

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — Timothy Campbell 6

Jan 24, 2026[Draven's POV]I watch Evelyn as my guards escort her toward the compound. She doesn't look back, doesn't plead or stumble. Just walks with her spine straight despite everything that just happened. That alone tells me more than her words ever could. "She feels right," Khaira rumbles through our bond. "Different from all the others who have crossed our borders. There is something about her... Keep her close, Draven." I stiffen at my dragon's words. Khaira hasn't shown this kind of interest in anyone for years. Never cared about strangers and for sure didn't urge me to catch them. www.novelworm.com The last time she urged me to trust someone... No. I won't think about that. Not now. "You cannot ignore what I sense," Khaira presses with unusual insistence. "Her scent alone tells me she is not ordinary. Something speaks to us both through this connection." "She's a stranger who wandered into our territory with a convenient story. Nothing more than that." "You felt it too. When you caught her falling body. When she pressed against your chest. Your heart quickened in ways it has not for years. Do not deny what I witnessed with my own senses." "From exertion. Flying at that speed, catching falling prey mid-air—that takes considerable effort." "Lie to yourself if you must, Draven. But you cannot lie to me. We share too much for such deception. I felt your pulse race when her skin touched yours. And I know exactly what that means." I clench my jaw and force myself to look away from her retreating figure. Khaira's instincts have served us well in battle, but they've failed us before in matters of trust. The last time I listened to my dragon about a stranger, Lyanna paid the price. I won't make that mistake again. Not ever. "This one is different," Khaira insists gently. "I would know if she carried darkness inside her heart. She does not. Her fear is genuine, not performed for our benefit." "You've been wrong before. We both have. And the cost was more than I can bear to pay twice." www.novelworm.com Silence stretches between us. Even my dragon cannot argue with that. I stride toward the main hall, my decision already made. Trust is a luxury I cannot afford—but information is something I can gather. "Summon Commander Sera," I command a passing servant. "Have her meet me in my study immediately. Tell her it's urgent business." "At once, my lord." Sera arrives within minutes, as efficient as always. My most trusted observer stands before my desk, sharp eyes already assessing my mood with practiced precision. "You saw the woman my guards brought in today?" I ask without preamble. "The wanderer, yes. I watched from the eastern tower as the guards brought her

through the gates. Quite an interesting catch you got, my lord.”“Tell me what you observed.”“Her bearing, mostly. She walked like someone used to attention—spine straight, chin level, measured steps. Rogues shuffle. They hunch. They try to disappear.” Sera shakes her head slowly. “This one walked through our settlement like she belonged in one. Just not ours.”“What else?”“She studied everything as they led her past. Not gawking like outsiders do—cataloging. Gates, guard rotations, building positions. I’ve seen that look before, my lord. On scouts memorizing enemy territory.”“Anything else?”“Her clothes. Travel-worn, yes, but the cut and stitching—that’s not roadside work. Someone with a coin paid for those garments. Someone from a proper house.”I nod slowly. Sera misses nothing, that’s why I trust her above all others for this particular work.

“I want you to watch her constantly. Every movement she makes within these walls. Every conversation she has with anyone. Every hint of deception—I want to know about it immediately. Is that understood?”“Perfectly clear, my lord. You suspect she’s a spy sent to infiltrate us?”“I suspect she’s hiding something significant and knows something valuable for us. Whether it threatens my house remains to be determined through careful, patient observation.”“And if I discover she is indeed a threat to us and our people?”“Then you come to me first. No independent action whatsoever. I want to handle this one personally when the time comes.”Something flickers across Sera’s weathered face. Curiosity, perhaps. Or concern. “You’re taking unusual interest in a simple wanderer, my lord. More interest than I’ve seen you take in anyone for quite some time now.”“There’s nothing simple about her. That’s precisely the problem I intend to solve.”“Understood completely. I’ll begin surveillance immediately. Where have you housed her for tonight?”“Servants’ quarters in the east wing. She works at dawn. Assign her the most menial tasks available. Let’s see how a desperate wanderer handles scrubbing floors on her hands and knees.”“As you command, my lord.” With a polite nod, Sera departs, leaving me alone with my thoughts and ghosts I cannot banish no matter how hard I try. I’ve seen hundreds of prisoners and refugees pass through those gates. They all share the same look—broken, desperate, defeated. This one had fear, yes. But underneath it? Something harder. Something waiting.

www.novels.com

She’s a secret, an enigma, a walking contradiction. And I haven’t yet decided if whatever she’s hiding is going to destroy us, or have no consequences to our House. I move to the window overlooking the compound below. The servants’ wing stretches out beneath the moonlight where Evelyn will spend her first night in my territory. A light flickers in one of the windows. Her room, perhaps. Is she sleeping? Plotting her next move? Clutching that mysterious pack and praying I don’t search it more thoroughly? There’s fire beneath her fear. I saw it when she challenged me about my men’s methods, when she refused to cower even with death staring her in the face. Defiance beneath her desperation. It intrigues me far more than it should. “You could go to her tonight,” Khaira suggests softly.

“Learn what she hides directly rather than through intermediaries watching from the shadows.” “And show weakness? Let her think she’s caught my attention so easily?” “She has caught your attention, Draven. Denying the truth doesn’t make it false. I know you too well for such pointless games between us.” I grip the windowsill until my knuckles turn white. “Consider this,” Khaira continues. “She may hide things not from malice, but from survival. As we all do when cornered by those who hold power over us.” The words settle uncomfortably in my chest. I think of my own secrets. The rage I keep leashed behind careful masks. The grief I’ve buried so deep it’s become part of my bones. Below, the light in her window dims. Whatever she’s doing in there, whatever secrets she guards so desperately—I will uncover them all. Every last one. www.novelworm.com I tell myself this obsession is only suspicion. Only the vigilance of a leader protecting his people from potential threats. Only the reasonable caution of a man who learned too late what misplaced trust can cost. I almost believe it. But Khaira’s rumble of knowing amusement echoes through my mind, and I cannot quite convince myself that suspicion is all I feel when I think of her. 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.