

Love's Unexpected Awakening Elowen's Choice Novel

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? The grand hall exploded into noise . " What ? The Duke of Duskmoor ? " " She actually said she wants to marry him ? " " Why would she give up the Crown Prince for him ? " " Does she even know he's in no condition to marry anyone ? " +10 Free Coins Whispers surged like a rising tide , crashing from every corner of the hall . They overlapped - sharp with disbelief and ridicule . Elowen heard every word . And yet , not a flicker of emotion crossed her face . She stood there , composed , as if the storm had nothing to do with her .

The King let out a quiet sigh , clearly trying to smooth things over . " That would be ... a difficult match for you , " he said , his tone gentle but hesitant . " Perhaps I should select another suitable candidate from the royal family . " But Elowen didn't retreat . " Your Majesty , " she said , her voice steady , firm enough to cut through the murmurs , " I am deeply grateful for your kindness . But i have already sworn before the Holy Mother . " A breath . " In this life , I will marry no one but the Duke of Duskmoor .

" She lowered herself into a deep , formal curtsy before the King and Queen and stayed there . " I humbly ask for your blessing . " She did not rise . Her posture was unwavering , her resolve laid bare for all to see . Cassian Valebourne . Duke of Duskmoor . The King's full - blooded younger brother , ninth of their generation . Back when the King had still been a prince , fighting his way toward the throne , it had been Cassian who stood beside him- unshaken , unyielding . Again and again , he had pulled the King back from the brink of death . 1/8 12:01 pm Ppp .

Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? +10 Free Coins Without him , there might never have been a crown . Afterward , Cassian led campaign after campaign - east , north - crushing rebellions , expanding borders , carving his name into legend . There was no one in Aventor who didn't know his reputation . Until one year ago . Stationed in the Northern Reaches , in the middle of a campaign- he collapsed . Without warning . He was carried back to Duskmoor Manor . And never woke up . Royal physicians came and went . None could promise anything . Some whispered he might never wake again .

Elowen knew all of it . And she knew something no one else did . In her previous life- Cassian awoke in the third year of her marriage . That year ... had been one of the darkest she had ever endured . She remained childless . The Queen arranged for Alaric to take a consort . Compared to Elowen , the consort was cherished - by Alaric , by the servants , by the entire Crown Prince's Wing . Everything Elowen was not . When Cassian finally woke , Alaric brought both women to Duskmoor Manor to visit him . On the way back- the consort deliberately left early in the carriage .

Leaving Elowen behind . Alone . Elowen didn't even know the road back to the palace . 2/8 12:01 pm Ppp Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? She lingered there , quietly , hoping just hoping someone might offer her a seat . But everyone knew . The Crown Prince despised her . No one wanted to risk offending him . She stood there as the sun dipped lower , the world slowly emptying around her- until despair began to close in . And then- a voice . Weak , but steady . " There's a carriage ready . Come . " She turned . Stunned .

Cassian sat in a wheelchair not far behind her , draped in a dark , loose robe . His once - powerful frame had grown thin , his face pale and gaunt . But when he looked at her- he smiled . Softly and gently . " Would you care to stay for supper at Duskmoor Manor ? " he asked . " No , I- " She meant to refuse . She really did . But the moment she opened her mouth- her voice broke . Tears spilled down her cheeks without warning , relentless . She couldn't stop them . She didn't understand . Why was she treated like this ? What had she done wrong ? +10 Free Coins 3/8 12:01 pm Ppp .

Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? Her family had died for the kingdom . And she was the one left behind . Abandoned . Discarded . All the pain she had buried so deeply , so carefully- broke loose in that moment . Right in front of him , Cassian sighed softly . Then , without a word , he took out a handkerchief and offered it to her . He didn't ask questions . Didn't press . Simply stayed beside her . The entire time . She cried for what felt like forever . And he never left . After that day- she never saw him again . But she remembered it . For a very long time .

Back in the present , the King frowned , deep in thought . He didn't speak . The hall waited . It was the Queen who finally broke the silence . Her voice was calm and measured . " If she is truly determined to marry Cassian , " she said , " then perhaps we should honor her sincerity . " The King glanced at her , then back at Elowen - still bowed . At last , he sighed . +10 Free Cains 4/8 12:01 pm Ppp . Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? 𐌆 Very well . " He rubbed his temple , looking suddenly tired . " You have no family left . And Cassian is still unwell .

The palace will oversee all arrangements . " Reluctant But final . Elowen raised her head eagerly , a glimmer of hope in her eyes , then bowed again . " Thank you , Your Majesty . " This time- she would not repeat the same mistake . She would not marry Alaric again . Cassian was the best choice . For one thing- He was still unconscious , which alone gave her time . Time to plan . Time to take control of her own future . And in her previous life ... though he had eventually awakened- neglect and poor care had left him permanently paralyzed . Confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life .

He had shown her kindness - when no one else had . The least she could do ... was return it . Care for him . Help him recover . Maybe even help him walk again . And when he woke up - she would ask for a divorce . He likely wouldn't want this marriage either . Before everything fell apart , back when Cassian was still healthy , she heard whispers that he had once loved someone . No one knew who she was . +10 Free Coins 5/8 12:02 pm ppp . Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? +10 Free Coins Across the hall , Alaric sat rigid in his seat . His gaze was locked on Elowen . Unblinking .

An irritation he couldn't explain gnawed at him . " She wants to marry Cassian ? " Maerwyn muttered under her breath , lips curling . " Elowen really is the dumbest girl alive . " Alaric's brow tightened . Maerwyn leaned closer , her eyes glinting with amusement . " Alaric , I'd bet anything - she'll regret this in less than a week . " A faint , cold smile touched his lips . " That has nothing to do with me . " After the banquet , Elowen returned to Hale Manor . She walked through the quiet garden , past familiar paths overgrown with silence , and into her long - abandoned room .

The moment she stepped inside- She let herself fall onto the bed . For the first time in years , she didn't have to think about Alaric . Didn't have to brace herself for another cold glance , another silent humiliation . She was home . The thought settled over her like warmth . And for the first time in a long time- she slept. Deeply and peacefully . Night after night , her strength slowly returned . A few days later , Hilda - one of the Queen's most trusted attendants - arrived at the Hale Manor . She greeted Elowen with a warm , familiar smile . 5/8 12:02 pmp pp .

Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? +10 Free Coins " His Majesty has entrusted your wedding arrangements to Her Majesty ," Hilda said kindly . " The Queen has been preparing everything herself . Today , she plans to select an auspicious date and she hopes you'll come to the palace to assist . " Elowen hesitated slightly . " I'm not very good with such matters , " she admitted . " Her Majesty may choose any date she deems suitable . I have no objections ." Hilda let out a soft laugh . " Even common families consult the bride after the groom's side chooses a date , " she said gently .

" You should come , my lady . The Queen mentioned she hasn't seen you in quite some time - and would like a private word . " A private word ? Elowen paused . In both her past life and this one- the Queen never liked her . They were never close . But Hilda's tone was sincere . Elowen found herself unable to refuse . By the time she entered the palace , the sun was already lowering in the sky . Golden light spilled across the cobblestone paths , warm and soft . Elowen walked quietly , following the servants toward the central wing .

Her gaze stayed lowered , watching the shifting light at her feet . " Your Highness . " Hilda's respectful greeting suddenly rang out . Elowen froze . Then slowly lifted her head . Alaric stood not far ahead . Tall . Impeccable . Cold . His brows were furrowed , his sharp gaze fixed on her with unmistakable scrutiny . That look made her chest tighten . Instinctively , she lowered her eyes again and stepped back , offering a restrained bow . " Your Highness ." Alaric's frown deepened . 7/8 12:02 pm ppp . Chapter 2 Playing Hard to Get ? He knew she liked him .

She had memorized his routines , timed her visits to the Queen just to " accidentally " run into him . Always with pastries she baked herself . Smiling . Hopeful . He had never eaten them . He gave them away . Or had them thrown out . But today , her hands were empty . No pastry box . So she came just to see him ? At the banquet , she had boldly claimed she felt nothing for him . And now here she was , clearly regretting it . But still playing distant and pretending she had moved on . Alaric let out a low , mocking chuckle . " Really , Elowen ?

" he said coolly , his voice edged with ridicule . " Is this your idea of playing hard to get ? " His gaze sharpened . " Honestly ... it's kind of boring " +10 Free Coins 8/8