Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 141

Chapter 141 A Lesson in Manners

“I favor the twenty-second of October,” Daphne spoke first.

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Then, as if remembering, she added, “Oh, I nearly forgot. That is the day Her Grace injured her knees.”

She adopted a look of feigned concern. “Your knees must still cause you pain, right?”

As Elowen was about to respond, Isla sighed, “Every time I think of that, I feel it was such a pity.”

She looked at Elowen with a weighty expression. “I told you so many times back then: stop sneaking out of the palace. Trouble was bound to find you. If you’d just listened to me earlier, you wouldn’t have been hurt or suffered so much.”

Elowen was taken aback.

Isla was placing all the blame squarely on her shoulders. She had been willful; she had insisted on leaving the palace; therefore, she had encountered danger. It had nothing to do with Alaric.

Sometimes, it was no wonder Alaric turned out as he did.

Such words were deeply unpleasant to hear.

Elowen wanted to refute them but worried about displeasing Isla and straining the bond between Theodric and Cassian.

As she hesitated, her peripheral glance caught Edith standing behind her.

Edith was a woman of few words, preferring action. More importantly, she seemed to fear no

one.

Once, when Mira had spent a few days learning from her, she returned full of admiration, telling Elowen, “Edith says there’s no one in the world she fears except the King, with His Grace backing her!”

Cassian had specifically asked Elowen to bring Edith today...

Elowen pressed her lips together, made a decision, and nodded. “You’re right, Your Majesty.”

She met Isla’s gaze. “It is only a pity that Your Majesty was not by His Majesty and the Duke’s side in their earlier years.”

Isla gave a light laugh. “Which earlier years do you refer to? I married His Majesty quite early

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Chapter 141 A Lesson in Manners

and have been Queen for many years.”

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“I refer to the time when His Majesty and the Duke were still princes.” Elowen set down her cup. “When the princes vied for the position of Crown Prince, and His Majesty and the Duke were involved, even faced an assassination attempt. The Duke took a blade for His Majesty then. He still bears the scar on his hand.”

Isla’s smile faded slightly, sensing the shift.

“Just as Your Majesty said, you advised me not to leave the palace. I did not listen, and thus my knees were injured. Had Your Majesty been by His Majesty and the Duke’s side back then, advising them strongly, perhaps His Majesty would not have faced that assassin, and the Duke would not have been wounded.”

Isla’s smile vanished entirely. She was momentarily at a loss for words.

Seeing Isla wrong-footed, Daphne, eager to impress her future mother-in-law, shot a glare at Elowen. “Why do you always invoke His Majesty and the Duke?”

From behind, Edith's voice cut in, cold and clear "Seems the Garretts don't know manners."

Daphne stiffened. "What did you say?"

"Setting aside that you are not yet wed to the Crown Prince, even as Crown Princess, you would be the junior. Her Majesty and the Duchess are your elders. When seniors are speaking, a junior should listen respectfully. How dare you interrupt and question your elder?"

Daphne frowned. "You're just a servant, and youre lecturing me on manners?!"

Edith's gaze sharpened, pinning her in place. "I entered palace service at nine, served Dowager Queen Selene for many years. I personally instructed countless individuals in palace decorum. Even His Majesty learned a thing or two from me. What, Lady Daphne- you think I don't know manners?"

Daphne was speechless, her face flushing and paling in turns.

She had never imagined Elowen had such a formidable senior maid by her side!

Isla attempted to mediate. "Enough. It's nothing I'm not angry with the Duchess."

"Indeed, Your Majesty has no cause for anger," Edith stated. "The one with cause for anger is the Duchess."

Isla blinked, thinking she had misheard.

"Because in this world, no one saves a life only to get blamed for it. When the Duke saved His

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Majesty, His Majesty was ever grateful, considering the Duke a brother bound by life and death. How is it that when the Duchess saved the Crown Prince, Your Majesty feels no gratitude, but instead blames Her Grace?"

Isla was speechless.

Judging by this senior maid's tone, she would surely report this to Cassian. And Cassian, bewitched by Elowen, would likely take it to Theodric...

Theodric, often favoring outsiders over his own family, would probably side with them, with little thought for his own children!

The thought filled Isla with helpless frustration.

With Maerwyn still under house arrest, she couldn't afford further trouble.

After a moment's calculation, she forced a smile. "You are correct, Edith. I didn't think it through and misspoke."

She turned to Elowen. "I was, of course, grateful for your actions that day. I only let my worry get the better of me today."

Isla's words held little sincerity.

But Elowen had never expected sincerity from Isla. She took the out and smiled back.

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Chapter 142 Take the Bait

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Seizing the chance to change the subject, Isla said, "The matter at hand today is selecting a wedding date. Why dwell on old history?"

Elowen readily agreed, "Just now, Lady Daphne chose the twenty-second of October, right? That's only a few days away. Feels way too rushed."

Isla thought it over. "It is a bit hurried."

Elowen glanced at Daphne. “Lady Daphne, your marriage to the Crown Prince is a certainty. No need for such haste. Unless you think something’s going to go wrong midway?”

A flicker of unease stirred within Daphne.

Had anyone else said this, she might have shrugged it off. But it was Elowen.

What if Elowen suddenly regretted her choice and turned back to Alaric?

What if she used her father and brother’s military merit to pressure the King into allowing her to remarry-yeah, that wasn’t impossible.

“The third of March seems favorable,” Elowen suggested. “Though it’s next year, it allows ample time for preparation.”

Isla nodded slightly, about to agree.

Suddenly, Daphne blurted out, “No!”

Isla frowned, turning to her.

Daphne insisted firmly, “It must be the twenty-second of October!”

Seeing her take the bait, Elowen remained composed, picking up her cup again. She didn’t drink, merely swirling the liquid inside gently.

Suppressing impatience, Isla asked, “Why?”

“Because... because...”

Daphne forced out a reason. “Because the third of March... I once had a seer read my fate. That date is bad luck for me. I’m worried... the bad omen will rub off on His Highness.”

The excuse was weak. Isla wasn’t fully convinced

Daphne softened her voice, pleading, “Your Majesty, please trust me. With the palace and my

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Chapter 142 Take the Bait

family preparing together, everything will be ready swiftly. It won't feel rushed..."

She entreated Isla for a long while. Elowen listened until Isla finally relented, agreeing to set the wedding for the twenty-second of October.

Elowen's hand, swirling the cup, paused briefly. A slight smile touched her eyes.

The Garrett estate was even farther from the palace than Hale Manor.

In her past life, Elowen's wedding had been soaked by a torrential downpour-the bridal procession already a mess. On the twenty-second, with wind, rain, and thunder... that would. be total chaos.

Especially for Alaric, who so despised rainy days

Perhaps a significant portion of his hatred for her in that life had stemmed from that wretched, muddy wedding day.

"Your Majesty, Your Grace," a maid entered to announce. "The Crown Prince is here."

Alaric had arrived in a confused rush, braving the rain.

Only as he stood outside Harvesttide Hall did he realize his impulsiveness.

He looked down at his dampened robes and shoes, frowning.

But the servants had already seen him and announced his arrival. It was too late for second thoughts. He had to enter.

"Greetings, Mother." He paused, then added, "Greetings, Aunt."

Seated above, Elowen looked surprised.

Did the sun rise in the west? Alaric greeted me voluntarily!

No. It's raining today. There is no sun.

Isla smiled, "What brings you at this hour? Did you hear Daphne was here and come to see her?"

Hearing this, Daphne immediately lowered her head in shy delight.

Just as I predicted. The moment His Highness learned I was here, he came...

Alaric hesitated briefly, then offered a slight smile, not denying it.

Elowen observed thoughtfully.

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Alaric hated rain. On a day like this, and not at the usual time to pay respects, he came all the way from the Crown Prince's Wing to Harvesttide Hall-if not to see Daphne, then why?

But it was none of her concern.

Alaric disliked her, and she disliked him-perhaps even more so. Being in the same room with him felt distasteful.

Elowen set down her cup and stood. "Your Majesty, if there is nothing else, I shall take my leave. The manor has a lot waiting for me."

Isla made a show of urging her to stay. "I had you come today since it's been so long and I wanted to chat. It's rare-why not stay a bit longer?"

Elowen smiled, "Another time, perhaps. My knees are aching. I need to get back and put on medicine. I beg Your Majesty's understanding."

When she mentioned her knees, Alaric's brow furrowed, a sharp change in his expression.

At this point, Isla couldn't push it.

Elowen gave a slight curtsy and turned to leave.

Alaric couldn't help but let his gaze follow her legs.

“Your Highness,” Daphne said softly, drawing his attention. “Her Majesty and I just settled on a wedding date. The twenty-second of October

Alaric, distracted, answered, “Sounds good.”

Noticing his eyes were still on Elowen, Daphne bit her lip. “Your Highness...”

“Mother,” Alaric cut in suddenly. “I just remembered there’s something I haven’t taken care of.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 143

Chapter 143 Why I Took You Out of the Palace

Isla was surprised. “What is it? It’s still raining. You’re soaked. Stay a while longer.”

But Alaric insisted, “I should attend to it first and return later.”

Isla couldn’t dissuade him.

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Watching Alaric’s almost hurried departure, Daphne felt a strange twinge. Is he going after Elowen?

“That Duchess...” Isla sighed wearily.

Daphne glanced over.

“She brought up her knee pain right in front of Alaric. It’s clearly meant to make him feel guilty.” Isla dabbed at her lips with a handkerchief.

Daphne’s eyes flashed with scorn. I knew it! Elowen did it on purpose.

Even as a Duchess, she is still shameless!

Elsewhere-

Elowen hadn’t walked far from Harvesttide Hall when she heard footsteps mingling with the rain behind her.

“Stop!”

She recognized Alaric’s voice.

She had no intention of heeding him. Was she to stop just because he commanded it?

That would be unbecoming for the Duchess of Duskmoor.

She ignored him, not pausing her steps, even quickening them slightly.

The footsteps behind her hastened. Alaric strode forward, planting himself directly in her path. The servant holding an umbrella over him scrambled to keep up, the tilt soaking half his shoulder.

“You’re avoiding me?” Alaric fixed his gaze on her, brow furrowed.

Elowen stopped. “Oh, it’s the Crown Prince.”

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Chapter 143 Why I Took You Out of the Palace

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Her tone was dismissive. “Did you call for me just now? I didn’t hear anyone address ‘Aunt.’”

Alaric gritted his teeth.

Calling her that in front of his mother was one thing. But to say it to her face in private... it felt wrong as hell.

Elowen asked, “Why aren’t you keeping Lady Daphne company in Harvesttide Hall?”

Alaric frowned. “You...”

He looked at her, his expression complex. “Are you bothered by my marriage to another?”

Elowen’s eyes

widened. “Have you

lost your

mind?”

Disgusting words, and he actually said them out loud.

She didn’t want to stay with him another second. Face hard, she said, “Stop talking. I’m leaving.”

She made to walk past him.

“Wait!” Alaric quickly raised a hand, blocking her path.

Looking at the arm barring her way, Elowen was suddenly transported to her past life.

It had always been her blocking Alaric’s path, offering a pleading smile, hoping he would listen to her.

Back then, she believed their discord stemmed from a lack of communication.

And Alaric, always impatient, would ask coldly, Don’t you have anything to do? You’re always clinging to me. It’s irritating.”

Now, Elowen frowned and, echoing the memory asked sharply, “Is it appropriate for Your Highness to cling to me like this?”

Alaric stiffened, immediately withdrawing his hand. “When am I clinging to you?”

Elowen gave a cold laugh. “When? Right now.”

Alaric’s face flushed and paled. “I’m here to talk about your knees.”

He gritted his teeth. “You were injured because you pushed me aside... but I never asked you to do that.”

Elowen stared at him.

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Chapter 143 Why I Took You Out of the Palace

“I did say I’d be responsible for you. But I was young then. I didn’t understand what ‘responsibility’ meant. I just blurted it out in the moment.”

After a brief moment of shock, only calm remained within Elowen.

She had wondered before how Theodric, who repaid favors, could have sired such an ungrateful son.

Now she saw it was because of Isla. As the old saying went, the apple didn’t fall far from the

tree.

Elowen couldn’t even muster anger. She gave a casual, dismissive nod. “Mm-hmm. Understood. And?”

For some reason, her reaction only increased Alaric’s agitation.

She should have fought back tears, gazing at him with her eyes brimming with hurt and grievance as she said, “But I waited for you for years. I waited for you to finally step up and take responsibility. How could you say something like that?”

But she didn’t.

Her expression was too detached. This matter, which had tormented him for so long, seemed trivial in her eyes.

Alaric clenched his fists. A turbulent emotion surged within him.

He said deliberately, “And you don’t have to bring up your knees in front of me all the time. What happened then was your own choice. Besides, if you hadn’t insisted on taking me out. of the palace that day, it wouldn’t have happened.”

“Wait.” Elowen cut him off.

Alaric’s gaze locked onto her face.

Now she’d finally complain and cry, right?

But she did not.

Elowen remained eerily calm. “First, I haven’t brought up my knees in front of you.”

Alaric’s eyes filled with confusion.

Elowen continued, “Second, do you truly not remember why I took you out of the palace that day?”

Alaric froze, his heart skipping a beat.

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Chapter 143 Why I Took You Out of the Palace

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“Back then, you constantly complained to me about how boring the palace was. You begged me to take you out to play. You asked countless times. Each time, I said your father and mother would be displeased. You said it was fine that if we were caught, you would claim it was all your idea. Only then did I relent and take you out.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 144

Chapter 144 The Unexpected Guest

Chapter 144 The Unexpected Guest

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Alaric's eyes darkened. Though his conviction wavered, he still frowned. "Even so, I never begged you to save me..."

"No, you didn't. No one wanted that accident. Pushing you aside was instinct. I never expected anything in return. If I truly sought recompense, at the betrothal banquet, why did I say I wanted to marry the Duke of Duskmoor, not you?"

Alaric stared, the color draining from his face.

"I truly don't understand why you chased after me to say this," Elowen continued. "It was so long ago. What's the point of dwelling on it? You must find it tiresome. I certainly do. The Duke has already engaged a physician specifically to treat my knee injury. You should focus on your own affairs. Your wedding is approaching."

She paused, glancing at him. "The twenty-second of October. Daphne's choice. It should be a lucky day."

With that, she stepped around him and strode away.

This time, Alaric did not follow.

His lips moved slightly, a low murmur escaping Don't you regret it."

Through the curtain of rain, Elowen didn't hear

She was eager to return to Duskmoor Manor to see if Cassian had returned.

Neither of them noticed the small group standing some distance away, watching through the downpour.

The woman at the forefront wore rich robes, her features cool and elegant as she gazed towards Elowen. Her voice was thin and cold. "That is the Duchess of Duskmoor?"

The senior maid holding an umbrella over her nodded. "Yes. The one beside her is Edith."

She glanced at the woman's face and added, "The Duchess is the daughter of General Hale. She and the Crown Prince... grew up together."

The woman frowned with displeasure. "That is the past. If she cannot let go of the Crown Prince, she should have stayed with him, not involved others. Now that she is married to the Duke of Duskmoor, she should maintain a proper distance. This lingering closeness is inappropriate. If word spreads, it will tarnish the Duke's reputation and invite ridicule."

The maid agreed, "You're absolutely right, my lady."

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Chapter 144 The Unexpected Guest

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The woman's eyes grew stern. "My sister-in-law mentioned before that the Duchess, though young, is of a restless nature. I didn't believe it then. Seeing it now, maybe there's something to it."

Her tone shifted. "Didn't my sister-in-law also say the Duchess has been interfering with Sylvia's marriage?"

"Indeed," the maid replied. "Lady Marwen said so herself. She originally hoped for a match between Sylvia and the Crown Prince, but the Duchess, still clinging to him, would not allow it. Lord Piers of Falconcrest Manor showed some interest in Sylvia. Lady Marwen tried to match them, but the Duchess, nursing a grudge, also opposed it."

Clear displeasure showed on the woman's face.

This Duchess is utterly overbearing and willful!

Observing her expression, the maid asked, "My lady, shall we...?"

"We shall see His Majesty first," the woman said, her voice icy. "Later, we will visit Duskmoor Manor and meet this Duchess. If she is truly as willful and domineering as they say, I shall take it upon myself to advise Cassian to divorce her!"

Elowen returned to Duskmoor Manor to find Mira and Cora sitting together, chatting and laughing as they worked on lily pods.

One was extracting the seeds, the other using a small tool to remove the bitter cores.

Elowen looked closer. A white porcelain plate on the table already held a good pile.

She asked, "What are you two doing with these?"

Mira smiled, "The Duke ordered it."

Cora added with a smile, “Falconcrest Manor sent fresh lily pods. His Grace said you enjoy them. He is occupied and cannot peel them himself, so he asked us to do it.”

A warm feeling spread through Elowen’s chest.

She picked up a seed and tasted it. It was fresh and sweet.

After swallowing, she said, “There are plenty-both of you should have some.”

She couldn’t possibly eat them all.

Cora said earnestly, “His Grace ordered these for you, Your Grace. I wouldn’t dare.”

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Chapter 144 The Unexpected Guest

Mira nodded in agreement. “Nor I.”

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Elowen felt a bit embarrassed. After a moment’s thought, she said, “Then perhaps later I’ll make some lily seed soup...”

Mira’s eyes lit up. “Lily seed soup!”

Cora glanced at her.

Mira said excitedly, “The lily seed soup Her Grace made is amazing!”

“Your Grace.”

Hearing the voice, Elowen turned to see Gerda’s grave expression.

Her heart dipped. Something happened again?

“What is it?” she asked.

Gerda sighed, “The Marchioness of Havenstead has arrived.”

Elowen was confused. “Who?”

“Dowager Queen Selene’s younger sister. She married the Marquess of Havenstead in Rivenshire.”

Understanding dawned on Elowen.

She was the aunt of both the current King and Cassian.

Without hesitation, Elowen moved to step out. “Where is Aunt now? I’ll go see her. Did anyone serve pastries?”

“Your Grace, please, wait.” Gerda stopped her. “The Marchioness arrived in Vanelle but did not come here directly. She went to the palace first.”

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Chapter 145 The Marchioness Has Arrived

Elowen was puzzled. “She went to the palace? I didn’t see her there.”

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Gerda’s expression was grave. “Before going to the palace, Lady Marwen left the manor and went to see the Marchioness.”

Elowen’s heart sank.

Marwen would certainly not speak well of her.

On the contrary, recent events concerning Sylvia’s marriage prospects had left Marwen deeply resentful of Elowen.

Blocked by Cassian from confronting Elowen directly, she had been nursing her grievances.

Now, with an aunt arriving, Marwen had seized the opportunity to act.

Elowen had no idea what Marwen had said or how she had said it. Unease gnawed at her.

She was preoccupied with the matter all afternoon.

In the evening, as she prepared the lily seed soup, distracted by thoughts of the Marchioness, she accidentally brushed against the hot pot. A large red mark instantly blossomed on her forearm.

She treated it hastily, finished the soup, set aside a portion for Cassian, and shared the rest with the household.

Night fell, and the Marchioness still hadn't arrived.

Elowen left the cooled soup on the table. A sharp pain shot through her arm.

Lifting her sleeve, she saw the afternoon's burn had worsened. She frowned in concern.

Just then, footsteps sounded outside.

Thinking it was Cassian, she turned. Only Bran entered.

"His Grace is at the army camp, much occupied. He won't return until tomorrow morning. He was concerned you might wait up, so he sent me to inform you. He asks you to sleep first."

Elowen nodded slightly.

"My message delivered, I shall take my leave," Bran said, turning to go.

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Chapter 145 The Marchioness Has Arrived

He rushed back just to deliver a message?

Elowen stopped him. "I made lily seed soup today. Have some before you go."

Bran scratched his head. "I should hurry back to report to His Grace..."

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Just as Elowen was about to retract the offer, Bran had already turned and sat at the table. “But since you invite me, I’ll have a little.”

Elowen couldn’t help a small smile. “I saved a bowl for the Duke, but it might not keep well overnight. Take it with you later.”

“Got it.”

After a satisfying meal, Bran, in high spirits, took the food container and departed.

The rain had stopped outside. Elowen’s knees still ached, but her arm hurt more.

She blew gently on the burn, which brought slight relief.

“I’ll fetch a physician!” Mira, seeing this, was heartbroken and rushed out.

Not watching her path, she collided headlong with Gerda, yelped in pain, and stepped back. “Gerda, are you alright?”

Gerda had no time to answer. She said to Elowen, her expression solemn, “Your Grace, the Marchioness has arrived. She is in the front reception hall.”

Elowen’s expression grew serious. She clenched her fingers slightly. “Does she seem displeased?”

“Quite displeased.”

“Is she alone in the hall?”

Gerda thought for a moment. “She was alone. But people at Rose Hall likely know of her arrival by now. They will probably go to greet her.”

Elowen pondered for a moment, then said earnestly to Gerda, “Gerda, go tell the Marchioness that I’m not feeling well and have already turned in.”

Gerda was taken aback.

Cora couldn’t help but intervene, “Your Grace, that would be unwise! The Marchioness already holds a poor opinion of you. If you refuse to see her now, and Lady Marwen says unpleasant things, the Marchioness’ displeasure will only deepen.”

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Chapter 145 The Marchioness Has Arrived

Elowen merely lowered her eyes and gave a soft smile. “That is precisely the point.”

Cora still didn’t understand.

“Gerda, go on,” Elowen urged.

Gerda assented and left to deliver the message.

Mira rubbed her forehead. “Then I’ll go fetch the physician.”

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But Elowen stopped her. “No need. My arm isn’t seriously hurt. Rest a bit and it’ll be fine.”

Having decided to feign sleep, she saw no need for further complications.

On one side, Elowen washed up, extinguished the lamps, and went to bed.

On the other, by the time Gerda returned to the reception hall, Marwen had already arrived.

Hearing that Elowen had turned in, Marwen heaved a dramatic sigh. “The Marchioness is an elder, and she traveled all the way from Rivenshire. Regardless, the Duchess should have come to greet her personally.”

Feigning concern, she added, “Gerda, perhaps you should go inform her again, urge her to come.”

“No need.” The Marchioness’ voice was icy, her face cold. “If she doesn’t want to see me, why drag her here?”

Gerda offered an apologetic smile. “I beg your pardon, My Lady. Her Grace has indeed been unwell these past few days. Her knees pain her greatly. His Grace even summoned Doctor Dray back for her.”

Marwen pretended to support this. “That is true. Her Grace has an old knee injury. Years ago, she and the Crown Prince encountered danger on the street. Without a second thought, she pushed him aside.”

She then added, as if pondering aloud, “She acted so decisively to save the Crown Prince back then. If His Grace were in danger... would she do the same for him?”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 146

Chapter 146 Stoking the Fire!

Gerda frowned.

Lady Marwen is a master at stoking the fire!

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She forced a thin smile. “You may not know this, but a few days ago, His Grace ran into assassins in the street. Her Grace was there too. She didn’t even think-she stepped right in front of him. Plenty of folks saw it.”

Marwen shot her a look of disdain and waved her off impatiently. “Enough, Gerda! You may leave now!”

Gerda was reluctant to go. Leaving now would leave the field clear for Marwen’s slander.

But the Marchioness of Havenstead, Elspeth, also said, “You may go.”

Helpless, Gerda left, looking back over her shoulder with each step.

She could only hope Elowen had a plan.

Elspeth was different from Marwen.

Marwen was manageable. But Elspeth was Cassian’s maternal aunt and had watched him grow up. When others dared not reprimand him for wrongdoing, she wouldn’t hesitate to slap him.

If Elspeth took a dislike to Elowen, Elowen’s future would be fraught.

With the servants gone, Marwen moved closer, sitting beside Elspeth. She sighed, “Don’t be mad. The Duchess is, after all, still young. Since she entered the manor, His Grace has spoiled her rotten. It’s no wonder she has a temper.”

Elspeth gave a cold snort.

“But hey, if His Grace likes her, what can we say? That courtyard of hers is being renovated. I hear the materials and furnishings are all expensive imports. I managed the household once; I know the manor’s finances are tight. Renovating a courtyard is a massive expense. I don’t know where the funds will come from!”

Elspeth frowned. “Did you not advise Cassian?”

“Advise him? I wouldn’t dare! When the Duchess first arrived, I asked her to come to Rose Hall to pay her respects. She said I was merely an aunt by marriage, not worth her time. Somehow, she sweet-talked His Grace into scolding me. He took my entry token and banned me from their courtyard.”

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Chapter 146 Stoking the Fire!

Elspeth’s expression hardened. “Such a thing happened?”

“It did. The entire manor knows.”

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Marwen sighed with feigned resignation, “I can swallow it. My husband passed years ago; I am an outsider. But you, My Lady, are different. You are His Grace’s own aunt. If you ask me, it’s best to turn a blind eye. Don’t let the Duchess ruin the bond you’ve had with His Grace for years. If he were to, in a fit of passion for his wife, forbid you from visiting Duskmoor Manor in the future...”

“He wouldn’t dare!”

Elspeth’s face flushed with anger. She slammed her hand on the table, rattling the cups.

Seeing this reaction, Marwen could barely suppress her smile.

She had worried Elowen might come and disrupt her performance.

But the girl was sleeping so soundly.

Perfect. Now Elspeth thoroughly despised Elowen. Pressuring Cassian to divorce Elowen would be easy.

When the time came, Marwen would put in a few good words and slide Sylvia in as the next Duchess.

A perfect solution!

In the bedchamber, Elowen had gone to bed but slept fitfully.

Her knees ached. Her arm burned.

Perhaps she had grown accustomed to sleeping beside Cassian. Alone, she felt restless.

In her drowsy state, she heard the faint sound of wheels.

She felt the curtain shift; someone was sitting on the edge of the bed.

Squinting, she saw Cassian's face in the moonlight.

Drowsy, she half-thought she was dreaming. She mumbled, "It hurts."

Cassian leaned closer, his voice low. "Shall I massage them for you again?"

Elowen nodded obediently.

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Chapter 146 Stoking the Fire!

After a pause, she shook her head.

"What is it?" Cassian asked.

43%

+30 Free Coins

Elowen didn't answer. Sleep reclaimed her. She turned towards the wall and drifted off.

That tired, huh?

Cassian reached for her hand. She instinctively flinched, a soft whimper escaping her lips, eyes still closed.

Cassian frowned and pushed up her sleeve.

The sight of the burn on her arm made his brow furrow deeper. He withdrew his gaze and got off the bed.

Elowen, half-asleep, heard the sound of wheels again.

She forced her eyelids open, looking around. Cassian was gone.

It must have been a dream...

She closed her eyes, intending to sleep, when the sound of wheels returned.

She looked over.

Cassian was back on the bed, a small white porcelain jar in his right hand. “Give me your hand,” he said softly.

In her drowsy state, Elowen was most compliant. She extended her hand.

Cassian gently pushed up her sleeve, revealing the burn. He scooped a generous amount of salve from the jar and applied it to the wound.

Elowen, fearing pain, instinctively tried to pull her hand back. But Cassian held it firmly.

She scrunched up her face in fear-but to her surprise, his touch was feather-light. The salve was cool, not causing pain but bringing immediate, soothing relief.

III

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 147

Chapter 147 The Midnight Return

43%

+30 Free Coins

Elowen looked at Cassian, then at her wound, watching his long, elegant fingers smooth the salve over the burn.

Her pupils dilated gradually, then she jolted, fully awake.

“My lord!” she exclaimed, eyes wide.

“I’m here,” Cassian responded, focused on applying the salve, not looking up.

Elowen gazed at him in surprise. “Why are you back?” She leaned toward him.

Cassian immediately held her still, his voice firm “Applying salve. Don’t move.”

“Oh.” Elowen settled.

Only after patiently finishing did he speak, “You sent Bran with the lily seed soup, right? I had some. Came back specifically to praise you.”

Elowen found this strange. “Just to praise me?”

A slight smile touched Cassian’s lips. “Someone lacks confidence. How can I not praise her?”

Elowen felt a flush of embarrassment. She knew he meant her.

“But,” Cassian’s tone shifted a little, “that’s only part of it.”

Elowen tilted her head, looking at him. “Then what else? Worried I’d make a mess of the manor in your absence?”

“No.” Cassian denied it.

“Then... did you hear the Marchioness came to the manor?” Mentioning this made Elowen feel guilty.

“...No.” Cassian denied this too.

Elowen secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

“Guess again,” Cassian prompted.

Elowen thought deeply, then her expression cleared with realization.

Cassian encouraged her. “Say it.”

III

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Chapter 147 The Midnight Return

43%

+30 Free Coins

Elowen took a breath, her cheeks warming. “Are the effects of the aphrodisiac wine acting up? Did you rush back to find me?”

Cassian was speechless.

Am I that kind of man?

Well...

Yes, I am.

After a moment’s consideration, Cassian said, “That is also only part of the reason. There is a more important one.”

Elowen was lost. “There’s more?”

Cassian gave a soft hum. This time, he didn’t make her guess. He stated directly, “I missed you.”

Elowen stared.

The aphrodisiac wine acting up and missing me... seems like the same thing.

But she didn’t dare say or ask that.

She scratched her neck. “My lord, are your duties at the army camp finished?”

“Not yet. I’ll return tomorrow morning after I wake.”

Elowen blinked.

The army camp sat outside the city. Duskmoor Manor was near the center of Vanelle.

With Cassian’s legs still healing, he couldn’t ride a horse. A carriage wasn’t fast. The journey from the army camp to the manor took at least an hour.

He rushed back in the dead of night, only to rush back later...

Elowen bit her lip. “My lord, is that... appropriate?”

“Hmm?”

“I feel a bit...” She searched for words. “Like a... siren leading a hero astray.”

Cassian gave a low chuckle. “A siren, perhaps. But not one who leads astray.”

He added emphatically, “If anyone calls you that. I’ll have their tongue.”

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Chapter 147 The Midnight Return

Elowen opened her mouth, thinking that sounded cruel, but didn’t say it.

“Did I hear my aunt visited?” Cassian asked.

Elowen nodded.

43%

+30 Free Coins

“Did you see her?” Cassian asked, noting her odd expression and thinking there might have been an unpleasant encounter. “My aunt is forthright, but her heart isn’t bad.”

Elowen looked away, unable to meet his gaze. She said slowly, “When the Marchioness arrived, I said I was asleep. I didn’t go to see her”

She expected him to be angry, to scold her for impropriety. She braced herself.

Instead, she heard a soft laugh. Cassian asked with interest, “Did my aunt get led astray by Lady Marwen again?”

Elowen was astonished. “How did you know?”

Cassian smiled faintly, “It’s not the first time. Not surprising.”

Some learn from a single stumble. Others just keep stumbling over the same spot.

His aunt was the latter.

Elowen relaxed slightly. “I’m glad you’re not angry...”

“Nothing to be angry about. You made that call, which means you had your reasons.” Cassian gently pinched her cheek. “I trust you to handle it.”

A warm feeling spread through Elowen’s chest.

Cassian withdrew his hand. “Do your knees still hurt?”

“A little,” Elowen admitted truthfully.

Cassian reached out and found her knee. His palm was warm and broad, pressing and massaging with just the right pressure. The pain seemed to recede bit by bit.

Elowen looked at Cassian. He was staring intently at her knee, his expression focused.

After a while longer, Elowen gathered her courage and took hold of his wrist. “My lord, I think the pain is gone.”

“Think?” Cassian raised an eyebrow, amused.

Elowen didn’t answer that. Her cheeks flushed as she asked, “The aphrodisiac wine... are you

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Chapter 147 The Midnight Return

still feeling it?”

Cassian was always caring for her, mindful of her pain.

Fair’s fair. She couldn’t ignore how he felt.

43%

+30 Free Coins

Hearing her question, Cassian readily complied. He gave a soft cough, his voice weakening slightly. “A little, yes.”

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 148

Chapter 148 The Night’s Remedy

43%

+30 Free Coins

He feigned confusion, asking, “What exactly did Hugh tell you about curing the effects of that wine?”

Elowen’s cheeks flushed even darker. Shamefaced but honest, she said, “Doctor Dray said... I need to be... intimate with you.”

“Intimate?” Cassian feigned innocence, all wide-eyed and pure.

“Yes...”

Elowen took a deep breath and actively moved closer to him. They sat facing each other on the bed, mere inches apart.

She leaned in, closer and closer.

Cassian caught the faint, sweet scent of her skin.

Though he was the one who had schemed behind the scenes, it was his breath that grew

uneven now.

He watched as Elowen, her face crimson, steeled herself and leaned forward. Her soft lips landed on the corner of his mouth.

Cassian froze. His heart hammered against his ribs as if trying to break free.

Elowen made a soft sound and pulled back slightly, muttering to herself, “Missed...”

Cassian froze.

Elowen seemed to review her first attempt. She leaned in again.

This time, her lips met his squarely in the center

Her lips were unbelievably soft, carrying her unique, delicate fragrance.

Cassian’s body seemed to stiffen, then melt.

Such a scene had only occurred in his dreams. Now, in the deep night, everything felt surreal.

Cassian lifted a hand and cupped her cheek.

Her skin was smooth, silken, and burning hot.

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Chapter 148 The Night’s Remedy

Cassian knew then-his beautiful dream had come true.

43%

+30 Free Coins

Elowen kept her lips against his for a moment before tiring. She pulled away and asked softly, “Are you feeling better?”

Cassian’s eyes were deep pools. “...No.”

Elowen felt a twinge of worry. She had been ready to sleep.

Cassian gazed at her for a long moment, his throat working. “Shall I... take the initiative?”

“Alright.” Elowen agreed almost without hesitation.

So Cassian tilted her chin and kissed her deeply

Unlike her tentative pecks, his kiss held an assertive edge, much like the man himself-a drawn sword, unstoppable.

Elowen was kissed into a dizzy, foggy state, losing all sense of place and purpose. She merely followed his lead by sheer instinct, clumsy but willing.

A long while later, just as Elowen felt she might drown in the kiss, Cassian finally released her.

His voice was low, noticeably hoarse. “...Now it’s better.”

Elowen slowly returned to herself, unconsciously swallowing.

Only after did she realize she hadn’t just swallowed her own saliva.

That thought sent fresh heat blazing across her already-burning cheeks.

“I’ll go wash up,” Cassian said, getting off the bed.

Elowen looked up, a beat late. “Shall I help you?”

“No need.” Cassian gave her hand a squeeze. “You sleep first.”

He settled into his wheelchair and went to the bathing chamber alone.

Elowen lay back down on the bed, the feverish heat in her body gradually subsiding.

She closed her eyes, recalling the kiss.

She had memorized it. Next time he was unwell, she could mimic it to treat him.

More importantly, when she wrote her next tale she would know how to describe intimate scenes, rather than just cutting the lights and calling it a night.

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Chapter 148 The Night’s Remedy

By the time Cassian returned to bed, Elowen was nearly asleep.

Half-conscious, she shifted toward the wall, making space for him.

Cassian lay down. She wrapped an arm around his waist as if by habit.

Resting her head against the solid muscle of his arm, she finally closed her eyes in

contentment.

43%

+30 Free Coins

“In a few days, it will be the formal betrothal celebration for Lady Daphne and the Crown Prince. We have to attend. My aunt is in Vanelle she will certainly go as well...”

Elowen was too drowsy. She heard some of his words, gave a vague murmur of assent, and fell into deep sleep.

Whatever else he said after, she didn’t hear or remember.

The next morning, when Elowen awoke, the space beside her was empty.

Sitting before her dressing table, she yawned and asked Mira, “What time did the Duke leave?”

“The Duke?” Cora looked puzzled. “Your Grace, didn’t His Grace stay at the army camp last night? He didn’t return.”

Elowen blinked.

Then who had she kissed, and who had kissed her last night?

Had it been a dream?

Later, Hugh arrived to check on Elowen.

After he finished, Mira said, “Doctor Dray, could you also look at the burn on Her Grace’s arm?”

If she hadn’t mentioned it, Elowen might have forgotten the burn altogether, mainly because she felt no pain now.

“Let me see,” Hugh said.

Elowen lifted her arm and pushed up her sleeve

Mira gasped, “Huh? How did it heal so fast?”

Elowen looked down.

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Chapter 148 The Night’s Remedy

43%

+30 Free Coins

Yesterday’s swollen, red mark, nearly blistering, was now only faintly visible, largely healed.

Hugh glanced at it briefly and concluded, “His Grace came back last night.”

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19:40 Fri, Feb 13 TTD

Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 149

Chapter 149 The Camp Visit

Elowen didn’t understand. “How did you know that?”

43%

+30 Free Coins

“You carry the scent of a burn salve on your arm Hugh said. “This particular salve was bestowed by the King. There were only two jars in the entire world-one kept in the palace, the other in Cassian’s possession. As for such an effective remedy, no one alive can replicate its formula.”

“Not even you, Doctor Dray?”

“No,” Hugh admitted honestly.

So it truly is a precious salve. No wonder my wound healed so quickly.

Elowen looked down at her arm, remembering how Cassian had scooped out a large dollop of the salve the night before as if it were worthless.

He really didn’t spare any expense.

“Didn’t expect His Grace actually came back last night,” Mira murmured. “He must have come back very late. I didn’t hear a thing, and I’ve no idea when he left this morning either...”

Elowen heard that, and her mind flashed back to Cassian saying, “I missed you.” Her mood twisted, strange and restless.

“Your Grace.” Gerda entered. “A formal invitation has arrived from the Crown Prince’s Wing.”

Elowen looked up and took the card.

“They’re setting the betrothal with the Garrett family,” Gerda explained. “It’s a small rite, but they’ve invited His Grace and Your Grace.”

A hazy memory surfaced. Cassian had mentioned this to her last night....

In Avenlor, it was customary to hold a formal betrothal ceremony before the grand wedding.

In her past life, she and Alaric had gone through all these rituals.

This time, because Cassian lay in a coma, they cut every rite they could. Their own betrothal had simply involved the palace sending gifts to Hale Manor.

“I’ve heard...” Gerda leaned in closer, lowering her voice as Elowen drifted in thought, “...that the Marchioness will also be attending.”

Cassian had mentioned that, too.

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Chapter 149 The Camp Visit

Elowen gave a slight nod. “Of course we’ll go.”

She wrote a reply and told Gerda to deliver it.

42%

+30 Free Coins

Nearby, Hugh clicked his tongue, frustrated. “His Grace isn’t back yet. If he doesn’t drink his medicine on time, who knows when those legs will heal.”

An impulse stirred in Elowen’s chest, and the words slipped out before she could stop them. “I’ll deliver it to him.”

Hugh blinked in surprise. “His Grace should be at the camp right now, right?”

“Yes,” Elowen said. “I know.”

When her father and brother had served, she had occasionally accompanied her mother or sister-in-law to visit them at camp.

Once decided, she turned to give instructions. “Once his medicine is ready, seal it in a jar and place it in the tiffin carrier. Have a carriage prepared-I’m heading out to the camp.”

In the palace-

Theodric finished writing a missive and handed it to Alaric. “Take this to the camp. Deliver it to Cassian.”

Alaric paused. “Me alone?”

Theodric raised an eyebrow. “What? Did you want to bring your mother along?”

Flustered, Alaric quickly lowered his head. “That is not what I meant.”

“Then go.” Theodric’s voice carried an undeniable authority. “The contents are of great importance. I do not trust anyone else to deliver it. Furthermore, you are the Crown Prince,’ soon to be wed. A visit to the camp will do you good.”

Alaric could only nod. “Yes, I’ll leave now.”

By the time Cassian’s medicine was ready and packed, Elowen set off.

The Duskmoor Manor carriage was fitted with soft cushions, but the journey was long and arduous. By the time the carriage rolled to a stop at the camp, her back and hips ached from the ride.

She figured that Cassian’s body must be tough. Last night, he hadn’t looked tired at all.

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Chapter 149 The Camp Visit

42%

+30 Free Coins

After taking a moment to compose herself, Elowen alighted, carrying the tiffin carrier. She walked towards the camp gates, flanked by Gerd and the manor guards. No one in the army stopped them.

However, just outside the command tent, she spotted a familiar figure.

Alaric,

Elowen’s lips pursed. Talk about bad timing.

She decided to ignore him and walked straight towards the entrance.

But Alaric had seen her. His brow furrowed. “What are you doing here? This is a military camp! You’ll just get in the way.”

Elowen’s expression remained impassive. “I come from a military family. I’ve been to camps far more often than you have.”

With that, she turned her back on him and addressed the guard at the entrance. “I am the Duchess of Duskmoor. Is the Duke inside?”

Alaric’s tone was laced with sarcasm. “Uncle is currently in a critical strategy session. He doesn’t even have time to see me. You’d best wait outside like everyone else.”

Before his words had fully settled, the guard bowed respectfully to Elowen. “Yes, Your Grace. His Grace is within. Please, proceed inside.”

A faint smile touched Elowen’s lips. “Thank you

Alaric was stunned.

What is the meaning of this?!

Fury ignited within him. He turned on the guard. “Why is she permitted entry? I am the Crown Prince, yet I am made to wait outside?”

The guard’s tone was strictly professional. “My apologies, Your Highness. These are His Grace’s explicit orders. The military council is of utmost importance. He was most clear: aside from His Majesty and the Duchess of Duskmoor, all other non-essential persons are barred from entry. I beg Your Highness’ understanding.”

Alaric felt his blood boil.

So, in Uncle Cassian’s eyes, Elowen holds the same standing as the King?!

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Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice novel Chapter 150

Chapter 150 Not Familiar?

What kind of spell did this woman cast on Uncle Cassian?

The guard pushed the door open.

Instantly, Cassian’s cool, measured voice reached Elowen’s ears. “I know.”

+30 Free Coins

The timbre was pleasing, but the tone was as cold and unyielding as iron, devoid of any emotional warmth.

For a fleeting moment, Elowen found it unfamiliar.

But perhaps this was the real Cassian.

The Cassian of legend, the one described in countless tales, was exactly like this—aloof and unapproachable, seated high above the fray.

Taking a step inside, Elowen was suddenly met with the gaze of a room full of men.

Their stares held no malice, but they were strangers, and she couldn’t help the flutter of

nerves.

Cassian sat at the head of the large central table, his eyes lifting to meet hers. The light in the room was dim, making it hard to read his expression.

She drew a steadying breath, her fingers tightening around the handle of the tiffin carrier, and forced herself to walk forward.

Reaching his side, she glanced left and right.

The table was strewn with tactical maps, letters, inkwells, and quills-no clear space in sight. Every item looked more important than the simple container in her hands.

As she hesitated, Cassian reached out and took the carrier from her.

With a decisive sweep, he pushed a large map aside and set the carrier squarely on the table.

The other officers seated around the table stared eyes wide.

Hold on.

Weren't you just saying that map was more vital than all our lives put together?

Cassian looked up at Elowen, his voice softening "What brings you here?"

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19.41 Fri Feb 13 TT D.

Chapter 150 Not Familiar?

The officers' eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets.

What in the blazes?!

What kind of voice is that?

Your Grace, have you been possessed?

42%8

+30 free Coins

Under the collective stare, Elowen felt her cheeks warm. She lowered her voice, embarrassed. “Doctor Dray said your legs haven’t fully healed and you need to keep taking medicine. I didn’t know when you’d be back, so I brought it to you.”

Cassian nodded, understanding. “So you were worried about my leg.”

He spoke at a volume that ensured everyone present could hear him clearly.

For some reason, Elowen got the distinct impression he’d said it on purpose, as if... showing off.

But what was there to show off about?

Puzzled, she tilted her head and gave him a curious look.

Cassian lifted the medicine bowl from the carrier.

“The journey was long,” Elowen said, glancing at it. “It might have gone cold.”

“It’s fine. Perfect temperature.”

With that, he brought the bowl to his lips and drained it in one go.

He drank so quickly that a few drops clung to the corner of his mouth.

Elowen took a handkerchief, intending to hand it to him. But he didn’t seem to notice, so she reached out to dab the liquid away herself.

At that exact moment, Cassian set the bowl down, and his hand came up to cover hers.

The touch of his skin against hers sent an involuntary shiver through her, and she snatched her hand back.

The handkerchief fell into Cassian’s hand. He smoothly dabbed his mouth again and asked, “I’ll be a while. Can you wait for me?”

Elowen nodded. “I’ll wait outside.”

“Very well.”

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Chapter 150 Not Familiar?

She collected the empty bowl back into the carrer and retreated the way she came.

42%

+30 Free Coins

The moment the door clicked shut, the officers exchanged glances, their faces alight with poorly suppressed glee.

One, gathering his courage, ventured, “Your Grace, the Duchess is truly devoted! To come all this way just to bring you your medicine!”

A faint smile touched Cassian’s lips. “Yes. She cares for me deeply.”

Another officer, a burly man with a thick beard, looked puzzled. “But... when you touched her hand just now, she pulled back as if stung. You two don’t seem familiar with one another?”

Cassian’s smile vanished. He shot the man a frosty look.

Not familiar? We kissed just last night!

A square-faced officer next to him chuckled, “How could they not be familiar? His and Her Grace have been wed for some time now. I wager it won’t be long before we hear news of a young heir. Who says they’re not familiar?”

He expected this comment to earn at least a smile from Cassian.

Instead, Cassian’s expression darkened further.

Before the man could attempt to recover, Cassian’s icy voice cut through the room. “Funny how you’re all so chatty now. When I asked for volunteers a minute ago, every last one of you went dead quiet.”

Instantly, all heads bowed in meek submission.

Outside, Elowen stepped out of the tent, pointedly ignoring Alaric where he stood waiting.

She offered the guard a polite smile. “Might there be a place to rest nearby? The Duke asked me to wait for him.”

“Of course, Your Grace. Right this way,” the guard said.

They turned to go.

“Aunt.” The word came from behind her, sharp and clear.

He said it more smoothly than before, but it carried a distinct, gritted-teeth quality.

Yeah, he was pissed.

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19.41

19 41 Fri, Feb 13 TT b.

Chapter 150 Not Familiar?

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Elowen turned back, voice cool and even “Your uncle is still occupied. He will see you when he is finished.”

Alaric frowned. “That’s not what I wanted to ack

But Elowen had already turned away, showing ne intention of listening further.

“Stop!” Alaric commanded, his voice rising.

When she didn’t halt, he strode after her. “I said op! Are you deaf?!*

With that, he reached out, rough and abrupt, to grab her arm.

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