

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-8 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 111

Feb 25, 2026 Every step sends pain through my wounded thigh, but I don't stop. Behind me, steel clashes — Venna holding the line, buying seconds with blood. "I see you coming. Keep moving, don't slow down." "Your wing — can you fly at all?" I talk to Aspis as I can't leave my dragon in this condition. "The membrane is torn, not destroyed. Short distances only, enough to get airborne or clear the immediate danger." "What about escaping this position?" "Enough to survive. Stop asking questions and keep running." Fifteen yards, then ten. Aspis heaves upright, her damaged wing dragging against the stone. "The bone holds intact. I can lift us both if you mount quickly." "How high? How far before the wing fails?" "Twenty feet, perhaps thirty, short bursts. It will hurt, but I can manage the pain long enough to get us clear." "And after that?" I don't even want to think about us losing. "I do not know. We will learn together when the moment comes." I grab the ridge of scales along her neck. My arms shake, and my wounded leg nearly buckles, but I pull myself onto her back. "Hold tight. This will hurt us both, and I cannot catch you if you fall." "Do it now before I lose my nerve." "You are lying about being ready, but we have no time for honesty. Flying now." Aspis lurches upward with a scream of effort. Her damaged wing beats once, twice — each stroke painful, the torn membrane straining. We rise. "I cannot maintain this altitude for long. The wing is failing." "Hold it as long as you can." ~~Ww.Nov@lWOrM.com~~ I look down. Venna is still at the gap — the natural chokepoint between two boulders that only admits one attacker at a time. She's positioned herself at a gate, holding it with everything she has left. Two elite guards rush her position. Her blade catches the first across the throat, and she pivots into the second with a shield bash that sends him staggering. The return stroke opens his chest before he can recover. She's slower now: movements deliberate rather than instinctive. A warrior who knows her body is failing and is choosing each action with terrible precision. The wound in her side is catastrophic — dark blood spreading across her leathers, dripping onto stone. "We have to help her. Aspis, we have to go back—" "I cannot do what you are asking. The wing will not sustain another landing and launch. If I go down now, I stay down." "So we just hover here and watch her die?" Aspis says nothing. There is nothing to say indeed. Below, Venna cuts down another attacker. Her blade work is still precise, but the strength is fading. I can see it in the way she plants her feet: wider now, compensating for legs that want to buckle. She hated me. She spent months trying to destroy everything I built. Why would she die for

me?wW(w).nOveWôrM.cómThree fresh fighters move toward her position. They recognize what she's doing: holding the gap, preventing pursuit. They're willing to spend lives to break through.

The first one dies with her blade through his eye. The second locks swords with her, and while she's engaged, his partner drives a sword into her thigh. She staggers, and my breath catches. But she doesn't fall. Her return stroke takes the partner's head clean off, and she shoves the locked blade aside with raw fury, opening the second man's belly. www.NovewôrM.©om Blood pools beneath her boots. Too much blood... The wound in her side has spread: her entire left flank is dark and wet now. Minutes at most, perhaps less. I can't watch this, but I force myself to, because it's the least I can do. Venna is framed against the rocky ground, a single figure in bloodstained leathers, holding a gap that should have required a dozen warriors. She's not fighting to win anymore, and she is not trying to survive. She's simply trying to stand long enough for her death to matter. For us to escape, and for the gate to serve its purpose. One more attacker rushes her. Her blade rises — slower now, so much slower — and catches him across the chest. Another follows. Block, strike, block. The movements are automatic, muscle memory carrying her through what conscious thought no longer can. A Mintian blade finds her chest, and yet — she doesn't fall. She steps back, braces her shoulders against the stone. The blade is still in her chest — I can see the hilt protruding, dark against her leathers. Venna looks down at it, then back up at the enemies before her. She raises her sword. The elite guard pushes forward, expecting her to collapse. But Venna doesn't give them the satisfaction. She stands against the stone with steel in her chest, and when the first attacker tries to push past her, she cuts him down. How is she still standing? I suppose, it's her will alone. The body has failed her completely. She's holding the gate with nothing but stubbornness and fury — the same stubbornness and fury she aimed at me for months. Now it's pointed at the enemy, and it's the most terrifying thing I've ever seen. wW(w).nOveWôrM.cóm Another attacker. Another cut from her failing arm. Her sword moves slower with each exchange, but she holds the gap. Smoke thickens around us: catapult fire spreading flames, wind carrying ash across the battlefield. My eyes water. "Aspis, I can't see her through the smoke—" "I cannot maintain this altitude much longer." "Just a few more seconds, try, please." The smoke shifts. For a single heartbeat, the gap is visible again. Venna is still standing. Her sword is lowered now, tip resting against the ground, but she's braced against the stone, facing the enemy, blocking the gap with her body alone. The guard has stopped attacking. They're waiting for her body to fail. She's not falling. Even now, she refuses to fall. Then the smoke closes again, and she's gone from my sight. "Evelyn, we must go now. She died well, as well as any warrior could hope to die." We find her afterward, when the battle ends and the smoke clears. We go back to the gap. Venna is still there — propped against the stone, hand on her sword, face turned

toward the enemy she never let pass. The blade is still in her chest, and her eyes are open. She died on her feet, exactly as she lived. Dorian carries her body back. He doesn't speak, none of us do. They tell me later that she said something before the end. A warrior from Torren's unit saw it from the ridge — Venna, braced against the stone, lips moving as the last of her strength faded. Four words, spoken to no one and everyone: "I held the gate." Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 112

Feb 25, 2026 [Draven's POV] I see the aftermath from Khaira's back. The eastern gate held. The chokepoint where the rocks narrow to a single passage is choked with bodies — Mintian warriors piled three deep, cut down trying to force through a gap that should have fallen in minutes. "The gate held longer than any strategic model would have predicted." "Someone bought time. Who was stationed there?" "Torren's unit was assigned to the eastern defense. But the chokepoint — that narrow passage between the boulders — was held by a single fighter." "One person held that gap against Aldric's elite guard?" "Long enough for Torren's unit to reinforce and for Riven's flanking force to complete the encirclement. The eastern assault broke against that position." *W(w)w. nOvElwO(r)m.cOm* I bank Khaira lower. A body propped against stone, with a hand still on a sword and a face turned toward the enemy. "Venna." The name hits me like a blow. Venna — who betrayed my house to Mintia, who spent months convinced Evelyn would be our ruin. That woman held the eastern gate alone. "She chose her death well." "There's no choosing well in war. There's only choosing." I pull Khaira south. The main fleet is visible — dozens of warships, the blue dragon banner snapping in the wind, but the coordinated assault is fragmenting. Ships are losing cohesion. "The secondary assault has failed. They are receiving reports from the eastern shore." "And realizing their elite force was destroyed at the gate." Then Evelyn appears. She rises from the east on Aspis — the white dragon climbing through smoke and ash, moonlight blazing from her scales like a star ascending. The dragon's wing is damaged, the flight uneven, but she's airborne. She's alive. "She should not be flying. That wing damage is severe." "Try telling her that when she

has her mind set on something.” Ships begin to turn: not retreat, not yet, but the wavering that precedes retreat. “The Mintian sailors are superstitious. They are seeing what they believe to be prophecy fulfilled.” “Good. Let them carry the story back to every port in the realm.” I bank Khaira toward the eastern gate. The battle here is over — Riven’s flanking force has completed the encirclement, and the surviving Mintian warriors are surrendering. The killing zone worked exactly as designed, but the cost is written in blood across every stone. I land near the gate as medics rush toward the wounded. Riven is already there. My brother is kneeling beside Venna’s body, his expression shattered in a way I haven’t seen since Lyanna. His hand rests on Venna’s shoulder — not touching the blade still embedded in her chest, not trying to move her, just making contact with someone who can no longer feel it. “Riven.” He looks up. His eyes are red-rimmed, his jaw clenched against whatever is trying to break free. “She held the gate, Draven.” His voice is raw, scraped hollow by something grief-adjacent.

“She held it alone against a dozen of Aldric’s elite. Torren’s unit would have been overwhelmed without her. The whole eastern defense would have collapsed.” “I saw the aftermath from the air. The bodies in the gap — she must have killed eight or nine of them before they brought her down.” “Eleven.” Riven’s hand tightens on Venna’s shoulder. “I counted the bodies in the chokepoint. She killed eleven of them while bleeding from wounds that should have dropped her in the first exchange.” I kneel beside my brother and look at the woman who betrayed my house, fought for it, and died defending the person she hated most. The blade in her chest is Mintian steel — driven through her armor, through her ribs. And she didn’t fall. The stone behind her is streaked with blood where she braced herself and kept fighting. “There is no clean narrative here, Riven. No redemption story that makes sense of what she did.” Riven’s voice cracks on the last word. “I’m looking at a woman who destroyed everything she believed in and then died to prove she was wrong. That’s not redemption but tragedy.” “She was a warrior. In the end, she chose to be what she always claimed to be.” *www.n(0)ve①W@Rm.com* “And what good does that do anyone now? She’s dead, and I’m the one who stripped her rank, who humiliated her in front of the household, who made her spend her last months as an outcast in the house she’d served for years.” “You did what had to be done. Her treason was real, and the consequences were appropriate.” Riven laughs — a bitter, broken sound. “She’s lying here with a blade in her chest and I’m supposed to feel satisfied that the consequences were appropriate?” I reach out and close Venna’s eyes. The gesture is ancient, practiced, something I’ve done for too many warriors over too many years. “She held the gate. That’s what she would want remembered. Not the treason, not the disgrace, not the months of bitterness, but the gate held because she held it.” Riven is silent for a long moment. When he speaks again, his voice is steadier. “Evelyn was on the ground when Venna reached her, surrounded by elite guards. Venna cut through three of them to

reach her, then positioned herself at the gap and told Evelyn to run.”
www.NoVELWoRm.CoM “She saved Evelyn’s life. Not only did she play her part, but she saved her life as well.”
www.NoVELWoRm.CoM “Then remember and honor it. Let it change nothing about the facts and everything about how we carry them.” A runner appears — young, breathless, armor splashed with blood that probably isn’t his own. He skids to a stop beside us, chest heaving. “My lord — urgent report from the southern observation post.” “The fleet is retreating. I saw the ships turning from the air.” “Most of the fleet is retreating, my lord. But the flagship hasn’t turned. Lord Aldric’s vessel is breaking from the formation and heading for the eastern shore at full sail.” Riven rises to his feet. “He’s not retreating but coming here personally.” “There’s more, my lord.” The runner swallows hard. “One of Torren’s scouts reported movement in the compound. Someone matching Lady Cassandra’s description — armed, moving east, heading for the last known position of the white dragon.” The words land like ice water. “Evelyn landed east of the gate after the aerial combat. Her dragon’s wing was damaged — she couldn’t maintain altitude.” “That’s where Cassandra is heading, my lord. Toward the eastern shore and wherever Lady Evelyn came down.” I’m moving before the runner finishes speaking. Khaira is already lowering her shoulder for me to mount. Riven is shouting for his own dragon, but I don’t wait for him. Cassandra is armed and loose on the battlefield, heading straight for the woman she’s spent her entire life preparing to kill. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

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Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 113

Feb 25, 2026 [Cassandra’s POV] I move through the battlefield like a blade through silk. The fighting has shifted — the eastern assault broken, survivors too focused on their own survival to notice one more figure in blood-splattered armor. The southern fleet is wavering on the horizon, ships turning in ragged sequence. None of it matters. I am not here for battles or fleets or the petty arithmetic of war. I am here for the prophecy. I have always been here for the prophecy, since the day the witch spoke the words that defined my existence. The eastern shore opens before me — rocky ground descending toward the sea, smoke drifting from a

dozen fires. And there, fifty yards ahead, I find what I've been searching for. Evelyn. She stands near her dragon on a flat stretch of scorched rock. The white beast is grounded — wing damage visible even from this distance, the membrane torn, the creature exhausted and unable to fly. Evelyn is alone except for the wounded dragon behind her. Her armor is bloody, and her silver hair streams wild in the wind. Around her fingers, moonlight flickers like a failing torch — guttering, unsteady, the power that should have made her invincible reduced to fitful sparks. She looks exhausted but powerful, exactly like the woman the prophecy warned about. I step into the open. No concealment or ambush: the prophecy demands a confrontation, and I will give it one. Evelyn sees me the moment I emerge from the smoke. Her body goes still — not with fear, but with recognition. She knows what this is, and she's known since the day I arrived at this compound that it would end with the two of us facing each other across bloody ground. Thirty feet separate us. Thirty feet of scorched rock, of war's debris, of everything our father built and everything he destroyed. "Cassandra." Her voice carries across the distance, steady despite the exhaustion written in every line of her body. "I wondered when you would find me." "I've been looking for you for years, sister. Every time Father looked at you with disgust, every time he reminded me that one of us would survive and one would not, every time I trained while you cowered — I was finding my way to this moment." "Then you've spent these years preparing for something you don't understand." "The witch spoke the words, and I have spent my entire life becoming what the prophecy requires." "What do you think the prophecy requires, Cassandra? Tell me exactly what you believe you were raised to do." I recite the words that have shaped every moment of my existence, the words I have carried like a second heartbeat since I was old enough to understand them. "The cycle ends in blood, and what was divided is made whole." I grip my blade tighter. "The stronger sister destroys the weaker one, and that's what I was trained to fulfill." "You believe you're the stronger sister." "I am! Father made certain of it. Every advantage was by design — the training, the resources, the cruelty that forged me into a weapon while you were kept weak and afraid. I am what years of preparation created." Evelyn doesn't draw a weapon. She stands with her hands at her sides, moonlight still flickering around her fingers, and looks at me with something that might be pity. "The prophecy has been misread, Cassandra. Deliberately, I think. By Father, or by whoever told him what he wanted to hear." "Father heard it directly from the witch's mouth." "He heard what he wanted to hear—a reason to destroy one daughter and elevate the other." www.novelsandromances.com Evelyn takes a step toward me — not aggressive, not threatening, just closing the distance. "I've read the original fragments, Cassandra. The actual text of the prophecy, not Father's interpretation of it." www.novelsandromances.com

"There is no interpretation!" "The words say 'break the cycle,' not 'break the weaker.' The stronger sister ends the pattern of destruction that has consumed our family for generations.

She doesn't perpetuate it by killing her own blood."The words land like a blade between my ribs. I feel them cut — feel the doubt I crushed weeks ago in my confinement chamber rising again, the hairline crack in my certainty threatening to split wide open."That's not what Father taught me."He wanted one daughter to destroy the other so he wouldn't have to choose between us. He wanted the prophecy to justify his cruelty so he could pretend it was destiny instead of abuse."Evelyn's voice is steady, almost gentle."You were never supposed to kill me, Cassandra. You were supposed to end the cycle of violence that Father perpetuated. The prophecy doesn't demand a victor. It demands an end."I hesitate. The words vibrate in my bones like a struck bell, resonating with something I've buried so deep I'd almost forgotten it existed.I heard this reading surface in my own mind. Weeks ago, in confinement, staring at the walls and wondering if everything I'd been taught was a lie.The thought came unbidden: what if "stronger" doesn't mean what Father thinks it means? I crushed it then. I called it weakness, refused to let doubt contaminate the certainty I needed to survive.But Evelyn is saying it now, standing before me with exhaustion in her eyes and truth on her tongue, and I cannot crush what she's offering."If the prophecy doesn't demand your death," I say slowly, "then every cruelty, every lesson, every moment of my life is shaped toward this purpose — all of it wasted."Not wasted but misdirected. You were forged into something powerful, Cassandra. That power doesn't have to serve Father's interpretation. It can serve the actual prophecy."You're asking me to believe that years of my life were built on a lie."Just consider that they might have been. I'm asking you to look at the evidence and make your own choice instead of following the path Father carved for you."Years of training and cruelty and absolute certainty, years of knowing exactly who I was and what I was meant to do.And now my sister stands before me offering a different truth, path, and ending.The doubt spreads through me like poison, corroding the foundations of everything I've built my identity upon.www.novellworks.comBut years of conditioning is stronger than one moment of uncertainty. Twenty years of Father's voice in my head, telling me what I am and what I must do.www.novellworks.comYears of being shaped into a weapon cannot be unmade by words, no matter how true those words might be.I raise my blade."You may be right about the prophecy." My voice sounds strange to my own ears — hollow, distant, like someone else is speaking through my mouth. "But I am what Father made me. I don't know how to be anything else."Evelyn's expression shifts — hope dying, replaced by something that looks like grief."Cassandra, please. You can choose differently. The prophecy doesn't have to end in blood."The prophecy ends however I decide it ends, and I have already decided."I lunge.Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

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7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 114

Feb 25, 2026[Evelyn's POV]Cassandra lunges and I don't draw a blade. I pivot, channeling moonlight into a barrier that deflects her strike — not blocks it, not meets it with force, just redirects the killing edge past my shoulder by inches. She recovers faster than I expected, spinning into a second attack that forces me back. "Evelyn — you must fight back. She will not stop until one of you is dead." "I know she won't stop, but I won't kill her either, Aspis. I refuse to be what Father wanted me to become." "She is trying to kill you. Your refusal to respond in kind is not nobility — it is suicide." "And responding in kind would be murder. I am trying to break the cycle, which means not becoming what she expects me to become." "Then how do you expect this to end?" "With her alive, both of us alive, actually. There has to be a way." Cassandra's blade comes for my throat. I duck under it, catch her wrist, try to lock the joint and force her to drop the weapon. She twists free and her elbow catches my jaw hard enough to send sparks across my vision. I stumble back, and she presses the advantage. The fight becomes brutal. Cassandra attacks with everything she has — no hesitation, no restraint, fighting with the desperation of someone whose identity depends on this moment. I fight to neutralize. Every technique designed to disarm, to pin without piercing. I channel moonlight into barriers, throw blinding flashes, use locks and deflections that Sera taught me — controlling without destroying. It's not enough. Her blade finds my arm — a cut that opens the flesh from elbow to wrist, blood running hot down my fingers. I hiss through my teeth and keep moving. "You are bleeding badly. Your reserves are depleted, and you cannot maintain this defense much longer." "I just need her to listen. One moment where she hears me instead of Father's voice in her head." "She has had years of that voice telling her who to be. You have had thirty seconds to offer her something different." "Then I'll use every one of those seconds. Help me, Aspis, help me reach her." "I do not know how to reach someone who has decided to be unreachable." Another exchange. Another cut — this one across my thigh, shallow but painful, my leg threatening to buckle. I give ground, retreating toward the cliff edge where the rocky shore drops away to the sea below. "Fight me properly!" Cassandra screams, her face twisted with fury and something that looks almost like anguish. "You always were a coward, hiding behind your excuses, refusing to be what you were meant to be. Stand and face me like the sister I was promised!" My voice breaks on her name: "I am standing right here, refusing to raise a blade against you, and that is the hardest thing I have ever done." "You call this hard?"

Try living your entire life knowing you were made to kill someone, try being forged into a weapon before you were old enough to understand what weapons do.” “I know how Father shaped you, but you don’t have to be the thing he made. You can choose something different.” “There is only this — only us — only the prophecy that Father carved into my bones before I could walk. Make it easier for both of us and die!” She drives forward — a combination that forces me to the very edge of the cliff, the stone crumbling beneath my heels, the sound of waves far below. I channel moonlight into one more barrier, deflecting her killing stroke, and the effort costs me something vital. The power gutters in my chest like a candle in a storm. “I don’t want to kill you.” The words tear out of me, raw and desperate. “Don’t you understand what I’m telling you? I never wanted any of this. Not the prophecy, not the hatred, not years of being told one of us had to die so the other could live.” “One of us does have to die! That’s what the prophecy demands.” “It demands that we stop, that one of us be strong enough to end the cycle instead of perpetuating it. I am trying to be that sister, Cassandra. I am trying to save us both.”

“Save us?” She laughs — a broken, terrible sound. “You think you can save me? After everything Father did, everything he made me become, you think there’s something left to save?” “I have to believe that, or none of this means anything.” “Evelyn, she is positioning for a killing strike. Her weight is shifting forward.” “I see it.” “You must defend yourself. If she completes this attack—” “I know what happens if she does it.” Cassandra’s eyes meet mine across the space between us. For one moment — one suspended, infinite moment — something in her face cracks. The fury recedes like a tide, and beneath it, beneath the conditioning, beneath twenty years of being told she is the weapon and I am the target, I see someone else. A girl who wanted a sister and never got one. A child who learned hatred because love was never offered. “Cassandra.” I reach toward her with my empty hand, moonlight flickering around my fingers. “It doesn’t have to end this way. We can both walk away from this, and we can be the sisters we were never allowed to be.” The moment stretches. Her blade wavers, and her eyes are wet with something she would never admit to feeling. Then—Her face hardens. Her grip tightens on the blade, and she screams — a sound of pure anguish, of a choice being made against everything soft that might have lived inside her — and lunges for the killing strike. A thrust aimed at my heart: committed, final, with no possibility of pulling back. www.novelworld.com I don’t choose what happens next. The power surges through the bond — not my will, not my decision, but Aspis reacting to a lethal threat with the only response the bond knows. Overwhelming force, the way a heart beats without permission. Moonlight erupts from my body. Not a barrier or a flash. A shockwave — massive, uncontrolled, a sun compressed into a single instant; the light is blinding, absolute, and the world disappears into white. The shockwave catches Cassandra mid-lunge. I see her expression in the heartbeat before the light takes her — surprise, then understanding, then

something that might be relief. Her body lifts from the ground, thrown backward as if struck by the hand of a god. She hits the stone outcropping behind her. The sound is something I will hear in nightmares for the rest of my life. The wet crack of impact, the silence that follows, and the way her body slides down the rock and crumples at its base. “Evelyn.” The light fades. The power collapses back into my chest, leaving me hollow, leaving me cold. “No.” The word comes out as a whisper. “No, no, no—” I’m running, stumbling across the rocky ground, falling to my knees beside Cassandra, reaching for her with hands that still glow with the power that killed her. “Evelyn. She is—” “Don’t say it. Don’t you dare say it.” Cassandra’s eyes are open. Her chest isn’t moving, and blood pools beneath her head where the stone cracked her skull. I didn’t mean to do this! I was trying to save her! The moonlight did what my heart refused to do. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

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7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 115

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Feb 25, 2026 I reach Cassandra before anyone else. She lies against the stone where the shockwave threw her, her body broken in ways I can see without touching. The angle of her spine, the dark spread of blood pooling from the back of her head where skull met rock. Her blade has fallen from her hand, Mintian steel glinting uselessly three feet away. Her eyes are open. She’s staring at the sky, and the fury is gone from her face. In its place is something I never thought I’d see — confusion. Pure bewilderment, as if the world has rearranged itself into a pattern she never learned to recognize. I drop to my knees beside her. My hands are shaking, covered in moonlight that won’t stop flowing. The power that did this to her still pulses through my veins, mocking me with its presence. I did this. I killed my sister. The damage is catastrophic, and I can see it in the stillness of her legs, the way her chest barely rises. Nothing can undo what the shockwave did to her body. But I reach for her anyway, touch her face with fingers that glow silver, stroke the hair from her forehead: hair the same silver-blond as our father’s, the same shade that marked us both as daughters of the blue blood. “I’m sorry,” the words pour out of me, broken and desperate. “I’m sorry, Cassandra. I

didn't mean to do this. The power just happened, and I couldn't control it, couldn't stop it from hurting you." Cassandra's eyes move. They find my face with effort, and something in her expression shifts. The confusion doesn't leave, but it reshapes itself around recognition. "Evelyn..." Her voice is a whisper, broken but clear. "You're crying." Tears are running down my face, cutting tracks through the blood and ash. I hadn't even noticed. [Ww\(n\)ovelworld.com](#) "I just killed you. I killed my sister, and I didn't want to, I was trying to—" "You were trying to save me." Cassandra's lips curve into something that might be a smile if it weren't so full of pain. "That's almost funny... Father would be furious if he knew." "I don't care about Father, I care about you. I've always cared about you, even when you were trying to destroy me. You're my sister, Cassandra. You were supposed to live through this." [Ww\(n\)ovelworld.com](#)

[A wet cough escapes her. Blood flecks her lips, dark against pale skin.](#)

"The prophecy..." Her voice is fading, each word softer than the last. "The witch said... the stronger one would break the cycle. It was supposed to be me. Father promised it would be me." "Father twisted the prophecy to serve his hatred. He used you, Cassandra. He made you into a weapon because he couldn't face that his own cruelty created the very thing he feared." "I know that now," her eyes drift, then focus again with visible effort. "I think I always knew, but believing him was easier than believing I was built on a lie. He told me every day of my life that I was the weapon and you were the target. I believed him, Evelyn. I wanted to believe him." "That's why I wanted to save you. You were a victim too." Her hand moves. It takes everything she has — I can see the effort in her face, the way her jaw tightens against pain — but she reaches for mine. A reflex, maybe, or something deeper. Something our father never managed to burn out completely. I take her hand, hold it between both of mine, moonlight and blood mingling on our skin. "I'm here, I'm not leaving you. You don't have to die alone." "I've been alone my whole life," her fingers twitch against mine, trying to grip and failing. "No friends or connections, only the mission. Only you, always you, the sister I was supposed to destroy. Do you know how much time I spent thinking about you? Planning your death, imagining your face when I finally won?" "And now? What do you feel now?"

"Now I think maybe I'm glad it was you," a breath rattles in her chest. "The stronger sister turned out to be someone who tried to save me instead of someone who wanted me dead." "Don't talk like it's over. Maybe I can heal you—" I reach for the moonlight, try to shape it into something gentle, something that mends instead of destroys. The power slips through my fingers like water... I don't know how to heal; I only know how to break. "Evelyn," Cassandra's voice is barely audible now. "It's done, and the prophecy is fulfilled. You broke the cycle the way it was always meant to be broken: not through murder but through

mercy.” “This isn’t mercy but failure.” “You did save me,” her eyes found mine one last time, and in them I saw something I never expected: peace. “From Father’s voice in my head, from more years of being his weapon, from becoming something worse than I already was. You saved me from myself.” “Cassandra—” www.novelworm.com “Tell Father the prophecy came true, just not the way he wanted.” Her eyes close. Her grip loosens around my fingers, going slack in a way that tells me everything I need to know. I wait. I pray to gods I’ve never believed in, beg for one more breath, one more word. The battlefield roars around us — steel and fire and screaming — but here, in this small space between the rocks, there is only silence. Cassandra doesn’t open her eyes again. “She is gone, Evelyn, I am sorry.” Aspis finally talks to me again. The scream that tears out of me doesn’t sound human. Grief and guilt and a wound so deep it doesn’t have a name — the howl of a woman who killed her sister with a power she couldn’t control, who tried to save her and failed. I don’t know how long I kneel there, holding her hand, before I feel it. Terror floods through the bond: raw, primal fear from Aspis, a creature that has never known fear. The sensation is so foreign, so wrong, that it forces me to raise my head. The sky is full of eyes — vast and patient, burning with light like dying stars. They fill the horizon from edge to edge, looking down at the battlefield, looking down at the dead, looking down at me kneeling beside my sister with blood and moonlight on my hands. “The Watcher. It has manifested at last.” Every dragon on the field goes rigid. I feel Aspis lock in place behind me, frozen, her mind suddenly small and quiet in a way that terrifies me. Through the bond — not just my bond with Aspis, but every dragon bond on the field, Khaira and the minor house dragons, all of them — a single word reverberates. Not spoken or heard, but FELT, in the deepest part of my soul. “ENOUGH.” The word is older than houses and prophecies. It carries the weight of centuries, the judgment of something that has watched empires rise and fall. The battlefield falls silent, and the eyes in the sky turn toward me. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 116

Feb 25, 2026[Draven's POV]A force vibrates through bone and blood, through the dragon bond that connects me to Khaira. My body locks in place mid-flight, muscles frozen, breath caught in my chest. Below me, warriors on both sides stop moving. Weapons lower, and blades hang in mid-swing. "Khaira, what is this? What is happening to us?" "The Watcher speaks, and we must listen. Every dragon on this field must do this." "I can't move... My body won't respond to my commands." "None of us can move. The word carries authority that supersedes flesh and will." The dragon trembles beneath me — not fear, but recognition. Something ancient in the bond acknowledges the Watcher's authority the way a body acknowledges gravity: absolutely, without choice. "You recognize this thing? You know what it is?" www.NoVëlw0rm.c0m "The Watcher is older than houses and the bond itself. When it speaks, dragons obey, there is no alternative." "What does it want from us?" "I do not know, but the word has been spoken: the violence must end." The sky above the battlefield is wrong. A vast draconic shadow fills the space between clouds — something that is not a dragon but the idea of dragons given form, ancient and terrible. Eyes like dying stars look down at the carnage below, at the ships and the bodies and the blood soaking into the rocks, and their judgment weighs on my chest like a mountain. www.NoVëlw0rm.c0m Then, as suddenly as it came, the pressure eases. The Watcher's presence recedes, pulling back like a tide withdrawing from shore. The sky lightens degree by degree, the shadow thinning, the eyes fading. The battlefield remains frozen for a heartbeat longer, then releases. Warriors stumble, dropping their weapons. Men who were locked in combat stagger apart, staring at each other as if they've forgotten why they were fighting. "Khaira, take me down! I need to find Evelyn." "I sense Aspis on the eastern shore. She is distressed beyond anything I have felt from her. Something terrible has happened to her rider." "Take me there, now!" "Banking toward the eastern cliffs. Hold tight." Khaira descends and I see the aftermath. Aldric's flagship has grounded on the rocks, hull torn open by the reef it struck when the helmsman froze at the Watcher's word. Mintian warriors stand among Black Dragon defenders, weapons lowered, staring at the sky with expressions of stunned incomprehension. www.NoVëlw0rm.c0m We land and I dismount before Khaira has fully settled. "Where is she exactly?" "Near the stone outcropping. Draven, the bond between Aspis and her rider is screaming with grief. Prepare yourself for what you will find." I push through the confusion — past warriors who don't seem to know if they're supposed to be fighting or surrendering, past medics rushing toward the wounded. Aspis is visible ahead, her white scales dim in the strange light, her damaged wing dragging against the stone as she positions herself protectively around a small figure. Evelyn... She's kneeling at the cliff edge, hunched over something in her arms. Moonlight flows from her in waves: uncontrolled, wild, bending the air around her like heat shimmer, warping the light itself. www.NoVëlw0rm.c0m The power is beautiful and terrifying, and I can feel it pushing against my skin even from twenty feet away. Cassandra

lies in Evelyn's arms, and her eyes are closed. Blood has pooled beneath her head, dark and spreading, and the angle of her spine tells me everything I need to know about how she died.

I approach slowly. "Evelyn, can you hear me?" She doesn't respond. Her shoulders shake with sobs — raw, broken sounds. "She cannot hear you. The grief has consumed everything else." "Evelyn..." I kneel beside her, close enough to touch. "I'm here, I'm right here with you." "I killed her." Her voice is a wreck — hoarse and broken. "I was trying to save her, Draven. I was trying to break the cycle without killing her. But the power just erupted, and I couldn't control it." "You didn't choose this. The bond acted to protect you from a killing strike." "I killed my sister..." She finally looks at me, and her eyes are devastated. "I held her while she died, watching life leave her eyes. The last thing she said was that she was glad it was me: the stronger sister was someone who tried to save her." "The prophecy is fulfilled. The cycle is broken." "The prophecy took everything from me." Evelyn's grip tightens on Cassandra's body. "It took my childhood, family, my chance at a sister who might have loved me. And now Cassandra is dead by my hand, and I'm supposed to believe this is right?" "I'm not going to tell you anything except that I'm here, and I'm not leaving." "She reached for my hand at the end, Draven, like I was something worth holding onto. After everything Father made her believe about me, she reached for me." "Because you showed her something different. You tried to save her when everyone — including her — expected you to kill her." "And I destroyed her anyway. The power didn't care what I wanted, it only cared about keeping me alive." "This power saved your life. Cassandra made the choice to attack, so she committed to that killing stroke knowing what it would force you to do." "You think that makes it better — knowing she chose this makes it hurt any less?" "No, nothing will make this hurt less for a very long time." I don't have another answer. So I do the only thing I can — I put my hand on her back, steady and warm, and I stay. I don't try to move her, don't offer comfort in words, because there are no words for what she's carrying. I just stay. Around us, the battle ends, not with a surrender or a treaty: with a silence so complete it feels like the world is holding its breath. Warriors from both sides stand in the wreckage, and none of them seem to know what happens next. The Watcher's shadows settle on the horizon like a promise. It's an acknowledgment that what happened here matters, that the ancient presence has witnessed and judged. Footsteps on stone, and Sera's voice cuts through the silence: "My lord, the battle is over. The Mintian forces have stopped fighting, and the flagship is grounded. Most of the fleet has retreated beyond the horizon." "Casualties?" "Heavy on both sides. Venna held the eastern gate alone — she's dead, but she bought time for the defense to reorganize. Torren's unit is decimated, and your brother is wounded but ambulatory." "What about Aldric?" "That's why I'm here, my lord." Sera pauses, and I hear something unusual in her voice. "Lord Aldric is alive. His guards have surrendered, and he's being held at the flagship under armed escort. He's asking to see his daughter." The words land like stones in still water. I look at Evelyn — at Cassandra's body

in her arms, at the moonlight still flowing uncontrolled from her skin, at the grief that has hollowed her out from the inside. Which daughter, I want to ask Sera. But I know. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-8 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 117

Feb 25, 2026[Evelyn's POV]Draven pulls me away from Cassandra's body with the firm, measured strength of someone who knows that if he doesn't do this now, I'll shatter in a way that can't be repaired. His hands close around my arms and lift me to my feet, separating me from the weight in my lap, from the body that was my sister, from the blood that has soaked into my leathers and will never wash out. I try to fight him. Not physically — I don't have the strength left for that — but verbally. I'm broken... A stream of words that don't make sentences is the only thing I am capable of right now. "Draven, this power wasn't mine, it wasn't something I chose, it just erupted and I couldn't stop it—" "Listen to me carefully." "I was trying to save her, I was trying to break the cycle without anyone dying, I told her we could both walk away—" "Evelyn! I need you to hear what I'm about to say." "She reached for my hand at the end. She reached for me like I was something worth reaching for, and the last thing she felt was the light that killed her—" His hands frame my face, forcing me to look at him. His eyes are dark and certain, anchored in a way that makes me want to cling to him. "You didn't choose to kill her. It's your power that chose to keep you alive. Those are not the same thing." The words land somewhere deep in my chest, in the hollow space where grief has carved out everything else. "It doesn't matter... She's still dead, and I'm the one who killed her. The prophecy said one sister would break the other, and I'm the one still standing." "The bond acted to protect you from a killing strike. Cassandra committed to that thrust knowing what it would force you to do. She made her choice, and the power made its choice." (W) www.morvel.com "That doesn't make it hurt any less." "No, it doesn't, but understanding that you didn't choose this — that matters. It will matter more as time passes." I hear him. I don't believe him — not yet, maybe not for a long time — but I hear him. The words sink into the wreckage of my mind and find purchase somewhere, a handhold in the

warmth — damaged, grounded, but alive and present. She can't be here physically, but she's here in every way that matters, her consciousness wrapped around mine like a blanket against the cold. Beneath the warmth, I feel a thread of ancient sadness, deep and old, as though the dragon has lived this grief before, in some other life, through some other bond. Riders who lost what they loved, and dragons who watched their partners break under the weight of what they'd done. The ancestral memory carries more pain than I ever imagined, and Aspis shares it with me now so I know I'm not alone in this. "You are not the first to grieve what power has taken, and you will not be the last. But you will survive this, because I will not let you fall." I close my eyes. In the darkness behind my lids, I feel Cassandra reaching for my hand — not as she was at the end, broken and dying, but as she might have been in another life. A sister reaching for a sister, and a hand extended in something other than violence. Her fingers close around nothing but light.

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First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 118

Feb 25, 2026[Draven's POV]The next morning, I handle the immediate aftermath with the systematic efficiency that keeps me sane. Prisoners are processed in the lower courtyard — Mintian warriors stripped of weapons, catalogued by rank, confined under armed guard. Aldric's elite forces receive separate quarters and heavier chains.

www.NOVELM.com "You are burying yourself in administration." "It is what keeps an army functioning after a battle. The fighting is the easy part — it's the aftermath that breaks houses." "You are also avoiding your chambers, where Evelyn sleeps." "She needs rest more than she needs me hovering. I'll be there when she wakes." The allied minor houses report casualties through runners. House Theron lost eight warriors, and House Varis lost twelve. House Caelum, who held the southern wall, lost twenty-three. I send condolences with supply aid: grain, medicine, and practical support that says what words cannot. The dead are gathered by midday. The count is heavy but not devastating — sixty-two from our forces, another forty-one from the allies. We expected worse. The intelligence advantage saved lives. The eastern trap worked

exactly as designed, because Kael's information was accurate and Venna's revelation closed the secondary leak before it could warn the enemy. Lives saved by unlikely sources. "My lord." Riven's voice comes from the doorway of the war room where I've been reviewing casualty reports. His face is drawn, exhaustion carved into every line, but there's something else beneath it: something that looks like peace. "What news do you bring, brother?" "Venna's body has been recovered from the gate. I had her cleaned and prepared for burial myself. I dressed her in warrior's armor — full rank insignia, the insignia she wore before I stripped it from her." I set down the reports and turn to face him fully. "You restored her rank without consulting me or the council?" "www.novelworm.co.uk" "She earned it back, Draven. She held that gate alone against a dozen elite warriors when she could have run. She saved Evelyn's life when she had every reason to let her die. Whatever her crimes were before, she paid for them at that chokepoint." Riven's voice cracks slightly. "I needed to do this for her, to give her back what I took." "Are you asking me to confirm it and make the restoration official?" "My request is to give her full honors at the burial and let her be laid to rest with the house's fallen, with her rank restored posthumously in the official records." I study my brother — the grief that has aged him overnight, the determination that keeps him standing despite it. Riven loved Venna before her bitterness poisoned everything between them. Part of him probably still does. "Full honors," I say. "She'll be buried with the house's fallen. Her rank is restored as of the moment she took her position at the gate. See that Sera writes the commendation for the records." Riven's shoulders sag with relief. "Thank you, brother. I know this isn't a simple decision, given everything she did before the battle." "She held the gate when it mattered, so that's what history will remember." He leaves to make the arrangements. I return to the reports, but my mind keeps circling back to the woman who died facing enemies she once served. Sera arrives an hour later with a document in her hands, her face pale. "The commendation you requested, my lord, for Venna's posthumous restoration of rank."

"You finished it quickly." "www.novelworm.co.uk" "It is the most difficult document I have ever composed." She sets it on the table. "How do you write a commendation for a woman who betrayed everything she believed in, then died proving she believed in it after all?" "You don't have to capture all of it. Mention the part that matters for the records — she held the gate, saved lives, and died facing the enemy. The rest belongs to the people who knew her." "To us, you mean," Sera corrects quietly. "To everyone who has to live with what she did and what she became." She leaves the document and withdraws. I read it once, sign it, and set it aside. Then the guards bring words that test my composure: Kael has been found. They bring him to me in the war room — injured, confused, and clutching a satchel of documents he'd been trying to deliver to our intelligence post when the battle overran his position. Cassandra's encoded messages are inside, evidence of his defection. I look at the man who was once betrothed to Evelyn. He's been beaten by the battle itself, caught between lines

when the Watcher's word froze everyone in place. "Lord Draven, I was trying to reach your intelligence commander when the fighting started. The documents I carry contain everything I could gather about Aldric's forces and plans." "We already had that information. Your earlier messages reached us in time." "Did they help? I hope they made a difference in the battle." "They did. The eastern trap was designed based on your intelligence, and lives were saved because your information was accurate." Something in Kael's face shifts. I study him and see someone broken beyond repair: not a villain who chose cruelty, and not a hero who found courage. He is just a man who was too weak to be good and too decent to stay evil. "What happens to me now? Am I a prisoner or a defector? I don't know what category I fall into anymore." "You'll be treated for your injuries and detained pending tribunal. The council will decide what to do with you when the crisis has passed." "And Cassandra?" The name catches in his throat. "I heard what happened. I heard that the prophecy—" "She is dead. Her body lies in the compound's cold room." Kael's composure shatters. Something behind his eyes simply breaks, and the man standing before me becomes somehow less substantial. "I would ask a favor, my lord. When the prisoners are repatriated to the Mintian lines, I would carry her body myself. I would see her returned to her father's people, not left here among enemies." The request is oddly tender from a man she manipulated for years, used as a tool, discarded when he was no longer useful. But grief doesn't follow the rules of logic or justice. It exists regardless of whether it's earned or deserved. www.novelworld.com "Granted. You may carry her to the Mintian lines when the exchange is arranged." "Thank you, my lord." His voice breaks on the words. "She was not what I wanted her to be, but she was still — I still—" He can't finish, but I don't ask him to. Kael's grief is complicated and ugly and earns him no sympathy from me, but grief doesn't require sympathy to be real. It simply is, like weather, like war, like the weight of a body in arms that once held it living. I have the guards take him to the infirmary, then to his cell. The morning's work continues: there is always more to do. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 119

Feb 25, 2026[Evelyn's POV]I go to see my father because the wound won't close until I face the man who carved it. The answer to why Cassandra died sits in a cell beneath the compound, stripped of weapons and dignity. "Are you certain this is wise? Your control is fragile, and your grief is raw." **www.noVELworld.com** "I'm not certain of anything, Aspis, but I need to do this. I need to look at him and understand." "What?" "How a man destroys his own family and calls it prophecy." The guards at the secure quarters straighten when they see me approach. They know who I am — the silver hair, the dragon mark, Draven's consort sigil on my armor. "Lady Evelyn, we weren't informed you would be visiting the prisoner." "I'm informing you now. Open that damned door and give me ten minutes alone with him." They hesitate, so I let the moonlight flicker around my fingers. It works. The cell is clean but sparse — a stone bench, a water basin, and a chamber pot. Sitting on the bench, hands folded in his lap, is the man who terrorized my childhood. Aldric looks old, and I wasn't prepared for that. In my memory, he's always towering — the cold blue eyes, the silver hair swept back from a face carved from contempt. My father's voice could freeze blood with a single word. The man before me is diminished. His hair is tangled, and his beard is unkempt. His eyes, when they rise to meet mine, hold none of the rage I expected. He looks at me, taking in the silver hair that matches his own. He notices the dragon mark and the consort sigil: the woman he tried to destroy, standing over him in the house he tried to conquer. Then his gaze drops to my hands, where moonlight still flickers, where the power that killed his daughter lives beneath my skin. He says nothing for a long time, and I give him this opportunity, not hurrying up to ask questions. "She's dead." He says finally, and his voice is flat. Not a question — a statement of fact, spoken like a man reading casualty reports. "Yes, Father, Cassandra is dead." "It was you! You killed her with that light I'm seeing around your fingers." "I didn't want to do that, I tried to save her. I spent the entire fight trying to disarm her, trying to make her understand that the prophecy didn't demand her death." "But she's dead anyway." "She lunged at my heart with a blade she'd been training to use since childhood. You spent years teaching her that killing me was her destiny, and that's the result. She's dead because the power in my blood reacted to protect me when my own will wouldn't." Aldric's face doesn't change, but something behind it shifts: a structure built on certainty beginning to crumble inward. "The prophecy said—" "I know what it said! The stronger sister would break the cycle, Father, not break the weaker. Cycle! The pattern of violence and cruelty that you perpetuated for generations." I step closer, and my father — the man who once seemed tall enough to block out the sun — shrinks on his bench. "You misread it, Father. Deliberately or not, I don't know, but you twisted those words into permission to destroy one daughter and weaponize the other." "I did what the witch told me was necessary. The prophecy demanded—" "Nothing! It was you who demanded. You wanted one of us dead so you wouldn't have to choose. You wanted the witch's words to justify the hatred you already felt. So you raised Cassandra as a blade pointed at my heart and you raised me as—" My voice breaks. "As if I was nothing..."

You raised me as a curse, as something to be endured until the prophecy resolved itself.” “You don’t understand the pressures of succession. The weight of a prophecy hanging over a house for generations—” “I understand it perfectly. You had two daughters, and you chose to make one a weapon and one a target. You could have raised us as sisters, Father, could have let us find our own way to break whatever demanded, but instead you made sure we would destroy each other.”

The moonlight around my hands flares brighter. “The destruction of the house that the prophecy warned about? It wasn’t me, Father, it was you. It’s all about your cruelty, certainty, and your conviction that violence was the only answer.” [WwNovel\(w\)Orm.com](#) Aldric’s mouth opens, but nothing comes out. “Cassandra died reaching for my hand. Did you know that? In her last moments, she stopped being the weapon you made and became a sister. A girl who wanted to be loved and never was. She told me she was glad the stronger sister was someone who tried to save her.” I’m crying now, tears cutting tracks through the dust on my face. [ww.no\(v\)èL\(w\)órm.cóm](#) “She was glad, Father, that I tried to be merciful even when everything you taught her said I would kill her without hesitation.” “I didn’t know—” His voice cracks. “I didn’t know it would end like this.” “You knew exactly how it would end. You built every piece of it. The only thing you didn’t anticipate was that I would refuse to play the role you assigned me.” I watch something happen to my father’s face. Not grief exactly — he may not be capable of that, not for the daughter he threw away. But it’s a collapse, a structure of certainty crumbling inward, leaving nothing but rubble where a man used to stand. His eyes meet mine, and in them I see recognition. My face — his silver hair, his jaw, his firstborn daughter: the child he called a curse from the moment she drew breath. He sees what he did. He sees it clearly, perhaps for the first time, and the weight of it is more than he can bear. Aldric opens his mouth again but still keeps silent. His eyes drop to the floor. I wait for the satisfaction I’ve been owed since childhood. I expect vindication from standing over my tormentor and watching him break. I wait for the feeling of justice that should flood through me after everything he did, everything he took, everything he destroyed. It doesn’t come. There is only sadness now: vast, exhausted, useless for a family that tore itself apart because one man couldn’t tell the difference between a prophecy and a permission slip. I am sad for a sister who never had a chance to be anything but what Father made her, and for a childhood that was stolen and can never be returned. [w\(w\)w.Novel\(w\)Orm.com](#) I leave. The guards don’t speak as I pass. My legs give out three steps past the cell door. I slide down the wall and sit on the cold stone, knees drawn to my chest, breathing in ragged gasps. The moonlight around my hands flickers wildly, responding to emotions I can’t name. “Evelyn.” Aspis’s voice in my mind again, distant but present. She’s still grounded by her wing injury, but the bond stretches between us like a lifeline. “I’m here. I just need a moment to breathe.” “Take all the moments you need. I am not going anywhere.” I breathe, in and out. The stone is cold against my back.

Somewhere in the compound, life continues — warriors healing, prisoners confined, a house rebuilding from the ashes of war. “Evelyn, have a question for you, when you are ready to hear it.” “Ask.” Through the bond, Aspis sends something new — not warmth or warning, but a genuine inquiry, patient and profound: “What do you want to become?” Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-8 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 120

Mar 2, 2026
The compound is quieter now, the frantic energy of battle replaced by something heavier and more purposeful. I walk the grounds alone, touching stones that are still standing, passing workers who hammer and lift and rebuild what the war tried to destroy. Warriors nod to me as I pass and I nod back. We don’t need words. We all survived something together, and that creates its own kind of language. I am not the same person who arrived here a year ago: disguised, terrified, hiding a dragon the size of a cat in my commander’s private alcove. I am not the person I was yesterday, either. www.NoVeLwôRm.COM That woman killed her sister with a power she couldn’t control and broke a prophecy and a family in the same breath. “You are walking in circles around the compound, Evelyn. I have been watching you from the healing yard.” “I’m processing. Some of us need to move our bodies while we think through what happened to us.” “And some are grounded with damaged wings and must think while lying very still. I am merely observing that your path has no destination.” “Maybe I don’t have it yet. I’m still figuring out where I’m supposed to go from here and what I’m supposed to become.” “That is a reasonable answer to give. I will accept it for now, but I expect a better one eventually.” www.NoVeLwôRm.COM I find Draven on the high wall, in the same place where we stood together before the world caught fire and the fleet appeared on the horizon. He’s staring at the sky. I can see the exhaustion etched into every line of his body: the lord who held his house together through revelation and treason. He made it through the war, through something ancient enough to stop the world with a single word. I climb the stairs and cross to where he stands. He doesn’t turn, but I see his shoulders relax slightly when he senses my approach behind him. The bond between us isn’t magical like the one I share with

Aspis, but it's real in its own way: built on trust and battle and something deeper. I take his hand in mine and feel the warmth of his skin against my fingers, the steadiness that has anchored me through everything. The moonlight bends toward my fingers unbidden. It always will now, I finally understand that. The power is part of me, not a tool I control with any real precision. The gap between my will and its reach is the wound I'll carry forward. The reminder of what I did to Cassandra. "Draven, I just want you to know, one more time, that I tried to save her. I fought the entire battle trying to disarm her, to make her see the truth." "I know you did. Everyone who saw the fight knows. You gave her every chance to choose differently." "It wasn't enough. She couldn't hear me through years of Father's voice telling her whom to hate." "Some people can't be saved from what they were made into. That's not your failure." "That knowledge doesn't make it hurt any less... It doesn't bring her back or change what happened between us." "No, it doesn't. Just allow yourself grief without blaming yourself for what you couldn't influence." Above us, Aspis and Khaira circle against a sky that is darker than it should be. The storm clouds haven't dispersed — they've thickened at the horizon. (W) Ww.NovêlWorm.©M They gather at the edges of the world like a curtain being drawn across the sky. The Watcher hasn't left. Its presence remains patient and vast and watchful.

"Evelyn, I need to show you something important. I have been sensing it through the old connections." Aspis sends an image through the bond: a sensation, something she's feeling through connections I don't fully understand yet. More dragons scattered across the realm, restless in their nests, stirring from sleep that has lasted generations. Ancient nesting sites reactivating after centuries. The images carry urgency: fundamental shifting in the world's bones, responding to the Watcher's presence in ways we don't yet understand. "What does it mean, Aspis? What is happening to the dragons?" "I do not know entirely, but the Watcher's presence has triggered something in the old places. Dragons that have slept are beginning to stir." "That sounds like either very good news or very bad one, depending on what they do when they wake." "I suspect it is both at once. Whatever comes next will require more than two riders and a fractured household to face it." I squeeze Draven's hand tighter. He squeezes back, and the simple pressure grounds me in this moment, in this place, in this life I've built. "Thalissa said something to me this morning over tea, with that casual bluntness she uses when she's about to ruin your entire day." I try to smile when saying that to him, but I feel that I fail. "Is that anything about the shadows on the horizon?" Ww.novêl(W)orm.com "She said: 'You broke the cycle, well done! The Watcher's next demand will be considerably less personal and more apocalyptic.'" Draven laughs — a short, exhausted sound, but genuine despite everything. "That sounds exactly like something the loremaster would say over the tea." "She also said we have about six months before whatever's coming arrives. Enough time to rebuild and reach out to the other houses across the realm." "A half of a year to prepare for the apocalypse? Well, I've worked with worse

timelines before, though I can't remember when that might have been." "Are you just saying that to make me feel better about our impossible situation?" "I just want both of us to feel better about everything. Whether it's actually true remains to be seen when the time comes." The shadows on the horizon pulse — not visibly, but I feel it through the bond with Aspis. The Watcher is patient, but it's also waiting for something. "Evelyn." Aspis's voice carries the weight of everything we've been through together. "Are you ready for whatever the Watcher demands of us?" I don't answer. I stand on the wall with Draven's hand in mine, the compound healing below us, the shadows gathering above. I think about Cassandra reaching for my hand at the end, about the question Aspis asked me in the dark corridor: What do I want to become? I am the first white dragon rider in centuries. I am consort to a lord who loves me deeply. And I am the woman who broke a prophecy and lost a sister. I am not ready for what comes next, but I don't think anyone ever truly is, not really. The shadows watch, the dragons circle... The story continues.

Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella's storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.