian. People would wonder aloud what kind of woman could be worthy of him. The conclusion was always the same—none.

Unless he himself favored her, any woman who married him was reaching beyond her station.

Elowen... was also reaching beyond her station.

A hollow, empty feeling suddenly settled in her heart.

“Your Grace, all clear!”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 133

Chapter 133 His Beloved Was Not a Woman?

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Bran stepped forward to report, “Two captured live. We’ll take them back and interrogate them as usual.”

Cassian gave a dismissive hum, showing little interest in the matter.

Bran looked at him, his eyes a mix of joy and concern. He ventured, “Your Grace, shall I assist you?”

Cassian ignored him. Instead, he looked back at Elowen.

She still stood where she was, looking somewhat dejected.

“Frightened?” Cassian asked, his voice low and steady.

“No...” Elowen shook her head.

“Then come here,” he said.

Though puzzled, Elowen obediently walked over

She stopped half a step away. “What is it?”

Cassian looked at her. “Too far.”

Elowen bit her lip and took another step closer.

Before she could ask again, Cassian dropped his sword and leaned against her. “Can’t stand.”

Bran, standing ready to assist only to be completely ignored, blinked.

Elowen steadied him. “Your legs are not better yet?”

“No,” Cassian murmured. “I forced myself up earlier.”

He gave a soft cough. “Rushed it. Feels like the wine’s effects are stirring again. I’m a little off.”

Bran stared at Cassian’s seemingly frail state, his eyes wide.

No. That can’t be right.

In the past, Cassian could fight for a day and a night without food or water.

He’d once taken a sword through the shoulder and didn’t even twitch.

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Chapter 133 His Beloved Was Not a Woma

Now he was saying he got up too fast and felt sick?

“Should we call a physician?” Elowen asked anxiously.

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“Yes.”

Cassian glanced sideways at Bran. “Fetch Doctor Hugh Dray.”

Bran dragged himself out of his shock and answered at once.

Cassian turned back to Elowen. “Hugh is a friend. One of the few in Vanelle I trust. He was away from Vanelle recently, just returned.”

Elowen blinked.

She had heard of Hugh. He was quite famous.

In her past life, it was Hugh who had cured Cassian, rousing him from his coma.

But more famous than his medical skill was his appearance.

He was said to have lips like rose petals, teeth like pearls, with strikingly beautiful, almost feminine features.

His beauty was such that not only women admired him, but men as well-perhaps even

more so.

Many sought him under the pretext of medical consultation, only to try to take liberties.

Consequently, Hugh’s temper was notoriously poor, and he disliked staying in Vanelle.

The guards prepared a new carriage.

Cassian returned to his wheelchair, and they headed back to Duskmoor Manor.

The street’s disorder was left for the guards to handle.

Back at the manor, Bran and Hugh had not yet arrived.

Elowen helped Cassian into the main hall and onto a chaise lounge. She recalled certain rumors she’d heard.

Hugh was a few years younger than Cassian, and they had been close since childhood.

Some had therefore speculated that Cassian’s inclinations lay elsewhere, that his so-called “beloved” was not a woman, but Hugh.

Chapter 133 His Beloved Was Not a Woman

Many subscribed to this theory, listing numerous reasons.

For instance, Cassian was unmarried. Hugh was unmarried, either.

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Also, Hugh traveled constantly, practicing medicine. Only Cassian's letters could summon him back.

...And so on, countless examples.

When one thought about it, the two men-one a famed physician, the other a Prince-were rather well-matched...

Lost in these rambling thoughts, Elowen made to stand and leave, but her wrist was caught gently.

She looked down at Cassian. "What is it?"

His voice was slow. "I'm unwell. Stay with me a while."

Her heart softened, and she sat back down.

Cassian didn't release her hand. He asked softly. Do you remember what I said to you in that room at Falconcrest Manor?"

The moment she recalled, her mind filled with those intimate, breathless moments. The strange sensation of his lips on hers washed over her again like an incoming tide.

Her heartbeat quickened slightly. "You mean about the aphrodisiac wine and needing a kiss to feel better?"

Cassian gave a low chuckle. "Not just that."

His thumb stroked the back of her hand. "I also said my beloved is you."

Elowen stared. A thousand questions surged, but she couldn't find where to start.

Cassian didn't rush her, patiently waiting for her to process.

After a long moment, Elowen ventured hesitantly, "Truly?"

Back at Falconcrest Manor, she had assumed it was the reckless talk of a man under the influence.

Her sister-in-law had told her many men, in the heat of passion, would say all sorts of sweet, insincere things to coax a woman.

So she hadn’t taken it seriously.

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Chapter 133 His Beloved Was Not a Woman

Truly,” Cassian affirmed.

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Elowen’s heart beat faster. She bit her lip, her expression conflicted. “But... when you first knew of me, I was very young...”

Barely in her teens.

Though in these times, in poor, struggling families, daughters might be married off as early as thirteen or fourteen. Some, even earlier, before ten, at eight or nine.

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 134

Chapter 134 You Lack Confidence

Regardless, the age difference between Elowen and Cassian was significant.

Cassian acknowledged it frankly. “True.”

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He looked down, continuing, “So I kept it to myself. Many knew I had a beloved, but none knew her identity.”

He had done this, in part, to protect Elowen’s reputation.

Also, at the time, many considered Elowen and Alaric childhood sweethearts, a perfect match. Splitting them up wasn’t his first thought

Cassian paused. “At first, the only one who knew you were the one I loved was His Majesty.”

Elowen was surprised. “But at the betrothal banquet, when His Majesty asked whom I wanted to marry and I said you, he was reluctant to grant it. He urged me to reconsider.”

Cassian smiled slightly, “Because I was unconscious at the time.”

He stroked her hand. “His Majesty’s perhaps better than you imagine. He has a kind heart, and he genuinely remembered your father and brother’s military service, felt compassion for your plight.”

A lump formed in Elowen’s throat.

After a moment, she composed herself and asked, “But... why tell me this today?”

Cassian looked at her for a long moment. “Because, Ella, I realized you lack confidence in yourself.”

Elowen was taken aback. “How could that be?” she blurted.

She was born into Hale Manor, the first and only daughter of the family.

Unlike her rough-and-tumble, sun-browned brothers and cousins, she had always been plump and delicate, like a doll. Elders doted on her; everyone indulged her. She received whatever she desired.

How could she lack confidence?

Cassian arched a brow. “Then what was your first thought when I said I like you?”

As Elowen started to think, he added, “Don’t think. Just say it.”

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Chapter 134 You Lack Confidence

Elowen paused.

He asked again, “I say I like you-what do you think?”

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Steeling herself, Elowen confessed, “I don’t have any merits. Why would you like me?”

The words shocked even herself as she spoke them.

Cassian watched her calmly. “You see, Ella? You lack confidence.”

Elowen opened her mouth to respond, but footsteps sounded outside the door.

Bran announced, “Your Grace, Doctor Dray is here.”

Elowen swallowed her words.

Cassian asked, “I’ll have Doctor Dray examine me. Why don’t you get some rest?”

Elowen nodded.

Cassian released her wrist and gently touched her cheek.

As she left, Elowen finally saw the famed Hugh.

He wore plain white robes. Perhaps from years of travel, his complexion was not the rumored fairness, but his lips were a deep red, his eyes slightly upturned at the corners.

At first glance, his gender was indeed ambiguous

Seeing Elowen, Hugh nodded, his voice surprisingly deep and resonant. “Your Grace.”

Elowen blinked.

That booming voice, without seeing his face, one would imagine a tall, bearded giant.

Elowen returned a smile. “The Duke was forced to drink aphrodisiac wine earlier. Sorry to trouble you.”

Hugh, having seen much of the world, showed no particular reaction. “Of course.”

Elowen left, walking slowly down the corridor.

Sunlight slanted in, illuminating her shoes.

She looked down, recalling her conversation with Cassian.

She lacked confidence.

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Chapter 134 You Lack Confidence

She hadn’t realized it before.

When did it start?

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Perhaps after her father and brothers died one after another, leaving her alone in Hale Manor, people’s attitudes shifted from flattery to avoidance and mockery.

Or perhaps from Alaric’s changing attitude, especially after her past life’s experience in the Crown Prince’s Wing, where his coldness, blame and belittlement had been constant.

So it wasn’t just her outward appearance that had been worn to a pale, gaunt shadow; her inner self had also been eroded, riddled with holes.

A belated fear and sorrow washed over Elowen.

Amidst the sorrow, there was also relief.

Thankfully, she had been reborn.

And thankfully, in this life, she had married Cassian.

Elsewhere, Hugh strode into the room and approached the chaise. “Well, heard you were forced to drink aphrodisiac wine?”

Bran brought a stool. Hugh sat down heavily, legs apart.

Cassian arched a brow. “My wife told you?”

“Yes.”

“She was concerned for me,” Cassian said, a note of deep satisfaction and unusual softness in his eyes.

Hugh stared at him as if seeing a ghost. “Are you truly ill?”

“Hmm?”

“In all my years, I’ve never seen that expression on your face.”

In Hugh’s memory, Cassian was either cold-faced, stern-faced, or aloofly gazing down upon the world as if everyone owed him a mountain of gold. “Gentle” had never been in his Vocabulary.

Cassian gave him a profound look. “You, who have no wife, naturally wouldn’t understand.”

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Chapter 134 You Lack Confidence

Without another word, Hugh stood up. “Right. Then this wifeless man will take his leave.”

Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 135

Chapter 135 A Favor

yet. He Bran pleaded anxiously, “Doctor Dray, you can’t leave! His Grace’s legs aren’t healed needs the wheelchair daily, and can barely stand for long. You’re the only one who can help him!”

Hugh chuckled coldly, “The patient himself isn’t concerned. Why are you so agitated?”

He truly made to leave.

Unable to stop him, Bran turned a desperate look toward Cassian. “Your Grace, please say something!”

Cassian spoke unhurriedly, “My legs aren’t my immediate concern. My concern is my wife’s knees.”

Wife, wife, “my wife” this, “my wife” that. So proud of being married.

Hugh rolled his eyes and strode out.

Cassian’s voice continued, calm and measured. “My wife’s mother’s maiden name was Wynne.”

Bran didn’t understand the relevance. The urgent matter was surely coaxing Hugh back!

To everyone’s surprise, upon hearing this, Hugh who had already left, actually stepped back inside.

He walked all the way back to the chaise, fixed his gaze on Cassian, his brow furrowed, expression serious. “Wynne?”

Cassian nodded. “Yes.”

Hugh’s expression shifted through several emotions before settling. He merely asked, “What’s wrong with your wife’s knees?”

Cassian gave a slight nod toward the stool.

Hugh sat back down with a thud.

Cassian explained slowly, “She was once in a carriage accident. Her knees struck the ground, After that, she couldn’t ride anymore.”

Understanding dawned on Hugh. “Likely improper initial treatment, leaving lasting damage.”

Cassian glanced at him. “You can cure it?”

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Chapter 135 A Favor

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Hugh shrugged. “No physician in the world, ever the legendary Asclepius reborn, would guarantee a complete cure for any ailment. I can only say I’ll try my best.”

Cassian frowned.

“I will try. To the best of my ability,” Hugh added

Cassian remained silent.

“And you.” Hugh’s gaze shifted to him. “That leg of yours-you not planning to treat it?”

Cassian said calmly, “It’s not a big problem. It just needs time.”

Hugh looked at him with disdain. “One might mistake you for the physician.”

He gestured. “Give me your hand.”

Cassian, unoffended, obediently extended his arm.

Hugh felt his pulse for a while, then tapped his legs.

Bran asked worriedly, “Well? How are they?”

Hugh snorted, “Not a big problem, huh? Did you force yourself to stand? Twice?”

Cassian thought back. The first time was when he was still unconscious-Lucien had barged. in to take advantage of Elowen, and he’d stood up. The second time was today.

He nodded. “Yes.”

“Each time you forced it, your legs felt like you were being stabbed with needles, right?”

Cassian didn’t deny it. “Yes.”

Hugh’s frown deepened, his gaze sharp. “You think it’s fine and the rest will fix it. Truth is, if you keep pushing yourself and stand a few more times, your legs will be done for. Permanently.”

Cassian paused.

Bran was frantic. “How can that be? Doctor Dray His Grace’s legs cannot be ruined... Please, think of a way! Cure him! I beg you, Doctor Dray!”

Hugh glanced at Cassian.

Cassian considered. If his legs were ruined, and Elowen faced danger again in the future, he might only be able to watch helplessly.

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Chapter 135 A Favor

So he cooperated, mimicking Bran’s tone. I beg you, Doctor Dray.”

Hugh made a face as if he’d swallowed a fly. You shut up!”

After a moment, he said. “Your legs aren’t incurable. But it will take time and meticulous

care.

Cassian readily agreed. Just tell me what’s needed”

Hugh said. “Those instructions need to be given to the person who will be with you day and night.”

Bran puffed out his chest, about to step forward

Cassian suddenly smiled. Then you’ll need to speak to my wife.

Bran froze mid-step.

Hugh felt goosebumps every time he heard “my wife. Losing patience, he stood. “Then I’ll go see her.

Wait. Cassian called.

Hugh was impatient. “What now?”

Cassian smiled. “As a favor, for old times sake, help me with something....”

After hearing the specifics, Hugh stared at him for a moment. “Are you out of your mind?”

Cassian wasn’t annoyed. He sighed. “You know I’ve had a beloved all these years. For her sake. I never took a wife or concubine.”

Hugh was skeptical. “Is she the current Duchess

Cassian nodded.

Hugh calculated the ages. “How old was she then You beast.”

On this point, Cassian had no rebuttal. He gritted his teeth. “So, will you help?”

Hugh looked at him with scorn, declaring righteously, “I don’t do lying.”

Cassian looked at him meaningfully and uttered a single word. “Wynne.”

Hugh clenched his jaw.

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Chapter 135 A Favor

Elsewhere, Elowen washed her face and set about redoing her hair.

As she sat before the dressing table, a deep ache flared in her knees.

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+30 Free Coins

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Chapter 136 The Parting

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It had started bothering her last night, but she hadn’t paid it much mind. Today, it was worse.

After Mira finished styling her hair, the room felt stuffy. Though it was still afternoon, the light had grown dim.

Elowen looked out the window. Dark, churning clouds had swallowed the sun.

“Looks like rain,” Mira murmured.

Elowen glanced down at her knees again.

No wonder they hurt.

Ever since the injury, her knees ached whenever rain was coming.

At first, she took pain-relieving pills. Later, they lost their effect, and she simply toughed it

out.

This time would likely be the same.

“Your Grace,” Cora entered from outside.

Elowen turned. “Yes?”

“Mrs. Wren is here.”

Elowen was surprised.

It was about to rain-why had Rowena come?

Suppressing the ache in her knees, she rose and went to the receiving hall.

Upon seeing Rowena, Elowen immediately frowned. “Mrs. Wren, what happened to your face?”

A scratch marred the left side of Rowena’s face, broken skin visible. It looked like a sharp, deliberate gouge.

She’d tried to cover it with powder, but it didn’t quite hide it.

Rowena offered a pained smile. “It was Elara.”

Elowen stared.

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Chapter 136 The Parting

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“When we were at Falconcrest Manor, I heard Elara had escaped the house. I rushed home immediately. Finding it empty, I was about to go search when the Duke of Duskmoor’s guards brought her back. After hearing what she had done, I couldn’t help but scold her. We argued, and she... scratched me.”

Facing Elowen, Rowena held nothing back.

Elowen tried to comfort her. “She’s young. It’s a lot to take in all at once. She’ll calm down. with time.”

Rowena gave her a grateful look. “I know you are kind-hearted. But she cannot continue like this. I have decided to leave Vanelle with her.”

Elowen blinked. “Leave?”

Rowena nodded. “If we get away from this place away from the Duke of Duskmoor-maybe she’ll settle. I also plan to marry her off soon.”

Elowen was momentarily at a loss for words.

Rowena stepped forward and took both of Elowen’s hands, smiling, “Your Grace, I’m truly glad to have been your friend.”

Elowen's heart softened with a bittersweet ache. She took a breath. "I... I will write to you."

Rowena shook her head gently. "It's best that Elara have no contact with anything related to Duskmoor Manor. As much as I'd love to exchange letters, for Elara's sake... I cannot."

She squeezed Elowen's fingers, her smile genuine. "But don't worry. Once everything is settled, I'll return."

Elowen opened her mouth, but no words came.

Rowena's decision was, indeed, the best for everyone involved.

Helpless, Elowen could only nod, then nod again.

After a long moment, her voice was slightly hoarse. "Mrs. Wren, it may rain soon. Please take a cloak."

Rowena's eyes grew slightly red-rimmed. She smiled and agreed softly.

After Rowena left, large raindrops immediately began to fall outside, drumming on the roof and rustling through the tree leaves in the courtyard.

Rowena had been one of the few genuine friends Elowen had made in recent years.

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Chapter 136 The Parting

With her departure, Elowen would be alone again.

Elowen began walking back. As the rain intensified, the pain in her knees sharpened.

She gritted her teeth, hoping only to reach her chambers and sit down.

As she entered the corridor, she encountered Hugh.

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Elowen clenched her jaw, fighting the severe pain, forced a smile, and stopped. "Doctor Dray, you finished checking on the Duke? How is he?"

Hugh gave a slight bow. “Your Grace.”

Looking at Elowen’s innocent, guileless face, Hugh felt another twinge of conscience and inwardly cursed Cassian a few more times for being a scoundrel.

He recited the lines Cassian had given him, his tone wooden. “His Grace was indeed dosed with aphrodisiac wine, and it has left lingering effects. Medication alone cannot cure it.”

Elowen, completely unsuspecting, wrung her hands in worry. “Then what do we do?”

Seeing her concern, Hugh felt even more indignant on her behalf. Cassian, you truly are the worst!

He gritted his teeth. “...It may require Your Grace to maintain close physical contact with the Duke.”

Elowen blinked.

Close contact?

Does he mean kissing Cassian, and such?

Unbidden, memories of what happened at Falconcrest Manor surfaced. Heat rushed to her cheeks.

“Also,” Hugh added, relieved to finally say something true. “The Duke’s legs require your close attention as well.”

Elowen’s expression turned serious. “Please tell me.”

Hugh began explaining the regimen. Elowen listened, committing each point to memory.

It was detailed and somewhat complex. Elowen frowned. “Doctor Dray, please wait a

moment.”

She turned, fetched ink and paper, laid them on a table, took up a quill, and gave him a small

Chapter 136 The Parting

smile. Alright, please continue.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 137

Chapter 137 He Cares for Me

Hugh paused, then resumed his explanation.

Elowen carefully noted down every word.

Hugh looked at the elegant, graceful handwriting. Cassian sure gets lucky.

As he finished his last instruction, Elowen completed her notes.

It was hot, and she was so focused that a fine sheen of sweat clung to her forehead.

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She looked down at the paper, then unconsciously rubbed her knee-the pain was intense.

“Does Your Grace have an old knee injury?” Hugh asked suddenly.

Elowen looked up, surprised. “You could tell?”

Hugh shook his head. “No.”

“Huh?”

“Some time ago, I received a letter from His Grace, urging my early return to Vanelle for an important matter. Just now, when I saw him, he said it was to have me treat Your Grace’s knees.”

Elowen was utterly stunned.

So that's why. In her past life, Hugh hadn't returned. Now, he was back early.

Not because Cassian woke sooner, but because Cassian remembered her injury.

"Don't worry," Hugh continued. "I have promised His Grace. I can cure your knees, for good."

Having said all he needed, Hugh prepared to leave.

Elowen rose to see him out, but he waved her off "On rainy days, your knees must ache more than usual. Please, rest."

Elowen didn't insist, asking Cora to escort him instead.

She lowered her eyes to her knees.

The pain persisted, sharpening with the increasing downpour.

She couldn't recall ever complaining to Cassian about her knee pain. She didn't know how he

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Chapter 137 He Cares for Me

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had found out, or why he had remembered, even summoning a physician specifically for her.

It seemed... he truly did care for her.

At the Crown Prince's Wing—

Leonhart and Alaric sat by the window, a chess board between them. Leonhart held a piece, scowling for ages.

Alaric tapped the table. "Hurry up."

After a long struggle, Leonhart finally tossed the piece down. “I concede.”

He flopped back, grabbing a cushion and hugging it, gazing out at the relentless rain. “It’s coming down harder.”

As if struck by a thought, he murmured, “I wonder if Elow-”

Across from him, Alaric caught the syllable instantly, his brow furrowing deeply.

Leonhart, realizing his slip, paused and corrected himself. “I wonder if Aunt Elowen’s knees still hurt.”

Alaric’s jaw tightened. “What does her pain have to do with you?”

Leonhart thought it over. “Because we were friends. It’s normal for friends to care.”

Alaric snorted derisively.

“And,” Leonhart glanced at him, “Alaric, while her knee pain may have nothing to do with me, they do have something to do with you. You should visit her more or send her something as a gesture. After all, she was injured saving you.”

At those last words, Alaric flew into a rage. He swept his arm across the table, sending the board and pieces scattering to the floor.

Leonhart, caught off guard, flinched.

“Saving me?” Alaric hissed through clenched teeth. “I didn’t force her to do it. Did I beg her?”

Leonhart shrank back. He didn’t agree with the statement but dared not argue.

“Besides,” Alaric continued coldly, “if she hadn’t pestered and begged me to leave the palace that day, we wouldn’t have encountered that carriage, and she wouldn’t have fallen. In the end, she brought it on herself. It’s not my fault!”

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Chapter 137 He Cares for Me

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He sneered, narrowing his eyes, “And you want me to visit her? She’s too busy trying to seduce Uncle Cassian every day. If I went, I’d likely see something unsightly.”

Leonhart hesitated.

Elowen had married Cassian. They were lawfully wed. Closeness between husband and wife was perfectly normal.

How was it “seduction”? How was it “unsightly”?

It felt like Alaric was simply mad with jealousy...

Leonhart didn’t dare say this aloud, keeping it to himself.

A servant entered, head bowed, to clean the mess on the floor.

Another followed, announcing, “Your Highness, Her Majesty the Queen has summoned Lady Daphne to the palace tomorrow. It is said to select a wedding date.”

Already in a foul mood from discussing Elowen, the thought of marrying Daphne only increased Alaric’s irritation.

He frowned impatiently. “Fine. Got it.”

“Alaric...” Leonhart ventured cautiously. “Are you really going to marry Lady Daphne?”

Alaric shot him a look. “Why? Shouldn’t I?”

Leonhart shook his head. “No...” I just worry you’ll regret it later.

Alaric stared at the scattered chess pieces. “Mother says Daphne is suitable for me. She’s sensible, obedient. Moreover, she is Azure, a woman of talent. She will make a good Crown Princess and can assist me.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 138

Chapter 138 You Don’t Have to Get Used to It

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The words were spoken to Leonhart, but they seemed equally meant to reassure himself.

By dusk, the rain eased for a while.

As night fell, it began again, a gentle, steady drizzle.

Duskmoor Manor was enveloped in dampness.

That night, as Elowen was loosening her hair, Cora came in and said, “Her Majesty the Queen sends word. She invites Your Grace to the palace tomorrow afternoon for a talk.”

Elowen agreed.

After washing up, she found Cassian already in bed, reading.

Remembering Hugh’s instructions filled her with embarrassment. She braced herself, kept a steady face, and moved forward, slipping past him to lie down on the inside.

Just as she was wondering how to broach the subject, Cassian spoke first. “Do they hurt?”

“...Hmm?” Elowen was momentarily confused.

“Your knees,” he added.

Elowen smiled, “Oh, I’m used to it. They don’t hurt.”

Cassian set his book aside and looked at her.

Under his

gaze,

all

pretense seemed to evaporate. Her smile faltered slightly.

“Ella,” Cassian said, his voice gentle. “It’s okay to say they hurt. You don’t have to get used to it.”

Elowen stared at him, her eyes suddenly stinging.

In her past life, her knees had always hurt terribly, especially on rainy days.

At the end of her first year of marriage, during a long, wet, bitterly cold snowfall in Vanelle, the pain had been unbearable.

Alaric was taking her to pay respects to his parents. She walked slowly. He grew impatient. “Are you doing this on purpose?”

She shook her head, explaining earnestly, “My knees hurt.”

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Chapter 138 You Don’t Have to Get Used to t

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Back then, she had naively hoped he might soften, say, ‘If it hurts, rest a while. I’ll wait.

Instead, Alaric had frowned and asked, “Is today the first time they hurt?”

Elowen had been puzzled. “What?”

He had stared at her, his expression strange. “If it’s not the first day, then you should be used to it by now. Besides, how bad can knee pain be

Those words seemed to echo faintly in her ears.

But they faded, replaced by Cassian’s voice.

“You don’t have to get used to it.”

Realizing her eyes were wet, Elowen hurriedly lowered her gaze.

“Shall I massage them for you?” Cassian asked, setting his book down entirely.

Surprisingly, Elowen didn’t refuse.

She sat on the bed, pulling her pant legs up past her knees, revealing slender, pale calves.

Her knees were smooth, showing no outward scars.

The pain was hidden beneath the skin, deep in the bone.

Cassian’s hand settled over one knee.

His palm was exceptionally broad, marked with calluses, slightly rough but wonderfully

warm.

He applied pressure, not too light, not too heavy Whether it was her imagination or not, the pain seemed to lessen.

She looked at her knee, and for the first time, noticed a distinct scar on the web of Cassian’s thumb and forefinger. She hadn’t seen it before

Men who served in the military bore scars. Someone like Cassian, with years of service, likely had countless marks all over, much like her father had.

She was curious about this particular scar but felt shy about asking.

“This scar,” Cassian began, as if reading her thoughts, “I got it saving the King.”

Elowen looked at him in surprise. “Really?”

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Chapter 138 You Don’t Have to Get Used to t

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He hummed in affirmation, his hands continuing their work. “My father had many sons. The Crown Prince was originally my eldest brother, but he transgressed and was stripped of the title. The position remained vacant. The King and I are full brothers. I asked him if he wanted to be the Crown Prince. He said yes.”

He massaged in one direction for a while, then shifted. “Somehow, word got out, reaching my second brother’s ears. He was ambitious and wouldn’t tolerate competition. He hired assassins. We were both young then, unprepared. We had few guards, no weapons. In the chaos, I grabbed the descending blade with my hand.”

Elowen shuddered just imagining it. “That must ve hurt like hell.”

Cassian smiled slightly, “Yes, it hurt. But it had its upsides.”

Elowen looked at the scar, her heart aching for him.

Cassian continued, “The King has never forgotten that day, that I took a blade for him. Today, after we were attacked on the street, the King was informed. He has promised me a thorough investigation.”

Elowen thought for a moment. “But I feel like... Manelle is the heart of the kingdom. For someone to dare assassinate a Prince-the mastermind must be highly placed.”

Cassian nodded. “Yes.”

“And the King’s promise to investigate...” Elowen trailed off, unsure.

Cassian gave a low chuckle. “All I want is his stance. That’s what matters. Who ordered the attack? Who instigated Elara’s scheme? In the end, it narrows down to a few suspects. I know exactly who my enemies are.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 139

Chapter 139 A Calculated Invitation

Elowen nodded slightly.

The King always paid back kindness.

How could such a principled ruler have sired an ungrateful son like Alaric?

“Oh,” Elowen remembered. “Her Majesty asked me to enter the palace tomorrow.”

Cassian didn’t look up. “If you don’t want to go, just turn her down.”

Elowen blinked. “But... I already agreed.”

“You can still refuse.”

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Cassian gave her knee a gentle squeeze. “Looks like the rain will keep on tomorrow. Your knees are already acting up. No need to run all that way.”

In truth, Duskmoor Manor was close to the palace, and Elowen would travel by carriage, not on foot.

Cassian said it like that for another reason, obviously.

Elowen considered for a moment, then asked obliquely, “Is there something happening tomorrow?”

Cassian gave her a long look. “Tomorrow, the Queen has also summoned Daphne to the palace to select a wedding date.”

Elowen shrugged. “What of it? It’s Daphne and the Crown Prince marrying, not me. Even if we bump into each other, no big deal.”

Cassian said nothing.

“The thing is,” Elowen continued seriously, “the Queen and I are sisters-in-law now. If she invites me and I refuse, it might seem disrespectful to the King. My lord, you and the King are full brothers. I don’t want to strain your relationship over trivial matters.”

She leaned closer, offering a smile. “Besides, ever since you’ve protected me and given me your personal seal, whether it’s Daphne, the Crown Prince, or many others in Vanelle who once looked down on me, none dare slight me now. When I go out, they must bow and address me properly as the Duchess of Duskmoor.”

Only then did Cassian’s lips curl. “Alright.”

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Chapter 139 A Calculated Invitation.

After they lay down, just before sleep, he added in a low voice, “Take Edith with you

tomorrow.”

Elowen agreed.

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Reflecting on recent events, she made a decision She turned towards Cassian, cautiously moved closer, and gently draped an arm over his waist, hugging him.

Cassian stiffened in surprise.

Elowen fell asleep peacefully. He, however, lay awake, his heart pounding.

The next day, Elowen woke to the sound of rain. A steady drizzle still fell over Vanelle.

The space beside her was empty; Cassian had risen early.

She lingered a while before getting up.

A bowl of medicine sat on the table. Mira told her, “Bran prepared it. He made two bowls this morning. His Grace has already drunk his.”

Beside the bowl was a small dish of candied fruits. Mira smiled, “This, well, His Grace prepared himself, worried the medicine might be bitter for you.”

Elowen’s cheeks warmed. She sat at the table without a word.

A sip of the medicine-it was bitter!

She quickly ate a candied fruit, which helped.

One sip of medicine, one candied fruit-by the time the medicine was finished, the candied fruits were gone as well.

Mira couldn’t help but remark, “His Grace truly understands you.”

Elowen’s heart skipped a beat. She changed the subject. “Where is he?”

Mira shook her head. “I didn’t ask.”

Elowen guessed he had likely gone to the army camp.

In the afternoon, Elowen had the carriage prepared for the palace, taking Edith as Cassian had instructed.

Outside Harvesttide Hall, she could hear laughter and conversation from within.

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Chapter 139 A Calculated Invitation.

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+30 Free Coins

It was Isla's voice, filled with pleasure. "I have always favored you, my dear, and thought our connection was not to be. Yet by a fortunate twist, it is you who will become my daughter-in- law."

Elowen felt no particular stir. She continued forward.

Entering the hall, she saw Isla seated above, holding Daphne's hand with apparent fondness.

"The Duchess of Duskmoor arrives," a chamberlain announced.

Daphne, who had been looking down demurely lifted her eyes towards Elowen. A slight, triumphant smile curved her lips, her gaze openly arrogant.

Elowen paused briefly.

In her past life, after marrying Alaric, Isla had said similar things to her countless times.

"I have always favored you. Lucky me-you're my daughter-in-law."

"Having a daughter-in-law like you is a blessing."

Back then, Elowen had felt happy.

Only later did she gradually realize it was all empty flattery.

One judges sincerity not by words, but by actions.

If Isla had truly favored her as a daughter-in-law why hadn't she urged Alaric to treat her well? When Elowen suffered in the Crown Prince's Wing, how could Isla not have known?

Isla "favored" Elowen because Theodric had decided she would be Crown Princess, not from genuine affection.

Now, Isla said she favored Daphne. How much of that was true?

But Daphne believed it wholeheartedly, casting a challenging look at Elowen.

Elowen offered a faint, composed smile. “Speaking of which...”

Her gaze settled on Daphne. “In the past, your father served under mine. We often played together. After your father’s promotion, we saw little of each other, and I thought our connection had faded. Lucky me-you’re about to marry the Crown Prince. We shall be family. In the future, when the Crown Prince comes to pay his respects to his uncle, you may also come along to visit me.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 140

Chapter 140 The Wedding Date

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Elowen watched calmly as the triumph in Daphne’s eyes swiftly dissolved into anger and humiliation.

A slight smile touched her own lips as she asked deliberately, “Don’t you agree?”

Daphne swallowed her disgust and forced a compliant tone. “Yes...”

Only then did Elowen feel better.

“Duchess, please, sit,” Isla said with a benign smile.

Having achieved her point, Elowen said no more, gracefully taking a seat to the side.

Daphne bit her lip and stood. “Your Majesty, if I may be excused for a moment...”

“Of course, my dear,” Isla permitted.

Daphne bowed respectfully. The moment she stepped outside the hall, her submissive expression vanished, replaced by a venomous glare.

She gritted her teeth, muttering, “That damned bitch...”

“My lady,” her maid, Iris, approached. “Why don’t I swing by the entrance of the Crown Prince’s Wing?”

Daphne shot her a suspicious look. “Why go there? Trying to catch the Crown Prince’s eye yourself?”

Iris shook her head hurriedly. “I wouldn’t dare! I’m not going to meet His Highness. I want people from the Crown Prince’s Wing to see me. That way, His Highness will know you’re in the palace.”

Daphne caught on. “If His Highness knows I’m with Her Majesty, he’ll surely come to see me immediately.”

“Exactly,” Iris said. “If His Highness sees the Duchess treating you unkindly with his own eyes, he will feel greater sympathy for you and greater dislike for her.”

A smug smile curved Daphne’s lips. She glanced at her maid. “Then what are you waiting for?”

“Yes, my lady!” Iris smiled and hurried off.

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Chapter 140 The Wedding Date

At the Crown Prince’s Wing-

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+30 Free Coins

Alaric was in his study, seated at his desk but frowning, staring distractedly at the rain outside.

The words Leonhart had spoken yesterday still echoed in his ears.

Alaric, while her knee pain may have nothing to do with me, they do have something to do with you. You should visit her more or send her something as a gesture. After all, she was injured saving you.”

The events of that day on the street were still vivid in his memory.

He remembered Elowen shoving him aside, her knee striking the ground with a sickening thud, leaving her unable to walk.

He remembered his own panic, his profound worry.

He also remembered gripping her hand and declaring loudly, “I’ll be responsible for you! I promise!”

The memory only increased his agitation. He pressed his fingers to his temple.

“On my way back just now, I saw Lady Daphne’s maid outside...”

“Shouldn’t Lady Daphne be at Harvesttide Hall? Why come here?”

Hearing the servants’ hushed conversation outside, Alaric sneered inwardly.

Daphne was at the palace to select a wedding date with his mother.

Harvesttide Hall was some distance from his Wing. Why would Daphne’s maid come here? To lure him over?

Such a crude tactic.

Alaric always disliked rain. Walking outside for even a short while would soak his shoes and stockings, an unbearable discomfort.

He had no desire to move.

The servants outside continued, “I heard Her Majesty also invited the Duchess of Duskmoor today.”

Elowen?

Alaric stiffened.

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19:36 Fri, Feb 13 TTD

Chapter 140 The Wedding Date

Screech-

A sharp sound.

Alaric shot to his feet, his chair leg scraping harshly against the floor.

“Attendant!”

A servant hurried in. “Your Highness?”

“Fetch a cloak,” Alaric ordered.

The servant was puzzled. “Your Highness, are you going out?”

Alaric gritted his teeth. “I... am going to pay my respects to my mother.”

The servant hesitated. “But it’s afternoon...”

Respects were usually paid morning and evening. Afternoon visits were uncommon.

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A flicker of guilt made Alaric force an angry expression. “What, I need your permission now?”

The servant quickly bowed his head. “I wouldn’t dare...”

“Then fetch the cloak! Now!”

Any later, and Elowen might leave!

In Harvesttide Hall, Elowen made polite, intermittent conversation with Isla. She held a cup but hadn’t taken a single sip.

Before long, Daphne returned, a smile on her lips as she resumed her seat beside Isla.

Elowen watched her. Here comes another nasty scheme.

“Your Majesty.” A well-dressed senior maid entered, bearing a tray.

Isla explained to Elowen, “I had them select good dates for the wedding. Today, Daphne and I will choose a suitable one.”

Elowen glanced at the tray.

Two slips of paper.

October the Twenty-Second. March the Third.

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19:36 Fri, Feb 13 TTD

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Chapter 140 The Wedding Date

Elowen’s brow arched slightly.

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The first date was deeply imprinted in her memory. It was the day she had pushed Alaric aside on the street, injuring her knees. It was also the date of her homecoming visit after marrying Alaric in her past life.

That day, Vanelle had been besieged by a terrible storm, worse even than the one on the nineteenth. Alaric had accompanied her to Hale Manor and had returned with a high fever that lasted days.

The second date also held significance. It had been a day of clear skies and bright sunshine, with reports of auspicious signs discovered in the northern mountains.

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